

September 6, 2013

Written Comments: Re: Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (WASC-ACCJC)

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Committee on Accreditation and its Committee on Community Colleges do not think it is appropriate to expand the mission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission on Community and Junior Colleges (WASC-ACCJC) at this time. Within the past month, the United States Department of Education, in an August 13, 2013, letter from Ms. Kay Gilcher, has raised serious questions regarding the process used by WASC-ACCJC to deny accreditation to the City College of San Francisco; the California legislature has decided to conduct a legislative audit of WASC-ACCJC; and the San Francisco city attorney has filed a lawsuit against WASC-ACCJC. Until the outcomes from these investigations are known, it would seem to be highly inappropriate to increase the number and type of institutions for which WASC-ACCJC has accreditation responsibility.

The American Association of University Professors Committee on Accreditation monitors the activities of accrediting bodies and seeks to enhance the quality of higher education by advocating for the inclusion of Association principles (academic freedom, collegial governance, and fair processes) in accreditation standards and processes. The AAUP's Committee on Community Colleges deals with issues of concern to faculty in the nation's community colleges. The Committee advances AAUP principles on community college campuses in such matters as faculty workload, shared governance, academic freedom, and the over-reliance on contingent academic labor.

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