



Follow-Up Report

Submitted by

Moorpark College
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to

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

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Certification

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

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This Follow-Up Report is submitted to ACCJC for the purpose of demonstrating resolution of deficiencies cited by the Commission in the action letter dated January 16, 2024. The Follow-Up Report reflects the nature and substance of this institution, as well as its best efforts to align with ACCJC Standards and policies, and was developed with appropriate participation and review by the campus community.

Signatures:

	
Dr. Rick MacLennan, Chancellor, Ventura County Community College District	Date:
	
Ms. Gabriela Torres, Chair, Board of Trustees, Ventura County Community College District	Date:
	
Dr. Julius Sokenu, President	Date:
	
Dr. John Forbes, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Accreditation Liaison Officer	Date:
	
Dr. Matthew Moorgan, President, Moorpark College Academic Senate	Date:
	
Ms. Rebecca Stroud, President, Moorpark College Classified Senate	Date:
	
Mr. Jackson Heybl, President, Associated Students of Moorpark College	Date:

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Response to Identified Compliance Requirements

District Recommendation #1 (Compliance – To Meet Standards):

The ACCJC Commission determined that each College must demonstrate compliance with Standard IV.C.12, which reads: The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively.

In their *Spring 2024 Action Letter*, the Commission states: ***In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement board policies without board interference. (IV.C.12)***

Background Context of Recommendation

The ACCJC visiting team observed three Board Policies that address the relationship between Board and the Chancellor:

- BP 2430: Delegation of Authority to the Chancellor, which grants the Chancellor authority to supervise the general business procedures of the district and budget, to authorize employment and fix job responsibilities, and act as the professional advisor to the Board in policy formation.
- BP 2434: Chancellor's Relationship with the Board, which further clarifies that the Board delegate full responsibility and authority to the Chancellor to implement and administer board policies without board interference, holding the Chancellor accountable for the leadership and operation of the District and Colleges.
- BP 2200: Board Duties and Responsibilities, which states that the Board develops policy and provides broad oversight while delegating the implementation of its policies and performance of district duties and obligations to the Chancellor.

While these policies are in place, the ACCJC visiting team confirmed several examples where the Board actions have impeded the Chancellor's ability to exercise his delegated authority. These examples are outlined in their Final Report posted online for all three colleges. As such, the Commission documented their concerns in their action letters to each college, issuing this Compliance Finding.

Corrective Actions being taken by VCCCD Governing Board.

As documented in the responses to the District Core Inquiry #1 submitted in September 2023 (DR01-01), since January 2022 the governing board has sought outside consultation to assist in ongoing efforts to improve and strengthen its collective understanding of its roles and responsibilities. More recently, since the receipt of the 2023 Commission Action Letter, the Board Committee on Planning, Accreditation and Student Success (PASS) has taken an active role and responsibility for overseeing the process by which the governing board will address and mitigate the compliance issues noted by the Commission. (DR01-02)

The District continues to commit a significant level of financial resources (DR01-03) and time to provide the governing board members with a variety of opportunities for education and board development. Working through the chancellor and his staff, the following activities have occurred:

- (1) **September 15, 2023. Special Board Retreat** w/ Board Development Consultant, Dr. Helen Benjamin ([DR01-04](#)).

OUTCOMES: The governing board revisited its *Ground Rules* that had been developed in a 2021 Board Development session with Dr. Helen Benjamin and Dr. Brice Harris. (DR01-05) In addition, Dr. Benjamin walked the trustees through a review and update of their strategic goals. (DR01-06)

The governing board also identified priorities for the coming year, to include implementing strategies for becoming a high-performing board (DR01-07):

- a. Support the Chancellor's Vision and Day-to-Day Operational Decisions/actions
- b. Have a clear and common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the board
- c. Follow the agreed upon policies and procedures
- d. Strengthen the Board/CEO relationship with the Chancellor

Attendees: Five out of five trustees were present for this retreat. *Other Attendees:* Chancellor, MacLennan; Vice Chancellor, Herrera. (DR01-08)

- (2) **October 9-12, 2023. ACCT Leadership Congress.** The ACCT Leadership Congress is the largest professional development opportunity for over 1,500 community college trustees and presidents/chancellors. This event was available to all VCCCD trustees. *OUTCOME:* Community college leaders share experiences and expertise, network with people from around the country and beyond, and expand knowledge of the community college sector. Chair Perez. (DR01-09)

Attendees: All Trustees invited. Board Chair Perez attended. *Other Attendees:* Chancellor MacLennan; Executive Director Putnam. (DR01-10)

- (3) **November 16-18, 2023. CCLC Annual Convention.** The League's Annual Convention is the premier professional development event for California's community college leaders. *OUTCOME:* This event brings together CEOs, trustees, faculty, staff, administrators, and partners from across the state to share tools, models, and solutions to system issues. The 2023 Learning Strands include: Teaching and Learning; Student Services and Student Success; Institutional Performance and Accountability; Fiscal, Legal, and Administrative Operations; Professional and Leadership Development; Community and Global Partnerships. This event was available to all VCCCD trustees.

Attendees: All Trustees invited. Board Chair Perez and Trustee Mantooth attended. *Other Attendees:* Chancellor MacLennan; Executive Director Putnam. (DR01-11)

- (4) **January 26-29, 2024. CCLC Effective Trusteeship and Legislative Conference.** The League's workshop for trustees and board chairs to learn the duties expected of board members of California's Community Colleges. *OUTCOME:* State leaders and experienced trustees provide comprehensive information on the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective trustee. This event was available to all VCCCD trustees but is mostly tailored for board chairs and vice chairs.

Attendees: All Trustees invited. Board Chair Perez attended. *Other Attendees:* Chancellor MacLennan. (DR01-12)

- (5) **February 4-7, 2024. ACCT Community College National Summit.** The ACCT Leadership Congress is the largest professional development opportunity for over 1,500 community college trustees and presidents, as well as leaders from philanthropic organizations, government agencies, and other national non-profits. It is a time for community college leaders to share experiences and expertise, network with people from around the country and beyond, and expand knowledge of the community college sector. This event was available to all VCCCD trustees.

OUTCOME: The VCCCD team met with congress representatives to advocate for a variety of issues at the federal level that impact our local colleges and students, including enhanced support for Federal Pell Grants, funding for federal student financial aid, student veterans, access and funding for basic needs services, support for workforce development, and the Higher Education Act (HEA) Reauthorization. (DR01-13)

Attendees: All Trustees invited. Board Chair Perez, Trustee Chancer and Trustee Mantooth attended. *Other Attendees:* Chancellor MacLennan; Executive Director Putnam. (DR01-14)

- (6) **Spring 2024 PASS Committee Meetings.** The Planning, Accreditation, Student Success (PASS) Committee is a committee of two trustees: Trustee Lichtl and Trustee Torres. In their role as committee members, the trustees analyzed and discussed the Compliance Issue identified in the Commission's *Action Letter* to the colleges. In March 2024, the trustees requested that the chancellor reach out to ACCT to arrange for a team of consultants, one former trustee and one former CEO, to lead the board through addressing the identified compliance concern. In April, the chancellor updated the trustees on the progress being made in contracting with the consultants and scheduling a date for the retreat. (DR01-15)

- (7) **May 2-5, 2024. CCLC Annual Trustees Conference.** Trustees are locally elected officials responsible for overseeing their college's mission and ensuring their colleges succeed. *OUTCOME:* The Annual Trustees Conference is designed to strengthen the skills and knowledge required of trustees to lead California's community colleges. (DR01-16) This event was available to all VCCCD trustees.

Attendees: All Trustees invited. Board Chair Perez, Trustee Mantooth and Trustee Torres attended. *Other Attendees:* Chancellor MacLennan; Executive Director Putnam. (DR01-17)

(8) ***July 27, 2024. Special Board Retreat, Dr. Debbie DiThomas (ACCT) and Dr. Phil Linfante (ACCT).***

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) facilitated a board retreat/training program for the VCCCD governing board. Board retreats provide an opportunity to review and clarify the board's roles and responsibilities and that of the chancellor and administration. ACCT retreats are designed to promote effective governance practices that align with national standards, provide governing boards with tools and resources to be a high performing board, and to offer expert guidance on board governance issues. (DR01-18)

OUTCOME: During this special board meeting, the Board made commitments to:

- Conduct a formal review of Board policies (Chapter 2 policies) to ensure currency, comprehension, and adherence, to begin October 2024 and be completed within two years.
- Develop a review schedule for Chapter 2 Board policies and procedures to ensure regular review that aligns with the District's 6-year review cycle.
- Review and discuss communication protocols and update associated Board Policy and Administrative Procedure, to be completed before February 2025 Board Meeting. (DR01-19)
- To reaffirm the Board's Affirmation of Service each year
- Stay focused on their role in policy, and out of operations

Attendees: All Trustees invited. Board Chair Perez; Trustee Mantooth; Trustee Torres; Trustee Lichtl attended. Trustee Chancer cancelled due to an unexpected conflict. *Other Attendees:* Chancellor MacLennan; Executive Director Putnam. (DR01-20)

Prior to the retreat, the trustees took part in a self-assessment via an online survey (DR01-15), participated in individual interviews and conversations with the consultants via Zoom. One goal of the Board Self-Assessment (BSA) is to strengthen the governing board's leadership role and partnership with the chancellor. The summary report provides an overall assessment of the governing board as one unit and reinforces the role of the Board of Trustees. It also provides a profile of each trustees' response to each item in the assessment. The information gathered as part of the BSA process informed the focus of discussion topics and issues that were addressed in the July 2024 board retreat.

(9) ***August 7, 2024. Follow-Up Session, Dr. Debbie DiThomas (ACCT) and Dr. Phil Linfante (ACCT).***

To afford Trustee Chancer with the opportunity to receive the same information as the other trustees and for him to provide input into this board development work, the ACCT Consultants met with him, Chair Perez, and Chancellor MacLennan for a one-and-a-half-hour make-up session. (DR01-22)

(10) **September 16, 2024. Second Special Board Retreat w/Board Development Consultants, Dr. Debbie DiThomas (ACCT) and Dr. Phil Linfante (ACCT).**

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) facilitated a follow-up retreat for the Board of Trustees, building on the July session. During the retreat, trustees engaged in in-depth discussions aimed at advancing Board best practices, clarifying the Commission's compliance findings, differentiating governance from operations, and reaffirming their commitment to established ground rules and policies.

Trustees revisited their the "no surprises" (no "gotchas") agreement, emphasizing adherence to agreed-upon communication protocols with the chancellor and among trustees. The consultants also provided clear examples to highlight the distinction between governance and operations, outlining where trustees' responsibilities end, and the chancellor's authority begins.

The trustees explored the implications of casting a no-vote, acknowledging their right to do so, but also recognizing the need to consider the broader impact on staff efforts (for example, one college's facilities master plan in January 2024, the general obligation bond in June 2024, and the adopted budget in September 2024).

OUTCOME: The retreat concluded with the following commitments from the Board of Trustees:

- Complete the thorough review of Chapter 2 Board Policies to ensure currency, comprehension, and adherence
- Submit agenda requests to the Board Chair and Chancellor for scheduling
- Remain mindful of the potential implications of any future no-vote decisions
- Maintain focus on policymaking responsibilities, avoiding operational involvement, while holding each other accountable and accepting constructive feedback with respect
- Respect the distinct roles of the Chancellor, the Board Chair, and the Board members
- Refrain from publicly criticizing or disparaging the work of staff
- Communicate any conversation with internal constituents or interest groups to the Chancellor

Attendees: All Trustees invited; all were in attendance. *Other Attendees:* Chancellor MacLennan; Executive Director Putnam. (DR01-23)

(11) **FUTURE EVENTS BEING SCHEDULED FOR SPRING 2025:**

- Third Special Board Retreat w/Board Development Consultants, Dr. Debbie DiThomas (ACCT) and Dr. Phil Linfante (ACCT) in March 2025.
- January Annual Legislative Conference 2025 (CCLC event)
- February 2025 ACCT Community College National Summit

Results and Evidence of Progress and Continued Challenges (as of Fall 2024)

The District leadership and the governing board have invested time and financial resources into the Board development activities above. While some progress is being made, there are still challenges in meeting Standard IV.C.12.

This Standard has two components:

- (a) The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer board policies without board interference and
- (b) holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively.

The Commission's Spring 2024 Action Report requires the district to address the first component of this Standard: "In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the governing board delegate full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement board policies without board interference. (IV.C.12) (DR01-24, DR01-25, DR01-26)

The district does, however, continue to not only meet the second component of this Standard, but continues to thoughtfully strengthen its approach in doing so, as described below.

The Board holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively.

As part of the September 2023 Special Board Meeting, Dr. Helen Benjamin walked the Board through a process to identify Strategic Goals and Objectives for the District. The 2023-24 Board Goals, updated in September 2023 and approved in October 2023, inform the districtwide objectives and the identified action steps to be taken with the leadership of the chancellor (CEO). (DR01-27)

The chancellor updates the governing board on progress being made on these districtwide goals through various channels. The board committees, Planning, Accreditation, Student Success Committee (PASS) and Administrative Services Committee (ASC) receive updates and reports in their monthly meetings, advising the committee on progress being made on major initiatives as well as operational activities. (DR01-28) To further assess progress being made on these goals and objectives, the District Institutional Effectiveness program has provided regular PASS Reports which provide the Board with student achievement and institutional effectiveness data and analysis. (DR01-29) These reports serve as evidence that the district/colleges are continuing to meet the identified Strategic Goals and Objectives. Following the Q&A within PASS and ASC meetings, these updates, presentations, and reports then move forward to the full Board in their next regular meeting. The Board also receives written reports from the college presidents and vice chancellors summarizing progress on specific activities and events taking place in each of their respective areas. (DR01-30)

In addition to these formal progress reports, the chancellor also emails the trustees progress updates and reports of strategic engagement and activity across the community, keeping trustees informed in-between their regular monthly meetings (DR01-31) and updates on key topics of interest via email updates. (DR01-32)

As a formal way to hold the chancellor accountable, the Board conducts a formal evaluation process of the chancellor. Each trustee provided evaluative feedback via an evaluation survey. (DR01-33) A sub-committee of two trustees collected and organized the individual responses, producing a summary evaluation for the chancellor. The summary evaluation was presented and discussed with the chancellor by the sub-committee and then finalized with Human Resources. (DR01-34)

Delegating full responsibility and authority to the CEO.

Progress being made; challenges still present.

The governing board has acknowledged the Commission's findings and accepted full responsibility for addressing the compliance concerns raised. (DR01-35) The board has taken active steps to resolve these issues, and all trustees have expressed their commitment to make necessary improvements. These commitments were documented in the September 16, 2024, Board Development Workshop notes. (DR01-23) Over the past several months, progress has been made, with trustees embracing the development work and changes required.

One of the most significant improvements is the trustees' growing recognition of their collective responsibility. They understand that individual actions can directly impact the board's ability to function cohesively as a unified body. This shift in mindset has led to trustees holding each other accountable, ensuring adherence to their roles and responsibilities as members of a governing board, rather than acting as five separate individuals.

For instance, when a trustee raises concerns about a matter that has already been formally decided by the board, another trustee promptly reminds the group that reopening such discussions can be counterproductive. (DR01-36; DR01-37) Additionally, when a trustee acts outside their fiduciary duty of loyalty—such as pursuing personal interests or advocating for a special interest group—another trustee has stepped in to address the breach. (DR01-38)

There is still work to be done in this area.

Since the Commission's visit in March 2024, Board meetings have continued to feature instances where individual trustees publicly critique staff efforts, stepping outside their policy role and stepping into the operations of the district. (DR01-39, DR01-40)

While the board has a responsibility to ensure that the chancellor upholds their responsibility to implement board policies, it is not the role of any single trustee to publicly evaluate the work of district employees. Should there be any concerns about the work being presented as part of any board meeting agenda, trustees have the opportunity to seek clarification or request additional information in advance of the public meeting. (DR01-19) This allows for the trustees to be informed prior to the board meeting, allowing them to effectively fulfill their decision-making responsibilities during the meeting.

The district staff and the board have been working together over the last year to improve the process by which the district staff responds to any trustee's questions or requests for additional information related to any agenda item. This work has been centralized in the chancellor's office, allowing for an improved coordinated effort that ensures that responses to requests are fulfilled thoroughly and in a timely fashion. *Response Reports* are generated and distributed to all trustees in advance of the meeting and then archived in a shared folder that all trustees have access to. If the information is not readily available, or requires additional time for further research, the trustees are informed and, as best possible, provided a timeframe for when they should expect the information. (DR01-42)

In addition, all trustees are invited to meet with the chancellor to discuss any concerns that they might have, including any concerns about the work being completed by district staff. These one-on-one meetings serve to provide the opportunity to inform the chancellor of the concerns and to provide the chancellor with time to address the concerns appropriately with their staff.

Should any trustee have concerns that they do not feel are being adequately addressed, they are encouraged to bring their concerns to the board chair for further resolution. (DR01-32)

Adherence to these policies and communication practices has allowed for timely responses to concerns that have been raised over the last year. Yet, some trustees have continued to raise their concerns or critique the work of staff during public meetings. For example, in the June 11 meeting, regarding the general obligation bond (DR01-43) and the process for seeking legal services (DR01-44), and again in the June 18 meeting, trustees made disparaging remarks about the quality of staff work. (DR01-45, DR01-46) In some cases, trustees have even implied that district leadership was withholding information or acting untrustworthy, as seen in the September 10 board meeting during the agenda items on strategic planning and the adopted budget. (DR01-47 and DR01-48)

These actions continue to create an atmosphere of distrust and fear across the district. Although the chancellor is being held responsible for executing the district's strategic goals, negative and undermining comments from even one trustee may create significant obstacles to achieving those objectives. Such behavior contradicts the board's stated priorities, as public expressions of suspicion not only erode trust but also discourages district leadership from taking necessary risks on new initiatives. It is difficult for district leadership or staff, for example, to invest time and effort into major projects in the anticipation of facing public rebuke. This fear of public suspicion can stifle innovation and progress, directly hampering the district's ability to meet its strategic goals.

Beyond public meetings, there has been one instance when an individual trustee overtly overstepped into operational matters. After receiving updates from the chancellor reporting the progress of the implementation of solar panels at one of the colleges, the trustee was not satisfied because the process was taking longer than this trustee believed it should. This trustee directly contacted Southern California Edison to inquire about delays in activating solar panels at the college, just two days after the chancellor had confirmed that he would have an update for the trustees in just a couple days. The representative assisting the district on this project informed the chancellor's office of the trustee's inquiry. Such a phone

call not only causes confusion for the representative, it could easily create further complications for the ultimate completion of the project. (DR01-49)

While progress has been made and trustees have publicly committed to improving in these areas and to holding peers accountable for inappropriate or self-serving actions, more work is needed to fully resolve this compliance issue. True resolution will come only when peer-to-peer accountability is fully ingrained in the Board's culture, ensuring that all trustees act in the best interest of the district as a whole.

Evidence: District Response - Compliance Recommendation #1

DR01-01	August 2023 District Core Inquiry Responses to ACCJC
DR01-02	PASS Minutes: Accreditation Discussions
DR01-03	Itemized list of costs for various Board Development Activities
DR01-04	September 15, 2023, Special Board Meeting Materials
DR01-05	FY21 Board Ground Rules
DR01-06	VCCCD Board Goals
DR01-07	FY21 Strategies for Improved Board Performance
DR01-08	September 15, 2023, Special Board Meeting Minutes/Notes
DR01-09	Chair Perez' Report During Oct 17 Board Meeting
DR01-10	Travel Expenses: ACCT Leadership Congress, Nov 2023
DR01-11	Travel Expenses: CCLC Conference, Nov 2023
DR01-12	Travel Expenses: CCLC Conference, Jan 2024
DR01-13	Legislative Agenda for Congress 118 and Trustees' Report During Feb 13 Meeting
DR01-14	Travel Expenses: ACCT Summit Conference, Feb 2024
DR01-15	PASS Minutes documenting Accreditation Course of Action
DR01-16	Chair Perez' Report During May 14 Board Meeting
DR01-17	Travel Expenses: CCLC Conference, May 2024
DR01-18	Board Retreat Materials, Session 1, July 27, 2024
DR01-19	DRAFT Board Policy on Communication Protocols
DR01-20	July 27 Meeting Notes
DR01-21	Board Self-Assessment Report (BSA), July 2024
DR01-22	Follow-Up Meeting Invitation (Zoom Call with Trustee Chancer and ACCT Consultants)
DR01-23	Board Retreat Materials, Session 2, September 16, 2024
DR01-24	Moorpark College Action Letter
DR01-25	Oxnard College Action Letter
DR01-26	Ventura College Action Letter
DR01-27	Chancellor's Goals
DR01-28	PASS Meeting Agendas and Minutes
DR01-29	PASS Reports
DR01-30	Sample President and Vice Chancellor Reports
DR01-31	Chancellor's Strategic Engagement and Activity Reports
DR01-32	Sample Email Communications: (a) solar panel update; (b) monthly reports; (c) alerts on topics of interest of specific trustees
DR01-33	Chancellor's 2024 Evaluation Survey Template
DR01-34	Chancellor's 2024 Evaluation: Board Agenda Items and Meeting Invite
DR01-35	Board communications accepting responsibility
DR01-36	August 13, 2024 Board Meeting: -- Seniority List Request Issue (Time Marker 3:34:35 – 3:35:58; and 3:41:01 – 3:41:36)
DR01-37	September 16 Board Development Meeting Notes
DR01-38	September 10, 2024 Board Meeting (Time Marker 5:42:30 – 5:45:50)
DR01-39	BP 2200 – Board Duties and Responsibilities
DR01-40	BP 2215 – Role of the Board Chair
DR01-41	BP 2430 – Delegation of Authority to Chancellor
DR01-42	Sample response reports; screenshots of SharePoint and permissions
DR01-43	June 11, 2024 Board Meeting:

- DR01-44 -- Critique of Staff Work on Bond (Time Marker 3:54:13 – 3:58:20)
[June 11, 2024 Board Meeting:](#)
- DR01-45 -- Critique of Staff Work on RFQ for Legal (Time Marker 4:27:13 – 4:28:00)
[June 18, 2024 Board Meeting:](#)
- DR01-46 -- Claim of Vague Project List & Associated Debate (Time Marker 2:52:38 through 3:06:12)
[June 18, 2024 Board Meeting:](#)
- DR01-47 -- Critique of Staff Work (Time Marker 3:19:00 – 3:21:35; 3:29:20 – 3:36:47)
[September 10, 2024 Board Meeting:](#)
- DR01-48 -- Concerns about fund balance (Time Marker 4:53:55 – 4:58:39; and 5:39:38 – 5:46:01)
- DR01-48 Trustee Chancer’s Prepared Statement on Adopted Budget
- DR01-49 Communications about Solar Panels