

# City College Won—And the Fight is ON!

**Now it's time to rebuild our community treasure, for a future of education for all**

The official story: "City College's accreditation was re-affirmed for seven years because it worked



hard to meet standards." The reality: The college suffered a highly politicized attack by a corporate-influenced accreditation agency. The ACCJC is part of an education "reform" coalition now bringing you Betsy DeVos as the nominee for education secretary.

## **Victory Won!**

City College remains open and accredited thanks to the students,

faculty and their union (AFT2121), staff, and community members who organized, mobilized and pushed back on many levels. We built wide support and did direct action, used the courts and local government. Students sat in on campus and at City Hall, building ties with other schools and community movements; faculty struck for the first time in CCSF's 80 years; rallies and marches drew thousands of people. These efforts kept the school open and turned back a vicious anti-union attack. The movement is advancing one of the most sweeping free tuition programs in the US.

## **Damage Done**

Since the accreditation crisis hit in 2012, City College has bled students, staff and classes. It has lost close to 1/3 of its students, nearly 300 teachers, and almost 800 classes, with more cuts promised. Valuable college property has been turned over to developers to build luxury housing. This is no accident. The accreditation crisis was a "shock treatment" designed to bring CCSF in line with state policies to reshape community colleges on more corporate-friendly lines. See other side for more...

## **The Fight is On**

**Rebuild the School:** Last year CCSF administration announced that it would cut out 26% of the school's classes by 2020, and it is moving swiftly with the cuts. The online enrollment system is so dysfunctional that it's a serious barrier to people signing up for classes. Urge the Board of Trustees to push the administration to restore classes and fix the online system! Go to [www.saveccsf.org](http://www.saveccsf.org) for addresses and a sample letter. We need an administration committed to rebuilding the school, not downsizing it.

**Stop the Land Grabs:** Public land, including City College land, should not be sold for private profit! Watch for upcoming actions.

**Free City College:** AFT 2121, students and community groups led last fall's successful campaign for Proposition W, the tax on luxury real estate sales. The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to put Prop W on the ballot, and three times voted to earmark revenues from the measure to fund free tuition at CCSF for everyone who lives in San Francisco and some who work here. But Mayor Ed Lee refuses to appropriate the funds. Demand that he listen to the people! Write [mayoredwinlee@sfgov.org](mailto:mayoredwinlee@sfgov.org) or call 415-554-6141 and say "Fund Free City College NOW!"

**More information about the Save City College Coalition:** [www.saveccsf.org](http://www.saveccsf.org)

Write [info@saveccsf.org](mailto:info@saveccsf.org) to get occasional email alerts

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## **CCSF's Accreditation Crisis: Retooling the School for Profit**

Since 1935, City College of San Francisco has offered hundreds of thousands of students new dreams and second chances, a step up the education ladder or into life in the US. In 2007 the *New York Times* called it one of the top eleven community colleges in the country. But in July 2012, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) stunned the city by sanctioning the beloved institution. In July 2013, the ACCJC demanded City College's closure one year out.

This highly politicized attack was payback for CCSF's role on social justice issues, and the set-up for land grabs. CCSF led opposition to the state "Student Success Act" of 2012, which brought the education "reform" project to the community college level, spearheaded by the California Business Roundtable. The ACCJC, though it is a supposedly neutral agency, was one of the measure's loudest supporters. A month before the accreditation bombshell was dropped, the *SF Chronicle* called for downsizing and closing CCSF campuses as the way to "save the college" (see June 1, 2012). The *Chronicle* is owned by the Hearst Corporation, a major real estate corporation.

### **Corporate Education Reform Goes to College: Who Stands to Gain?**

The Student Success Act represents the same corporate privatization strategy that has been used in the K-12 world since the 1980s. So far, over 6000 K-12 public schools have been closed down, replaced mainly by corporate chain charter schools. Now the same playbook has jumped the fence to the community colleges. The goals:

- **Downsize** affordable and high-quality community colleges to expand predatory for-profit schools that cost 17 times as much as City College, requiring huge student loans;
- **Abandon open access** for *all* community members, ending the concept of community colleges as the place for second and third chances, for grandma, students with disabilities, new immigrants and working night school students taking one class at a time;
- **Erode or dismantle** ethnic studies and social justice programs won in the 60s and 70s, along with English language learning, the arts, lifelong learning, PE and world languages;
- Focus on young full-time students bound for the **corporate workforce**;
- **Convert** to a fast-food-model, part-time faculty with lower pay, benefits and security;
- **Fork over prime college land** to real estate developers in rapidly gentrifying San Francisco

### **Accreditation crisis brings state takeover, rule of austerity**

California used the accreditation crisis to justify a state takeover, with the *un-elected* Community College Board of Governors suspending the *elected* local Board of Trustees. A "Special Trustee with Extraordinary Powers" (STWEP) made unilateral decisions for the school from 2013 -- 15, including decisions to sell off land to developers, and halt construction of the Performing Arts Education Center. Power was restored to the elected Board in January 2016, and two new, progressive members were elected in November. But the current top administrators were appointed by the STWEP, and operate under the logic of austerity, obedient to the mandate of shrinking the school and re-engineering it into a narrow focus on corporate workforce education.

Now, even though accreditation has been won, that logic must be reversed. We must rebuild our school as a large, community-serving, open access institution.

**For more information:** <http://www.saveccsf.org>

**History and analysis:** "School Reforms and Land Grabs Threaten SF's Community College," in *Race, Poverty & the Environment* magazine, available online at <http://www.reimaginerpe.org>