



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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DATE: October 10, 2012

TO: Chief Executive Officers, Chief Instructional Officers,
Accreditation Liaison Officers, Academic Senate Presidents,
and interested others

FROM: Barbara A. Beno, President *Barbara A. Beno*

SUBJECT: Notification of Grant Award

I am pleased to inform you that the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has received Lumina Foundation¹ funding for a 30-month project, "*Application of the Degree Qualification Profile (DQP)*"² to Two-Year Colleges in the Western Region." The DQP is a generic framework for defining the student competencies associated with a degree and was developed with the support of the Lumina Foundation. With this grant, ACCJC member institutions will join institutions in three other accrediting regions in exploring the practical utility of the DQP as a tool for developing or strengthening the institutions' degree learning outcomes and learning assessments for individual institutional programs and degrees.

Student learning outcomes assessment is a key element of educational quality and institutional effectiveness, and has become a critical component of the Accreditation Standards. Assessment of learning, and the use of assessment results to inform institutional practices, has become an essential component of educational quality improvement and efforts to improve student success. The ACCJC Lumina Foundation grant provides an opportunity to establish and test whether well-articulated outcomes at the associate degree level improve the value of the associate degree and improve associate degree holders' opportunities for employment and transfer to four-year institutions. This grant will fund two types of projects, as follows.

1. Six to ten ACCJC member institutions will design and implement self-selected projects, approximately eighteen months in duration, involving the Degree Qualifications Profile and its application to career and technical programs and academic programs at their institutions. The colleges will participate in training activities during the course of their projects, and will collaborate on strategies aimed to enhance student achievement and student learning. Member institutions are invited to express interest in participating in a project. Interested colleges should be at the Proficiency level in SLO implementation³.

2. An additional group of four to six California public community colleges will be invited to work with identified California State Universities (CSUs) who receive transferring students from their colleges. This group of institutions will work to align degree outcomes for selected statewide community college AA-T and AS-T degrees with expectations for 3rd year students in bachelor's degree programs at those CSUs. Participating community colleges will be identified for their proximity to the identified CSUs.

Interested colleges should contact Vice President Krista Johns for more information on how to apply for this project at:

Email: [kjohms@accjc.org](mailto:kjohns@accjc.org)

Telephone: 415-506-0234

The ACCJC plans to share the work of participating institutions with its broader institutional membership. In addition, the Commission will compile effective practices from this work for consideration during the ongoing Review of Accreditation Standards and Practices.

Available November 1, 2012: Please look for a link to the Degree Qualifications Profile Project page at www.accjc.org for ongoing information about this project.

¹ Lumina Foundation, an Indianapolis-based private foundation, is dedicated to expanding access to and success in education beyond high school. For more information, logon to <http://www.luminafoundation.org>.

² The Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) offers a framework for the core competencies for recipients of degrees at the associate, bachelor's, and master's levels. The DQP describes five basic areas of learning: broad, integrative knowledge; specialized knowledge (within one's chosen field of study); intellectual skills; applied learning (application of learning to/in real-world situations); and civic learning (responsible citizenship and ability to contribute to the common good). Within each area, the profile describes the framework for key learning outcomes in which a student should be competent, with the expectations for students increasing as they move up the three degree levels.

The DQP framework is complimentary to "tuning," a process in which discipline faculty identify and agree upon the learning outcomes students must achieve within like or linked degree programs (either vertically, between sending and receiving institutions serving the same students, or horizontally, across similar programs serving different students). Lumina has provided support to institutions, higher education systems, and accreditors willing to pilot the DQP and tuning. As input comes back from the field, DQP and tuning materials are being revised, and additional resources are being developed for sharing with the field.

The electronic draft of the DQP can be accessed at: www.luminafoundation.org/publications/The_Degree_Qualifications_Profile.pdf. Additional information about tuning, including a tuning handbook, can be accessed at: www.iebcnow.org/OurWork/Tuning.aspx.

³ Please refer to the *Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness*, Part III: Student Learning Outcomes, which can be found at www.accjc.org/all-commission-publications-policies.