A major milestone in the life of the College as an accredited post-secondary institution was passed on November 12, 2013, with the visit of Dr. Mary Okada, CEO of Guam Community College, and team Chair for our October 2012 Accreditation visit. While the result of that earlier visit was having the College placed on Warning by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), primarily because we had not fully addressed recommendations given us at the time of our prior visit in 2006, the work that the College has done since receiving word of our status in February 2013 has been exemplary.

During her follow-up visit, Dr. Okada met with the Chancellor and members of her staff, Division Chairs, the Distance Education Advisory Committee and the General Education Board in a series of meetings focused on the six recommendations provided by the visiting team at the conclusion of the initial visit in 2012. Many thanks to those who were able to meet with Dr. Okada, and to all who participated in the preparation of the Follow-Up Report, which can be viewed on the College’s website at http://www2.honolulu.hawaii.edu/?q=node/1

In her brief exit report to the campus at the end of her visit on November 12, Dr. Okada provided some very positive feedback on the Follow-Up Report prepared by the College, and on the evidence provided in support of the progress we have made. She commended the College for its quick response to the determination of status from ACCJC, and in particular the way the College gave immediate attention to the critical recommendations regarding Distance Education and General Education (those initially identified in 2006 and not fully resolved in 2012.) She noted that an understanding of SLOs/SAOs now permeates the institutional culture of the College, and appreciated the fact that the focus on “closing the loop” (i.e., instituting positive change based on thoughtful assessment) extended to many aspects of institutional continuous improvement, not just those identified in the recommendations.

Dr. Okada will submit her report to ACCJC, which will meet next in January 2014 to determine the College’s status and any further reporting requirements. While the College awaits that decision, we should take a moment to acknowledge and celebrate the good work that has been done—and then focus on sustaining the substantial progress we have made in a very short time. Assessment and accreditation are best understood not as isolated or occasional events, but ongoing processes that are the foundation of the College’s growth as a student-centered, student-focused institution.