

Memo To: All Interested Parties

From: Ron Norton Reel, Lynette Nyaggah, Alan Frey (CCA)

Date: March 24, 2009

Subject: Barbara A. Beno, President of Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Memo Concerning Community College Association (CCA/CTA) Communications To Some California Public Colleges

Dear Interested Parties:

On March 17, 2009 CCA met with Barbara Beno as a courtesy to put her and the group she represents on notice of the concerns regarding the actions of ACCJC we believe that are outside the purview of accreditation and interfere with collective bargaining regarding the colleges we represent.

Below is a copy of the communication we sent our local chapter presidents and other members regarding that meeting.

Dear CCA Members,

Yesterday CCA Consultant to Governance Alan Frey, CCA Vice President Lynette Nyaggah and I met with Barbara Beno, Director of the ACCJC in her office regarding various concerns CCA has over the recent findings and results issued by the Commission.

We had a very productive and informative meeting. I wanted to share three things this morning with all of you. A detailed letter will be sent soon.

First: Not one community college in California has received a sanction because of SLOs.

Second: Colleges are free to use any means they wish to achieve the Standards required by the Commission as long as they demonstrate how the Standards are being accomplished. The "Rubric" used by the Accreditation Team is a way of standardizing information brought by the Team to the Commission, but colleges do not have to complete the items on the rubric themselves in order to be accredited. For faculty, verification of student achievement is the key component. The Student Learning Outcome is only one way of showing achievement. If a faculty group decided to use another method, it would be acceptable to the Commission as long as it was data-based and met the Standards.

Third: Faculty can only control the teaching and, to a certain extent, learning part of accreditation. We must demand that our administrators and trustees keep their end of the bargain for those areas which are their responsibility. Many colleges are being sanctioned for issues outside teaching and learning, and faculty should not be held responsible for those sanctions.

Please let your primary contact staff person know if what you are being asked to do interferes with collective bargaining. We did put Dr. Beno on notice that we will be pursuing these issues as they develop.

**Sincerely yours,
Ron Norton Reel
CCA President**

Please understand, the law allows us to communicate with the chapters we represent with an expectation that outside parties not interfere nor try to communicate with our members. It appears that Ms. Beno has tried to sabotage that right. Here is a copy of the communication Ms. Beno sent to CEO'S and ALO's that has been distributed statewide to faculty groups and to our members.

MEMO TO: CEO's, ALO's
ROM: Barbara A. Beno, President
DATE: March 20, 2009
SUBJECT: CAA communications to some California Public Colleges

Dear Colleagues:

On Tuesday of this week, I met for about an hour with representatives of the CAA to discuss accreditation matters about which they had questions and about which their members have concerns. The meeting was informational only. **The CAA may now be trying to communicate some information about its informational meeting with me.** Unfortunately, **from what I've heard, it appears** the **CAA communications are not very accurate.** I want you to be assured that the Commission has not changed its position or its expectations of institutions, nor would the Commission communicate any changes in its expectations of institutions through another agency or organization.

CCA met with Ms. Beno for the purpose of clarifying our concerns so we could communicate with our members the clarification Ms. Beno provided us and reassure our members about their concerns. We told Ms. Beno we would communicate with our members and verified with her what we were going to communicate was accurate. In addition, we are very concerned that Ms. Beno would write a memo when it is very clear

she had not read the communication we sent to our members. When one says, "Unfortunately, from what I've heard..." the art of rumor and intimidation along with misinformation is sent forth as truth when indeed it is not. How would anyone suggest a communication we sent as not being accurate when Ms. Beno in her own words indicates she has not read our communication we sent to our own members. This was a communication to our members from us. Not once in our communication did we indicate we were the spokespersons for the ACCJC.

During the course of the conversation, I shared with the CAA information that the Commission has compiled from its actions on institutions and which I presented in detail to the NorCal CEO's last week. I will be discussing this information with the SoCal CEOs next month. The information is about the common deficiencies that have caused the 22 ACCJC member institutions that are currently on a sanction to be placed on sanction. The institutions currently on sanction are deficient in meeting standards in one or more of the following areas: program review, integrated planning, governance, and financial stability or management. These are the same four common reasons for sanction that I reported to the CEOs last time the ACCJC did this analysis, in Spring 2004.

At our meeting, Ms. Beno did share some information from her presentation to the NorCal CEO's and asked us not to discuss that information with anyone until after she had a chance to share it with the SoCal CEO's. We honored that request and did not nor will we share that information until she has had a chance to share it with others. I don't know why it is mentioned.

HOWEVER, IT WAS MS. BENO WHO SAID WORD FOR WORD, "Not one community college in California has received a sanction because of SLOs." We quizzed her with several additional questions regarding that statement to clarify and repeated the sentence to her. This was not OUR sentence, but hers.

The CAA is apparently conveying a confused message that faculty can or should stop work to implement the accreditation standards that have to do with student learning outcomes and assessment because colleges are not yet being commonly sanctioned for failure to do this work. This logic would imply that colleges should only meet standards as the result of the extreme pressure of an accreditation sanction. This is not the message that the ACCJC conveyed to the CAA, and it is an ill-advised message.

Please reread our simple three paragraph communication. There is not one mention or suggestion that indicates anyone should stop

working or to not implement the accreditation standards to do with learning outcomes and assessment. We simply repeated Ms. Beno's statement to us that said it is not the only method that can be used. Ms. Beno was very clear that Student Learning Outcome is only one way of showing achievement.

The ACCJC has not changed its expectations for institutional compliance with the standards that have to do with student learning outcomes, as described in the ACCJC letter of September 2008 and the Rubric on Institutional Effectiveness. While the rubric is a way of assessing institutional progress in meeting the standards, it does not replace or substitute for the standards. Institutions are responsible for meeting the standards.

Our letter said, " For faculty, verification of student achievement is the key component. The Student Learning Outcome is only one way of showing achievement. If a faculty group decided to use another method, it would be acceptable to the Commission as long as it was data-based and met the Standards." We cannot understand how one would misconstrue our statement as an, "ill-advised message" when in fact, it was Ms. Beno who made the statement.

I would advise institutions with any questions about accreditation to contact the Commission offices for an answer.

We agree that on issues of accreditation, colleges should contact ACCJC, however, CCA has the right to contact membership concerning issues that deal with collective bargaining.