

December 20, 2013

WASC Senior College and University Commission
985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501

WASC Senior College and University Commissioners,

The Teachers College of San Joaquin's institutional response provides updates on how we are responding to the recommendations from the WASC team's final report for the Fall 2013 Special Visit. TCSJ Leadership values and has profoundly benefited from the observations, suggestions and recommendations of the visiting team.

TCSJ deeply appreciates the commendations in the report and the recognition by the team of our commitment and dedication to our work. We are grateful that our quest is evident – to ensure that students in all of our programs find relevance in the coursework they take, are engaged in rigorous educational learning opportunities, develop meaningful relationships with colleagues, and become reflective practitioners.

This response is aligned with the four recommendations stated in the final team report:

1. *To take TCSJ to the next level, senior leadership and the Governing Board will need to fully embrace a culture of higher education and become more familiar with best practices and processes for colleges and universities.*

The Teachers College of San Joaquin was founded to serve the needs of the local K-12 educational community by offering a viable option for educators in the San Joaquin Valley and surrounding region to pursue graduate studies. As our College matures, we are committed to embracing a higher education culture and to continuing to prepare reform minded K-12 teachers and educational leaders.

Senior leadership is undertaking steps to learn about best practices and processes in higher education. A delegation from TCSJ will attend the WASC ARC in April, which will be a good opportunity for us to hear from our colleagues how they are addressing issues that we are facing. We are also planning to attend WASC educational programming workshops next year. In addition, we are members of the American Educational Research Association and have attended AERA conferences, and are members of the Association of Teacher Educators.

The President, Dean and Director of Graduate Studies and Research meet and communicate on a regular basis to discuss matters related to daily operations of the College, including governance, strategic and business planning, and safeguarding the academic quality of all programs. As TCSJ grows, the need for a full-time President will be re-evaluated, but at this stage of our development a part-time President role has served to be fiscally and practically responsible.

The Board is also actively engaged in professional development. TCSJ will be contacting the Association of Governing Boards for consultation on a variety of topics, as suggested in the team's report, such as creating mechanisms for assessing how well the Board performs its governance responsibilities, development of the job description for the President, and mechanisms for evaluating the President.

2. *The President of TCSJ work with WASC staff to clarify what should be included in Governing Board bylaws to conform to WASC Standards (CFR 3.9) and the Policy on Independent Governing Boards. [In addition], the Board [should] establish at minimum three committees: audit, academic affairs, and finance committees, with membership augmented by drawing from non-Board members with relevant expertise.*

The set of bylaws that were approved at the December 20, 2012 Board meeting were a different version than what was initially agreed upon by WASC staff and TCSJ Leadership in March of 2012. This error was corrected at the December 18, 2013 TCSJ Governing Board meeting. With assistance from the Chair of the WASC Team, and the WASC Institutional Liaison, the bylaws were reviewed during the Special Visit and appropriate changes were made that conform to the Policy on Independent Governing Boards. These changes were reviewed and confirmed by WASC after the Special Visit.. In addition, at the December 18, 2013 Board meeting, the Board established three committees (audit, academic affairs, and finance) to align with the Policy on Independent Governing Boards.

3. *TCSJ make systematic, deliberate progress in the three priorities identified in the strategic plan by refining time lines, identifying measures for each initiative, adding estimates of resources to complete each initiative, and adding lines of responsibility.*

The leadership team has met and begun work on action plans for each area of focus in the Strategic Plan. All action plans will provide critical dates, costs, measurements, and participants and will be completed mid-February 2014.

4. *TCSJ make systematic, purposive efforts to assess and plan for the long-term financial sustainability of TCSJ.*

TCSJ Leadership views this recommendation as a very high priority. Collaboration with the San Joaquin County Office of Education's business department occurs often and meetings have been scheduled once a month for the next six months to develop the long-range fiscal plan for the College. The President is directly involved in this effort and provides guidance to ensure sustainability of the Teachers College of San Joaquin.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our progress to date on the team's recommendations, and we look forward to meeting with the Commission in February and answering questions about TCSJ.



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