SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Are California Community College Leaders
Prepared for
the New Accreditation Standards?

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

“Not everything that can be counted counts,

and not everything that counts, can be counted.”

Albert Einstein

Assessment and learning outcomes are two major movements in which American higher education institutions and regional accreditation commissions have been focusing their efforts in the past several years. Looking through the standards of all regional accreditation commissions in United States, it is easy to identify the importance that it is given to the improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness as a primary reason for assessment. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), a branch of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), adopted in June 2002 the new standards for fall 2004 and the two key themes of the new standards are student learning outcomes and assessment.

According to a memorandum sent to leaders of the community college system in summer 2002 by Barbara A. Beno, Executive Director of ACCJC, “The new standards build on the 1996 standards by adding the requirement that institutions identify student learning outcomes and measure their achievement as part of self-evaluation.” Several community colleges in California do at some degree base their institutional mission and procedures on assessment and learning outcomes, however there are staff in colleges in California who are not in favor of the new standards and do not feel prepared to meet these standards.
Change always meets resistance, and in a higher education organization, change can be even more difficult due to old traditions. The new standards are meeting resistance from these organizations due to the need for these organizations to change. Also as with any other organizational change, part of the resistance is the fear of the unknown. Several community college leaders and organizations have clearly expressed the need for training and understanding how these standards will affect their institutions.

The process of implementing learning outcomes and assessment is a lengthy one. Higher education institutions such as Alverno College have been working on it for thirty years and they continue to improve this process. Although accreditation is part of recognition of an institution, it is important to note that the changes required through ACCJC will not be done in a blink of an eye.

Background

The community college system in California is composed of 108 colleges and it serves more than 2.6 million students. This is the largest system of higher education in the world and it has played and continues to play a vital role in California’s higher education since 1910, when the first junior college, Fresno Junior College, was opened. The 108 community colleges in California have become the centers of educational opportunities for everyone who seeks an education. Each institution has its own mission and goals, and they all serve a very diverse student population.

Accountability is an important factor in these institutions and other colleges in the United States. Accreditation is one of the systems for having institutions of higher education accountable in meeting their mission statement and serving their students. According to the ACCJC mission, the commission has the responsibility for evaluating and accrediting public and
private institutions of higher education that offer higher educational programs of two years in length leading to the associate degree. This commission accredits all public and private community colleges in California as well as other institutions in the Western region of United States including its territories, protectorates, and self-governing areas.

Prior to June 2002, the ACCJC accredited institutions based on ten standards that were revised in 1996 and they were: mission of the institution; institutional integrity; institutional effectiveness; educational programs; student support and development; information and learning resources; faculty and staff; physical resources; financial resources; and governance and administration. During this period, the focus of accreditation was in institutional planning. Institutions would be required to have plans and follow up in their implementation.

In keeping up with other accreditation commissions and also to give an environmental push to the colleges, the ACCJC decided that a change was needed in their accreditation standards. The discussion for change was completed in June 2002 and the result of these discussions and reports were the four new accreditation standards. Although there are six less standards than before, the new standards cover all the areas of the institution as in the old standards. The new standards are: institutional mission and effectiveness; student learning programs and services; resources; and leadership and governance.

The institutions will be required to comply with the new standards starting fall 2004. The ACCJC asked community college leaders whose institutions are due for accreditation review prior to fall 2004, to participate as pilot schools and prepare their self-study report based on the new standards. According to Barbara A. Beno, Executive Director for ACCJC, in a discussion at the Assessment Institute in September 2002, there were several institutions in California that initially volunteered as pilot schools to test the new accreditation standards. However, once the
process of self-study reporting was started by these institutions, a few community colleges pulled back because they felt that they were not prepared to meet the new standards. At this time, there are three community colleges in California that are acting as pilot schools for the new standards. They are: MiraCosta Community College, Santa Monica Community College, and College of the Siskiyous.

To make an easier transition for the institutions, the ACCJC in conjunction with other associations have put together several workshops and training opportunities for the following year. Although other institutions will be required to comply with the new standards in fall 2004, according to Barbara A. Beno’s memorandum in summer 2002, the ACCJC does not expect the institutions to have a completed process of identifying student learning outcomes (SLOs), measuring their achievement, analyzing the results, and using those for institutional improvements. However the commission does expect that in fall 2004:

- An institution will have begun identifying SLO’s, defining meaningful measures of accomplishment, measuring and evaluating the results. Some data on student achievement of SLO’s will be available.
- There will be some plan in place to extend accomplishments in using SLO’s to all courses, programs and degrees.
- There will be evidence of broad institutional dialogue about and engagement with SLO’s.
- There will be some evidence of reorientation of other college processes to support student learning, such as planning processes, resource allocation processes, decision-making processes. (Beno, 2002, p. 2)

According to the commission, the new standards focus institutional evaluation on student learning and the commission expects the institutions to improve educational quality through their focus on student learning.
**Problem Statement**

Although leaders of higher education institutions have had some time to adjust to the new standards, the new standards have not yet received wide spread acceptance by faculty, staff and administrators in community college institutions. According to Barbara A. Beno, Executive Director of ACCJC, there are training workshops and conferences being offered to institutions, however she is concerned about the lack of participation by leaders of the community colleges.

The institutions will be required to comply with the new standards starting in fall 2004. During the accreditation team visit, the institutions will not be required to have implemented and assessed student learning outcomes for each program, however, they will be expected to show that planning has been made to start implementing student learning outcomes and assessment of these outcomes. Are institutions ready to start the accreditation process based on the new standards? Have they started the process of identifying the student learning outcomes? To take it even further, have they identified the means to assess these outcomes? The new standards of the ACCJC are not “a new trend” that will go away soon, therefore it is important to look at the community college organizations and identify the issues with the new standards as well as the necessary training needed for staff in these institutions.

**Research Questions**

For the purpose of this study, community college leaders were identified as people who were in the following positions in California community colleges: president/superintendent; president of the faculty senate (or equivalent position); and president of the classified senate (or equivalent position).

The following research questions were formulated for this project:
1. Are the new ACCJC accreditation standards clear to the California community college leaders?

2. Is ACCJC providing the necessary training for the community college leaders to prepare them for institutional accreditation?

3. According to community college leaders, are California community colleges ready to meet the new standards?

**Purpose/Objective**

The purpose of this project was to assess the preparedness of California community college leaders toward the new accreditation standards. One of the objectives for the project was to get some feedback from community college leaders on their attitude toward the new standards and the training necessary for the accreditation process. Another objective was to give a report to the ACCJC on what to expect from the leaders of the community college, as well as give recommendations on how ACCJC and other related organizations could help these leaders to prepare for the new accreditation standards.

**Definition of Terms**

1. **ACCJC** – The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has the responsibility for evaluating and accrediting public and private institutions of higher education that offer one or more higher educational programs of two years in length leading to the associate degree. The Commission accredits public and private institutions in California and Hawaii, as well as in Guam, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.
2. **Accreditation** – “the result of thorough and careful evaluation of the educational quality of the institution…. [it] signifies that the institution has a purpose appropriate to higher education and has resources, programs and services sufficient to accomplish its purpose on a continuing basis” (Commission on Colleges, 1998, pp. 1-2).

3. **Assessment** – This is a term for which people have different interpretations. In the Assessment Institute held in Rancho Mirage, on September 2002, it was discussed that many educators see assessment as: “Assessment is simple. You figure out what they want; find the quickest, less damaging way to respond; send off report, and then forget it” (Assessment Institute, September 2002). For the purpose of this project, the term assessment will be defined based on Lindamood-Bell Term Definitions web site (2002). “Assessment: - The act or process of gathering data in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of student learning, as by observation, testing, interviews, etc. *Note:* Some writers use the term *assessment* to refer also to the judgments or evaluations made after data are gathered.”

4. **Community College** – “the higher education institution for the average citizen. They are also recognized for their contributions to career education, and for training and re-training of workers for business and industry.” (Vineyard, 1993, p. 97).

5. **Community College Leaders** – For the purpose of this study, community college leaders will be the President/Superintendent of the college, the academic senate president, and the classified senate president.

6. **Higher Education** – post-secondary education emphasizing degrees or credentials rather than solely trade or vocational preparation.
7. **Institutional Accreditation** – status given to an institution of postsecondary education which embraces the whole institution as it defines itself, and therefore it includes all areas, activities and programs.

8. **Learning Outcomes** – There are a variety of definitions and opinions on what exactly are learning outcomes. For the purpose of this project, the researcher will take a simplified definition as it was defined by a group of faculty and staff at MiraCosta Community College. Learning outcomes are what students can do once they graduate; observable, measurable behavioral skills acquired or improved during their program of study. Outcomes derive from student abilities, and they are broad and general goals for student’s achievement that are institutional wide.

9. **Quality Assurance** – Minimum standards set by the university or college to assure quality of a program or institution.

10. **Regional Accrediting Agencies** – Voluntary, non-governmental agencies, with the responsibility to organize accrediting procedures within a specified region: New England, Middle States, North Central, Northwest, Southern, and Western Associations.

11. **Self-study Process** – The process where the institution reviews its programs, mission, and institution as a whole to prepare the self-study report.

12. **Self-Study Report** – A documented written account of self-study necessary to indicate substantial compliance with the standards.

13. **Standard** – A specified required minimum condition which may be quantitatively or qualitatively based.
14. **Team/Visiting Team** – A group of educational professionals assigned by an accrediting commission to review the institutional self-study report and conduct an on-site evaluation visit.

15. **Team Visit** – The site visit during which the accreditation team observes the entire institution to verify information gathered in the self-study report. The team makes evaluative judgments regarding the degree to which the institution complies with the standards.

16. **United States Department of Education** - the federal agency authorized by federal statute to publish a list of accrediting agencies and associations recognized by the Secretary of Education as reliable authorities concerning educational quality.

17. **WASC** - The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional associations that accredit public and private schools, colleges, and universities in the United States. Founded in 1962, WASC is comprised of three commissions: Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, and Accrediting Commission for Schools.

**Conceptual Framework**

**Accreditation**

In 1906, the National Association of State Universities met in Massachusetts “to present a plan… for establishing, preserving, and interpreting in common terms the standards of admission to college, whatever be the methods of admission, in order to accommodate migrating students and to secure just understanding and administration of standards” (Conference Minutes, 1906, as published in Young, 1983). Based on this meeting and the desire by the higher educational leaders to validate the purpose and quality of the institutions of higher education, accreditation began in 1906. Accreditation agencies were created by and for the higher education community.
and these agencies served the purpose of verifying basic institutional integrity and improving quality and effectiveness (Wolff, 1990).

Prior to the late 1980s, the accreditation standards were based on inputs to educational processes such as library holdings, facilities, faculty, and financial stability. In 1992, Congress passed legislation requiring accrediting associations to demonstrate their ability to assess institutional quality. The 1992 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, states that:

The agency maintains a systematic program of review designed to ensure that its criteria and standards are valid and reliable indicators of the quality of the education or training provided by the institutions or programs it accredits and are relevant to the education or training needs of affected students. [§ 602.23(b)(5)]

This legislation required accrediting commissions to reevaluate their standards and meet the legislative mandate. In the 1990s, accreditation commissions have shifted their focus of accreditation from inputs to outputs, based on a national emphasis on accountability and assessment of student learning. As we entered the new millennium, the accreditation commissions across the United States are focusing their standards on learning outcomes and assessments and are acting as a catalyst for changes in higher education institutions’ missions and goals. Based on this environmental push, more and more institutions are focusing on assessing student learning through institutional goals, programs, and individual courses.

**Quality Assurance and Effectiveness**

Quality assurance and effectiveness are seen as the main points for accreditation. According to William E. Troutt (1979), “Regional accrediting associations serve many purposes, but the public identifies them primarily with their quality assurance function. Various higher
education consumers rely heavily on the judgments of regional accrediting associations to satisfy concerns about institutional quality” (p.199).

Throughout history, accreditation commissions have played a major role in assuring the quality of higher education institutions. In the 1980’s, there was seen a decline of quality in higher education institutions, therefore the regional accreditation commissions felt that they needed to respond to these criticisms and they started to place a higher emphasis on institutional effectiveness and quality assurance (Moore, 1986).

In 1999, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) convened a group of higher education leaders, policy makers and accreditors to discuss changes in higher education that may have an impact on the current role of quality assurance in the United States. It was clear from this meeting that accreditation should not be replaced by a completely different quality assurance. It was also clear that changes needed to be made in the current system to better assure quality assurance in the wake of the new virtual campuses, corporate universities, and information technologies in the classrooms (CHEA, 2002).

In conclusion, ACCJC also took steps to better assure quality. With the 1996 revision of the standards, a higher importance was given to effectiveness of institutions. The standards called for higher accountability and community colleges started to respond positively to these environmental pushes. With the new standards, ACCJC is hoping to take a further step to the assurance of quality through assessment and learning outcomes.

**Significance of the Study**

This type of project is beneficial in that data collected and findings can provide a basis for future planning. The ACCJC will be able to see whether more training is necessary for community college leaders and plan their training accordingly. Until there is a full understanding
of the standards and their benefits to the institutions, there will continue to be animosity toward these standards. The appropriate training will provide the leaders with the necessary understanding and the institutions will slowly start to focus and/or grow their college mission on student learning.

The dilemmas that California community colleges face are present in other geographical areas. Information gathered from this project are useful to other colleges in the WASC region. Furthermore, the data collected and recommendations could be used to help institutions prepare for their upcoming accreditation.

**Delimitations/Limitations**

This research project required the researcher to overcome some limitations. One of the limitations that the researcher needed to consider was the bias that the leaders may have had toward the new standards, being positive or negative biases. Another limitation was the background of each leader. Some of them could have gone through an educational program where learning outcomes and assessment were the norms, to others, these terms may be fairly new, therefore they could have a different learning curve.

There were a few delimitations that the researcher decided to make through the project to limit the study. First, the researcher decided to investigate the ACCJC standards, eliminating all the other accreditation commissions in the United States. Furthermore, although ACCJC accredits schools in Hawaii and other territories, the researcher decided to concentrate only on public community colleges in California. Another delimitation was the narrow definition of the leaders at a community college. There are many leaders at educational institutions, but for the
purpose of this project, the researcher chose to concentrate on only presidents, faculty senate presidents, and classified senate presidents/CSEA president.

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter one of this project has presented background information, a problem statement, research questions, objectives/purpose of the project, a conceptual framework, significance of the study, as well as limitations and delimitations. This chapter is followed by a review of relevant literature based on higher education accreditation in the United States, and history of the WASC/ACCJC. Chapter three involves an information gathering process. The researcher collected data based on a questionnaire distributed to the California community college leaders. The findings of the data are presented in chapter four of the project. Finally, chapter five gives a summary of the project followed by conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to assess the preparedness of California community college leaders toward the new accreditation standards. Although there is none to very little research about this particular project, the review of literature concentrated on research of other topics closely related to this project. The review of related literature begins with a brief history of community college followed by a detailed history of higher education accreditation in the United States and its criticism. Furthermore, the chapter discusses, in brief, the history of WASC and its role. The next section focuses on ACCJC and the change in its standards. The final section of review includes the quality of higher education and the role of accreditation. This particular structure was selected based on the topics that were identified as being important in reviewing the literature.

Community College Development

In the late 1800s, public high schools were being urged to add two or three more years to their curriculum to better prepare students for the university career. The first community college was founded in 1901, Joliet Junior College in Illinois. The curriculum used at the first junior college was designed by high school principal J. Stanley Brown (California Community Colleges Academic Senate Report of 1998). William Raney Harper, University of Chicago, suggested that the major mission of junior colleges should be to provide freshman and sophomores with their first two years of a university education (Cohen, 1998). According to American Association of Community Colleges (AACC):

In the early years, the colleges focused on general liberal arts studies. During the Depression of the 1930s, community colleges began offering job-training programs as a
way of easing widespread unemployment. After World War II, the conversion of military industries to consumer goods created new, skilled jobs. This economic transformation along with the GI Bill created the drive for more higher education options. In 1948, the Truman Commission suggested the creation of a network of public, community-based colleges to serve local needs (2002).

Ratcliff in Baker III (1994) has described the mission of community college,

Community Colleges have stood for open admissions, geographic proximity, and relative financial affordability to the potential students of the community and region served. Within the structure of American higher education, the community college’s contribution has been increased accessibility and pragmatic curricular diversity geared to local and regional needs (p.4).

In its web site report, AACC declares that:

Community colleges became a national network in the 1960s with the opening of 457 public community colleges. Today, community colleges educate more than half the nation's undergraduates. In the 1996-97 academic year, 9.3 million people took credit courses at community colleges. Another 5 million took noncredit classes, the majority of which were workforce training courses. Since 1901, at least 100 million people have attended community colleges (2002).

Presently there are 1,166 community colleges in United States, and if the branches of community colleges within the districts are considered, there are about 1,600 community college campuses. Each community college is a distinct educational institution, loosely linked to other community colleges by the shared goals of access and service. Open admissions and the tradition of charging low tuition are among the practices they have in common. But each community college has its own mission (CCCCO, 2002).
The first public junior college in California, opened in Fresno in 1910 as part of a local K-12 system (Douglass, 2000). According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, currently there are 108 colleges statewide organized in 72 districts, and they serve more than 2.6 million students, representing the largest system of higher education in the world (2002).

In conclusion, according to AACC:

In the 20th century, community colleges have not only survived, they have thrived by demonstrating remarkable resiliency and becoming centers of educational opportunity open to all seekers. They pride themselves on providing educational marketplaces where student choices and community needs influence course offerings. Now we mark a century in which community colleges have helped millions of people learn and advance toward personal goals, while providing a forum to address challenges facing whole communities (2002).

A table of significant historical events of development of community colleges is provided in Appendix A.

**History of Higher Education Accreditation in United States**

Although there are hundreds of literature pieces on the history of higher education in the United States, there is little information in the literature on accreditation in the United States and this is noted by Selden, former Executive Secretary for the National Commission on Accrediting, (1960), who suggests that:

Of the hundreds and hundreds of volumes written about higher education in the United States it is surprising to note that no more than passing reference, if any at all, is made to accrediting, accreditation, or accreditment, as it is variously called. This lack of attention
is incongruous when one appreciates how extensively accrediting has influenced the development of higher education in this country. It is even more anomalous when one reflects on the passionate arguments and disagreements it has caused (p.1)

Selden continues to discuss the conditions that existed in the United States that created accreditation. The first organization that “employed accrediting as a means of external control of education standards” was the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York (Selden, 1960).

By legislation enacted in 1787, members of the New York State Board Regents were required “to visit every College in the State once a year” and report yearly to the Legislature. In this way the foundations for accrediting were laid a hundred years before it was developed as an answer to the burgeoning diversity of education and lack of coordination among the multiplying number of high schools and colleges (p.30).

Dickey and Miller (1972) give four phases on the history of accreditation:

1. Phase 1 – to 1914, a growing pressure for Federal accreditation;
2. Phase 2 – 1914 to 1940, the “Ph.D. Trust” and the growth of regional accreditations;
3. Phase 3 – 1940 to the early 1950’s, growing dissatisfaction with accreditation;
4. Phase 4 – 1952 to the present, the uneasy domestication of accreditation and the struggle for control of coordination, with growing Federal involvement in the accrediting arena.

A more recent summary of the history of accreditation of accreditation organizations is given by Bloland (1999):

The organization structure of accreditation in postsecondary education includes six accrediting associations covering six geographical regions in the United States. Each of the associations has one or more commissions that accredit colleges and universities. There are also a number of agencies, national in scale that accredit professional programs
that exist within postsecondary institutions. In addition, there are national agencies that accredit special purpose institutions. Beyond this, there has been a succession of national associations on accrediting that “recognized” accrediting agencies but did not do accrediting. These national associations on accrediting have included the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions on Higher Education (FRACHE), the National Commission on Accrediting (NCA), the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA), and now the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Each in turn has acted loosely as a peak association for the other accrediting organizations with varying forms of participation (pp.362-363).

Higher education accreditation has been under attack throughout its history. Koerner (1971) gave a critique about accreditation:

Regional accreditation is normally a rather quiet, clubby enterprise that seems to have a special attraction for professors of education, small college presidents, and other kinds of educational administrators. With their convoluted structure of committees and commissions and boards, the regional associations operate in a manner that suggests mutual backscratching and logrolling, or what an uncharitable observer might call “academic incest.”

The criticism became critical in the 1990s, where according to Bloland (1999):

The accrediting agencies and COPA were blamed for the high default rates on student loans and for not sufficiently cracking down on fly-by-night degree-granting institutions and non-degree trade schools. The regionals faulted for instituting new diversity standards fro accreditation that were resisted by many institutions of higher education (p. 364).

Another summary of the criticism of accreditation was given by Graham, Lyman, and Trow (1995):
The current institutional accreditation process has the potential to intrude on institutional autonomy and is unlikely to induce real improvements in academic programs. At its worst, the current accreditation of colleges and universities is an odd combination of arrogant intervention and irrelevant ritualism. Even at its best, current accreditation encourages self-justification rather than self-critical candor by the institution under review. Virtually all strong and large institutions enter the process with absolutely no expectation that their accreditation can be removed. Smaller and more unconventional institutions are more vulnerable to the threat of withdrawal and can be inappropriately pressed to alter their legitimate missions. The advice offered by knowledgeable peers after a brief and often hectic visit varies in quality. We are disturbed by reports that this “advice” is sometimes pressed upon the unwilling institution in a coercive way (p. 19).

Based on these criticisms and on the internal pressure from accrediting commissions, agencies, and presidential associations, COPA was separated in two temporary organizations, CORPA and the National Policy Board (NPB). Through time, NPB established the Presidents Work Group (PWG), which later became the current national accrediting agency, CHEA (Bloland 1999). The NPB issued a Special Report, *Independence, Accreditation and the Public Interest* (1994), that discussed the issues that accreditation agencies were facing:

In short, the challenges facing accreditation are formidable. The nations’ colleges and universities are at the point where they risk losing voluntary accreditation as a quality-assurance and self improvement tool. The implications of this state of affairs extend far beyond the concerns of accreditors to affect the independence of every college and university in the United States and public confidence in the integrity of our institutions (p.4).

With all the criticisms throughout the years, currently CHEA has the largest institutional higher education membership organization in the United States. This includes 3,000 colleges and universities, with 60 participating national, regional, and specialized accrediting organizations
and it is governed by a 17-person board of college and university presidents, institutional representatives, and public members. CHEA has the purpose of advocacy and service (2002, September 16). A table of significant historical events of development of accreditation in United States is provided in Appendix B.

**WASC and its Role**

In the 1920s, representatives from various colleges and universities in Southern California had been meeting to discuss problems that were related to athletic competition, therefore James Blaisdell, president of Pomona College, and Ernest Moore, Director of Southern Branch of the University of California, felt that the institutions should meet more regularly (Herrick, 1974). There were six institutions that were represented in the first meeting held on April 19, 1924 at Pomona College, and according to Briggs (1959), the purpose of Southern California Association of Colleges and Universities was to provide an opportunity for faculty and administrators to receive intellectual stimulus, to share ideas and ideals, and to take courses of action that were in tune with the members and affiliates. The first constitution was developed in 1931 where the Association changed its name to the Association of Colleges and Universities of the Pacific Southwest, since there was interest in joining the association by institutions outside of Southern California (Briggs, 1959). In a meeting in March 1942, it adapted a revised constitution changing its name to Western College Association, and toward the end of the 1940s, the Association began to see its role as performing institutional accreditations (Herrick, 1974). The Western College Association got its national recognition in 1949, where it was invited by the American Council on Education conference. According to Herrick (1974):
At this meeting in 1959 the foundations were laid for the National Commission on Accrediting, which included the seven leading national education organizations and was concerned with the accreditation of professional education. As a result of these deliberations, a National Committee of regional Accrediting agencies was formed, to be concerned with the institutional accreditation of colleges and universities. Some of the leaders in the American Council on Education would have preferred the expansion of the Northwest Association throughout California to the recognition of a new regional accrediting body, but their views did not prevail. The Western College Association was recognized by ACE as the sixth regional accrediting association responsible for accreditation (p.22).

Later, a reorganization of the Western College Association brought the change of name to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Three commissions were formed to meet the goal and mission of WASC:

- Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities;
- Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges;
- Accrediting Commission for Secondary Schools

According to WASC’s statement in its web site:

Currently, the purposes of WASC are: the continual improvement of education and cooperation among educational institutions and agencies, the certification of accreditation or candidacy status, and the promotion of effective working relationships with other educational organizations and accrediting agencies. WASC evaluates and accredits schools, colleges, and universities in California, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Republic of the Marshall
Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. WASC functions through a Board of Directors and three accrediting Commissions: the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Accrediting Commission for Schools. The Board of Directors consists of nine members, each accrediting Commission selecting three members (2002).

**ACCJC**

The literature of this section is mainly based on two major reports on ACCJC; *Evaluating the Evaluators Round Two* (2001), and *External Review Committee[ERC] Report* (2001). Based on lack of publications on ACCJC, the literature review gives a very brief history and purpose of ACCJC, and then it concentrates on recent changes that ACCJC has gone through. According to the ERC Report (2001):

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges was formed in 1962 as one of the three commissions that form the Western Association of Schools and Colleges…. At the turn of the millennium, 138 institutions were accredited by ACCJC including 110 public and 13 private institutions in California, seven public and two private colleges in Hawaii, and six public institutions throughout the far Pacific (p. 105).

According to ACCJC web site on the purpose and role of ACCJC:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has the responsibility for evaluating and accrediting public and private institutions of higher education that offer one or more higher educational programs of two years in length leading to the associate degree. The Commission accredits public and private institutions in California and Hawaii, as well as in Guam, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Commission provides counsel and assistance to established and developing institutions. It strives to protect against
encroachments which might jeopardize educational effectiveness or academic freedom. The Commission sets standards for accreditation. It provides guidance to institutions preparing self-study reports, appoints teams and schedules visits, considers and evaluates the reports and recommendations of visiting teams, and makes accreditation decisions. The normal interval for comprehensive visits for ACCJC's member institutions is six years.

The primary purpose of all Commission activities is to strengthen institutions through self study, peer evaluation, and appropriate follow-up. The Commission seeks to sustain the quality and integrity of institutions. In each instance, a college is judged by how effectively it meets its stated mission and the Commission Standards for Accreditation. The work of the Commission is accomplished by the Commission staff and the Commission members (2002).

In 1993, ASSJC initiated a survey to evaluate the standards and procedures that were used to accredit institutions. As a result of this survey, the standards were changed in 1996, including adding a standard on institutional effectiveness. To answer some of the same questions that were asked in 1993, another survey was developed in 2000. The *Evaluating the Evaluators Round Two* report presented the findings of this survey as it pertained to ACCJC. According to the report, the survey findings were positive and showed positive increases in comparison to the 1993 survey (2001). The areas surveyed were; process, utility, standards, larger value of accreditation, and transformation of the accreditation process. Although there were a few negative findings in the report, in general all the areas had positive remarks toward ACCJC, and the overall opinion was that the Commission is doing a good job in accrediting its institutions. Project Renewal, the 2000 comprehensive review of all ACCJC standards and processes, includes this study in its evaluation and recommendations.
Also, to accomplish the purpose of Project Renewal, a seven-member External Review Committee (ERC) was formed and in March 2001, the ERC submitted its report with findings and recommendations. According to this report, there were nine findings:

1. The Commission operates usefully and effectively;

2. The commission positively impacts and improves the quality of the accreditation process through its activities;

3. The Commission helps institutions improve quality through the Standards, Self Study, and Team reports;

4. The Commission makes decisions that are fair and meaningful;

5. The Commission sets standards that are clear, appropriate, consistent, and sufficient to measure and communicate quality and accountability;

6. The Commission responds adequately to issues and tensions surrounding accreditation;

7. The Commission uses its accumulated information/data to assist member institutions facilitate change;

8. The Commission achieves a balance between being the evaluator of institutionally determined quality vs. being the impetus for institutional change;

9. The Commission demonstrates leadership to its member institutions by providing information pertinent to changing educational conditions and future trends.

However, at the same time, ERC Report (2001) discussed three areas of particular concern for ACCJC and they were; Distance Learning, Technical Support, and Alternate Approach to Accreditation.
As mentioned above, the standards were changed in 1996 based on the 1993 report and ten standards were identified in accrediting institutions. In the ERC report, the current ten standards were reviewed as well, and the team made recommendations on the usefulness of the standards and the need to change or modify them. Prior to the ERC report there were ten standards:

- Standard one – Institutional Mission
- Standard two – Institutional Integrity
- Standard three – Institutional Effectiveness
- Standard four – Educational Programs
- Standard five – Student Support and Development
- Standard six – Information and Learning Resources
- Standard seven – Faculty and Staff
- Standard eight – Physical Resources
- Standard nine – Financial Resources
- Standard ten – Governance and Administration

In conclusion, according to Dr. Barbara Beno (June 2002), Executive Director of ACCJC, in her memorandum to the leaders of higher education institutions, the discussion for change was completed in June 2002 and the result of these discussions and report were the four new accreditation standards. Although there are six less standards than before, the new standards cover all the areas of the institution as in the old standards. The new standards are:

- Standard one - Institutional Mission and Effectiveness;
• Standard two - Student Learning Programs and Services; includes instructional programs, student services, and library services;

• Standard three - Resources; includes human resources, financial resources, technological resources, and physical resources;

• Standard four - Leadership and Governance.

The institutions will be required to comply with the new standards starting fall 2004.

**Quality of Higher Education and the Role of Accreditation**

This section of the literature review focuses briefly on quality assurance and effectiveness of higher education institutions and the effect that the accreditation commissions have on these institutions as it pertains to quality. According to an article written by Ronald L. Baker (Jan-Mar 2002):

Quality is one of higher education’s most deeply held values, yet the characteristics of quality and measures of effectiveness for higher education are neither easily identified, clearly understood, nor universally accepted. Therefore, it is difficult to delineate a common set of appropriate and universally applicable criteria that enable authentic evaluation of all institutions of higher education. As a result, a judgment of quality in higher education was traditionally determined more by implicit perceptions of institutional reputation and characteristics than by explicit evidence of outcomes and achievements. In recent years, shifts in societal attitudes and expectations are forcing higher education to move toward specific meaningful assessment and reporting of the quality of its infrastructures, processes, and outcomes (p.3).
Another summary of literature on quality in higher education is given by Peterson and Cameron (1995):

Over the years, the literature’s treatment of “quality” and “quality management” in higher education has evolved through several distinct stages. Initially – through the mid-to-late 1980’s – quality was discussed primarily within the context of assessment. Early in the 1990’s the literature began to shift in focus from assessment to improvement. During this period, institutions began to embrace the specific tenets of Total Quality Management [TQM] although this was by no means a uniform development. This stage gradually gave way to a time of consensus – between the years of 1991 and 1993 – when the literature was dominated by advocates of TQM who urged institutions to adopt TQM/CQI [Continuous Quality Improvement] principles. However, over the course of the past two years an increasingly suspicious, and often times even critical, stance has been struck by numerous authors. This latest trend within the literature reflects the challenges and failures many colleges and universities have experienced with TQM/CQI (p. ii).

William E. Troutt (1979) says that, “Regional accrediting associations serve many purposes, but the public identifies them primarily with their quality assurance function. Various higher education consumers rely heavily on the judgments of regional accrediting associations to satisfy concerns about institutional quality” (p.199). Baker (2002) continues to say that:

[Accreditation] has dual purposes of fostering quality improvement and providing quality assurance and is considered to be the cornerstone of self-regulation. Accreditation fulfills its dual purposes through a collegial process of self-assessment and critical peer evaluation based upon criteria established by voluntary non-governmental associations (p. 3).
Edgerton (1997) suggested three standards by which to judge the quality of higher education:

The first is the extent to which students who embark on a course of study actually finish their program and acquire a degree. The second is whether students learn whatever is that they are studying at a level of depth that we can call “understanding.” The third is whether students are learning the literacies required for effective work and citizenship in our changing society (p. 26).

In the 1980’s, critical reports were seen that discussed the decline in the quality of higher education as seen by lower standardized test scores, lower graduation rates, changes to the curriculum and other factors. Regional accrediting agencies felt that they needed to respond to these criticisms by gradually placing a greater emphasis on institutional effectiveness in the accreditation of institutions (Moore, 1986). According to Baker (2002):

As it continuously reviews its standards and practices for judging institutional quality and fostering quality improvement, regional accreditation is adapting its evaluation criteria to justify the confidence of the public and the educational community that self-regulation is meaningful and effective in judging quality and effectiveness. One way it encourages that confidence is by requiring member institutions to conduct continuous, effective, and relevant assessment and evaluation of its infrastructure, processes, and outcomes to document clear and compelling evidence of achievement of results that correlate closely with institutional mission and goals (p. 7).

In conclusion, in responding to the environmental changes, ACCJC also took steps in making sure that institutions are accountable and operate effectively. In the ACCJC Annual Report 2000-2001, it states that:
With the release of the ACCJC Standards of 1996, effectiveness received new attention. Our Standards joined other forces calling for accountability through the improved specification of institutional objectives and especially learning outcomes for students. Colleges have clearly made good faith efforts to respond to these pressures, though no institution can be said to have done so in a fully adequate matter. There is much yet to be done on developing the state of this art. While the locus pressure for accountability continues to emanate from sources external to the institutions (the states, the federal government, student interest groups), the institutions themselves are increasingly engaged internally in substantial responses. Colleges are now asking much more sophisticated questions pertaining to measures and assessment, and the accrediting community should be playing an active role to assist (p. 5).

**Conclusion**

The literature review showed clearly that although there is a substantial literature on higher education, there is limited information on accreditation and specifically on ACCJC. Although accreditation has been in existence for over 100 years, it is surprising to see that there are decades where accreditation is not mentioned at all or very little in the literature. When the literature was reviewed on accreditation, it was mostly based on the criticism of the process rather than on the role or influence it has had on the higher education system. However, the literature review also showed that during the last decade, accreditation commissions have gone through several changes due to environmental pushes and demands made by state and federal regulations, and that they are playing a bigger role in institution effectiveness and quality of improvement.

It is also important to mention that while reviewing the literature on quality effectiveness and institutional improvement, it is obvious that there are some unclear ideas as to what it means
for an institution to be effective and how effectiveness and improvements are measured. Although the accreditation commission has had a great impact as an external push on institutions to improve quality and effectiveness, it is important to have more literature on the understanding of quality by institutions. A better understanding of this process would bring less criticism of the accreditation process.

While reviewing the literature on ACCJC, it was evident that there was little research done in the past on the role of ACCJC and the perception of institutions toward this commission. Since ACCJC is responsible for accrediting the largest educational system in the world (California Community College), as well as other colleges in Hawaii and other territories, the researcher believes that it is necessary to have more studies on the role that ACCJC plays in these colleges.

Also, based on the two reports for the ACCJC and the 1993 surveys, it seems that ACCJC acts upon recommendations from the external review committees as well as the feedback that they get from institutions. The survey done in 2000 received feedback from institutions on standards that were changed in 1996. This four-year period gave institutions time to adjust to the new standards and respond to them based on their experience through the accreditation process. Now that the standards have been changed again, it is timely to get the feedback from the institutions through this project at the beginning of the development, so that the ACCJC can respond to the institutions and help them with training and adjustment.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter concentrates on a detailed description of the methodology used for the project. The chapter begins by discussing the research design. It continues by listing the research questions and a detailed description of the sample. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the instrumentation used for the project, the data collection, and data analysis. The chapter concludes by discussing the limitations of the research and giving a brief summary of the chapter.

Research Design

This project has been based upon a review of the literature as well as on the information that will be collected in a survey using a quantitative nonexperimental study. According to Cresswell (1994):

“…quantitative study, consistent with the quantitative paradigm, is an inquiry into social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true (p.2).

According to Ary (2002), “in a nonexperimental quantitative research, the researcher identifies variables and may look for relationships among them, but does not manipulate the variables” (p.24). A major form of nonexperimental research is a survey research and this form was used for the project. “Survey research uses instruments such as questionnaires and interviews to gather information from groups of subjects. Surveys permit the researcher to summarize the characteristics of different groups or to measure their attitudes and opinions toward some issue” (Ary, 2002).
**Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated for this project:

1. Are the new ACCJC accreditation standards clear to the California community college leaders?

2. Is ACCJC providing the necessary training for the community college leaders to prepare them for the institutional accreditation?

3. According to community college leaders, are California community colleges ready to meet the new standards?

**Sample**

The sample for the study was selected based on the California community colleges that will have a team visit for their accreditation between spring 2004 and spring 2006. The researcher chose these time periods based on the timeframe of the accreditation process. The new standards will be implemented in fall 2004, therefore institutions going through the accreditation process before this period will be using the old accreditation standards. Also, institutions that will have the team visit after spring 2006 have some time to prepare and get more training on the new standards. All colleges selected for this project were California public community colleges. First, a list of these colleges was obtained from ACCJC in October 2002. There were 42 colleges that were asked to participate in the survey. Although the accreditation process based on the new standards will begin in fall 2004, three colleges that will have the team visit in Spring 2004 were also selected due to their role as pilot schools for the new standards. The three colleges that volunteered to be pilots for their accreditation process were: College of the Siskiyous, MiraCosta College, and Santa Monica College. The remaining samples for the survey are 39 community
colleges for which the accreditation process will be completed by team visits between fall 2004 and spring 2006. The remaining 39 colleges will be visited as follows:

Fall 2004 – 13 colleges

Spring 2005 – 7 colleges

Fall 2005 – 12 colleges

Spring 2006 – 7 colleges (see Appendix E for a list of schools)

After identifying the colleges that will participate in the survey, the researcher identified the three community college leaders needed for the project. The leaders were: college president/superintendent, academic senate president (or equivalent), and classified senate president (or equivalent). The researcher selected these particular leaders based on the role that they serve in the institution. These three leaders are responsible for disseminating information to their employees and groups that they represent (faculty and classified staff).

**Instrumentation**

The survey for the project was based on the research questions. Although there was not a specific standardized survey available for the project, several questions were rewritten or taken from the survey conducted by the California Community College Research and Planning Group (RP Group) in 2000 (Evaluating the Evaluators: Round 2, 2001). In constructing the survey, the researcher designed closed-ended questions because the responses are easier to tabulate, and the respondents are more likely to complete the survey. However, several closed-ended questions were followed by “other” as the last possible response. This option allowed room for comments to receive open-ended responses and therefore get a better understanding of the responses given by the people sampled. A combination of Likert-type questions, checklist, and scaled items was
used for the survey. In determining the order of questions, the researcher took the advice of Ary (2002) and started the survey with questions that the respondents would find interesting, motivating and closed-ended. The survey started with questions that determined the familiarity of the respondents with the old and new ACCJC standards. Further, the survey included questions on ACCJC’s support to the institutions and the participation of the respondents in the workshops offered through various organizations. The survey continued with questions on determining the preparedness and readiness of the institutions to meet the new standards in their accreditation process. Questions such as current position, and school size were included at the end of the survey. In the survey, the respondents were directed to check one box, or for certain questions, all boxes that apply, as well as they were asked to add any additional comments they felt were necessary to clarify their positions.

A draft of the survey with 21 questions was shown to a Dean of Research for a community college, a Vice President for Student Affairs, as well as to a faculty member who is a visiting team member for ACCJC. The recommendations from these three professionals were as follows: add a question on the ACCJC handbook (which was further discarded because the Handbook release was delayed); re-write questions on the workshops attended by respondents, and the student learning outcomes; use Likert-type questions to get a better response on the attitude of the leaders toward the accreditation process; and eliminate the gender question since it is irrelevant to the project. As a result of these recommendations, a revised draft of the survey is available in Appendix D.

In addition, the researcher wrote an introduction letter to accompany the survey. In this letter, the researcher gave a brief purpose of the project, how the respondents were selected, and request for cooperation. The letter also included the time limit for submitting the survey,
confidentiality information, and concluded with an expression of appreciation. Please see Appendix C for the introduction letter.

The researcher felt it was necessary to include an attachment with the description of the new standards, so that the respondents would have it available, if necessary, during the survey. The attachment was taken from the ACCJC web site, giving the respondents also the opportunity to review the web site and see the resources available through ACCJC.

**Data Collection**

The researcher used the suggestions given by Ary (2002) for developing and submitting a survey. In order to achieve a good survey and a good response rate, the researcher conducted the survey on-line. According to Ary (2002), on-line surveys have the advantages of prompter returns, lower item nonresponse, and more complete answers to open-ended questions. Although one of the criticisms that Ary had on on-line surveys was that not everyone has access to the internet, the researcher was confident in determining that the population being surveyed has access and in general is more willing to submit something on-line than fill out a paper instrument.

The names of 99 community college leaders and their e-mail addresses were taken from the Community College League of California web site. Due to the academic schedule of the responders, it was determined that the best time to submit the survey would be in February. At this time, the responder would have gone through the beginning of the semester and would be more willing to complete a survey that is outside of their regular duties.

With the help of a computer educational trainer, the researcher developed a web site for the survey. The web site had a log-in name and password that was provided to the leaders who
participated in the survey. The password was used as a form of controlling who fills out the survey, eliminating people who are interested in the survey but who are not part of the institutions selected for the project. Initially, on February 10, 2003 an e-mail was sent to the participants with the introduction letter and the request to fill out the survey. The e-mail also included the log-in name and password. Once the responders logged in the survey and completed the survey, a thank you message was displayed and they were unable to log-in again to view the survey. A deadline of February 28 was determined for the surveys to be completed. An e-mail reminder was sent on February 25, 2003 to the participants that had not yet completed the survey. This method urged some participants to visit the web site and complete the survey.

**Data Analysis**

Once the participants responded to the survey, the data went to a database in form of graphs and tables. The data did not require a complex statistical analysis, therefore Excel was used to arrange the data. Excel has the capability of calculating means, frequencies, and percentages. Also graphs were created to give a better visual of the responses. The responses for each question, in particular the questions based on Likert-type, were converted to percentages in order to discuss the results in proportions.

For questions that included “other” and open-ended comments, the results were grouped based on themes. This grouping was easier to interpret and was useful while making recommendations as part of this project.

**Limitations**

There were a few limitations that the researcher decided to make through the project. First, the researcher decided to investigate the ACCJC standards, eliminating all the other
accreditation commissions in the United States. Furthermore, the researcher decided to evaluate only California community colleges, therefore eliminating all the other community colleges covered by ACCJC or other accreditation commissions in United States. This limitation was narrowed further through selecting only community colleges that will have the team visit between spring 2004-spring 2006. Another limitation was the narrow definition of the leaders at a community college. There are many leaders at educational institutions, but for the purpose of this project, the researcher chose to include only college presidents/superintendent, academic senate president, and classified senate president. Finally, through the closed-ended questions chosen for the survey and through the Likert-type, the researcher was limiting the participants to make choices that may not completely be the right choice, however, through the comments, the researcher took in consideration this limitation.

Summary

This chapter gave a detailed description of the methodology used for the project. The chapter began by discussing the research design and continued by listing the research questions and a detailed description of the sample. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the instrumentation used for the project, the data collection, and data analysis. The chapter was concluded by discussing the limitations of the research.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF PROJECT

Introduction/Overview

This chapter provides a description of the sample surveyed for this project. The chapter then discusses the results of the survey in respect to the research questions. In conclusion, the chapter will be summarized based on the important findings and themes of the survey.

Results

Demographics of the Sample

There were 37 participants (99 received the survey) who responded to the survey within the deadline. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the role of the participants at the community colleges, where out of 37 total respondents, 35.1% were community college presidents, 35.1% were academic senate presidents, 13.5% were classified senate presidents or CSEA presidents, and 16.2% participants identified themselves as other (see table 1 for a breakdown of others).

Figure 1

My current position is best described by one of the following:
Table 1

Breakdown by Title of Participants identified as “Other”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Research</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim Chancellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responders represented a variety of school sizes with the largest group of them (32.4%) representing colleges with the total headcount student population between 10,001-15,000, with the second highest of 19% representing colleges with a student population of over 25,000. Please see figure 2 for a complete breakdown of representation based on the headcount student population.

Figure 2

My institution’s student population (headcount) is:

![Bar chart showing student population by size category](chart.png)
Of the 37 participants, only 33 of them answered the second question on when the institution will be visited by the accrediting team. The important factor on this response was that 24% of the responders were from the schools that will be piloting the new standards in spring 2004 (total of three schools). Most of the participants (33.3%) will be visited in fall 2004, the first semester that the new standards will be implemented from ACCJC. For a complete breakdown of the participants, please see below Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*My institution will be visited by the accrediting team in:*

Research Question 1 – *Are the new ACCJC accreditation standards clear to the California community college leaders?*

One of the purposes of this project was to see how clear are the new ACCJC standards to the California community college leaders. There were a few questions in the survey used to answer this question. The first one was to determine how many of the participants had read the
new standards. Of the 37 participants, 34 had read the new standards and 3 participants had not read the standards (Figure 4).

![Figure 4](image)

**I have read the new ACCJC accreditation standards:**

- 92% yes
- 8% no

Question 6 of the survey asked perception of the participants on the clarity of the new ACCJC standards. The question was separated in four sub-questions to separate the four new standards. According to the survey results, 89.1% participants felt that the new accreditation standard *I. Institutional Mission and Effectiveness* was either very clear or moderately clear, 8.1% felt that the standard was not clear, and 2.7% did not know. On standard *II. Student Learning Programs and Services*, 75.6% of the respondents felt that the standard was either very clear or moderately clear, 13.5% felt that the standard was not clear, and 2.7% did not know. On standard *III. Resources*, 83.7% of the respondents felt that the standard was either very clear or moderately clear, 13.5% felt that the standard was not clear, and 2.7% did not know. Lastly, on standard *IV. Leadership and Governance*, 73% of the respondents felt that the standard was either very clear or moderately clear, 21.6% felt that the standard was not clear, and 5.4% did not know. For a complete breakdown of these responses, please see figures 5, 6, 7 and 8.
The new accreditation standard for Institutional Mission and Effectiveness is stated:

Figure 5

The new accreditation standard for Student Learning Programs and Services is stated:

Figure 6
Figure 7

The new accreditation standard for Resources is stated:

Figure 8

The new accreditation standard for Leadership and Governance is stated:
It is important to mention that in a breakdown of participants in regard to these four sub-questions, out of 13 community college presidents that responded, 100% felt that the standards were either very clear or moderately clear. However, this percentage was different when looking at the 13 academic senate presidents where an average of 51.7% felt that the standards were either very clear or moderately clear, an average of 40.3% felt that the standards were not clear, and the remainder did not know. Please see Table 2 below for a breakdown in percentages on the clarity of the four standards according to the 13 academic senate presidents.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard I</th>
<th>Standard II</th>
<th>Standard III</th>
<th>Standard IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very clearly</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately clearly</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very clearly</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A Do not know</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 2 – Is ACCJC providing the necessary training for the community college leaders to prepare them for the institutional accreditation?

The second research question on whether the community college leaders are receiving the necessary training from ACCJC was answered as well through a few questions asked in the survey. The first question in these series asked whether ACCJC has clearly communicated the necessity to change the standards. Of the 37 responses, 73% either strongly agreed or agreed on the role of ACCJC to clearly communicate the necessity of changing the standards, and 27% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Please see Figure 9 for a breakdown.
When the researcher broke down the respondents and looked at the presidents and academic senate presidents in regard to this question, it was clear that there was a difference in opinion between these two groups. 85% of the community college presidents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, and only 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. While 54% of the academic senate presidents strongly agreed or agreed, and 46% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The participants also responded on the workshops or sessions that they had attended where the new standards had been discussed. According to these responses, 24% of the participants had not attended any workshops or sessions where the new standards were discussed, however the remainder of the respondents had attended at least one of the workshops, such as Assessment Institute, ACCJC presentations, RP group presentations on learning outcomes, and other. In a follow up question to those who responded, 84% of the participants
either strongly agreed or agreed that workshop(s) have given them a better understanding of the new standards, and 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Also, in another follow up question, 62.5% of these participants strongly agreed or agreed that these workshops have helped their institution in preparing for the self-study report, while 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, and the remainder did not know. For graphs on these responses, please see appendix F.

Question 10 of the survey asked the respondents on whether the new ACCJC handbook is helpful in preparing them for the self-study report. The results of this question had to be discarded because the handbook has been delayed and has not yet been distributed to the colleges.

The participants were further asked a series of three questions on whether ACCJC has provided the necessary training, information, and assistance to prepare for the self-study report. Only 36 participants responded to these three questions, and 36% strongly agreed or agreed on the statement that ACCJC has provided the necessary training (question 11), where 38.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements, and 25% did not know. Also, 44.4% of the participants strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that ACCJC web site has provided adequate information on the accreditation process (question 12), where 16.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 38.9% did not know. Lastly, 55.6% either strongly agreed or agreed that ACCJC staff support is helpful (question 13), while 11.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 33.3% did not know. Please see appendix F for a breakdown of these three responses.

The researcher also broke down the responses of these three questions based on the two largest groups that responded and looked at the community college presidents and academic senate presidents. There was a clear disparity in satisfaction between these two groups. On an
average of the responses for the 3 questions, 64% of the community college presidents strongly agreed or agreed with the statements that ACCJC has provided the necessary support, information and assistance, an average of 12.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and an average of 23.1% did not know. Please see Table 3 for a breakdown of the responses.

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCJC has provided my institution with the necessary training to prepare for the self-study report</th>
<th>ACCJC web site provides adequate information on the accreditation process</th>
<th>ACCJC staff support, including on-site assistance, phone consultation, and e-mail communication, is helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree/Agree</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree/Strongly disagree</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In looking at the academic senate presidents, only an average of 7.7% strongly agreed or agreed with the above statement, while an average of 43.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and an average of 48.7% did not know. Please see Table 4 for a breakdown of the responses.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCJC has provided my institution with the necessary training to prepare for the self-study report</th>
<th>ACCJC web site provides adequate information on the accreditation process</th>
<th>ACCJC staff support, including on-site assistance, phone consultation, and e-mail communication, is helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree/Agree</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree/Strongly disagree</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research question 3 – According to the community college leaders, are California community colleges ready to meet the new standards?

The researcher asked three particular questions to get a response to this research question. The first question (question 14) was asked to see if the institution of the participant was ready to start/continue the process of the self-study report based on the new standards. Of the 36 responders, 66.7% strongly agreed or agreed that they are ready to start/continue the process, while 33.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed (see Figure 10 for a complete breakdown). However when the responses were broken down based on the community college presidents and academic senate presidents, 77% of the presidents strongly agreed or agreed, and 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed. While 46.2% of the academic senate presidents strongly agreed or agreed, and 53.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 10

I believe that my institution is prepared to start/continue the process of the self-study report based on the new standards:

Question 15 asked participants on whether their institution has started the process of identifying student learning outcomes. Since the new standards are mainly based on student
learning outcomes and assessment of these outcomes, it was important to measure the preparedness of the institutions on these two measures. According to the survey, 86% of the responders feel that their institution has started the process and 14% do not believe that they have started this process (see Figure 11).

![Figure 11](image)

**My institution has started the process of identifying student learning outcomes:**

- Yes: 86%
- No: 14%

The differences of the responses in the breakdown of this question between the community college presidents and academic senate president is not great, 77% of the presidents agree versus 85% of the academic senate presidents.

Lastly, the participants were asked if they have started the process of planning to assess student learning outcomes, and 80% agreed, 17% had a negative response, and 3% did not know (see chart 3). Of the college presidents, 85% agreed and 15% disagreed, while 69% of academic senate presidents agreed, 23% disagreed, and 8% did not know.

The complete survey with the responses can be viewed on appendix F.
Open Comments

In the survey, the participants were also asked to give comments on the new standards and on the ACCJC accrediting process. The responses varied and in response to comment on the new standards, three different themes emerged: 1. New standards were necessary; 2. A change was needed but there is skepticism on student learning outcomes and their assessment; 3. Dissatisfaction with the new standards.

1. New standards were necessary – 15 participants commented on the new standards and there were a few comments that showed agreement and support that it was necessary to have new standards that measure learning outcomes. Comments from, “Excellent and long overdue”, to “They needed to be updated to improve student learning outcomes” show the support of some community college leaders toward the new standards.

2. A change was needed but there is skepticism on student learning outcomes and their assessment – The majority of the comments fit in this theme where community college leaders agree to some degree with the new standards and their emphasis on student learning outcome and assessment, but they are skeptical about the institutions’ abilities to meet the standards due to lack of training or lack of understanding the standards. Comments such as, “I am in support of the new standards but I feel that ACCJC has much work to do to adequately educate the field” show the necessity for more training that the institutions need to better understand the standards.

3. Dissatisfaction with the new standards – A few participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the new standards based on the student learning outcomes and their assessment. They felt that the new standards were ignoring subject matters and traditional classroom grading and the standards are trying to measure things that can not be measured.
The participants also had a chance to comment on the ACCJC accrediting process. More comments were received in this area than in the previous comment section. The majority of the comments were positive toward the accrediting process. Through the comments, many felt that the accreditation process was necessary for the institution. One participant felt that, “… the accreditation process is an effective means for institutional self-improvement.” and another expressed that, “[accreditation process is] fair and much needed for colleges.” This was also seen through another question in the survey were the participants were asked to reflect on the value of the accreditation process for their institution (question 1). Of the 37 participants, 81.1% felt that the accreditation process was highly valuable or valuable for their institution, 16.2% felt that it had limited value, and only 2.7% felt that it was not valuable (see Appendix F for a complete data). Please see Appendix G for a list of all comments.

Other Interesting Findings

The participants were asked to evaluate how effectively the new standards assess the quality of their institution. In focusing once again in the two major groups of participants, community college presidents and academic senate presidents, the satisfaction rate varied greatly between the two groups. In looking at the community college presidents, an average of 79% felt that the new standards assess the quality of the institution very effectively or effectively, and only 1.9% felt that the standards did not effectively assess the quality of the institution, the remainder of the participants did not know. Only an average of 31% of the academic senate presidents felt that the new standards effectively assess the quality of the institutions (no one from this group checked very effectively), an average of 46.7% felt that the standards did not assess the quality of the institution, and the remainder did not know.
Lastly, to compare the new standards with the old standards, the participants were also asked to measure the quality of how the old standards assessed the quality of the institution. In looking once again at the community college presidents and the academic senate presidents, there was not a difference in satisfaction between the two groups. An average of 77% of community college presidents felt that the old standards very effectively or effectively assessed the quality of the institution, 15.3% felt that they did not effectively assess the quality, and the remainder did not know. An average of 70% of academic senate presidents felt that the old standards very effectively or effectively assesses the quality of the institution, 20.6% felt that they did not assess the quality, and the remainder did not know. There are two observations that the researcher made based on the questions above. Community college presidents (although not by a large margin) feel that the new standards assess the quality of the institution better than the old standards. Academic senate presidents, by a large margin, feel the opposite, that the old standards better assess the quality of the institution.

Summary

The purpose of this survey was to be able to answer three research questions of the project. Although the data were based on 37 participants, the main two groups who responded to the survey were community college presidents and academic senate presidents. The researcher received a few comments from classified senate presidents saying that they did not feel they had enough knowledge about accreditation to respond to the survey, therefore the low number of participants in this group can be attributed to the low involvement of classified employees in the accreditation process.

The first research question evaluated how clear the new ACCJC standards were to the California community college leaders. Based on the survey results, the majority of the
participants felt that the new standards were clear, however there was a discrepancy of satisfaction between the presidents of the colleges and academic senate presidents. This discrepancy was not only seen in evaluation of the first research question, but it was clear throughout the survey.

The second research question asked to see if ACCJC is providing the necessary training for the community college leaders to prepare them for institutional accreditation. Several participants, mainly community college presidents, have attended workshops or sessions provided by ACCJC or another organization where the new standards have been discussed. However through the surveys, many participants (in particular, academic senate presidents and classified senate presidents) did not know about the training, information, and assistance that ACCJC has provided in understanding the new standards.

Lastly, the survey data assessed the third research question on whether California community college leaders felt that their institutions are ready to meet the standards. The majority of the participants felt that they had started the process of identifying student learning outcomes and assessment of these outcomes. Since the new standards are mainly based on these two factors, it seems that the institutions will be ready to meet the new standards, although more training and education is necessary for these leaders in understanding the new standards and the process of accreditation based on the standards.

In conclusion, this chapter provided a description of the sample surveyed for this project. The chapter then discussed the results of the survey in respect to the research questions. The following chapter gives a summary of the project, reports conclusions of the survey and research project, and gives recommendations for practice and further studies based on this topic.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Assessment and learning outcomes are two major movements that American higher education institutions and regional accreditation commissions have been focusing their efforts in the past several years. Looking through the standards of all regional accreditation commissions in the United States, it is easy to identify the importance that it is given to the improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness as a primary reason for assessment. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), a branch of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), adopted in June 2002 the new standards for the fall 2004 and the two key themes of the new standards are student learning outcomes and assessment.

Although leaders of higher education institutions have had some time to adjust to the new standards, the new standards have not yet received widespread acceptance by faculty, staff and administrators in community college institutions. The institutions will be required to comply with the new standards starting in fall 2004. According to the ACCJC, during the accreditation team visit, the institutions will not be required to have implemented and assessed student learning outcomes for each program, however, they will be expected to show that planning has been made to start implementing student learning outcomes and assessment of these outcomes (“have a plan to plan and a plan to continue”).

The purpose of this project was to assess the preparedness of California community college leaders toward the new accreditation standards. Based on this purpose, the researcher formulated three research questions:
1. Are the new ACCJC accreditation standards clear to the California community college leaders?

4. Is ACCJC providing the necessary training for the community college leaders to prepare them for institutional accreditation?

5. According to community college leaders, are California community colleges ready to meet the new standards?

For the purpose of this study, community college leaders were identified as people who were in the following positions in California community colleges: president/superintendent; president of the faculty senate (or equivalent position); and president of the classified senate (or equivalent position).

Although there is none to very little research about this particular project, the review of literature concentrated on research of other topics closely related to this project. The review of related literature began with a brief history of community colleges followed by a detailed history of higher education accreditation in the United States and its criticism. Furthermore, the chapter discussed, in brief, the history of WASC and its role. The next section focused on ACCJC and the change in its standards. The final section included the quality of higher education and the role of accreditation.

In reviewing the literature on the history of higher education accreditation in the United States, it was clear that accreditation has a long history in the United States. The first organization that “employed accrediting as a means of external control of education standards” was the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York (Selden, 1960).

By legislation enacted in 1787, members of the New York State Board Regents were required “to visit every College in the State once a year” and report yearly to the
Legislature. In this way the foundations for accrediting were laid a hundred years before it was developed as an answer to the burgeoning diversity of education and lack of coordination among the multiplying number of high schools and colleges (p.30).

A more recent summary of the history of accreditation of accreditation organizations is given by Bloland (1999) who indicates that:

The organization structure of accreditation in postsecondary education includes six accrediting associations covering six geographical regions in the United States. Each of the associations has one or more commissions that accredit colleges and universities. There are also a number of agencies, national in scale that accredit professional programs that exist within postsecondary institutions. In addition, there are national agencies that accredit special purpose institutions. Beyond this, there has been a succession of national associations on accrediting that “recognized” accrediting agencies but did not do accrediting. These national associations on accrediting have included the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions on Higher Education (FRACHE), the National Commission on Accrediting (NCA), the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA), and now the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Each in turn has acted loosely as a peak association for the other accrediting organizations with varying forms of participation (pp.362-363).

The history of accreditation has been long, but just as long have been the criticisms toward accreditation. A summary of the criticism of accreditation was given by Graham, Lyman, and Trow (1995):

The current institutional accreditation process has the potential to intrude on institutional autonomy and is unlikely to induce real improvements in academic programs. At its worst, the current accreditation of colleges and universities is an odd combination of arrogant intervention and irrelevant ritualism. Even at its best, current accreditation encourages self-justification rather than self-critical candor by the institution under
review. Virtually all strong and large institutions enter the process with absolutely no expectation that their accreditation can be removed. Smaller and more unconventional institutions are more vulnerable to the threat of withdrawal and can be inappropriately pressed to alter their legitimate missions. The advice offered by knowledgeable peers after a brief and often hectic visit varies in quality. We are disturbed by reports that this “advise” is sometimes pressed upon the unwilling institution in a coercive way (p. 19).

Faced with all the criticisms throughout the years, accreditation associations has gone through several reorganizations with the current national accrediting agency being CHEA, which currently has the largest institutional higher education membership organization in the United States.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), is part of CHEA. According to WASC’s statement in its web site:

Currently, the purposes of WASC are: the continual improvement of education and cooperation among educational institutions and agencies, the certification of accreditation or candidacy status, and the promotion of effective working relationships with other educational organizations and accrediting agencies. WASC evaluates and accredits schools, colleges, and universities in California, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. WASC functions through a Board of Directors and three accrediting Commissions: the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Accrediting Commission for Schools. The Board of Directors consists of nine members, each accrediting Commission selecting three members (2002).

Three commissions were formed to meet the goal and mission of WASC: Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities; Accrediting Commission for Community and
Junior Colleges (ACCJC); Accrediting Commission for Secondary Schools. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has the responsibility for evaluating and accrediting public and private institutions of higher education that offer one or more higher educational programs of two years in length leading to the associate degree. The Commission accredits public and private institutions in California and Hawaii, as well as in Guam, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

ACCJC is quick to acts upon recommendations from the external review committees as well as the feedback that they get from institutions. The survey done in 2000 received feedback from institutions on standards that were changed in 1996. This four-year period gave institutions time to adjust to the new standards and respond to them based on their experience through the accreditation process. According to Dr. Barbara Beno (June 2002), Executive Director of ACCJC, in her memorandum to the leaders of higher education institutions, the discussion for change was completed in June 2002 and the result of these discussions and report were the four new accreditation standards. Although there are six less standards than before, the new standards cover all the areas of the institution as in the old standards. Now that the standards have been changed again, it is timely to get the feedback from the institutions through this project, so that the ACCJC can respond to the institutions and help them with training and adjustment.

The sample for the study was selected based on the California community colleges that will have a team visit for their accreditation between spring 2004 and spring 2006. All colleges selected for this project were California public community colleges. After identifying the colleges that would participate in the survey, the researcher identified the three community college leaders needed for the project. The leaders were: college president/superintendent,
academic senate president (or equivalent), and classified senate president (or equivalent). The survey for the project was based on the three research questions. Although there was not a specific standardized survey available for the project, several questions were rewritten or taken from the survey conducted by the California Community College Research and Planning Group (RP Group) in 2000 (Evaluating the Evaluators: Round 2, 2001). In order to get good responses, the researcher created a web site and conducted the survey on-line. The survey included an introduction letter along with 21 questions (see Appendix C and D).

Although the researcher was expecting a higher return of responses due to the web survey, there were 37 out of 99 participants who responded to the survey within the deadline. Out of 37 total respondents, 35.1% were community college presidents, 35.1% were academic senate presidents, 13.5% were classified senate presidents or CSEA presidents, and 16.2% participants identified themselves as other. The responders represented a variety of school sizes with the largest group of them (32.4%) representing colleges with the total headcount student population between 10,001-15,000. Most of the participants (33.3%) will be visited in fall 2004, the first semester that the new standards will be implemented.

The results of the project were organized based on the three research questions. One of the research questions was to see how clear are the new ACCJC standards to the California community college leaders. Based on the survey results, the majority of the respondents felt that the new standards were very clear or moderately clear. However, it is important to mention that in a breakdown of participants in regard to this research question, out of 13 community college presidents that responded, 100% felt that the standards were either very clear or moderately clear. This percentage was different when looking at the 13 academic senate presidents where an average of 51.7% felt that the standards were either very clear or moderately clear.
The second research question on whether the community college leaders are receiving the necessary training from ACCJC was answered through three questions asked in the survey. In looking at the responses from the community college presidents and academic senate presidents, there was a clear disparity in satisfaction between these two groups. On an average of the responses for the 3 questions, 64% of the community college presidents strongly agreed or agreed with the statements that ACCJC has provided the necessary support, information and assistance, an average of 12.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and an average of 23.1% did not know. In looking at the academic senate presidents, only an average of 7.7% strongly agreed or agreed with the above statement, while an average of 43.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and an average of 48.7% did not know.

Lastly, the researcher also asked three questions to get a response to the last research question on whether California community colleges are ready to meet the new standards. In one question, the participants were asked if the participants’ institutions were ready to start/continue the process of the self-study report based on the new standards. Of the 36 responders, 66.7% strongly agreed or agreed that they are ready to start/continue the process, while 33.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. However when the responses were broken down based on the community college presidents and academic senate presidents, 77% of the presidents strongly agreed or agreed, and 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed. While 46.2% of the academic senate presidents strongly agreed or agreed, and 53.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**Conclusions**

The conclusions of this project are based on the survey responses from a small sample of 37 participants. Of these participants, 13 were community college presidents, 13 were academic senate presidents, 5 were classified senate presidents, and 6 declared themselves as other. The
researcher analyzed the data based on the total population, and also examined separately the data for the two largest groups of participants, community college presidents and academic senate presidents. The conclusions below are discussed based on the three research questions.

*Are the new ACCJC accreditation standards clear to the California community college leaders?*

Based on the responses, most of the participants felt that the new accreditation standards were very clear or moderately clear. This means that ACCJC did a fairly good job on writing the standards clearly for the educators to read and understand them. In analyzing separately the community college presidents and the academic senate presidents, there is a disparity in the level of satisfaction for these two groups. All community college presidents (100%) felt that the four standards were very clear or moderately clear, but only an average of 51.7% of the academic senate presidents felt that the standards were very clear or moderately clear. This group was particularly not satisfied with the clarity of the Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services (only 37.7% of this group believed that the standards were very clear or moderately clear, while 53.8% disagreed), as well as the clarity of Standard IV: Leadership and Governance (38.4% agreed and 53.8% disagreed). Because Standard II deals primarily with student learning outcomes and assessment in instruction, the researcher believes that a factor for the lack of clarity of this standard, as reported by academic senate presidents, may be the negative opinions toward the student learning outcomes and their assessment rather than with the clarity of the standard. At the beginning of the process of changing the standards, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in *Fall 2001 Adopted Resolutions on Accreditation* made it clear that they were against standards that are based on assessing student learning outcomes (Adopted Resolutions on Accreditation). Through the past two years the Academic Senate has had many discussions on how to respond to the new accreditation standards. Through resolutions,
meetings, and other documents, there has been a clear opposition toward assessment of student learning outcomes. According to Hoke Simpson, in *The New Accreditation Standards: Guidelines for the Field*, certain resolutions that have been raised but not adopted by the Academic Senate have gone so far as to ask faculty not to participate in the accreditation process based on the new standards. However, currently the Academic Senate has been working on a multi-dimensional strategy where the faculty take ownership of the new standards and of the techniques for responding to them (Simpson, 3). It seems to be that the main opposition of the Academic Senate toward the standards are based on a central question regarding the assessment of the student learning outcomes: where is the research that shows that focusing the standards on student learning outcomes and assessment of these outcomes will improve educational quality? Also, there is opposition toward the methods to be used to show appropriate measures of student learning outcomes. The Academic Senate feels that faculty in their institutions, and not ACCJC, need to determine what the measures are that they will use to meet the standards, therefore faculty will need to determine what constitutes meaningful outcomes and measurements for their students’ learning (Simpson, 6). Based on these negative positions taken by the Statewide Academic Senate, it is the opinion of the researcher that certain negative feelings toward the standards may reflect the less positive responses provided by the presidents of the academic senates.

The researcher is unsure why most of the academic senate presidents that participated in the survey felt that Standard IV: Leadership and Governance was not clear to them. This standard has not had major changes from the current ACCJC standard on leadership and governance. The changes made to this standard affect more the president of the college rather than the academic senate presidents.
Is ACCJC providing the necessary training for the community college leaders to prepare them for institutional accreditation?

ACCJC have participated in many workshops and have given presentations to many groups throughout California on the new accreditation standards. Through the survey, 76% of the participants had attended at least one workshop where the new standards had been discussed, and of these participants 84% strongly agreed or agreed that these workshops had given them a better understanding of the standards. These statistics show that workshops have played a positive role in communicating information about the standards, therefore it is important for ACCJC to continue to offer workshops about the new standards.

The satisfaction was lower when the participants were asked if the ACCJC is offering the necessary training, information and assistance to prepare for the self-study report. Only 36% strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, while 38.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Also, 44.4% of the participants strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that ACCJC web site has provided adequate information on the accreditation process, where 16.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 38.9% did not know. Lastly, 55.6% either strongly agreed or agreed that ACCJC staff support is helpful, while 11.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 33.3% did not know. Although the statistics show dissatisfaction with the training from ACCJC, this may partly be due to the fact that not all participants have attended a workshop where ACCJC staff have been available, therefore they might not have direct experience in working with the staff. The ACCJC has currently (April 2003) provided schools with a draft guide in preparing the self-study report. The handbook guide with the new standards was scheduled to be available to the schools in November 2002. However the final handbook is not yet available. This late release of the draft
may be one of the main factors why the participants feel they have not received the necessary training to prepare for the self-study.

\textit{According to community college leaders, are California community colleges ready to meet the new standards?}

Since the new standards have as main themes student learning outcomes and assessment of these outcomes, it was important to measure the preparedness of the institutions on these two measures. The ACCJC has made it very clear to the institutions that through the first visit based on the new standards, the visiting team will look only for planning in implementing student outcomes and planning in assessing these outcomes and not full implementation of the student learning outcomes and assessments. According to the survey, 86\% of the responders felt that their institution had started the process of identifying student learning outcomes and 14\% did not believe that they had started this process. The differences of the responses in the breakdown of this question between the community college presidents and academic senate president was not large, 77\% of the presidents agreed versus 85\% of the academic senate presidents. The participants were also asked whether they had started the process of planning to assess student learning outcomes, and 80\% agreed, 17\% had a negative response, and 3\% did not know. Of the college presidents, 85\% agreed and 15\% disagreed, while 69\% of academic senate presidents agreed, 23\% disagreed, and 8\% did not know.

The researcher found these statistics interesting, because if the large majority of the participants feel that they have started the process of identifying student learning outcomes and assessing them, then these institutions are ready to meet the new standards and they are ready to start their self-study report. If they are ready, then why has there been a resistance to accept the new standards? One idea would be that maybe the planning for identifying student learning
outcomes has started, however there may be resistance within the institution to actually adopt these outcomes. Another idea would be that maybe some participants have adopted the definition of student learning outcomes to mean learning objectives, therefore they already do have learning objectives identified for the courses or programs. Also, if the definition is learning objectives, then they feel that they already assess these objectives through tests.

A major finding of this study was that classified senate presidents (or equivalent positions) felt that they did not have enough knowledge about the accreditation process and about the new standards. The researcher was contacted by several members of this group to apologize for not participating in the survey because they were not aware of the changes that were taking place in the accreditation standards and they felt that they did not have the knowledge on the accreditation process to participate in this survey.

In conclusion, when the new standards were introduced, they received many criticisms by some faculty groups, especially by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges representing faculty in California. However, based on this research, most of the community college leaders who participated in the survey feel that the new standards were necessary and that colleges have started planning student learning outcomes. Many have realized that this is not "flavor of the month" where if we ignore it, it will go away. California is not the first state where accreditation is based on student learning outcomes and assessments. Many regions have adopted this process for many years. Through more communication and training, community college leaders will realize that focusing on student learning outcomes is beneficial for the students and community at large. As always, people and organizations resist change, but working closely and having an open dialogue would bring an understanding about the necessity of the new standards. This study is beneficial because it shows a better understanding on the part of the California
community college leaders toward the new standards. Based on this study, it is clear that more training and communication is necessary between ACCJC and the community colleges.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Based on the study there are a few recommendations that the researcher is proposing to ACCJC and California community college leaders.

1. ACCJC should give an outline of the long-term vision of student learning outcomes so that community colleges can get a better idea of the role of these outcomes in the standards. This will eliminate the fear of certain groups that have the worry that the standards are imposing on the academic freedom of the faculty. It is not recommended to give specific details of this vision because certain colleges might follow it to the point where it would not allow for flexibility, but some communication about the vision is necessary for the skeptics.

2. Communication and dialogue is extremely important in successfully implementing the new standards. ACCJC, along with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, and other educational groups need to continue the open dialogue to discuss the importance of the standards and the positive effect the standards would have on the community at large. ACCJC needs to present research finding showing that the new standards do support educational quality.

3. Because the handbook has been delayed in its release, it is important that ACCJC provides links with other regions that have stellar self-study reports based on the student learning outcomes and assessment. Although other regions have different requirements for accreditations and certain things would not be relevant, there can be components
extracted that will help California community colleges prepare for the self-study report based on the new standards.

4. ACCJC, in conjunction with other education groups, should provide a larger scale of professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators on assessment and student learning outcomes. Due to the budget crises, it is becoming more difficult for these groups to participate in professional development opportunities, but if the workshops are offered often and in different locations, the traveling costs will be lower and more participants would be able to attend.

5. It is extremely important for the faculty to be involved more in a proactive way regarding implementation of student learning outcomes and assessment because then the process will be driven from within the organization. The resistance to the standards is somewhat based on the fact that faculty feel that the process is coming from outside forces. However, if the Statewide Academic Senate gets involved more in a positive dialogue, the resistance may be eliminated.

6. ACCJC needs to train the visiting team members on how to evaluate the self-study report based on planning student learning outcomes and assessment and not implementing them. If the colleges feel that the visiting team is prepared and properly trained, they will be more at ease in going through the accreditation process.

7. Community college presidents need to involve the classified staff more in the accreditation process so that they are more knowledgeable about the changes in accreditation and they can look in their departments to see how student learning outcomes can be implemented within their programs.
Recommendations for further study

Recommendations for further studies are based on the conclusions of this research.

1. The researcher recommends a further study of this topic once the colleges have gone through one accreditation visit based on the new standards. At that time, the community college leaders would have a better understanding of the standards and would have first-hand experience in commenting on the standards.

2. Conduct the same research with accreditation officers at each of the California community colleges. This group may have a better understanding of the new standards and may have attended more workshops and sessions on preparing their institution for the new standards.

3. A qualitative study with the academic senate presidents of the California community colleges would also be beneficial to get a better understanding of their specific feelings toward the standards and their concern on students learning outcomes and assessment.

4. Conduct a qualitative study with ACCJC and Academic Senate for California Community Colleges to assess the necessary training and dialogue needed for both groups to successfully implement the new standards.

5. Lastly, the researcher recommends a study in comparing the new ACCJC standards to other commissions’ standards in United States that have gone through the same changes.
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Appendix

Appendix A .......... History of Community Colleges in United States
Appendix B ................. History of Accreditation in United States
Appendix C .......................................................... Letter to Participants
Appendix D .......................................................... Survey
Appendix E ................. List of Colleges Selected for the Survey
Appendix F .......................................................... Survey Results
Appendix G .................................................. Survey Results - Comments
APPENDIX A

Significant Historical Events in the Development of the Public Community College


1862  Passage of the Morrill Act. With its emphasis on agriculture and the mechanical arts, the Morrill Act of 1862, often referred to as the Land Grant Act, expanded access to public higher education, teaching both courses and students previously excluded from higher education.

1890  Passage of the second Morrill Act. This act withheld funds from any state that refused admission to the land grant colleges based on race unless the states provided separate institutions for minorities. Expanded public higher education to include many blacks who previously were unable to attend college.

1901  The founding of Joliet Junior College in Illinois. Founded under the influence of William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, Joliet Junior College is the oldest public junior college in the nation.

1904  The "Wisconsin Idea." The University of Wisconsin emphasized that the university was to assist the general public through extension services and assistance to the state government. The university declared the boundaries of the state to be its campus. Today, most community college leaders view the college's service region as its campus.

1907-1917  California legislation. California passed legislation that authorized high schools to offer postgraduate courses, provided state and county support for junior college students, and provided for independent junior college districts that had their own boards, budgets and procedures.

1920-  Founding of the American Association of Junior Colleges. Meetings held in St. Louis (June 30-July 1, 1920) and Chicago (February 1921) resulted in the founding of the American Association of Junior Colleges. The association, currently named the American Association of Community Colleges, continues to provide a national focus and national leadership for the nation's community, junior, and technical colleges. In 1930, the
association began publishing its own journal, known today as the Community College Journal.

1925 "The Junior College Movement." This work, written by Leonard Koos, described the development of the public junior college, with emphasis on the types of junior colleges, their geographic distribution, enrollments and programs of study.

1931 "The Junior College." This book by Walter Crosby Eells documented the growth and curriculum of the public junior college, as well as its role in increasing access to higher education. Eells' book is a very important text on the early development of the public junior college.

1944 Passage of the GI Bill of Rights. In 1944 Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Popularly known as the GI Bill, this act provided financial assistance for veterans of World War II who wished to pursue higher education. The GI Bill was a milestone in the federal funding for education of individuals and did much to break down the economic and social barriers to allow millions of Americans to attend college. Indeed, more than 2.2 million veterans, including more than 60,000 women and approximately 70,000 blacks, attended college under the GI Bill.

1946 Jesse R Bogue. In 1946 Bogue became the executive secretary of the American Association of Junior Colleges, a position he held until 1958. As post-war spokesman, Bogue did much to popularize the term "community college" in his 1950 book titled "The Community College."

1947 Publication of Higher Education for American Democracy by the President's Commission on Higher Education. The commission report, popularly know as The Truman Commission Report, called for, among other things, the establishment of a network of public community colleges that would charge little or no tuition, serve as cultural centers, be comprehensive in their program offerings with emphasis on civic responsibilities, and would serve the area in which they were located. The commission popularized the phrase community college, causing hundreds of existing and new public two-year colleges to include community in their names.

1958 Edmund J.Gleazer Jr. In 1958, Gleazer succeeded Bogue as the executive director (The title replaced that of executive secretary, and in 1972 the title was changed to president.) of the American Association of Junior Colleges. He remained in the position until 1981, working tirelessly to promote the nation's community and junior colleges.
1960 The W.K. Kellogg Foundation. In 1960 the Kellogg Foundation announced a series of grants to be used to establish university centers for training two-year college leaders. In all, 12 universities established junior college leadership programs. Hundreds of future deans and presidents were graduates of the Kellogg Junior College Leadership Programs.

1960 "The Junior College: Progress and Prospect." Written by Leland L. Medsker, this volume discusses the public community college in detail, outlining both its strengths and weaknesses. The author provides data on the academic performance of students and the success of transfer students in selected states.

1965-1992 Student aid legislation. Beginning with the Higher Education Act of 1965, the 1972 amendments to the act, and subsequent amendments and reauthorizations (including the 1992 higher education amendments), the federal government made it possible for practically every American to attend college. Included in current legislation is the federal Pell Grant program.

1981 Dale Parnell. In 1981, Dale Parnell succeeded Gleazer as president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. He served as president of the Association until June 30, 1991. Parnell was the first president of the association to have served as the president of a public community college. During his tenure, the association established a press and issued a newspaper, the Community College Times.

1988 Report of the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges. In 1988, the Commission issued the report Building Communities: A Vision for a New Century. The report defined community not only as a region to be served, but as a climate to be created. Community colleges should play an important role in creating the climate and serving the region.

1991 David Pierce. On July 1, 1991, David Pierce succeeded Dale Parnell as president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Pierce, the first president of the Association to have graduated from a public community college, places major emphasis on working with the federal government, especially the departments of education and labor, and on interpreting the mission of the community college to both national and international audiences.

1992 AACC. By majority vote of the membership, AACJC drops the junior and changes its name to the American Association of Community Colleges.
2001  Centennial. Community colleges celebrate a 100 years of service. Joliet Junior College was the first community college, established in 1901.

**This information is from "The Community College Story: A Tale of American Innovation," by George B. Vaughan.**
### Appendix B

#### History of Accreditation in United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>New York Board of Regents established with broad regulatory, planning, and licensing authority over all educational institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>American Medical Association founded to advance profession through state licensing and improving educational quality. In succeeding decades, other professions follow suit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Office of Education established to collect statistics, including data on the numbers of schools and colleges. Question of what is a ‘college’ emerges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>New England Regional Association established. (Middle States—1887; Southern and North Central—1895; Northwest—1917; Western predecessor—1924).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>National Conference Committee on Standards of Colleges and Secondary Schools formed to establish common standards for college admission and distinguish high schools from colleges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>North Central Association develops first college and university accreditation effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Joint Committee on Accrediting established by National Association of State Universities and the Association of Land-Grant Colleges (now AASCU and NASULGC) to confront proliferation of accrediting entities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>National Commission of Regional Accrediting Agencies (NCRAA) founded by ACE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>National Commission on Accrediting, founded by five major national associations, assumes responsibilities and files of the 1938 Joint Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Public Law 82-250 tries to correct abuses in G.I. Bill by requiring U.S. Commissioner of Education to publish a list of “nationally recognized accrediting agencies.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>National Defense Education Act allows commissioner to make unaccredited institutions eligible for student loans on advice of an advisory committee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Independence, Accreditation, and the Public Interest* by the National Policy Board on Higher Education Institutional Accreditation October, 1994, Washington, DC.
### Appendix B
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Federation of Regional Accrediting Agencies for Higher Education (FRACHE) replaces NCRAA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Accreditation and Instructional Eligibility Staff (AIES) formed by Commissioner of Education to administer process for recognizing accrediting associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Postsecondary vocational institutions approved by state agencies eligible for federal student aid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) formed; NCA and FRACHE dissolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Congress creates State Postsecondary Review Entities (SPREs) to conduct reviews of institutions and imposes new requirements on accrediting agencies seeking recognition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


| 1994 | NPB disbanded. Presidents Work Group on Accreditation (PWG) selected to formulate a plan for creating a new accrediting organization/system. |
Dear ____________:

As you may be aware, the Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), has recently changed its accreditation standards to focus more on student learning outcomes and on the assessment of the outcomes. You are being asked to participate in a survey that will evaluate the readiness of California community colleges to meet these standards and on the training that is necessary for your institution to complete the process of accreditation based on the new standards. The survey is part of a research project that I am writing as a requirement for my Master’s degree in Postsecondary Education Leadership from San Diego State University.

Your name was selected because you were identified as one of the leaders of your institution and your institution is due for a team visit form ACCJC between Spring 2004 and Spring 2006. The survey is available on-line at __________________ and enter as log-in name _______ and password _______. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and your responses are extremely important to the success of this project. I would urge you to complete the survey on-line no later than February 28, 2003. Your timely response is greatly appreciated.

You may be assured that your responses will remain completely confidential. Your name and the name of your institution will never be placed in the survey results or in the project report.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at awojcik@miracosta.edu or call me at (760) 458-3064. I thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Alketa Wojcik
Student Services Coordinator, MiraCosta College
Graduate Student, Postsecondary Education Leadership
San Diego State University
Appendix D

Survey

1. The following best reflects my view on the value of the accreditation process for my institution:
   - [ ] Highly valuable
   - [ ] Valuable
   - [ ] Limited Value
   - [ ] Not valuable
   - [ ] N/A Don’t know

2. My institution will be visited by the accrediting team in:
   - [ ] Spring 2004
   - [ ] Fall 2004
   - [ ] Spring 2005
   - [ ] Fall 2005
   - [ ] Spring 2006

3. I have read the new ACCJC accreditation standards (click here for the new standards):
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

4. The ACCJC has clearly communicated the necessity to change the standards:
   Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    N/A Don’t know

5. I believe it was necessary to change the standards:
   Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    N/A Don’t know
6. Please check how clearly each of the following new accreditation standards are stated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very clearly</th>
<th>Moderately Clearly</th>
<th>Not very clearly</th>
<th>Don’t know N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Institutional Mission and Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Student Learning Programs and Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Leadership and Governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Please mark how effectively the **new** standards assess the quality of your current institution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very effectively</th>
<th>Effectively</th>
<th>Not very effectively</th>
<th>Don’t know N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Institutional Mission and Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Student Learning Programs and Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Leadership and Governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Please mark how effectively were the **old** standards assessed the quality of your current institution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very effectively</th>
<th>Effectively</th>
<th>Not very effectively</th>
<th>Don’t know N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Institutional Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Institutional Integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Institutional Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Educational Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Within the past two years, I have attended the following workshops/sessions (please check all that apply):

- [ ] Assessment Institute
- [ ] ACCJC orientation to colleges for the self-study report
- [ ] ACCJC orientation for visiting team members
- [ ] RP Group workshop on Learning Outcomes and Assessment
- [ ] Other (Please specify) __________________________
- [ ] None (If none, please go to question 10)

9a. The opportunity to participate in one or more of the above workshops has given me a better understanding of the new standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9b. These workshops have helped my institution to prepare for the self-study report based on the new standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. The new ACCJC handbook is very helpful for preparing our self-study report:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
11. ACCJC has provided my institution with the necessary training to prepare for the self-study report:

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  N/A  Don’t know

12. The ACCJC web site provides adequate information on the accreditation process:

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  N/A  Don’t know

13. ACCJC staff support, including on-site assistance, phone consultation and e-mail communication, is helpful:

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  N/A  Don’t know

14. I believe that my institution is prepared to start/continue the process of the self-study report based on the new standards:

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  N/A  Don’t know

15. My institution has started the process of identifying student learning outcomes:

   □ Yes  
   □ No  
   □ Don’t know

16. My institution has started the process of planning to assess student learning outcomes:

   □ Yes  
   □ No  
   □ Don’t know
17. My institution’s student population (headcount) is:

- [ ] Less than 5,000
- [ ] 5,001 – 10,000
- [ ] 10,001 – 15,000
- [ ] 15,001 – 20,000
- [ ] 20,001 – 25,000
- [ ] over 25,001

18. My current position is best described by one of the following:

- [ ] College President
- [ ] Academic Senate President
- [ ] Classified Senate President
- [ ] Other (Please Specify) ______________________

19. I will participate in the upcoming accreditation process for my institution as one of the following:

- [ ] Chair or coordinator of self-study
- [ ] Accreditation Liaison Officer
- [ ] Chair of a standard committee for the self-study
- [ ] Member of a standard committee for the self-study
- [ ] Not yet determined
- [ ] Other (Please specify) __________________________

20. Please comment on the New Standards:

21. Please comment on the ACCJC accrediting process:
Appendix E

Colleges Selected for the Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Year of team visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of the Siskiyous (pilot)</td>
<td>Spring 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiraCosta College (pilot)</td>
<td>Spring 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica College (pilot)</td>
<td>Spring 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antelope Valley College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of the Desert</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Marin</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compton Community College</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cypress College</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evergreen Valley College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fullerton College</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irvine Valley College</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merced College</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorpark College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. San Antonio College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxnard College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saddleback College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego City College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego Mesa College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego Miramar College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventura College</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor Valley College</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Hills Community College</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barstow College</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City College of San Francisco</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of the Redwoods</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeAnza College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feather River College</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foothill College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresno City College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Tahoe Community College</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Harbor College</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Southwest College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesto Junior College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. San Jacinto College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reedley College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago Canyon</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasta College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solano Community College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Los Angeles College</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuba College</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

Survey Results
My current position is best described by one of the following:

- College President: 13
- Academic Senate President: 13
- Classified Senate President: 5
- Other (Please specify): 4
My institution’s student population (headcount) is:
My institution has started the process of planning to assess student learning outcomes:
My institution has started the process of identifying student learning outcomes:

- Yes: 86%
- No: 14%
I believe that my institution is prepared to start/continue the process of the self-study report based on the new standards.
ACCJC staff support, including on-site assistance, phone consultation and e-mail communication, is helpful:

- Strongly agree: 12
- Agree: 11
- Disagree: 3
- Strongly disagree: 1
- N/A Don't know: 9

Strongly agree: 12
Agree: 11
Disagree: 3
Strongly disagree: 1
N/A Don't know: 9
The ACCJC web site provides adequate information on the accreditation process:
ACCJC has provided my institution with the necessary training to prepare for the self-study report.
The new ACCJC handbook is very helpful for preparing our self-study report:

- Strongly agree: 4
- Agree: 13
- Disagree: 2
- Strongly disagree: 2
- N/A Don't know: 15
These workshops have helped my institution to prepare for the self-study report based on the new standards.
The opportunity to participate in one or more of the above workshops has given me a better understanding of the new standards:

- **Strongly agree**: 7
- **Agree**: 14
- **Disagree**: 3
- **Strongly disagree**: 1
- **N/A Don't know**: 0
Within the past two years, I have attended the following workshops/sessions (please check all that apply):

- Assessment Institute
- ACCJC orientation to visiting team members
- ACCJC orientation to colleges for the self-study report
- Other (Please specify)
- None (If none, please go to question 10)
The old standard for Governance and Administration assessed the quality of your current institution:

Very effectively: 5
Effectively: 19
Not very effectively: 10
N/A Don’t know: 2
The old standard for Financial Resources assessed the quality of your current institution:

- Very effectively: 4
- Effectively: 24
- Not very effectively: 5
- N/A Don’t know: 3
The old standard for Physical Resources assessed the quality of your current institution:

- Very effectively: 8
- Effectively: 21
- Not very effectively: 4
- N/A Don't know: 3
The old standard for Faculty and Staff assessed the quality of your current institution:
The old standard for Information and Learning Resources assessed the quality of your current institution:

- Very effectively: 4
- Effectively: 21
- Not very effectively: 8
- N/A Don't know: 3
The old standard for Student Support and Development assessed the quality of your current institution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assessed</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very effectively</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very effectively</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A Don't know</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The old standard for Educational Programs assessed the quality of your current institution:

- Very effectively: 12
- Effectively: 17
- Not very effectively: 5
- N/A Don't know: 2
The old standard for Institutional Effectiveness assessed the quality of your current institution:

- Very effectively: 5
- Effectively: 22
- Not very effectively: 6
- N/A Don’t know: 3
The old standard for Institutional Integrity assessed the quality of your current institution:

- Very effectively: 8
- Effectively: 20
- Not very effectively: 6
- N/A Don't know: 2
The old standard for Institutional Mission assessed the quality of your current institution:

- Very effectively: 5
- Effectively: 22
- Not very effectively: 7
- N/A Don't know: 2
The new accreditation standard for Leadership and Governance assesses the quality of your current institution:
The new accreditation standard for Resources assesses the quality of your current institution:

- Very effectively: 5
- Effectively: 15
- Not very effectively: 8
- N/A Don't know: 7
The new accreditation standard for Student Learning Programs and Services assesses the quality of your current institution:
The new accreditation standard for Institutional Mission and Effectiveness assesses the quality of your current institution:
The new accreditation standard for Leadership and Governance is stated:

- Very clearly: 12
- Moderately clearly: 15
- Not very clearly: 8
- N/A Don't know: 1
The new accreditation standard for Resources is stated:

- 15 responded very clearly.
- 16 responded moderately clearly.
- 5 responded not very clearly.
- 1 responded N/A or don't know.
The new accreditation standard for Student Learning Programs and Services is stated:
The new accreditation standard for Institutional Mission and Effectiveness is stated:
I believe it was necessary to change the standards:

- Strongly agree: 7
- Agree: 17
- Disagree: 6
- Strongly disagree: 5
- N/A Don't know: 2
The ACCJC has clearly communicated the necessity to change the standards:
I have read the new ACCJC accreditation standards (click here for the new standards):

- yes 92%
- no 8%
My institution will be visited by the accrediting team in:
The following best reflects my view on the value of the accreditation process for my institution:
I will participate in the upcoming accreditation process for my institution as one of the following:

- Accreditation Liaison Officer
- Chair or coordinator of self-study
- Chair of a standard committee for the self-study
- Member of a standard committee for the self-study
- Not yet determined
- Other (Please specify)
APPENDIX G

COMMENTS on THE NEW STANDARDS

- I am in support of the new standards but feel that ACCJC has much work to do to adequately educate the field.

- They needed to be updated to improve student learning.

- I am uncertain whether our small institution has all the necessary staff and systems needed to do all the new quantitative analysis required by the new standards, especially considering the impact of the current budget cuts. It would be highly counterproductive to our mission if our ability to serve our students was negatively impacted by staff or systems compromises necessitated by the new requirements. This is a lot less cumbersome.

- To me, with the exception of the new emphasis on student learning outcomes, the new standards seem to have mainly merged the old ten into four broader ones.

- They are too oriented toward rigid and mechanical student outcomes instead of solid subject matter.

- I have serious concerns that we are trying very hard to measure things that we should either not be trying to quantify (or can't be quantified) or we are already measuring but our credibility is being questioned. For instance, every class results in a grade. I think this is the clearest measure of whether the student learned the information in the course. Now we are apparently saying that the grade does not measure this; we need a different type of evaluation or assessment. Why?

- As long as an individual college can define student learning outcomes in ways that are meaningful to the college, then the standards are fine. However, if the ACCJC seeks to impose a uniform definition that is irrelevant to what is crucial in student learning, then the process will be seriously flawed. I trust that colleges will have a central role in defining student learning outcomes.

- The new standards will have to be "test driven" by

- many institutions and tweaked by ACCJC through workshops and supporting information over a period of time before colleges can respond well to them. I feel strongly that the focus on student learning outcomes is a very appropriate way to evaluate college effectiveness.

- The new standards place significant emphasis on student learning outcomes, institutional accountability, and overall institutional effectiveness. Other areas, based on the old standards, seem to be less important.
I don't see any part of the standards that "enforce" appropriate funding and budget models from the State and the Districts, that then penalize them, not the Colleges.

Although at sometimes confusing, I believe a change was required and learning outcomes needed to be measured. Much too great a reliance on assessment of student learning outcomes. Promotes teaching to the test. No costs associated with assessment amounts to an unfunded mandate. No data presented to convince colleges of reasons for paradigm shift to assessment of student learning outcomes.

The new standards are wide open to interpretation. There is very little information on how our former ten fit into the new four. This requires a brand new, from scratch, self eval involving lots of time and money. I am very concerned about the onslaught on our bargaining agent and the disrespect shown to the role of shared governance. California C.C. are way ahead of any of the other institutions that will be accredited by this organization. Being accredited by ACCJC obviously does not imply a quality education when my college is compared with mail order colleges. I hope we won't be penalized due to what may be perceived as a lack of background since the manual is still not available (2/19)

The whole area of learning outcomes is both nebulous and unknown here. It remains to be seen whether or not it helps. If it is congruent with what is it may promote moving in a positive direction. If it is not congruent it will be divisive and a waste of time and en

Excellent and long overdue.

Better than old standards. I like the "four" format. They are a significant step forward in assessing institutional quality, integrity and learning outcomes. Since we haven't yet used them, I cannot comment on their effectiveness in the self-study process.

COMMENTS on ACCJC ACCREDITING PROCESS

I believe that the accreditation process is an effective means for institutional self-improvement.

Much still needs to be done to train people, especially the self study teams if this is to be effective.

Fair and much needed for colleges

I think the main problem with the process (and I've served on two accrediting teams to other colleges) is how to account for the role of the district offices and centralized services in the whole process. I know this is being worked on, but it adds confusion to the assessment process when much appears to be "beyond the control of an individual institution" and a there isn't really a way to identify that.
Although what is being proposed (or being implemented, I guess) is poor, the process itself is designed to get someone from off campus to get us to do what we (or somebody on campus believes) we should do. But we miss the big issues, such as grade inflation, which the commission resolutely ignores. Not to mention the general decline in academic standards and the pandering to the lowest common denominator.

The most positive aspect of the accreditation process is that it keeps the federal government out of the business of evaluating the colleges and universities of this country. I see our focus being on improving our educational institutions and for identifying those that should not be accredited. If the federal government was involved more closely in the process, I am afraid of the direction the accreditation process might take. It would be more susceptible to politics - special interest groups and big money.

It is an effective process that has become even better in recent years. It is more rigorous than it used to be.

The accrediting process is a workable and effective one. Again, it will take experience for the teams and ACCJC before the evaluation using the new standards will go smoothly.

The orientation process and opportunities to learn about the accrediting process under the new standards needs to become more prominent. The opportunity to obtain information (models or best practices) from other regional accrediting agencies would be very useful.

Although I wasn't there, I have heard that the ACCJC wasn't very receptive to faculty input on the new standards. I certainly through in my two cents worth here and there.

Difficult at times, but necessary. Change always has some resistance!

Process is absolutely necessary for college survival yet we continue to wait for handbooks and definitive definitions of outcomes and mechanisms for assessments. Little sympathy of ACCJC members to the facts that the most significant student outcomes are inaccessible such as high moral fiber, tolerance to diversity, lifelong learning, etc. Good luck with your survey.

ACCJC held meetings but did not raise the bar for the mail order colleges to meet the standards as set by AB 1725. The four standards are a wait and see and a time user, when you don't have a manual or handbook to use.

In the past it has been fine. We have heard rumors that the commission is being overly influenced by those who stand to gain personally and by those who feel that the art of measurement should control the content and methodology of courses. If this is the case, it must be undone.
I don't know except to say that the couple of presentations I have heard have been a very mixed bag with one part good ideas being offset by another part being highly offensive to both faculty and

The process is fine.

Can be a great experience. Very stressful experience for this district under the old standards.

The ACCJC accrediting process is an invaluable tool for institutional improvement. It helps all of our faculty, staff, administration, board and others who care about our college community understand better our effectiveness and areas needing improvement.