

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2016

The Honorable John King
Secretary of Education
400 Maryland Avenue Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20202-3100

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for your leadership in ensuring that all students have the opportunity for an affordable, quality higher education. We are writing to urge the Department of Education to deny the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) as a recognized accreditor, and to provide assistance to the California Community College (CCC) system – the largest higher education system in our country – as they transition to a new accreditor.

Community colleges are a key economic driver and indispensable ladder to success, security and prosperity in the 21st Century. City College of San Francisco (CCSF) is a cornerstone of the Bay Area's educational system. Since ACCJC issued the Show Cause measure in 2012, the entire CCSF community, including the administration, trustees, faculty, students and community leaders, have rallied together to make the necessary and tough decisions to ensure the College remains open and accredited.

Unfortunately, ACCJC's unfair and opaque actions continue to plague CCSF and the CCC system. ACCJC has inconsistently applied accrediting standards and ignored federal regulations; has lost the support of California's chancellors, state officials and unions; and has been the subject of multiple lawsuits. Simply put: neither the Department nor NACIQI can justify the continued recognition of ACCJC as a quality, fair or reliable accreditor.

California's independent State Auditor reviewed ACCJC from 2009 through 2014 and found that ACCJC's decision to terminate CCSF's accreditation in July 2013 was "inconsistent with the commission's treatment of other institutions." Further, the Auditor found that ACCJC sanctioned California Community Colleges at a significantly higher rate than its peers. The Superior Court of the State of California found ACCJC failed to notify CCSF of its deficiencies or address them and also failed to follow due process federal regulations.

We applaud the California Community College System, its Chancellors and Board of Governors for their bold decision to explore transitioning to a new accreditor. It is incumbent upon your Department to provide resources and support throughout this process, including providing direct and technical assistance to CCC and the 2.1 million community college students it serves.

We are proud to stand by the continued and remarkable progress CCSF has made, and am confident they will surpass accreditation standards in the newly created restoration process.

Thank you for your consideration of my views and for your commitment to sustaining City College's mission: 'Still Strong, Still Committed, Still City College.'


best regards,



NANCY PELOSI
Democratic Leader



JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress



ANNA ESHOO
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Ted Mitchell, Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity