January 31, 2011

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 January 11-13, 2011, reviewed the Midterm Report submitted by Sierra College. The purpose of this review was to assure that the recommendations made by the evaluation team had been addressed by the institution and that the College had also addressed the self-identified plans for improvement which were included in the institutional self study. The Commission took action to require that the College complete a Follow-Up Report.

The Commission requires that the Follow-Up Report be submitted by October 15, 2011. The report should demonstrate the institution’s resolution of the recommendation noted below from the January 28, 2008, Commission Action Letter:

**Recommendation 5 (2007)**

**Plan for Long-Term Debt Financing**

The team recommends that the college develop a long term debt financing plan to address the costs associated with implementation of GASB 45 requirements. (Standard III.D.1.C)

The College’s response to this recommendation in the Midterm Report states that an amount of approximately $200,000 will be paid into the irrevocable trust in addition to the $3.0 million paid to cover the costs of providing health benefits to retired employees. In summary, the College is incurring a $5.5 million liability and is paying $3.2 million of that obligation thereby allowing $2.3 million to accrue as a long term liability. Another part of this transaction that may not be obvious is that when the unfunded liability is accrued the College’s unrestricted general fund balance is reduced by the amount of the increase in the unfunded liability.

The Standards require the College to have plans to pay short-term and long-term obligations of the College. It is therefore recommended that the College provide a description of its plans to address this long-term obligation and how it intends to make changes to reduce future costs of retired employees’ medical benefits or to increase its contributions as appropriate to meet the requirement to pay the short and long-term obligations as they become due.
Institutions are expected to meet Standards at all times during the six-year review cycle and to fully address recommendations made by the previous teams at the time of the next comprehensive evaluation visit. This will be confirmed by the next comprehensive review team.

The Midterm Report will become part of the accreditation history of the College and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation. 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.

**Commission Reminder:** The Commission expects that institutions meet Accreditation Standards that require the identification and assessment of student learning outcomes, and the use of assessment data to plan and implement improvements to educational quality, by fall 2012. The Commission reminds Sierra College that it must be prepared to demonstrate that it meets these Standards by fall 2012 (Standards I.B.1, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2, and III.A.1.c).

Please note that the next comprehensive evaluation of Sierra College will occur in **Fall 2013**.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution’s educational quality and students’ success. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring institutional integrity, effectiveness, and quality.

Sincerely,

[B. A. Beno]

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Rachel Rosenthal, Accreditation Liaison Officer
    Board President, Sierra Joint Community College District
Accrediting Commission for Community College  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

PREPARATION OF A FOLLOW-UP REPORT

A **Follow-Up Report** is a report requested by the Commission for special purposes. It can occur at any time in the 6-year accreditation cycle. A Follow-Up Report requires that the institution provide information, evidence, and analysis regarding the resolution of the recommendations to which it was directed by the Commission's Action Letter. The institution's report will be reviewed by the Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and the institution will be notified as to what action, if any, it must take next.

**Follow-Up Report Format**
The following format for the report should be used:

1. **Cover Sheet**
   Include the date of submission, the name and address of the institution, and a notation that this is a Follow-Up Report.

2. **Table of Contents**

3. **Statement on Report Preparation**
The statement, signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation, review, and approval.

4. **Response to Team Recommendations and the Commission Action Letter**
Each recommendation identified by the Commission in its action letter should be identified and discussed. The report should describe the resolution of each recommendation, analyze the results achieved to date, provide evidence of the results, and indicate what additional plans the institution has developed.

5. **Governing Board Review**
The **Follow-Up Report** must be reviewed by the Governing Board prior to its submission.

The institution is required to send **three copies** of its report to the Commission **plus an electronic version**. The hard copies of the report should be sent to the Commission's mailing address at 10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. The electronic version of the report should be transmitted to accic@accjc.org.