

July 24, 2018

Charlotte PR Cepeda
Accreditation Liaison Officer
Northern Marianas College
PO Box 501250
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Charlotte:

Thank you for submitting the Northern Marianas College (NMC) Progress Report on November 1, 2017. The WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) requested a Progress Report following the Special Visit November 30-December 2, 2016.

The Progress Report was required to address the:

- a. institutionalization of a system to digitize and provide access to Board of Regents records and the availability of searchable board records on the NMC website;
- b. reporting in board meeting minutes decisions made and actions taken by the board, including their rationale;
- c. status of legislation to make the Board of Regents nomination process mandatory;
- d. Code of Conduct's discussion of issues pertaining to conflicts of commitment;
- e. status of goals and objectives mutually agreed to by the board and president;
- f. status of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) contract term limits.

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation for the obvious time and effort NMC devoted to the report; the report was organized and well written. NMC is commended for the report's depth and breadth and overall thoroughness. The report was informative and helpful, targeting the expectations articulated in WSCUC Commission Action Letter (CAL).

Digital and accessible Board of Regents records, available and searchable on the NMC website. I was able to easily follow the instructions in your report to access board member terms and minutes from previous board meetings on your website. I was also able to access NMC board policies.

Board meeting minutes. I reviewed several copies of minutes from 2016 and 2017 and confirm a consistent use of your protocol to list motions and decisions, I believe, in bold face; the strategy does make it easy to find this information. I am mindful that your small board size (7 members) means a board member has to serve on at least two board committees, which I suspect is very demanding. I also noted several "special meetings" of the board, along with a large number of board meetings each year. I suggest you discuss the rationale for the size of your board and for the number and nature of board meetings in your institutional report for reaffirmation of accreditation.

Legislation to make the Board of Regents nomination process mandatory. You and your colleagues at NMC are to be commended for the legislative passage of senate bill 20-15 to establish a nominating committee for the selection and appointment of board members; I understand the governor signed the bill into law, Public Law 20-26.

Conflicts of Commitment. This was a concept coined by the chair of the Special Visit review team to describe a relatively frequent occurrence of board members facing potential divided loyalties between membership on the NMC Board of Regents and commitments to other boards or government employment. I understand you modified the NMC Code of Conduct to include this concept. I suggest you discuss the effectiveness of this revised policy and board member compliance in your institutional report for reaffirmation of accreditation.

NMC goals and objectives mutually agreed upon by the board and president. Your report lists two long term goals for the college including 1) the construction of a state of the art, energy efficient campus, and, 2) the repair and expansion of the NMC gym. 2017 board meeting minutes confirm the approval of a master plan for both of these goals. I also noted the institutionalization of a performance evaluation form for the president to help ensure the alignment between board and presidential intentions.

CEO length of contract. I understand from the report that the president was offered a 4 year contract to begin in October 2016 but, to expedite hiring, actually signed a 2 year contract. This issue is under discussion by the board's human resources committee. I suggest you discuss the rationale for limiting the president to a two year contract in your institutional report for reaffirmation of accreditation.

Findings and Conclusions. In summary, Northern Marianas College responded effectively to the issues raised by the Commission. You should include an update on these six issues in your institutional report for your next comprehensive review beginning with the fall 2019 OSR. You do not need to include all follow-up information and/or updates as narrative explicitly in the report; feel free to incorporate some information in the report's appendices, as appropriate.

I would like to affirm the hard work and important steps Northern Marianas College has taken to address the issues raised in the 2016 Special Visit Commission Action Letter. I wish you and Northern Marianas College every success.

Sincerely,



Maureen A. Maloney
Vice President