

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you all had a restful holiday season. I am writing to share some brief updates from ACCJC as we enter 2024.

First, our new Accreditation Standards have been launched, and the institutions piloting them have begun to share their feedback and appreciation for the focus on students and the efforts that drive equitable outcomes. Several colleges will highlight those learnings at our 2024 Conference on May 9-10 in Orange County. We have an exciting program that includes national and regional thought leaders, several dynamic breakout sessions, and a poster session hosted by the Lumina Foundation. I invite you and your colleagues to submit a poster presentation highlighting a promising practice at your institution that can be shared with the field. You can learn more about the event at <https://accjc-conference.org/>.

ACCJC staff will launch our new Salesforce-based technology platform this spring, and institutions will begin to access and share information about personnel, visits, and data through this system. I am tremendously grateful to the College Futures Foundation for the grant that made this incredible jump in technology possible.

On the personnel front, ***I am pleased to share that ACCJC has hired TWO new Vice Presidents.*** The search committee reviewed materials for more than 350 candidates, and the finalists that the staff met with were all inspiring, capable, and immensely qualified.

Thus, I am pleased to share that **Nickawanna Shaw** will begin her employment as Vice President on March 18. She will continue to serve as a Commissioner through the end of the January Commission meeting, during which we will recognize her service and transition. For those of you who don't know her, Nickawanna brings with her 27 years of higher education experience. She remains inspired to advocate at leadership tables as she has done throughout her career to expand equitable access to all, personally inspired by witnessing the struggles of her student-parent, single mother. While her career began on the East Coast and outside of the community college system, inside the CCC system, she has held numerous faculty and administrative leadership positions, including 16 years as classroom faculty in Kinesiology, where she began her commitment to improving her teaching by learning about and embedding student support practices into her curriculum and studying the physiological conditions that most often interfere with mechanisms of learning. This led to her work bringing wellness practices to students at the college and into her classroom by writing coursework in meditation and partnering early on with the Veteran's Center on her campus to support students reintegrating into society after active-duty service. She invested 15 years in the local Academic Senate, eight as President and other executive

leadership roles, and two additional years as Curriculum Chair. In her last faculty leadership role, she served as co-chair of a college-wide DEI Gap analysis, working at the request of the Board to evaluate all policies, planning documents, and practices using a modified version of the USC equity toolkit to uncover the unintentional, but present roadblocks for students and staff to engage freely and thrive as members of our college community. Her most recent role is outside of the faculty as the dean of Language Arts and Library at Citrus College. Nickawanna holds a master's degree from Smith College in Exercise and Sports Studies as well as a bachelor's from Mount Holyoke College in Compositional and Performance Studies in the Fine Arts with post-graduate work in andragogy (Temple), human resource development, multicultural counseling (Teacher's College) and online teaching and learning from Cal State East Bay.

Additionally, I am pleased to share that **Melynie Schiel** will begin her employment as Vice President in February. Melynie is a seasoned leader in higher education, with over 17 years of community college operational experience marked by a commitment to teaching, faculty leadership, management, and executive service. She has served as Faculty Division Chair, Researcher, Academic Senate President, Curriculum Committee Chair, Dean of Instruction, and most recently as Vice President of Academic Services at Copper Mountain Community College District, with extensive work in the community college classroom, faculty evaluation, collective bargaining, instructional management, distance education, schedule development, educational assessment, program review, strategic planning, budgeting, and continuous improvement. She has been instrumental in promoting equity-minded practices in instructional services and through cross-campus collaboration. At Copper Mountain College, she began her service as Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) in early 2021, when she was immediately tasked with addressing a second follow-up report for ACCJC regarding learning assessment compliance. Before 2021, she led and engaged in multiple local accreditation activities ranging from ISER development to workgroups addressing recommendations. Melynie also brings private sector experience in insurance, risk management, managerial accounting, and financial planning and analysis. Her leadership extends beyond campus boundaries, previously participating in Academic Senate for California Community College (ASCCC) committees to most recently participating in the Inland Empire Desert Regional Consortium (IEDRC) Executive Council, contributing to workshops and conventions, and championing initiatives to expand Career Technical Education programs and enhance student success. She has a Master of Arts in Economics from CSU Long Beach and dual bachelor's degrees in Business Administration and Economics from CSU Chico.

The opportunity to bring aboard two outstanding candidates was a gift that couldn't be ignored. With respect to caseloads and portfolios, ACCJC won't be making any decisions about assignments until after our Staff Retreat in February. Ginni May will continue to serve as an Interim Vice President and lead the teams and trainings already planned/underway.

On the policy front, the Department of Education's most recent Negotiated Rulemaking starts next week. Our colleagues from the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (CRAC) and our lobbyists are participating and are tracking the significant amount of pending federal legislation (including short-term Pell). We will have an extraordinarily busy policy season in early 2024, and I will keep you posted on developments that affect our engagement and advocacy.

Thank you for your support of peer review! I look forward to a bright year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mac Powell', written on a light-colored background.

Mac Powell, MBA, PhD

President

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[ACCJC On the Move](#)