



Academic Affairs Division

R. Ray D. Somera, Ph.D.
Vice President

TO: Members of the College Governing Council
FROM: Academic Vice President
SUBJECT: Response to advisory from ACCJC President Dr. Barbara Beno
DATE: May 7, 2008

A recent advisory I received from ACCJC President Dr. Barbara Beno, in response to my request for clarification, prompts me to bring a critical issue to the attention of the College Governing Council.

This issue stems from the use of the phrase "shared governance" in the college's 2006 Evaluation Report, which reads: *The college is considering a more formal organization for faculty participation in shared governance* (my emphasis) *such as the initiation of a faculty senate* (p. 5). An excerpt in Dr. Beno's advisory provides this clarification:

Shared governance has a specific legal meaning in the California public colleges that is established by state law/regulation, and pertains only to public community colleges in the CA system of colleges. The California-specific definition of shared governance has been the subject of much controversy in California, and is at times interpreted or applied in ways that do not meet ACCJC standards for governance and for quality processes. Therefore, the Commission does not use the words "shared governance" in evaluating its institutions, and does its best to edit the words "shared governance" from team reports and to train team chairs not to use the language. It appears the Commission failed to catch the use of the phrase "shared governance" in the team report you cite, and it should have done so and edited that phrase out of the report.

I am providing you a full copy of the advisory here, which elaborates on Standard 4 and its subcomponents.

As the college's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), and in the spirit of the full extent of what the advisory is intended for, I propose that the Council issue a recommendation to President Mary Okada to change the words "shared governance" in our college official documents and in its place, the phrase "participatory governance" or "collaborative governance" be used. While the former is the term that Dr. Beno used in her advisory, the latter is the phrase suggested by ACCJC Vice President Jack Pond when he conducted self study training for the Pacific colleges on the GCC campus recently.

I trust that our actions toward rectifying this oversight on the part of our accrediting team will bring us closer to working together for the benefit of the students and the community we serve.

I will make myself available when the College Governing Council chair calls a special meeting to discuss this very important issue. I anticipate that it will be soonest.


Dr. R. Ray D. Somera



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JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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Dr. Ray Somera
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Dear Dr. Somera:

Thank you for clarifying the exact wording of the team report that we spoke about when I was at Guam CC last week. The language of the report, specifically the team report's discussion of Guam CC's governance system, uses the term "shared governance." I reiterate here what I said while visiting with you last week: The Commission does not require "shared governance" but instead, participation in governance. Standard IV.A.2 states: "The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator and student participation in decision making processes."

Shared governance has a specific legal meaning in the California public colleges that is established by state law/regulation, and pertains only to public community colleges in the CA system of colleges. The California-specific definition of shared governance has been the subject of much controversy in California, and is at times interpreted or applied in ways that do not meet ACCJC standards for governance and for quality processes. Therefore, the Commission does not use the words "shared governance" in evaluating its institutions, and does its best to edit the words "shared governance" from team reports and to train team chairs not to use the language. It appears the Commission failed to catch the use of the phrase "shared governance" in the team report you cite, and it should have done so and edited that phrase out of the report.

The Commission uses the concept of participatory governance to convey its requirements that there be broad-based participation in decision making processes so that members of the college community can participate *as appropriate* in decision making processes. That is to say, for example, that students are not required to be part of decision making processes that would be inappropriate for students. The same principle holds true for other groups. You can see that part a. of Standard IV.A.2 begins to elaborate on the significant roles of faculty and administrators, and then says "students and (support) staff also have established mechanismsfor providing input."

Dr. Ray Somera
Accreditation Liaison Officer
Guam Community College
May 2, 2008

So, standards do not suggest that all participants be weighed equally, or included equally, in all decisions.

As noted above in Standard IV.A.2., Commission standards state that the policy for who participates in what decisions are written, so that it is clear.

You can also see that Standard IV.A.2.b. states "the institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee and academic administrators for *recommendations* about student learning programs and services." The Standards do NOT specify that those groups have the responsibility to make all decisions; indeed, they imply that other bodies or individuals may be making some decisions.

The Commission requires an institution to delineate the governance structures, processes and practices (IV.A.3). But the main thrust of the standards is that decisions be evaluated in terms of their integrity and effectiveness (Standard IV.A.5) in enabling the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn and improve (Standard IV. Preamble). That is, the Commission evaluates decision making processes and structures on the basis of their outcomes, not who is included. The point of broad participation is to make the decision outcomes as effective as possible.

I hope this information is helpful to you and to Guam CC. Please feel free to write or call me if you have any additional questions.

Commissioner Floyd Takeuchi and I enjoyed visiting Guam CC last week and appreciate the time you and other took to meet with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara A. Beno". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barbara" being more prominent than the last name "Beno".

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/cg

Enclosures