



# Accreditation **Basics**

Preparing for  
Evergreen Valley College's

2016  
Accreditation  
Team Visit



# Evergreen Valley College Mission Statement

With equity, opportunity and social justice as our guiding principles, Evergreen Valley College's mission is to empower and prepare students from diverse backgrounds to succeed academically and to be civically responsible global citizens.

We meet our mission through a wide spectrum of educational experiences, flexible methodologies, and support services for our students. We offer associate degrees, associate degrees for transfer, certificates, career technical education, transfer coursework, and basic skills education. (Revisions approved by the SJECCD Board of Trustees October 13, 2015)



'bāsiks/  
skill. the essential facts or principles of a subject or

# Strategic Initiatives

1. **Student-Centered:** We provide access to quality and efficient programs and services to ensure student success.

Areas of focus are:

- Access
- Curriculum and Programs
- Services

2. **Community Engagement:** We will transform the college image and enhance partnerships with community, business and educational institutions.

Areas of focus are:

- Increase Visibility
- Develop Strategic Partnerships
- Building Campus Community

3. **Organizational Transformation:** We create a trusting environment where everyone is valued and empowered.

Areas of focus are:

- Student Access: Completion of Educational Goals
- Employee Development
- Transparent Infrastructure

## Introduction

### **Why does accreditation matter?**

Accreditation is a process whereby member colleges voluntarily agree to hold themselves to a set of standards of academic excellence. An accredited college is evaluated by peers and experts who acknowledge the institution's status. Being accredited means that students and the community can trust what the college represents about its programs, services, and resources.

Employers seek candidates from accredited programs when making hiring decisions. Baccalaureate institutions accept only transfer credit units from accredited colleges. Federal and state financial governments award financial aid to qualified students enrolled at accreditation schools.

Evergreen Valley College is fully accredited by the Accreditation Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).

### **How can I use this primer?**

As you read this primer, think about what your role might be as we move forward and how our planning, program review, student learning outcomes, and governance processes are integrated in the work you do.

### **Where can I go if I have more questions?**

We invite you to visit the EVC Accreditation website, which houses our Accreditation Self-Evaluation Report and all of our evidence and supporting documents. <http://www.evc.edu/discover-evc/accreditation>

Keith Aytch, our Vice President of Academic Affairs and Accreditation Liaison Officer and Lynette Apen, our accreditation faculty chair are great resources to point you in the right direction to answer any questions you may have.

## What you should know...

Accreditation has shifted from looking back at what we do and making a decision retrospectively to looking forward to seeing the college we can become.

There are five components to accreditation that we have addressed in our work. First, we have responded to Eligibility Requirements which are the expectations that EVC met when we first became a college. The Eligibility Requirements, or ERs for short, address the overarching activities of the college. EVC must continually meet the ERs as part of what we do.

The second component are the Accreditation Standards, or simply “the Standards,” which cover in greater detail, the work we do each day.

Standard I deals with our Mission, Institutional Effectiveness, Academic Quality and Integrity.

Standard II deals with our academic programs, student services programs and the library and learning services.

Standard III covers our resources including human, physical, technological and financial.

Standard IV covers our decision making, president, board matters and district activities.

The third component are the federal regulations and policies that we need to examine. As you might have read or heard, the US Government is playing a greater role in accreditation, specifically focused on how we steward our goal setting activities and financial aid.

The fourth component of accreditation includes the plans and activities we are building within our existing systems and processes to make key improvements to what we do.

The final, and perhaps most exciting component, is our improvement and innovation plan. It is where we think outside the box, think outside of our existing systems and processes to create new ideas to improve student learning and success. This component is called the Quality Focus Essay.

## The Self-Evaluation Report

All of our responses are contained in a self evaluation report. Some of you might know the report by its old name, “the self study.”

The self evaluation covers a wide range of topics from our data and demographics, responses to the ERs and Standards, and the checklist for compliance with the regulations and policies.

When we discussed the standards, you will see two key sections. First, the Evidence of Meeting the Standard. In this section we explain what we do and show how we do it. The next section is the Analysis and Evaluation where we reflect on what we do and see how our work is against the standards. From the analysis and evaluation we build our plans and create the Quality Focus Essay. The self-evaluation report is available on the web for a more detailed review if you like.

## The Visit

On October 10 through 13, 2016, the ACCJC will send a 15-person team of peers to verify our progress on meeting the standards. Part of the visit will include interviews with key people at the college who are most familiar with our planning, assessment, and governance efforts. After coming to the college and examining our work, the team will generate a report that will be forwarded to ACCJC for review.

In January, EVC will send a team to speak before the Commission to share our continued efforts between the time of the visit and the meeting of the Commissioners. The ACCJC will evaluate the report, evidence, and interviews and report their findings in a letter to the college. We are confident that our hard work meets the ACCJC expectations for growth.

In 2020, EVC will produce its midterm report, which will apprise the ACCJC of the work on our plans and QFE, as well as document our progress on meeting the any recommendations. While the formal requirements of accreditation have specific dates for submission and timelines for completion, the work of assuring institutional quality is a constant cycle of evaluation, analysis, and improvement.

## Quality and Innovation

You will notice something new this time for accreditation, the Quality Focus Essay (QFE). The QFE is born out of the college self evaluation and is an opportunity for colleges to further study and take action in areas that need wide-spread institutional change, development or improvement and have the potential to impact student outcomes.

EVC has identified two areas of focus for the QFE action Projects

### 1. Planning-Institutional Effectiveness

Goal: Strengthen the structure and processes for institutional effectiveness

### 2. Communication

Goal: Strengthen Communication to facilitate a more cohesive college community

#### QFE Desired Outcomes Action Project 1

- Refine infrastructure for institutional planning and resource allocation
- Operationalize long term and short term institutional planning timelines
- Align campus activities utilizing the integrated plan
- Monitor Institutional Set Standards for achievement and report improvements
- Establish evaluation plan and timeline for planning activities and college processes.

#### QFE Desired Outcomes Action Project 2

- Establish global picture of EVCs current communication procedures
- Establish Campus communication plan
- Facilitate reporting between shared governance entities (bidirectional)
- Increase frequency and quality of dialogue

To learn more about EVCs QFE and Action Projects, please visit our website [http://www.evc.edu/discover-evc/accreditation/2016-quality-focus-essay-\(qfe\)](http://www.evc.edu/discover-evc/accreditation/2016-quality-focus-essay-(qfe))

## Next Steps...

Over the next few months, we will be updating the entire college about the work we have done, what to expect at the visit, and how we will use the feedback from the team's report to improve what we do at EVC. We want you to be prepared for the visit and feel good about sharing the good work that we do. Some of you will be subject matter experts and will likely be interviewed by team members. We will be meeting with those folks so that you know what to expect, what to bring and what the team is looking for in terms of responses. Others may participate as a group because you are a member of a key college governance committee. We will be coming to committee meetings to share what will happen when the team comes. Finally, some of you play key roles at the campus that might not be relevant to the meetings with the team, but are still how we show the team who we are.

To make this a little fun, we will be having some contests, games and events to put the accreditation process into proper perspective. We do great work at EVC, there are areas we can improve on, and we want to learn from the team how to become better. Do not hesitate to contact the accreditation leads at the college if you have any questions, we will be happy to help. Let's show the team, the accrediting commission, our students and the community we serve our commitment to quality and our efforts to meet the important mission we have here in Evergreen Valley College. Go EVC!

