

ACCREDITING COMMISSION for COMMUNITY and JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Barbara A. Beno, President
Steven M. Kinsella, Chair

December 10, 2015

Ms. Jill Stearns
President
Modesto Junior College
435 College Avenue
Modesto, CA 95350

Dear President Stearns:

The Committee on Substantive Change of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges met December 1, 2015 to review the Substantive Change Proposal from Modesto Junior College for a:

- New Program: Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Care

The Committee acted to approve the substantive change and require a Follow-Up Report by July 15, 2016. The Committee also acted to require a visit after the College has submitted the follow-up report. The visit will take place within six months of the start of upper division classes. The Institution is asked to apprise the Commission of the starting date of those classes so that the visit can be scheduled.

The substantive change proposal submitted by the College outlined the development of the baccalaureate program. As this program proceeds through the implementation phase, note that the program is required to meet the Standards and will be evaluated on that basis. Within the substantive change process, certain Standards are given particular attention in the review of the baccalaureate degrees. These are 2014 Standards I.C.4, II.A.5, II.A.12, and II.A.14. The committee requests that the Follow-Up report address the following:

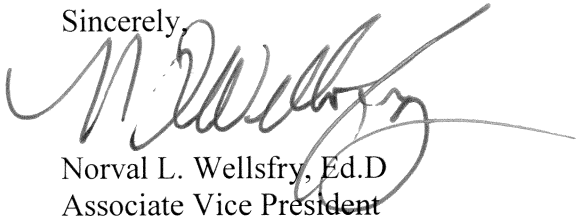
- The 2014 Accreditation Standard I.A.1 relates to the College's Mission Statement, including the types of degrees that it offers. Institutions with baccalaureate programs need to ensure their institutional mission statement includes the baccalaureate degree program, even though that degree is currently in "pilot" form. (ER 6: Mission)
- The Standards and the substantive change procedures require the inclusion of evidence of the approval of the courses and Program by the College's Curriculum process and the Board of Trustees. The evidence should also include a letter from the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges that demonstrates that the College has authorization to offer a Bachelor's Degree by the College (ER 1: Authority).

- There are multiple levels for Respiratory Therapists including Certified Respiratory Therapists and Registered Respiratory Therapists. The Certified Respiratory Therapist requires an Associate Degree. Will this baccalaureate degree qualify a graduate for a license as a Registered Respiratory Therapist? Is there programmatic accreditation at the baccalaureate level for Respiratory Therapist? Does the acquisition of a baccalaureate degree provide an enhanced career path for a graduate that justifies the additional cost?

The Institution should ensure that it meets the 2014 Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards. The Guide to Evaluating Institutions (July 2015 revision) contains sample questions for institutions and evaluation teams in regard to the self-evaluation process and some of the questions relate specifically to baccalaureate degrees. Your institution will want to demonstrate that the institution's policies, procedures, and practices that relate to the baccalaureate program meet the Standards.

Please call me if you have questions or if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Wellsfry', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Norval L. Wellsfry, Ed.D
Associate Vice President

Cc: Ms. Brenda Thames, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Martina Fernandez-Rosario, U.S. Department of Education
Chair, Substantive Change Committee

Attachment: Annotated Accreditation Standards

ATTACHMENT – MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS RELATED TO BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

I.A.1: The mission describes the institution’s broad educational purposes, its intended student population, the types of degrees and other credentials it offers, and its commitment to student learning⁴ and student achievement. (ER 6)

I.C.4: The institution describes its certificates and degrees in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected learning outcomes.

II.A.5: The institution’s degrees and programs follow practices common to American higher education, including appropriate length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits or equivalent at the associate level, and 120 credits or equivalent at the baccalaureate level. (ER 12)

II.A.12: The institution requires of all of its degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy for both associate and baccalaureate degrees that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on faculty expertise, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum, based upon student learning outcomes and competencies appropriate to the degree level. The learning outcomes include a student’s preparation for and acceptance of responsible participation in civil society, skills for lifelong learning and application of learning, and a broad comprehension of the development of knowledge, practice, and interpretive approaches in the arts and humanities, the sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. (ER 12)

II.A.14: Graduates completing career-technical certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment standards and other applicable standards and preparation for external licensure and certification.