February 3, 2009

Dr. Leo Chavez  
Superintendent/President  
Sierra College  
5000 Rocklin Road  
Rocklin, CA 95677

Dear President Chavez:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 7-9, 2009, reviewed the Progress Report submitted by Sierra College and the report of the evaluation team which visited on Monday, November 17, 2008. The purpose of this review was to assure that the recommendations made by the evaluation team were addressed by the institution. The Commission also considered testimony provided by President Chavez. The Commission took action to accept the report, continue the college on Warning, and require the college to submit a Follow-Up Report by October 15, 2009. The report will be followed by a visit by Commission representatives.

A Warning is issued when the Commission finds that an institution has pursued a course of action which deviates from the Commission’s Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or policies to the extent that raises a concern regarding the ability of the institution to meet accreditation standards. The accredited status of the institution continues during the warning period.

The Follow-Up Report of October 15, 2009 must demonstrate the institution’s resolution of the remaining portion of the recommendation below:

**Recommendation 2:**

In order for the college to ensure an ongoing, systematic, and cyclical process that includes evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation, the team recommends the following plan development, implementation, evaluation and improvement steps:

1b. Modify the budget development process in a manner that will place the college’s strategic plan priorities at the center of its resource allocation decisions. (III.D.1, 1.e.)

2d. Develop mechanisms to regularly evaluate all of the college’s planning and resource allocation processes as the basis for improvement. (I.B.6, II.A.2.e II.B.4, III.D.3, IV.A.5)
With regard to Recommendation 2b and 2d above, the Commission notes that the college effectively implemented program review (PAR) as required by the 2001 team recommendation, and modified the process (ePAR) to require that proposed actions address the goals and strategies of the college and link with its resource allocation process and other institutional decision making. The new budget planning process will not be completely implemented until the end of spring 2009. Furthermore, there remains a lack of understanding on the campus regarding the use of data from ePAR, including the results of resource allocation decisions that will be necessary to complete the cycle. The 2007 team also commented (page 27) that PAR did not require programs to include information on relevancy, appropriateness, and currency, thereby hindering the college from making informed decisions regarding program discontinuance. There still appears to be a lack of agreement on this issue today.

**Commission Recommendation 1:** The Commission requires the college to improve its program review process to include analysis of the currency and relevancy of the programmatic curriculum.

I also wish to inform you that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions out of compliance with standards or on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies within a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation. While Recommendation 2 was also noted by the year 2001 evaluation team, the Commission has extended Sierra College's time to correct these deficiencies for good cause. The Commission noted the college has accomplished substantial work to date on Recommendations 2a and 2c. Sierra College has completed critical planning elements in facilities, technology, and human resources and staffing. The final pieces of this recommendation are required to be developed and fully implemented bringing the college to the Proficiency Level on the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness Part II—Planning, by the time of the next report and visit.

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that you give the report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that all reports be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this.

Should you want the report electronically to place on your web site or for some other purpose, please contact Commission staff. The Progress Report will become part of the accreditation history of the college and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation.
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On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution’s educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Ms. Rachel Rosenthal, Accreditation Liaison Officer  
    Board President, Sierra College  
    Dr. Steven Kinsella, Team Chair  
    Evaluation Team Members  
    Ms. Linda Henderson, U.S. DOE