

January 21, 2025

Dr. Janice Lawhorn
Interim President
Gila Community College
8274 S Shooter Canyon Rd
Globe, AZ 85501

Dear Dr. Lawhorn:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, at its meeting January 8-9, 2025, reviewed the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), evidentiary materials, and Teach-Out Plan submitted by Gila Community College in support of its application for Candidacy.

The Commission also considered the Peer Review Team Report (Team Report) prepared by the peer review team that conducted its onsite visit to the College October 7-9, 2024. The Commission appreciated your spoken remarks, as well as presence of Jan Brocker, Gila County District Governing Board President.

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the College demonstrates the ability to meet all the Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, or to fully meet them within the two-year Candidate period. Upon consideration of the written and oral information noted above, the Commission acted to **Grant Candidacy** (preaccreditation). ACCJC's grant of accreditation or preaccreditation, per the institution's request, does not include participation in Title IV, Higher Education Act programs. The Commission also acted to **accept the Teach-Out Plan** submitted as part of the Candidacy application.

Commendations

Commendations signify institutional practices for which the Commission believes exceed Standards. The Commission recognizes the exemplary performance of Gila Community College in the following areas.

Standard 2.8 (Commendation 1): The Commission commends the Institution for its ability to foster a sense of belonging and community with its students, providing multiple opportunities for engagement, particularly with its older adults and high school populations via dual enrollment and career technical education partners.

Compliance Requirements

The Commission determined that the College must demonstrate compliance with the following Standards, as identified in the College recommendations in order to achieve Initial Accreditation. This demonstration must be addressed in a Follow-Up Report, which will serve as your application for Initial Accreditation.

Standard 1.3 (College Requirement 1): In order to achieve initial accreditation, the Commission requires the Institution develop institution-set standards and meaningfully disaggregate data to inform plans for continued improvement.

Required Documentation 1v: In order to meet the requirements for expected documentation under Standard 1, the Commission requires the Institution submit documentation that the institution has established standards and goals for student achievement (i.e., institution-set standards), including but not limited to standards and goals for course success, degree and certificate attainment, transfer, job placement rates, and licensure examination pass rates, at the institutional and program levels.

Standard 4.3 (College Requirement 2): In order to achieve initial accreditation, the Commission requires the Institution implement and operationalize their governance structure.

Recommendations for Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The Peer Review Team Report noted Recommendation 3 for improving institutional effectiveness. Improvement recommendations do not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice, but consistent with its mission to foster continuous improvement through the peer review process, the Commission encourages institutions to give serious consideration to these recommendations and the advice contained in the Peer Review Team Report. In the Midterm Report, the College will include actions taken in response to the improvement recommendations.

Next Steps

The Team Report provides details of the peer review team's findings. The guidance and recommendations contained in the Report represent the best advice of the peer review team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the College to improve or to come into compliance. A final copy of the Team Report is attached.

The Commission requires that you disseminate the ISER, the Team Report, the Teach-Out Plan, and this letter to all campus constituencies and the public by placing copies on the College website within seven business days of your receipt. Please note that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post current accreditation information on a Web page no more than one click from the institution's home page. In keeping with ACCJC policy, the Commission action will also be posted on the ACCJC website within 30 days of the date of the Commission's action.

In accordance with federal regulations, Candidacy is a formal affiliation status granted to institutions that have successfully undergone an Eligibility review, as well as a comprehensive review process using the Accreditation Standards, including preparation of an Institutional Self-Evaluation Report and a review by a peer review team. Candidacy is granted when the institution demonstrates the ability – as it continues to develop – to fully meet all the Accreditation Standards and Commission policies within the two-year Candidate period. During Candidacy, the institution undertakes the necessary steps to reach demonstrable and complete compliance with Accreditation Standards. Candidate status may be extended for two years, for a total period not to exceed four years. Institutions that have achieved Candidacy status may make public representations about their relationship with the Commission. Please refer to ACCJC’s [“Policy on Representation of Accredited Status.”](#)

The next report from the College will be the Follow Up Report¹, which will serve as your application for Initial Accreditation, **due no later than October 1, 2026. This report submission will be followed by a visit from a peer review team.** In close consultation with your ACCJC Staff Liaison, Vice President Gohar Momjian, you are advised to move forward toward the next stage of accreditation, as described in the [Accreditation Handbook](#). At a time determined in consultation with your liaison, a site visit will be arranged to verify the findings of the Follow-up report.

On behalf of the Commission, we wish to express appreciation for the diligent work and thoughtful reflection that Gila Community College undertook to prepare for this review. These efforts confirm that peer review can serve the multiple constituencies of higher education by both ensuring and encouraging institutional quality and effectiveness.

If you have any questions about this letter or the Commission’s action, please feel free to contact Dr. Mac Powell or the vice president assigned as liaison to your institution.

Sincerely,



Mac Powell, MBA, Ph.D.
President



Kathleen F. Burke, Ed.D.
Chair

¹ Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-up Reports, and Special Reports to the Commission should review the Accreditation Handbook and applicable report template available on the ACCJC website at <https://accjc.org/accreditation-handbook-and-report-templates/>.