

February 3, 2026

Dr. Carlos Peñaloza
Chancellor
Leeward Community College
96-045 Ala 'Ike
Pearl City, HI 96782

Dear Dr. Peñaloza:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, at its meeting January 14-15, 2026, reviewed the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and evidentiary materials submitted by Leeward Community College. The Commission also considered the Peer Review Team Report (Team Report) prepared by the peer review team that conducted its site visit to the College September 25-26, 2025.

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the College continues to meet ACCJC's Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and Accreditation Standards (hereinafter, the Standards). Upon consideration of the written information noted above, the Commission acted to **Reaffirm Accreditation for seven years.**

Commendations

Commendations signify institutional practices for which the Commission believes exceed Standards. The Commission recognizes the exemplary performance of Leeward Community College in the following areas.

Standard III.A.14, *Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education (Commendation 1)*: The Commission commends the College for comprehensive professional development offerings to support distance education faculty and course development through the College Innovation Center for Teaching and Learning (ICTL) and the Educational Media Center (EMC). The Distance Education Committee of the Academic Senate developed Leeward Distance Education Guidelines, including a clear campus definition of Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI). Often designated as a leader within the UH Community College system, Leeward Community College has successfully implemented the EMC Three-Part RSI Campaign, supported distance education faculty

through the LMS transition to Lamakū, and integrated the Leeward DE Guidelines into the peer evaluation process. Support is provided to the entire Leeward campus community that allows for innovation and collaboration not only among the Leeward community but the entire University of Hawai'i system.

Standards I.A.4, I.B.1, II.A.1, II.B.2, III.B.2, III.D.2 (Commendation 2): The Commission commends the College for its profound and intentional commitment to local indigenous culture and its mission to be a Native Hawaiian place of learning. This commitment is evidenced by the successful embedding of indigenous practices, and student support services. Initiatives such as the Pūko'a no Nā 'Ewa Council guide institutional change by ensuring sustained conversations on Native Hawaiian equity, while the Ho'opūnana Mentorship Program fosters reciprocal relationships between students, faculty, and staff. These efforts underscore the College's holistic approach to cultural preservation and integration.

Compliance Requirements

None.

Recommendations for Improving Institutional Effectiveness

None.

Next Steps

The Peer Review Team Report provides details of the peer review team's findings, including areas of noteworthy practice. The guidance and recommendations contained in the Peer Review Team Report represent the best advice of the team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the College to improve. A final copy of the Peer Review Team Report is attached.

The Commission requires that you disseminate the ISER, the Peer Review Team Report, and this letter to all campus constituencies and the public by placing copies on the College website within seven business days of your receipt. Please note that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post current accreditation information on a web page no more than one click from the institution's home page. In keeping with ACCJC policy, the Commission action will also be posted on the ACCJC website within 30 days of the date of the Commission's action.

The next report from the College will be the Midterm Report¹ due on October 15, 2029. The institution's next comprehensive review will begin with Team ISER Review in the spring term of 2032 and conclude with a Focused Site Visit in the fall term of 2032.

¹ Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-up Reports, Special Reports, or Teach-out Plans/Agreements to the Commission should review the Accreditation Handbook and applicable report template available on the ACCJC website at <https://accjc.org/accreditation-handbook-and-report-templates/>.

On behalf of the Commission, we wish to express appreciation for the diligent work and thoughtful reflection that Leeward Community College undertook to prepare for this review. These efforts confirm that peer review can serve the multiple constituencies of higher education by both ensuring and encouraging institutional quality and effectiveness.

If you have any questions about this letter or the Commission's action, please feel free to contact Dr. Mac Powell or the vice president assigned as liaison to your institution.

Sincerely,



Mac Powell, MBA, Ph.D.
President



Kathleen F. Burke, Ed.D.
Chair

cc: Ms. P. Jayne Bopp, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Mr. Lui Hokoana, Interim Vice President, University of Hawai'i Community Colleges