

January 21, 2025

Mr. Val M. Garcia  
Acting Superintendent/President  
College of the Desert  
43-500 Monterey Avenue  
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Dear Mr. Garcia:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, at its meeting January 8-9, 2025, reviewed the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and evidentiary materials submitted by College of the Desert. The Commission also considered the Peer Review Team Report (Team Report) prepared by the peer review team that conducted its site visit to the College September 26-27, 2024.

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the College continues to meet ACCJC's Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and Accreditation Standards (hereinafter, the Standards). Upon consideration of the written information noted above, the Commission acted to **Reaffirm Accreditation for 18 months and Require a Follow-Up<sup>1</sup>, due no later than March 1, 2026**, followed by a visit from a peer review team.

#### Compliance Requirements

The Commission determined that the College must demonstrate compliance with the following Standards, as identified in the requirements below. This demonstration must be addressed in the required Follow-Up Report.

**Standard IV.C.2 (College Requirement 1):** In order to meet the Standard, the Commission requires that the governing board acts as a collective entity and that once the Board of Trustees reaches a decision, all board members act in support of board decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-up Reports, Special Reports, or Teach-out Plans/Agreements to the Commission should review the Accreditation Handbook and applicable report template available on the ACCJC website at <https://accjc.org/accreditation-handbook-and-report-templates/>.

**Standard IV.C.10 (College Requirement 2):** In order to meet the Standard, the Commission Requires that the Board of Trustees adheres to its policy on a regular evaluation that it uses the results to improve board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness.

**Standard IV.C.12 (College Requirement 3):** In order to meet the Standard, the Commission requires the Board delegate full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer board policies without Board interference.

In accordance with federal regulations and the *Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions*, compliance requirements must be addressed, and the institution must demonstrate that it aligns with Standards within three years, by January 2028. If the institution cannot document that it has come into compliance within the designated period, the Commission will take adverse action.

#### Recommendations for Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The Peer Review Team Report noted Recommendation 4 for improving institutional effectiveness. Improvement recommendations do not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice, but consistent with its mission to foster continuous improvement through the peer review process, the Commission encourages institutions to give serious consideration to these recommendations and the advice contained in the Peer Review Team Report. In the Midterm Report, the College will include actions taken in response to the improvement recommendations.

#### Next Steps

The Peer Review Team Report provides details of the peer review team's findings, including areas of noteworthy practice. The guidance and recommendations contained in the Peer Review Team Report represent the best advice of the team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the college to come into compliance. A final copy of the Peer Review Team Report is attached.

The Commission requires that you disseminate the ISER, the Peer Review Team Report, and this letter to all campus constituencies and the public by placing copies on the College website within seven business days of your receipt. Please note that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post current accreditation information on a Web page no more than one click from the institution's home page. In keeping with ACCJC policy, the Commission action will also be posted on the ACCJC website within 30 days of the date of the Commission's action.

On behalf of the Commission, we wish to express appreciation for the diligent work and thoughtful reflection that College of the Desert undertook to prepare for this review. These efforts confirm that peer review can serve the multiple constituencies of higher education by both ensuring and encouraging institutional quality and effectiveness.

If you have any questions about this letter or the Commission's action, please feel free to contact Dr. Mac Powell or the vice president assigned as liaison to your institution.

Sincerely,



Mac Powell, MBA, Ph.D.  
President



Kathleen F. Burke, Ed.D.  
Chair

cc: Ms. Misty Burruel, Accreditation Liaison Officer