

June 2, 2015

**Vice President of Commission Operations**

**The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204  
Novato, CA 94949**

**Dear Dr. Clifford,**

**We wish to thank you for advising the College regarding the action taken by the Committee on Substantive Change related to the baccalaureate degree in Occupational Studies. As you are aware, the Committee’s action is pending approval by the Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) and will require a site visit within six months of the start of the program. Since the College is committed to meeting all Commission requirements, it is necessary to clarify why it is not possible to meet the Committee’s request for ACOTE approval at this time.**

**At present, ACOTE accredits programs based on their degree level, and therefore, does not have accreditation standards to accredit baccalaureate-level occupational therapy assistant nor occupational therapy programs. Development of baccalaureate-level accreditation standards may be considered by the next ACOTE Educational Standards Review Committee according to Dr. Heather Stagliano, Director of Accreditation (i.e., ACOTE). If and when standards for the baccalaureate level are created, the Coordinator and faculty of the Santa Ana College Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program will do whatever is necessary to document all the data needed for reporting in order to receive full accreditation for the baccalaureate program. As the Santa Ana College OTA Associate of Science degree program has received the maximum ACOTE accreditation status (i.e., ten years), the College is in an excellent position to meet all eligibility requirements and requisites of full accreditation at the higher level as well.**

**We would also like to inform the Commission that at this time, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is recommending that Occupational Therapy (OT) training, which is currently at the master’s degree level, be advanced to the doctoral level. It is projected that this change could be implemented by 2025.**

**As the Coordinator of the Santa Ana College AS degree OTA program chairs all OTA Professional Advisory Committee meetings, she has been in ongoing consultation with intersegmental colleagues at CSU, Dominguez Hills and the University of Southern California, as well as community members who employ OT and OTA graduates. All are in agreement that the Santa Ana College baccalaureate program reflects the growth and evolution of the profession. In addition, it has the rigor and requisite skill training for entry into existing OT master’s programs.**

**We are very enthusiastic about the opportunity to commence the baccalaureate program in Occupational Studies, which is planned for fall 2017, and we appreciate the guidance the Commission has offered in the writing of the Substantive Change Proposal. We are respectfully requesting that ACOTE approval be deleted as a contingency of Substantive Change approval, however, with the understanding that if and when ACOTE develops standards for a baccalaureate degree, the College will seek accreditation status at that level.**

**Please contact me or Michelle Parolise, the Program Coordinator, if further information is needed to clarify this issue.**

**Respectfully,**

**Bonita Nahoum Jaros, Ph.D.**

**Accreditation Liaison Officer**

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**c: Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D., President, Santa Ana College**