

TEMPLE COLLEGE

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April 7, 2008

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

I am currently President of Temple College, a public community college in Texas now preparing to undergo review for reaffirmation of accreditation in June 2010. I will not, however, be President of the College when that review occurs. Because I have accepted an appointment at the University of New Mexico, effective July 1, 2008, the Board of Trustees will appoint an Interim President who will serve from that date until a search is completed and a new President is named in August 2008. The names of both individuals will be forwarded to the *Commission on Colleges* once those decisions have been made.

However, the purpose of this correspondence is only partially to inform you of the imminent change in presidential leadership at Temple College. Before I leave, I hope to assure that all appropriate processes are in place for a successful reaffirmation review, and I am encouraged by the strength of leadership being demonstrated by those who have been asked to conduct this important review. It is my personal charge to provide you with the following report on some of the innovative programming in which the College is or soon will be engaged to allow *Commission* staff to determine compliance with requirements for reporting Substantive Change.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Temple College has earned a statewide reputation as a highly progressive institution, and during the past two years, we have become one of the fastest growing community colleges in Texas. Our growth rate of more than 20% since Fall 2006 is three times the average growth rate for Texas public community colleges during that same period. Temple College enrolled more than 4,800 credit students in Fall 2007 and may well exceed 5,000 credit students by Fall 2008. Unfortunately, rapid growth sometimes works against timely reporting, and it is my intention to fully update the *Commission* on notable College initiatives and to assist the College in preparing for any formal review that may be required.

The unprecedented growth of Temple College has risen from a tradition of strength in general academics, business, and the arts; an historical commitment to the Health Sciences; years of

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cooperative dual-credit programming with area public schools; dedicated educational outreach to all communities located in a service area that includes parts of three large counties; and the rapid expansion of online capability and delivery. It is my contention that, with the exception of the planned expansion of the *Cameron Education Center*, none of the initiatives listed in the report below constitute “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope” of the College, but are in fact evidence of an ongoing progression from a long-established base.

TEMPLE COLLEGE AT TAYLOR
(Off-site Educational Center, 37 miles from the Main Campus)

Temple College at Taylor (TCAT) began operation in Taylor, Texas (population approximately 15,000 in Williamson County, just north of Austin), in 1996 and has shown consistent growth to a current unduplicated enrollment of approximately 850 credit students. With recent dramatic population growth in East Williamson County, *TCAT* has the potential for enrollment in excess of 1,000 students by Fall 2009.

Housed in a 28,000 square foot facility in downtown Taylor, *TCAT* provides access to high quality classrooms, computer laboratories, two recently completed science laboratories, and a state-of-the-art clinical simulation center to support the Vocational Nursing program. The *TCAT* facility also contains dedicated space for student support services and a bookstore. Library support is provided through agreement with the new Taylor Public Library, along with courier service and electronic library support from the *Main Campus*. All instructional and support services are managed through the appropriate departments and divisions on the *Main Campus*, with line supervision provided by the Vice President of Educational Services. Students can complete certificates and degrees through this educational center.

Completed Substantive Change Review

A request for Substantive Change Review was submitted to the *Commission on Colleges* in advance of the 2000 reaffirmation of accreditation, seeking approval for the development of *TCAT* and for offering more than 50% of the credits needed for a degree. The attached letter from Dr. Rudolph S. Jackson, dated May 2, 2006, confirms successful completion of the Substantive Change Review as part of the 2000 reaffirmation process.

East Williamson County Higher Education Center (EWCHEC)

During the 2007 Legislative Session, approval was secured by Temple College to seek partnership agreements with other institutions of higher education in an effort to develop a higher education center in East Williamson County. The success of this initiative will provide additional space for *TCAT* programming at a second site in Taylor in a new, 25,000 square foot facility. There will, however, be no administrative change in the operation of *TCAT*. Each partner institution sharing the new facility will be responsible for its own programs, with Temple College providing the administrative staff necessary to secure and schedule the programs of the partners. One partner institution has already been secured, with others under consideration. As the lead institution in the *EWCHEC* initiative, Temple College will receive additional classroom and administrative space for *TCAT* in the new facility, as well as dedicated library space. The new facility is scheduled for completion in Fall 2009.

CAMERON EDUCATION CENTER
(Off-site Educational Center, 30 miles from the Main Campus)

The *Cameron Education Center (CEC)* began operation in January 2000 in Cameron, Texas (population approximately 6,000 in rural Milam County), with a very small enrollment; however, it has now grown to approximately 300 credit students with the potential for growth approaching 500 students. Housed in a 25,000 square foot facility near downtown Cameron, the *CEC* provides access to high quality classrooms and computer laboratories, with dedicated space for student support services. Electronic library support and library courier service is provided through the *Main Campus*. All instructional and support services are managed through the appropriate departments and divisions on the *Main Campus*, with line supervision provided by the Vice President of Educational Services.

Potential Need for Substantive Change Review

When the *CEC* was created, Temple College had no intention of providing more than 50% of the courses required to complete a degree and so notified the *Commission on Colleges* following the 2000 reaffirmation of accreditation. This notification is verified in the attached response from Dr. James T. Rogers dated August 23, 2000. However, driven by recent enrollment growth and the proposed addition of two classrooms and two science laboratories within the *CEC* facility by Fall 2008, course offerings already hovering near the 50% guideline will almost certainly exceed it by Spring/Fall 2009.

ONLINE INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Since Fall 2006, the number of courses delivered online through Temple College has increased dramatically, with well over 50% of the courses required for a degree now offered. In support of this increase, organizational and technical support for online programming has been substantially strengthened under the administration of an Associate Vice President of Distance Education.

Completed Substantive Change Review

A request for Substantive Change Review for online instructional delivery at less than the 50% guideline was submitted to the *Commission on Colleges* in advance of the 2000 reaffirmation of accreditation, and the attached letter from Dr. Rudolph S. Jackson, dated May 2, 2006, confirms successful completion of that review as part of the College's 2000 reaffirmation process. The attached memorandum from Dr. Belle Wheelan, dated July 12, 2007, confirms that the College was included in the successful Substantive Change Review of the *Virtual College of Texas*, and that as part of the *VCT* review, Temple College was one of seventeen Texas community colleges approved to offer more than 50% of the courses required to complete a degree.

TEXAS BIOSCIENCE INSTITUTE
(Instructional site in Temple, approximately five miles from the Main Campus)

The *Texas Bioscience Institute (TBI)* is an instructional site that came into existence during the implementation of a new curriculum in Biotechnology designed to support the dramatic expansion of medical research in Temple, and the long-term goal of "spinning off" commercial ventures from that research. Curriculum development was funded by a substantial competitive grant from the United States Department of Labor, and the degree and certificate programs are

administered through the Division of Health Sciences along with degrees and certificates in eight other disciplines. The *TBI* includes state-of-the-art laboratories and classrooms in approximately 26,000 square feet of space within Scott and White Hospital's West Campus (a large and growing research facility).

The *TBI* is not considered to be a separate campus or an educational center. It is rather a highly specialized extension of instructional space from the *Main Campus*. All classes offered at the *TBI* are authorized and taught through the appropriate departments and divisions on the *Main Campus*, with line responsibility for both instructional and student support services through the Vice President of Educational Services. Classes support a *Middle College* for qualifying high school students, as well as programs at the apprentice, certificate, and associate degree levels.

The common thread running through all *TBI* programming is the pursuit of technical and professional careers in the Health and Biosciences. This remarkable facility was designed and built through exemplary College and community partnerships and has received numerous state and national accolades, including the 2007 Bellwether Award for Workforce Development. College participation in proposed research and commercial initiatives (including the development of a Bio-incubator) will soon be assigned at the vice presidential level, but there are no plans to place the *TBI* facility under individual supervision or to move it in the direction of a stand-alone educational center.

A much more detailed description of the history and development of the *Texas Bioscience Institute* has been attached for your review.

DUAL CREDIT AND OTHER INITIATIVES WITH THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Temple College has been partnering with area public schools to offer dual credit courses for more than fifteen years. Most of those courses are offered on the *Main Campus*, including the *Texas Bioscience Institute*, or at the Taylor (*TCAT*) and Cameron (*CEC*) centers. Two well-defined consortia of school districts are served by the Taylor and Cameron centers respectively. Selected courses continue to be offered on nine high school campuses, with the number and variety of courses varying by semester according to their availability on the *Main Campus* or at one of the educational centers.

At six of those campuses, there is little potential for students completing dual credit coursework to exceed 24% of the hours required for a degree; however, at the three largest (Temple High School, Belton High School, and Hutto High School), the 24% guideline is regularly exceeded. In those three schools, the 50% guideline could be theoretically approached if a student were to secure permission over several semesters to take more than two dual credit classes per semester. However, Texas Education Code minimizes the likelihood of that occurring:

High school students shall not be enrolled in more than two dual credit courses per semester. Exceptions to this requirement for students with demonstrated outstanding academic performance and capability (as evidenced by grade-point average, ACT or SAT scores, or other assessment indicators) may be approved by the principal of the high school and the chief academic officer of the college.

It has never been the intention of the College to make possible the completion of more than 50% of the hours toward a degree on a high school campus, and we will continue to closely monitor course availability and course completion at the three identified sites. Temple High School is

approximately four miles from the *Main Campus*, and Belton High School is approximately twelve miles from the *Main Campus*. Hutto High School is approximately nine miles from the Taylor center (*TCAT*). Students from all three high schools enjoy easy access to College support services on either the *Main Campus* or through special programming on the high school campus as provided by the well-defined *College Connection* program delivered by College student services personnel on all high school campuses within the College service area.

The Middle College

One provision made by the State of Texas to permit high school juniors and seniors to complete more than six hours of dual credit courses per semester is the *Middle College*. A community college must receive formal approval for implementing this well-defined format from both the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The *Middle College* offered at the *Texas Bioscience Institute (TBI)* has not only been so approved, it has been recognized as an “exemplar” for the State in the delivery of STEM curricula. It is taught wholly on the College campus, exclusively by College faculty, and it is supervised by an experienced director holding appropriate TEA and THECB credentials. Students in the *TBI Middle College* not only have routine access to all College support services, they are provided with some of the most advanced learning technology available. The *TBI Middle College* began during the 2006-2007 Academic Year with a pilot cohort of approximately 45 students. Current enrollment is 102 students, with a projected maximum enrollment in Fall 2008 of 200 students.

In addition to the Middle College designation at the TBI, Temple College has received two other Middle College designations from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The first is for our Taylor center (*TCAT*) and was approved on July 17, 2006, to support the development of the *Early College High School* described below. The second is for our Cameron center (*CEC*) and was approved July 27, 2007. These Middle College designations will allow academically prepared high school students to enroll in more than two dual credit classes in one semester. However, students will be required to attend classes at one of the centers to qualify for participation. Neither of these designations has been fully implemented at this time.

The Early College High School

A second provision made by the State of Texas to permit high school students to enroll in more than six hours of dual credit courses per semester is the *Early College High School*. In this format, highly promoted throughout the nation by the Gates Foundation, students enter as ninth graders into a program that will rigorously prepare them for college-level success. Targeting students who are “first in their families in college” and who may well be at risk, the *Early College High School* is showing great promise throughout the nation.

In partnership with both the Taylor ISD and the Hutto ISD, Temple College has received a grant from the Texas Education Agency to implement the *Legacy Early College High School* (so-named by its first cohort of students). The first of its kind in a substantially rural area, it enrolled its inaugural cohort of 55 students during the 2007-2008 Academic Year. Each partner institution plays a significant role in this endeavor as defined in great detail by the Texas Education Agency. All courses are taught at the Taylor center (*TCAT*) by College approved faculty. As students advance through the curriculum, they will find increasing opportunities to complete college-level coursework for dual credit.

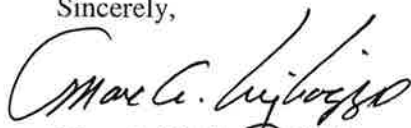
I have included for your review a description of the *Legacy Early College High School* as submitted to and approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

All of the above reported initiatives have been implemented following extensive planning and are administered by Temple College personnel. All are in keeping with the College mission and purpose and have been approved by the Board of Trustees, with frequent reports on progress presented to the Board. The College is prepared to provide additional information as requested by the *Commission on Colleges*, including the implementation of a formal Substantive Change Review if needed. The College has already appointed a full-time, permanent Accreditation Liaison to not only meet the expectations of the reaffirmation process, but to assure that all future initiatives pursued by the College will be promptly reported to the *Commission* within specified timelines.

Your review of this report will be appreciated. Whatever direction you might subsequently choose to provide will receive prompt response. I am also copying the report to Dr. Rudy Jackson who is currently assigned to Temple College for our reaffirmation review. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Marc A. Nigliazzo, Ph.D.
President

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Rudy Jackson, Vice President, Commission on Colleges
Members of the Temple College Executive Council