Colleagues,

The site evaluation visit by the team from the Higher Learning Commission concluded yesterday. Thanks to you, I believe we demonstrated the progress chronicled in our *Self-Study Report*, and showed that PCC is again on a path to providing the best possible service to students and the community.

Simply put, we did a solid job – faculty, staff, administrators, Governing Board members, students, employee group representatives. We were welcoming, honest and informed about our College. I couldn’t ask for more.

I also want to express gratitude to the dozens of community members – students, business leaders, retirees, educators – who contacted the HLC team. Some expressed their ongoing concerns about PCC. Others spoke about the positive changes they have seen here, and expressed optimism that the College is on the right track as it meets future challenges and opportunities.

At his Exit/Team Report meeting with administrators, Site Team Chair Dr. Luis G. Pedraja noted that the community’s passionate interest in the future of PCC was a strong indicator to the HLC that the community recognizes and values our contribution to the region. “A lot of people care about PCC,” he said.

Dr. Pedraja and his fellow peer reviewers deserve recognition for their thoughtful preparation and for meeting with over 100 internal and external constituents during their short time here. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Karen Solomon of the HLC, who accompanied the site team as an observer, for providing us with clear information over the past 16 months.

As they have throughout, the members of our Project Management Team planned and executed the site visit with professionalism and precision. Dr. Erica Holmes, Dr. Mary Ann Martinez Sanchez, Michael Tulino, Dr. Michael Parker, Dr. Dolores Durán-Cerda, Terry Hawkins, Rachelle Howell, Dr. Nicola Richmond, and Michael Peel should be acknowledged for shepherding a dynamic Self Study process to a successful conclusion in only 16 months, as opposed a typical two- to three-year timeframe. In his remarks, Dr. Pedraja commended the “Herculean effort” put forth by the College to conduct the Self Study in a relatively short time.

The next steps in the process are straightforward. In October, the HLC will provide the site evaluation team’s draft report to the College. The report will not contain the site evaluation team’s recommendation to the HLC. In November, PCC will submit an institutional response to
the report, to correct errors of fact such as erroneous timelines or data. In December, I will lead a team from PCC that will take part in a final round of discussion during a hearing of the HLC’s Institutional Actions Council. Dr. Pedraja also will attend that meeting. By the end of February the HLC Board will make its determination, and we should be notified of our status in early March.

As I have said, I am optimistic about PCC being taken off probation, and believe we will have to meet HLC monitoring requirements over the next several years. The spotlight will be on PCC for a while, which is not a bad thing. We should view the enhanced scrutiny as an opportunity for a culture of continuous improvement to take an even stronger hold at PCC.

I believe we will continue to improve as we focus on student success, community engagement and diversity. PCC seeks a shared vision derived from engaging the community and each other in an honest conversation about needs and expectations. Working together, we can create a premier community college.

Lee D. Lambert,

Chancellor