

Daily Press-Valley Voices

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Victor Valley College Remains Committed to Retaining Its Accreditation

News of Victor Valley College's (VVC) continued probationary status has generated great concern throughout the High Desert, and rightly so. The importance of VVC to students and the entire High Desert region cannot be overstated, nor can the urgency with which the Victor Valley College Board of Trustees and the entire College community are addressing this matter. In short, VVC has until October 15 to satisfactorily address recommendations identified by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), or risk losing accreditation. Ultimately, there are no acceptable excuses for these circumstances. We take full responsibility for our probationary status and are resolute in our commitment to meet this deadline for our students and for the future of the High Desert.

What is accreditation? It is the process used by the higher education community for evaluating and assuring the quality of education at institutions. Victor Valley College is among 112 community colleges in California that are reviewed every six years by the ACCJC in conjunction with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

An accredited college's course work is transferable to other accredited institutions, and graduation from an accredited college or university assures an employer that a job applicant's education has met high standards. To put it in the vernacular, a college's accreditation is everything.

Despite the current probationary status, Victor Valley College remains accredited. Course credits, degrees, transfers and financial aid are not affected. Summer classes are underway, and the fall semester will begin August 27th. For the casual observer it is business as usual, but behind the scenes it is an urgent call to action.

Addressing the Commission's recommendations is requiring a monumental effort, particularly on the part of faculty, to perform a comprehensive assessment of the College's programs. Detailed information on all the Commission's recommendations is available on the VVC website at <http://www.vvc.edu/offices/oie/accreditation/accreditation.shtml>

VVC's faculty and staff have been participating in ongoing planning meetings to complete all of WASC's recommendations. In addition to their teaching workload, many instructors have volunteered to assist others complete their tasks. Many members of VVC's support staff also have volunteered their time to help in whatever way they can.

During this challenging time, the College also has received offers for assistance from students, parents, teachers and alumni, as well as business leaders. We are heartened by the

community's support. The Commission's recommendations, however, pertain to the College's internal processes and must be completed by the appropriate faculty or staff members.

As the clock ticks down on the October 15 deadline, work continues throughout the campus to complete all recommendations and compile and file a report with the Commission. Once the report is submitted, an accrediting team will visit the College and file its findings with the entire Commission. The Commission's report will be made public in February, and VVC will find out at that time if the College is removed from probation, moved to the less severe "warning status," or placed on "show cause." When a college is placed on "show cause" it must make immediate corrections and file a plan for closure. The Commission then reviews the corrections to determine whether or not to continue working with the college or order its closure.

For Victor Valley College this is an inglorious teachable moment. As an educational institution, the College remains committed to providing excellence in teaching and learning. We know that much of the High Desert's success rests with the opportunities that Victor Valley College offers our population. We will not fail you. There is too much at stake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher C. O'Hearn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "O'Hearn" clearly visible.

Dr. Christopher C. O'Hearn
Superintendent/President

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