



## EL CAMINO COLLEGE

September 30, 2010

# The Process to Accreditation (v.2)

## An Internal Planning Document

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The El Camino Community College District and the Compton Community College District are committed to obtaining independent accreditation for El Camino College Compton Educational Center in accordance with the goals set forth in A.B. 318 and the Partnership Agreement between the two parties.

The objective of this document is to present certain facts, assumptions, and principles that will guide the future plans and activities of the parties to achieve that goal. Among the principles to which the El Camino and Compton districts will adhere in pursuing accreditation for the El Camino College Compton Center (ECC Compton Center or Center) are the following:

**Principle:** The El Camino and Compton districts will work cooperatively to obtain the independent accreditation of ECC Compton Center.

**Principle:** ECC Compton Center's readiness to enter into the accreditation process and achieve independent accreditation is evaluated solely by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (Accrediting Commission), and according to the Accrediting Commission performance criteria applicable to each stage of the accreditation process. The evaluation standards are those published by the Accrediting Commission.

**Principle:** To achieve accreditation eligibility and move through all subsequent phases of the accreditation process, all planning and work toward accreditation must be done cooperatively by El Camino College and the Center, with the working committees including representation from both entities, but primarily populated by faculty, students, staff and administrators from the ECC Compton Center.

**Principle:** To achieve candidacy and eventual accreditation, ECC Compton Center must demonstrate that it is fully qualified to meet the accreditation standards. Therefore, as the Center progresses through the phases of accreditation, it will need to become more of an independently functioning institution within the El Camino Community College District, with El Camino College exercising its Accrediting Commission-mandated oversight role in new and different ways.

The balance of this document is devoted to an overview of accreditation, the accreditation process, the anticipated timeline for accreditation and related matters.

### **Accreditation Eligibility**

To qualify for eligibility, El Camino College must identify and illustrate how the ECC Compton Center meets the twenty-one criteria for eligibility ([accjc.org/pdf/Eligibility\\_Requirements.pdf](http://accjc.org/pdf/Eligibility_Requirements.pdf)). The initial phase for accreditation of the Center requires El Camino College to establish goals and benchmarks for review and implementation throughout the accreditation eligibility process.

Once El Camino College has concluded that the ECC Compton Center has met the twenty-one criteria for eligibility for accreditation and the Standards for Accreditation, El Camino College will submit an application for eligibility to the Accrediting Commission. At this point, no firm timeline can be imposed on the process, as all timelines are determined solely by the activities and schedules of the Accrediting Commission.

Upon Accrediting Commission approval of accreditation eligibility for ECC Compton Center, the Accrediting Commission determines the course of action and timeline the Center must follow in preparation for candidacy. If the Accrediting Commission denies accreditation eligibility, El Camino College will receive input from the Accrediting Commission regarding which deficiencies the ECC Compton Center must correct before El Camino College may again apply for accreditation eligibility of the Center.

Currently, ECC Compton Center is in the process of working toward meeting all of the twenty-one eligibility requirements. This includes providing evidence of sustainability in the areas of planning and program review, and evidence of proficiency in student learning outcomes and assessment.

### **Applying for Candidacy**

Once accreditation eligibility is granted by the Accrediting Commission, El Camino College will prepare to apply for candidacy status of the ECC Compton Center. The Accrediting Commission will establish timelines for El Camino College in preparation of the candidacy review. An initial Self Study Report documenting how the Center meets the Standards of Accreditation and other Accrediting Commission policies will be prepared and submitted – this process usually takes 18-24 months. ([accjc.org/pdf/ACCJC\\_WASC\\_Accreditation\\_Standards.pdf](http://accjc.org/pdf/ACCJC_WASC_Accreditation_Standards.pdf)).

After the ECC Compton Center progresses to the point of a site visit, a team selected by the Accrediting Commission will visit the Center to validate the information presented in the self study report and to determine whether their standards, policies and eligibility criteria have been met. Following the site visit, the team prepares an evaluation report to the Accrediting Commission. During the candidacy stage, the Center must follow all Accrediting Commission guidelines, including completion of Accrediting Commission required annual reports and midterm progress reports. Based on the recommendations of the site visit team report and the overall assessment of the Accrediting Commission, El Camino College will receive a report with commendations and recommendations for areas of required improvement for the Center to be in compliance with the Standards for Accreditation.

The Accrediting Commission may grant, defer, or deny candidacy to the ECC Compton Center. If candidacy is granted, the Center must remain in compliance with the standards of accreditation throughout the entire candidacy period, which is at least two years. If denial occurs, the institution may reapply for candidacy by completing another Self Study Report after two years.

While in the candidacy stage, the ECC Compton Center remains an educational center of El Camino College.

### **Completing Candidacy and Applying for Initial Accreditation**

Once the ECC Compton Center effectively completes all progress reports to the Accrediting Commission during the candidacy stage, the Accrediting Commission may recommend commencing the final phase to accreditation. Provided the Center is successful during the candidacy period, a second Self Study Report, followed by another site visit is required. The site visit team is again validating the evidence in order to determine whether the Standards for Accreditation have been met. The team report is sent to the Accrediting Commission, where another overall assessment is completed by the Accrediting Commission at which time initial accreditation as a college is granted, or if full accreditation is not given, El Camino College must wait two years before submitting a new eligibility application to the Accrediting Commission and begin the entire process anew.

## **Accreditation Plan and Projected Timelines**

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The projected timelines and required activities for accreditation eligibility and candidacy are included in Appendix B, beginning on page 5. They are intended to serve as a guide for eligibility and candidacy, through accreditation of the ECC Compton Center to a college.

The process to obtain accreditation of the ECC Compton Center as an independent college will be completed in phases and organized as follows:

Compton District's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and El Camino College's Vice President of Compton Center (VPCC) will jointly lead the process to accreditation. They will be responsible for continuously monitoring the process and making the operational decisions necessary to ensure that work is complete, on time and of high quality. The CEO and VPCC will be accountable to the Superintendent/President and the Special Trustee, and through them to the El Camino and Compton Boards of Trustees. El Camino College's Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) will serve as the Center's Accreditation Liaison Officer.

To assist the CEO and the VPCC in guiding the process, the Superintendent/President will appoint an Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC). The membership of the ASC will include:

- The President of the Faculty Council and two additional faculty members nominated by the Council;
- Two classified employees, one nominated by the classified unit of the Federation, and one unrepresented classified employee nominated by his/her peers;
- A student nominated by the Associated Student Body;
- An ECC Compton Center manager; and
- El Camino College's Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Student and Community Advancement, and Administrative Services.

The ASC will be co-chaired by the CEO, VPCC and the President of the Faculty Council (FC).

Throughout the year, appropriate faculty, staff and administrators, including the CEO, VPCC, ECC Compton Center Deans and others, will immerse themselves in the accreditation process, and participate in Accrediting Commission workshops and training to more fully understand Accrediting Commission policies and procedures. This will also afford them the opportunity to meet Accrediting Commission staff and to better understand the culture of accreditation.

The first phase of the process to accreditation will be to prepare an eligibility application and supporting documentation for submission to the Accrediting Commission. Presuming the Accrediting Commission grants accreditation eligibility, the second and third phases of the process will be preparation for candidacy, followed by application for initial accreditation.

During the entire process, the direction, guidelines and timelines, from candidacy through full accreditation, are determined by the Accrediting Commission and not El Camino College, ECC Compton Center, the Compton Community College District, or any other entity.

The anticipated timeline and target dates for each phase of the process will need to be updated periodically as the process evolves and conditions change. Responsibility for revising the timelines and targets rests with the ECC VPAA with input from the CEO and VPCC after consultation with the ASC.

“Accreditation serves the public interest by certifying that the institution meets or exceeds specific standards of quality. This certification is also used by the federal government and other entities to determine whether an institution and its students are eligible for participation in federal financial aid programs or other forms of financial assistance to institutions. The peer-based nature of accreditation helps to maintain the values of higher education, particularly the values associated with academic freedom. Finally, the process of periodic self-examination and external peer review is a positive force in sustaining the quality of higher education and improving the effectiveness of accredited institutions.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eligibility, Candidacy and Initial Accreditation Manual, A Publication of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Summer 2009

## APPENDIX A

### Key to Abbreviations

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Accrediting Commission Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
ALO Accreditation Liaison Officer  
ASC Accreditation Steering Committee  
CBO Chief Business Officer  
CCCD Compton Community College District  
CEO Chief Executive Officer  
ECC El Camino College  
ECCCD El Camino Community College District  
FC Faculty Council  
FCMAT Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team  
VPAA Vice President of Academic Affairs  
VPAS Vice President of Administrative Services  
VPCC Vice President of ECC Compton Center  
VPSCA Vice President of Student and Community Advancement

## APPENDIX B

### Anticipated Timelines and Projected Dates

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#### Accreditation Eligibility

##### Fall 2010

1. In consultation with the CEO and the VPCC, the ECC Compton Center ALO, will schedule training for all participants through the Accrediting Commission.
2. The twenty-one Eligibility Criteria will be reviewed for objective assessment of tasks, and the ECC Compton Center's readiness for eligibility.
3. If the task assessment determines the Center is not ready, the ASC may recommend a revision of the plan and timeline to the Superintendent/President.
4. Assessment and response to the twenty-one Eligibility Criteria will be divided into the following areas: Organization (1,2,3,4,5,6), Instruction (7,8,9,10,11,), Faculty (12,13), Student Services (14,15, 16), Financial Integrity (17,18), Planning and Evaluation (19), Public Information (20) and Relations with the Accrediting Commission (21). There are five area groupings for the criteria; therefore, five subcommittees will be established for developing responses.

5. Five subcommittees and chairs:
  - i. Organization CEO, chair
  - ii. Instruction/Faculty FC President, chair
  - iii. Student Services/Public Information VPSCA and Dean Student Services, co-chairs
  - iv. Financial Integrity VPAS and CBO, co-chairs
  - v. Planning and Evaluation VPCC, chair
6. All appointed members will be required to participate in the committees on a regular basis; accurate agendas and minutes will be published on the [compton.edu](http://compton.edu) and [elcamino.edu](http://elcamino.edu) websites in a timely manner.
7. A writing team will be selected.
8. First subcommittee reports with electronic copies of documents and rationale will be completed. Subcommittees will continue assessing eligibility in respectively assigned areas. Subcommittees will develop recommendations for improvement actions if necessary.
9. ASC begins review of drafts and progress.
10. ASC co-chairs advise subcommittee chairs on next steps.
11. Continue scheduling training for participants to enhance knowledge of accreditation standards.

#### Winter/Spring 2011

1. Develop a Communications Plan in coordination with the Director of Community Relations.
  - a. Hold open forum at the ECC Compton Center for progress update and to answer questions relative to accreditation. ASC reviews comments and feedback from the forum.
  - b. Publish an accreditation newsletter each semester for internal and external communities.
  - c. Prepare information reports for the ECCCD and CCCD Boards of Trustees.
  - d. Establish an accreditation web page on the El Camino College and Center websites.
2. ASC co-chairs meet with Senior Management to report status of progress.
  - a. Identify gaps or missing information, regroup teams if necessary.
  - b. Reset timeline if necessary.
3. Develop draft document for response to the Eligibility Criteria.
  - a. Draft posted on El Camino College and Center websites with documentation.
  - b. Senior Management reviews and recommends revisions.
4. First draft of the Eligibility Proposal posted on the El Camino and Center websites.
5. Communications update.
  - a. Hold open forum to discuss the proposal.
  - b. ASC review comments and feedback from the forum.
  - c. Continue publishing accreditation newsletter with updates.
  - d. Update accreditation process on El Camino and Center websites.
  - e. Presentation to ECCCD and CCCD Boards of Trustees.

### Fall 2011

Finalize the proposal for review by El Camino College Cabinet, Senior Management and other constituencies.

1. Continue the final editing under direction of the ASC co-chairs.
2. Publish information on El Camino and Center websites.
3. ECC Compton Center ALO initiates contact with the chair of the Accreditation Eligibility Committee to review the final draft and discuss areas that need to be rewritten and/or need additional documentation.
4. Present a copy of the draft Eligibility Proposal to the El Camino and Compton Boards of Trustees for review and comment.
5. Determine if the Eligibility Proposal will be submitted to the Accrediting Commission Eligibility Committee for review at its January 2012 meeting, or if submission will be postponed for six months for review by the Committee at its June 2012 meeting.

### Spring 2012 or Fall 2012

The Accrediting Commission informs the El Camino College President whether the Eligibility Proposal for the ECC Compton Center is approved.

1. If yes – the Center prepares for the initial Self Study for candidacy.
2. If no - The process for eligibility begins again.

## Accreditation Candidacy

### Fall 2012 or Spring 2013

1. Accrediting Commission informs El Camino College of the timeframe for the Self Study for candidacy.
2. Candidacy includes a Self Study Report which usually takes two years to prepare for submission to the Accrediting Commission.
3. Once candidacy is granted, the ECC Compton Center must remain in compliance with the Standards of Accreditation throughout the entire candidacy period, which is granted for two years, but may not exceed four years.