



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***North Orange Continuing Education Granted Full, Six-Year Accreditation
by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges***

ANAHEIM, CA – The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) notified North Orange Continuing Education (NOCE) on April 27, 2023 of its action to grant North Orange Continuing Education (NOCE) a six-year term of accreditation, which is the longest cycle of accreditation, with no mid-cycle visit and no warnings. This is the highest level of accreditation, one that NOCE has proudly achieved three times in a row. The action was taken at the Spring 2023 WASC Commission Meeting based on the information provided by our school, including the school’s report, and the March 2023 accreditation visit.

In the letter dated May 27, 2023, WASC Commission Chairperson R. David Gaudi Jr., Ed.D. 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.” NOCE will work on 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 her announcement via e-mail, NOCE President Valentina Purtell thanked staff, faculty, and student leaders for contributing to the positive result, with all team members playing an important role in ensuring the high quality of NOCE’s programs and services every day.

The WASC seven-member accreditation visiting team spent three productive days, March 13-15, 2023, virtually visiting NOCE classrooms, meeting with faculty and staff, and interviewing students. The NOCE team’s efforts were reflected in the comments of the visiting team during the virtual team visit’s readout presentation.

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Visiting team members made the following comments about NOCE:

- The culture of collaboration and the genuine relationships of care and mutual appreciation, despite multiple locations, was noticed right away upon interacting with NOCE team members and students.
- Based on the self-study report, evidence, and interviews, it became clear that NOCE is an institution of high quality and deep care for its students.
- NOCE stayed the course of completing its Accreditation Action Plan despite the pandemic disruptions. Staff connected with students right after the pandemic shutdown and found ways to offer students social and emotional support besides preserving access to academic programs and student services. All programs maintained their momentum, which shows commitment to serving the community.

The WASC Visiting Team identified the following school-wide strengths:

- Resilience of the institution and maintenance of effort to provide high-quality and comprehensive programs and student services in spite of the pandemic, including launching distance education in record time.
- Comprehensive student support services aligned with the institutional core values and honoring wholistic approach to supporting students in their journey at NOCE.
- Extensive menu of course offerings to address academic, vocational, and enrichment needs of students. NOCE has something for everyone.

In addition, the following school-wide growth areas were identified:

- Expand the capacity of the SLO assessment – ensure that key course SLO data elements are tied to program level outcomes and institutional outcomes.
- Continue to develop rigor, relevance, and coherency of the distance education offerings.
- Include NOCE student representation in the District shared governance structures.

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“The cycle of continuous improvement never ends, instead it propels us to the next level of excellence,” said President Purtell. “It is time for us to celebrate our school’s achievement and it is also time for all of us to begin addressing all identified growth areas in NOCE’s Accreditation Action Plan. There is a lot of work ahead of us, but we will tackle it together in NOCE’s innovative and successful ways.

The WASC team’s visit marked NOCE’s third self-study visit. The WASC ACS team granted NOCE 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 and second visit in March 2017. The WASC visiting team was quoted as saying, “NOCE is a model school” in both 2011 and 2017.

President Purtell gives credit and thanks to the over 100 faculty and staff members and student leaders who contributed to the self-study report and prepared for the visit. A special note of gratitude was given to NOCE’s WASC accreditation co-chairs, **Tina McClurkin** and **Julie Schoepf**.

NOCE Background

A member of NOCCCD, which also includes Cypress College and Fullerton College, NOCE has been cultivating change since 1973 with tuition-free educational programs and services from high school completion, English-language acquisition, career technical education training, and self-development courses. NOCE serves more than 15,000 students annually, ranging from preschoolers to seniors, at three Center locations in Anaheim, Cypress, and Fullerton as well as approximately 75+ community-based partner locations. Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and part of the California Community College System, all NOCE courses are approved by the State of California.

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