



Mount Tamalpais College
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mount Tamalpais College is proud to announce that on January 27, 2022, we were granted Initial Accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). For nearly 25 years, Mount Tamalpais College – formerly known as the Prison University Project and Patten University at San Quentin – has provided a general education Associate of Arts degree program, including a robust college preparatory program in writing and math, to students incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison. The college is free to all students.

This is an historic moment for Mount Tamalpais College and our mission to provide access to quality educational opportunity for incarcerated students, and a landmark event in a society that has persistently excluded the incarcerated. San Quentin State Prison is now the site of an academic institution unlike any other in the U.S: an independent liberal arts college specifically dedicated to serving incarcerated students.

Says Corey McNeil, an alumnus who is now on staff at the college, “For me, MTC is a space for community and belonging and a place where I could learn and grow. Now that it’s accredited, it feels like it’s growing and evolving along with me. This is our own college now, all of the people who built this together. Now we can say that this is ours.”

MTC President Jody Lewen adds, “We are excited to embark on this next stage of growth. This year we will continue to improve the quality of academic instruction, expand student support services, and increase access to technology and library resources. We are also committed to providing support to other practitioners in the field of higher education in prison, and to sharing knowledge to advance the cause of equity and excellence in higher education nationally.”

Says Ronald Bloomfield, Warden at San Quentin State Prison: “The accreditation of Mt. Tam as an independent college represents years of dedicated service in helping an underserved segment of our society. The students of Mt. Tam experience an amazing high quality education. Graduates leave the college with knowledge and skills essential to becoming productive citizens. With an increased worldview comes increased possibilities and hope for a better future.”

We extend deep thanks to many people and institutions for their hard work and support throughout the accreditation process: Past Presidents of ACCJC Richard Winn and Stephanie Droker; Interim President Cindy Miles; ACCJC Vice President Catherine Webb; Accreditation Process Director, Elizabeth Dutton. Our ACCJC

Peer Review Team, led by Dr. Keith Curry, President of Compton College provided invaluable feedback and guidance that has already profoundly strengthened us as an institution. San Quentin Warden Ron Broomfield, as well as former California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Secretary Ralph Diaz, have also supported this bold initiative from its inception.