

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 3, 2017

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**North Orange County Community College District's School of Continuing Education
Granted Full, Six-Year Accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Schools,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC)**

ANAHEIM, CA – The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) notified the North Orange County Community College District's (NOCCCD) **School of Continuing Education (SCE)** on May 3, 2017 of its action to grant SCE **a six-year term of accreditation**, which is the longest cycle of accreditation, with no mid-cycle visit and no warnings. This notice comes one month earlier than the anticipated June announcement date.

In the letter dated May 1, 2017, WASC Commission Chairperson Damon Kerby stated "The ACS WASC Commissioners have determined School of Continuing Education meets the ACS WASC criteria for accreditation. This accreditation status is based on all of the information provided by the school, including the self-study report, and the satisfactory completion of the on-site accreditation visit. It is the decision of the Commission to grant Six-Year Accreditation Status through June 30, 2023." SCE will continue to implement the action plan over the next six years with a progress report sent to the ACS WASC Commission at the end of the third year.

In an e-mail sent to all SCE faculty and staff, Provost Valentina Purtell said "The accreditation decision was made one month earlier than expected. This, along with the level of the accreditation status, speaks volumes about the caliber of our institution and your dedication to its success."

The WASC four-member accreditation visiting team spent four productive days, March 19-22, 2017, visiting SCE classrooms, meeting with faculty and staff, and interviewing students. The WASC team's visit marked SCE's second self-study visit. The WASC ACS team granted SCE a full, six-year accreditation cycle, with no mid-cycle review, and no warnings during the institution's initial self-study visit in March 2011. The WASC visiting team was quoted as saying, "SCE is a model school" in both 2011 and 2017.

SCE's WASC accreditation chair Lianne Greenlee summed up the visit by emphasizing SCE's characteristics, saying: "SCE is a model adult education institution – celebrate it! [SCE] is successful, critical to the field, and can rightfully be called courageous leaders." She also gave a commendation for cultivating a boundless and growing presence in the community and for providing a welcoming environment for the diverse student body. Greenlee continued, "students said to us 'at SCE, we are proud to go to school with students who have disabilities as well as students of all ages and backgrounds. We feel safe and welcome here; this is our home.'"

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SCE was given commendations in many areas, but most notably in the following five major areas:

- SCE employees across all constituency groups are passionate about serving students and have created an institutional culture which embraces diversity.
- The multi-faceted delivery of services to students is a model for adult education.
- Innovative use of braided funding allows SCE to offer robust programs to serve their diverse student body.
- A school-wide trust in leadership creates a climate of collaboration and risk-taking which makes SCE a courageous leader in innovative curriculum design.
- Through a dynamic synergy with its community partners, SCE is a vital and vibrant institution which provides all students that it serves with pathways to success.

In addition, the WASC Visiting Team provided SCE with two major key issues (also known as goals):

- Goal 1: Repackage existing learning options in the form of educational pathways and create new pathways to increase the likelihood of completion and transition to credit programs and beyond.
- Goal 2: Align student services from various funding streams to improve student performance as measures by common indicators.

The Visiting Team recommended that SCE strengthen its Institutional Effectiveness Goal by developing a school-wide program improvement model based on data analysis and discussion, and by engaging all faculty, managers, and designated staff in integrated planning efforts.

Provost **Purtell** gives credit and thanks to the over 120 faculty and staff members who contributed to the self-study report and prepared for the visit. A special note of gratitude was given to SCE's WASC accreditation co-chairs, **Adam S. U. Gottdank, Ph.D.** and **Julie Schoepf**.

SCE Background

A member of NOCCCD, which also includes Cypress College and Fullerton College, SCE has been cultivating change for over 40 years with educational programs and services from high school completion, English-language acquisition, career technical education training, and self-development courses. SCE serves 30,000 students annually, ranging from preschoolers to seniors, at three Center locations in Anaheim, Cypress, and Wilshire (Fullerton) as well as approximately 150 off-campus locations. Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and part of the California Community College System, all SCE courses are approved by the State of California. NOCCCD's School of Continuing Education – **Change. Cultivated.**

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