



SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS  
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES

November 6, 2017

Dr. L. Michael Metke  
President  
Tyler Junior College  
P. O. Box 9020  
Tyler, TX 75701

Dear Dr. Metke:

It was a pleasure visiting with you and your colleagues from the Texas colleges that are planning to offer baccalaureate degrees. At the meeting, I mentioned the cultural shift of moving from a Level I, two-year college, to a Level II, baccalaureate-granting college. It is critical that the rigor and preparation of baccalaureate graduates be equivalent to or higher than graduates of other peer colleges and universities to ensure acceptance and transferability. It is also critical that these degrees be accepted and valued by employers.

A junior college historically signifies that the college offers the first two years of study with the goal of transferring the coursework to a four-year college or university. The comprehensive role of community colleges generally includes workforce training degrees and certificates, community service programs and continuing education offerings, in addition to the historic academic transfer programs. While SACSCOC does not require a name change in order to award baccalaureate degrees, the institution needs to demonstrate that students are not disadvantaged in reaching their career and educational goals if the college's name does not reflect its enrollment, outcomes, programs, graduates or expanded mission.

In the case of Tyler Junior College (TJC) where the majority of students are enrolled in workforce programs rather than junior college transfer courses, the college should be prepared to provide evidence that these students are equally a part of your mission and receive equivalent priorities in services. Furthermore, with the addition of baccalaureate programs, you should be prepared to provide data for the reaffirmation committee to demonstrate how student concerns about the acceptance of their baccalaureate degree from a junior college will be viewed and whether or not they will be disadvantaged.

A study engaging students, the campus community, employers, and TJC staff would be a worthwhile exercise in preparation for TJC's next SACSCOC reaffirmation visit. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to TJC to address your faculty and staff at convocation, and I was impressed with the dedication and loyalty of your employees and the numerous awards the college has accumulated. I expect your baccalaureate programs will continue the strong reputation for excellence that TJC has earned over its 90 year history.



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Best wishes as your college continues to expand its role and services to meet the needs of the region you serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.  
President

BSW:rb

cc: Dr. Cheryl L. Rogers  
Dr. Charles A. Taylor