REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

INITIAL ACCREDITATION PATHWAY B

To the **Northern Marianas College**, Saipan, CNMI

April 30-May 2, 2014

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 WASC Senior College and University Commission Standards of Accreditation (WSCUC) and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by WSCUC.

The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

Northern Marianas College (NMC) was established as a community college in 1981 under the oversight of the Board of Education of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI). In March 1985, NMC was re-established by law as a public corporation under the oversight of its own Board of Regents stipulating the mission and designating the college to serve as the land-grant college within the Commonwealth. NMC received initial accreditation from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges in 1985.

The current enrollment of NMC is approximately 1150 full-time equivalent (FTE) students. The college offers associate degrees (AA, AS, AAS) in Liberal Arts, Business, Criminal Justice, Nursing, Hospitality Management, and Natural Resources Management and non-degree certificates, and a Bachelor of Science in Education. In 2001, NMC received initial accreditation from the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) to offer a single baccalaureate degree program in Elementary Education. This was the first time in WSCUC history that a two year college was approved to offer a four year degree. The School of Education (SOE) at NMC offers bachelors' degrees in Education with concentrations in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Rehabilitation and Human Services and Special Education. SOE's enrollment in 2012 was 330 (28.7% of the total enrollment) students (NMC fact book 2012). NMC was dually accredited by both ACCJC and WSCUC from 2001-2013, however a decision by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) in 2013 determined dual accreditation was not permitted. Therefore NMC and

the SOE program must be accredited solely under the auspices of one institutional accrediting agency in order to be eligible for Federal student aid. Because of this determination by the USDOE, a substantive change request and subsequent evaluation visit occurred to assess the NMC (including the four-year program) to be solely under ACCJC standards and policies. This visit simultaneously occurred with the visit of the ACCJC's show cause team visit in October 2013. The Substantive Change application was approved by ACCJC in October 2013. Accreditation for the School of Education had previously been closely linked with that of the college, with visiting teams including members of both Commissions.

Over a period of the past 10 years, NMC has had difficulty fully meeting the accreditation standards of ACCJC on a consistent basis. Reports and evaluation team visits occurred in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, and 2012. These various visits resulted in the College receiving sanctions of Warnings, Show Cause and Probation by the ACCJC. By the time of the ACCJC evaluation visit in October 2012, the College had moved from Show Cause to the sanction of Probation and was required to immediately remedy all identified deficiencies. In October 2012, NMC's six-year Comprehensive Evaluation Visit was held. This visit focused on all areas under the ACCJC standards, and also addressed the five recommendations made by ACCJC in February 2012; integration of financial and institutional planning; financial integrity and responsible use of resources; governing board training and adherence to appropriate role; recruit a permanent Chief Financial and Administrative Officer; and schedule and process for the review of all College policies.

In January 2013, the Commission considered all presented evidence and found that NMC was in substantial non-compliance with two eligibility requirements, as well as with ACCJC Accreditation Standards, II.C.2, III.A.1, III.A.2, IV.A.2, IV.B.1.a, and IV.B.1.j, as reported in the Evaluation Team Report. On February 11, 2013, ACCJC issued a Show Cause Action letter that identified a number of areas of deficiencies for NMC in meeting the ACCJC Standards of Accreditation.

In 2013, NMC submitted a Show Cause Self Study report prior to the site visit of the Show Cause team. The Show Cause Visit Team Report (October 2013) reviewed each of the areas of deficiency and concluded that the college was in full compliance with all of the ACCJC standards. NMC submitted additional materials in December 2013, and in January 2014 the ACCJC removed all sanctions and reaffirmed the accreditation of NMC. The action letter of Feb 7, 2014, based on NMC's Show Cause Self Study and the visiting team's report of October 2013, concluded that NMC had successfully resolved all prior deficiencies. These changes included: having changed the composition of the Board of Regents by removing Honorary Regents; having changed its governance structure from a shared governance model to a participatory governance structure which codifies the role of the President; having facilitated legislative changes which made NMC's mission the responsibility of the college, not the Legislature; having established minimum qualifications for faculty and utilizing them in the hiring process; having established learning outcomes in information literacy and assessing them, and having filled all outstanding administrative vacancies.

The ACCJC's Feb 7, 2014 action letter noted that since the changes in NMC policies and practices made to move the institution into compliance with ACCJC accreditation standards were only recently established, that the College Midterm report should provide evidence that the changes have been sustained and provide an analysis of how well these changes are working.

On March 1, 2014, NMC submitted a new application to WSCUC seeking initial accreditation following Pathway B. The decision of NMC to change their regional accrediting agency from the Junior to Senior Commission was prompted by the new USDOE rules that require institutions to have one primary accreditor. ACCJC has authority to accredit two-year institutions of higher education which offer no more than one four-year program, and NMC wished to expand its offerings. NMC views its future as an important part of the economic development of CNMI that will suffer a substantial emigration of an educated contract work force when US immigration policies take full effect at the end of 2014. The need for more bachelors' level education, especially in business, has prompted NMC to submit, along with the Pathway B application, a Substantive Change proposal to WSCUC for a second four-year degree, a Bachelor in Business Management that it hopes to launch in Fall 2014. This site visit included a review of both proposals. (See **Appendix IV** Report on the Substantive Change Application Bachelor of Science in Business Management)

The mission statement of the College is: "Northern Marianas College, through its commitment to student learning, provides high quality, affordable and accessible educational programs and services for the individual and the people of the Commonwealth."

The vision statement is: "Northern Marianas College will serve as the engine to drive economic

growth and cultural vitality of the Commonwealth."

The main campus of NMC is located on the island of Saipan, CNMI, with small sites maintained on Tinian and Rota islands. Complete degree programs are not offered on Tinian or Rota islands, so these sites were not visited by the team. Distance education courses are offered by NMC, but in no case do they make up more than 50% of a degree program and thus did not merit an independent report.

B. Quality of the Self-Study under the Standards and Supporting Evidence

In order to prepare the self-study NMC assembled a large number of faculty and staff to comprise 10 teams responsible for each of the sections of the standards. Each team had 14-15 members (with some overlapping membership) and was led by two members that were staff, department chairs or faculty. This overall team of approximately 150 members represents a large majority of the 165 listed faculty and staff in the NMC 2013-2014 Directory.

When meeting with the site visit team, the WSCUC Steering Committee of the Accreditation Review Team, 20 members, comprised of the team leaders, identified themselves in terms of their responsibility for drafting each of their sections of the CFRs for the self- study and for providing documentation. There was evidence of a broad -based engagement of the institution as a whole in the development of the Self-Study Report.

Faculty were well represented (approximately 50% of the Steering Committee membership) and overall represented 50 of the 150 engaged in the teams responsible for sections of the standards.

There are currently 31 full time faculty and 23 part time faculty. Faculty at large also had the opportunity to comment on early drafts of the Self-Study Report through a participatory governance process.

The site visit team was impressed with the continuing engagement of the teams in educating themselves on the meaning of the WSCUC Standards. NMC has been accredited by the ACCJC since 1985 and the Bachelor of Science degree in Education, added in 2001, had been accredited by the WSCUC. Since the USDOE decision and the lifting of sanctions by ACCJC this year, there has been a relatively short time horizon of about six weeks for NMC to prepare the Pathway B Accreditation Self-Study. Thus broad-based familiarity with the WSCUC standards is a work in progress, one that NMC clearly recognizes as it has elected to retain the Accreditation Standard teams for continuing professional development. Workshops on the WSCUC standards were conducted for these teams on April 25, 2014 just prior to this visit.

The quality of the evidence presented in the NMC Pathway B Self-Study report was uneven. In many sections, links to data and documents did not work and, in institutional documents on NMC's website such as the catalog or Fact Book, minutes of meetings and documentation for student achievement and curricular information were missing. The team requested that a number of these items be provided in the Team Evidence Room and requested more information at the time of the visit. NMC was cooperative in providing the missing data elements if available.

In terms of the analysis of the evidence, the NMC Self- Study report identified a number of areas as needing improvement, and generally the team agreed with their conclusions. The institution is

to be commended for its level of candor in recognizing areas of weakness in relation to the CFRs; however, the team noted that, in several sections, comments were made that were not supported by the evidence provided.

C. Description of the Team Review Process

The team reviewed the ACCJC/WSCUC team report for the special visit to NMC in Fall 2012, the NMC Show Cause Self Study of October 2013, the NMC Show Cause team report for the ACCJC visit of October 2013, NMC's Supplemental Report to ACCJC of December 2013, the NMC ACCJC Show Cause Action letter of February 2014, and the NMC Pathway B Self-Study of Spring 2014. The team conducted a conference call on March 25, 2014 having completed the team conference call worksheet for Pathway B (2013 standards). Following the conference call the institution was asked to submit additional items for review prior to the visit as well as additional items for the evidence room. NMC was invited to submit the BSBM proposal using the substantive change template. This was received April 4, 2014 and was given a preliminary review by the Assistant Chair, whose background includes experience on the Substantive Change Committee.

The evaluation visit was conducted on NMC's campus in Saipan, CNMI from April 30-May 2, 2014. Members of the team met with the President, the WSCUC steering committee and the ALO, representatives of the Board of Regents, the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, the College Council, the Academic Council , the Deans, the Registrar, Student Support Services staff, the program review committee, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

(including Institutional Research staff), the Budget and Finance Committee, the Faculty Senate,

Student Senate, faculty as a whole, faculty from the SOE and Business

Department, and the Information Technology Department. Team members also conducted class

visits and met with students.

SECTION II – TEAM ANALYSIS UNDER THE STANDARDS

Standard I: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

NMC's mission statement had previously been prescribed by the Constitution of the

Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI). In November 2012, 90% of the

CNMI electorate voted to modify the Constitution and allow the College flexibility to modify its

own mission statement. This was accomplished via broad-based engagement with College

stakeholders during 2012 – 2013, and the new mission statement was approved by the Board of

Regents (BOR) in September 2013. The new statement is: "Northern Marianas College, through

its commitment to student learning, provides high quality, affordable and accessible educational

programs and services for the individual and people of the Commonwealth." The new mission

statement, published in the catalog and on the web site, defines its essential values and character

and indicates ways in which the college contributes to the public good. Both the mission and the

vision statement are periodically reviewed as part of NMC's long-term strategic planning cycle,

an approach affirmed in BOR Policy 2000 and allowing for input from a broad based of the

institution's stakeholders (CFRs 1.1, 4.6).

NMC's student learning outcomes are defined at the institutional, program, and course

levels. Institutional student learning outcomes are published in the general catalog (2013 – 2014

General Catalog, p. 82), as are the general education philosophy and outcomes (2013 – 2014

General Catalog, pp. 82–84). Course and general education student learning outcomes are published in instructors' syllabi. Program learning outcomes are reflected in departmental curriculum maps and are disseminated in program review documents, as well as in the General Catalog, course syllabi, course guides, program promotional materials, and in graphics posted in departments and classrooms. Processes to demonstrate that student learning outcomes are achieved are in place, with additional description provided under Standard II (CFR 1.2).

College faculty and staff recognize the importance of regularly generating and evaluating student achievement data, including measures of retention and graduation, and have made a public commitment to this inquiry in their Strategic Imperative Four (2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan). The College Fact book publishes graduate counts; however, graduation *rate* data (disaggregated by program, gender, and ethnicity) is not included. The College has taken preliminary steps in this area through the acquisition of Argos (from eVision) which will support the generation and publication of student achievement data. The College is urged to prioritize this initiative and subsequently develop processes to systematize evaluation of student achievement data. Student achievement data is not made available to the public by the College, and the College is encouraged to develop mechanisms for doing so once data reporting systems are strengthened (CFR 1.2).

NMC's commitment to academic freedom is published on the College web site in two locations: 1) the Board of Regents Policy 3000, and 2) the General Catalog. The academic freedom statement affirms the college's position that faculty and students are entitled to express disparate viewpoints without fear of recrimination. This policy meets the criteria for academic freedom within the higher education community, and the team appreciated NMC's thoughtful definition articulating faculty and student's responsible freedom of expression within the college

community. It is assumed that academic freedom concerns are vetted through faculty and student grievance procedures (CFR 1.3). NMC's mission does not include instilling specific beliefs or world views.

The college demonstrates an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through its policies and hiring processes. Job vacancy announcements affirm that equal opportunity will be given to all applicants regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, political affiliation, and family relationships. Employee demographic data provided to the visiting team reveal a reasonable gender balance among college employees, a likely result of the college's focused efforts in this area. Representation of various ethnicities within the college's employees is reasonable given the demographics of the CNMI. The commitment to diversity is reaffirmed in NMC's mission statement in its explicit commitment to provide educational services to the people of the CNMI. To further meet this commitment, the college is encouraged to explore graduation rates and other metrics of student achievement for student sub-populations (e.g., working parents, remedial students, international students) (CFR 1.4).

The NMC operates with education as its primary purpose, and is not affiliated with any related entity such as a governmental, corporate, or religious organization (CFR 1.5). In June 2011, the Board of Regents (BOR) reaffirmed its autonomy in Resolution 201-03.

NMC represents its academic goals, programs, services, and costs in the General Catalog. Additionally, the catalog contains policies addressing student conduct, grievances, disability, refunds and financial aid. Publication of the catalog on the college website ensures transparency in these areas to students and the larger public (CFR 1.6).

The visiting team was unable to determine if academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion (CFR 1.6), for on-time completion rates are dependent upon internal policies (e.g.

transfer credit), course scheduling, sufficient course sections, curriculum design, and enrollment management practices. Data requested by the visiting team show that of the students enrolled in associate degrees from 2006 to 2013, only 3% graduate within two years and 13% graduate within three years. NMC has acknowledged this as an area of weakness in their self-evaluation, and their 2015–2020 Strategic Plan identifies various commitments to improve student success and support (see Imperative Four in the Strategic Plan). To meet this imperative, the College is encouraged to continue its efforts to better understand the factors contributing to low graduation rates through analysis of disaggregated graduation rates, internal policies and procedures, curriculum structures, scheduling protocols, and overall enrollment management strategies.

As a college transitioning to the WSCUC, the faculty and staff research infrastructure does not address human subjects in research. As the college refines its thinking around faculty scholarship, they may need to establish appropriate policies and procedures to support such scholarship (CFR 1.6).

The institution's course numbering system defines and distinguishes between the different types of credits it offers. Though the definition is included on student transcripts and in the 2013-2014 General Catalog (p. 66), it fails to include the course numbers assigned for upper-division coursework in the baccalaureate-level program (CFR 1.6).

NMC exhibits transparency in its operations through the adoption and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures (CFR 1.7). The institution's transparent participatory governance structure allows for vetting of policies through campus stakeholders, and board-approved policies are made available on the college web site. NMC's financial management practices include integrating institutional planning with resource allocation, hiring qualified staff, maintaining a strong commitment to internal controls, conducting annual external audits, timely

financial reporting, and adhering to a robust procurement process. Evidence of integrity in its operations and sound business practices can be found in the most recent external audit (FY2012) which revealed no audit exceptions and resulted in unqualified auditor's opinions on both the financial statements as well as the report on internal control and compliance for federal programs.

NMC ensures transparency in its grievance procedures, for it publishes its student grievance policy in the 2013–2014 General Catalog (p. 79). The employee grievance policy (#5006) is made available on the college website under Board policies. NMC has a history of honest and open communication with the accrediting commissions (CFR 1.8). The institution's self-study was prepared by the Accreditation Review Team (ART) with broad-based engagement, and the institution's faculty, staff, students, administration and the Board of Regents demonstrated candor and transparency during the team visit. The institution abides by Commission policies and procedures, as evidenced by the careful monitoring to ensure that no more than 50% of the courses in any degree program are offered online (Substantive Change Policy).

Standard II: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

Teaching and Learning

NMC offers the following degree programs: Bachelor of Science (BS) Education, with Concentrations in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Rehabilitation and Human Services; Associates in Arts (AA) Business; Associates in Arts (AA) Liberal Arts; Associate in Science (AS) Nursing; Associate in Science (AS) Natural Resources Management; Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Business Administration, with Emphasis in Accounting, Business Management, and Computer Applications; Associate in Applied Science

(AAS) Hospitality Management; and, Associates in Applied Science (AAS) Criminal Justice.

The associate degrees average 65 units (ranging from 53 to 68), with the exception of the AS in

Nursing with 92 units and AS in Natural Resources with 74 units. The various concentrations in

the BS in Education have 132-133 units. Although NMC offers both online and hybrid courses,

all degree programs are primarily ground-based (less than 50% online or hybrid). Starting in

spring 2014, ground-based, online, and hybrid were separately coded in PowerCampus (student

administration system) for data disaggregation and tracking. Online platform activities (e.g.,

video, discussion boards) are monitored to ensure integrity of credit hours. Faculty

qualifications were recently reviewed resulting in the raising of standards with a new BOR

policy and the reassignment of 10 faculty, and the hiring of 8 new faculty. Students noted an

improvement in instructional quality with the implementation of this policy. NMC employs 31

faculty to serve 1200 students with the majority holding master's level degrees and a few with

doctorate level degrees in their instructional discipline. Nearly 70 percent of courses are taught

by full-time faculty based on three-year averages (CFR 2.1).

The College's "open admission" policy for resident students aligns with its mission statement by

ensuring all residents of the CNMI, who can benefit from postsecondary education, will have the

opportunity to enroll in programs offered by the College. To implement this policy NMC

provides eight different categories of requirements for admission into its various programs.

These admission requirements are clearly articulated in the NMC Catalog. While providing

tremendous access, the College experiences a high percent (90%) of incoming students requiring

at least one developmental course in Math or English and recognizes that stricter admission

requirements may need to be implemented for the four-year programs as it adds more degree

programs. Graduation requirements are articulated through Individualized Degree Plans (IDPs)

that start with General Education (GE) and core course requirements and then add specific

program requirements. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Student Learning Outcomes

(SLOs) are identified by faculty and program directors. Periodic updates of course guides,

program curriculum maps, and IDPs are performed in the departments and submitted for

approval by the Academic Council and the Dean of Academic Programs and Services (APS)

(CFR 2.2).

NMC's General Education program is at an initial phase of development with its 7 General

Education Outcomes (GEOs) with 14 Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for basic skills in

written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy and critical thinking

(CFR 2.2a). These basic skills are achieved through six core courses or 19 units (BE 111, CO

210, EN101, HE150, MA132, and SO 297) that are clearly articulated in the IDPs and catalog.

The course guides for the core courses provided both instructional goals and SLOs, but the

linkage to GEOs was not always present. General Education outcomes beyond basic skills to

"ensure breadth for all students in the cultural and aesthetic, social and political, and scientific

and technical knowledge" (CFR 2.2a) were not evident. General Education (GE) courses were

also not consistently included in all degree program curriculum maps; therefore alignment to

ensure students with sequenced and frequent opportunities to develop increased sophistication

with each

GE outcome was not evident. Although program course syllabi typically list GEOs, GE SLOs

were not consistently provided nor were their alignment to course-specific SLOs indicated.

Based on interviews with PROAC members, there is no functioning committee responsible for

the GE program and consequently no formal plans articulated for a comprehensive program review of GE SLOs. The last comprehensive review of General Education that included assessment of student performance on all SLOs (only 9 at that time) occurred in 2009. This program-level review that collected and analyzed student achievement of PLOs for all courses that participate in GE should be implemented on a regular and ongoing basis. In addition, as the College expands its degree programs, the GE philosophy, and related GEOs, should be expanded to include a breadth of study beyond basic skills and higher expectations of student achievement by adding upper division GE courses. (CFR 2.2a)

Institutional strategic goals, program outcomes and student learning outcomes are aligned with NMC's mission statement (CFR 2.3). GEOs, PLOs, and SLOs are stated in the NMC Catalog, course syllabi, and departmental curriculum maps. Limited evidence was provided as to the quality and effectiveness of experience outside of the classroom (e.g., clinical work, service learning, and internships) beyond merely stating their existence (CFR 2.3). However, the College's Library Programs and Services (LPS) department and eight other Learning Support Services (LSS), including advisement, technology resources, tutoring, and career counseling are commended for having established measurable PLOs with target criteria. User-end data were also provided for most of the LSS with summaries of evidence collected and analyzed to ensure continuous improvement plans (CFR 2.3).

NMC faculty have developed PLOs and course SLOs in collaboration with the Academic Council which reviews and recommends approval through the Dean of Academic Programs and Services to the President for all academic degree programs (CFR 2.4). The recent addition of

four instructional faculty members to Academic Council has increased faculty ownership of this curriculum review process.

Based on a review of course guides, methods of evaluating student performance at the course level include some authentic assessments that are formative and summative assessment (CFR 2.5). Most program curriculum maps articulated learning progressions for students to have the opportunity to practice, generalize, and apply their new knowledge and skills. Standards of performance for course SLOs that have expectations for levels of learning (i.e., rubrics) were not consistently present across all programs (CFR 2.5). Linkage between assessment of student performance and feedback has been recognized by the College, in the self- study report, as an area for improvement as well as the need to align co-curricular activities such as, internships, fieldwork, and capstone projects with standards of performance and feedback. The team agrees with the College that this is an area for improvement.

Expectations for graduation based on levels of learning or standards of performance are evident in a few programs that use licensure or certification examinations, such as for Nursing and Education majors. Most programs have not set learning expectations beyond course completion and GPA (CFR 2.6). The self- study report stated, "Capstone courses track and evaluate the standards expected by those prior to graduation." Evidence was not provided to substantiate this statement in the self- study report. A review of sample capstone course and clinical/practica fieldwork rubrics revealed that they are not aligned to PLOs and evaluators are not always calibrated to ensure consistency of ratings. Interviews from students stated that not all faculty use rubrics for assignments requiring subjective judgment (i.e., essays, projects).

The academic program review cycle articulates a staggered six-year assessment of PLOs through the annual submission of the College's Program Review Form 1, but does not state when each program will complete a comprehensive program review of all PLOs. Program Review Form 1 requires an evaluation of the methods employed to assess achievement of PLOs, and analysis and reflection on learning results. Biannually, programs complete the Program Review Form 2 Template that requires internal review at the department, PROAC and Academic Council level, but not external review. It includes a written report with recommendations for improvement. The program review process also lacks program-level feedback from students, graduates, alumni, and employers (CFR 2.3). The Learning and Achievement section of Form 2 is primarily focused on course completion including developmental courses, retention from term-to-term or next course/level data, degree program and graduation rate and so forth. Although these are required data elements, the completed Program Review Form 2 samples provided were often missing datasets for reflection, analysis and narrative comments. Furthermore, measures of teaching effectiveness (e.g., course evaluations, peer evaluations of teaching, and record of faculty scholarship and discussions of effective pedagogy) are not required in the process. NMC's academic program review process is at an initial phase of development as it transitions from course-level assessment to a more comprehensive program level review with emphasis on student achievement of PLOs and program completion (i.e., retention and graduation rates) (CFR 2.7).

Scholarship and Creative Activity

The self-study report provided limited evidence in this area (CFR 2.8) related to NMC students. A list of student organizations was provided that included Associated Students of Northern

Marianas College (ASNMC) and student clubs but without specific information related to number of student participants and type of activities that promote research, scholarship and creative activity. The College's effort to improve faculty quality with the implementation of the BOR Policy 5005 on Minimum Instructional Faculty Qualifications is a commendable and significant step forward. Policies for recognition of scholarship related to teaching, learning, assessment, and co-curricular learning are currently under discussion. While the College recognizes the linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service, it is in an initial phase of developing plans to promote these linkages (CFR 2.9).

Student Learning and Success

NMC degree completion rates are very low for both the Associate and Bachelors of Science (BS) degree programs (CFR 2.10). The BS in Education reported a cumulative 6-year degree completion rate of 14.5% (2-year average) and 7-year rate of 38%. The associate degrees reported a cumulative 3-year degree completion rate of 14.0% (3-year average), 4-year rate of 18.5% (2-year average), and 5-year rate of 22%. The College disaggregated this data by areas of study, but not by those demographic variables which are unique to the students it serves (i.e., remediation rates, number of hours working off campus, part-time or full-time enrollment, or residence status). Although the College recognizes the need to improve their students' degree completion rates and has made this an institutional priority, plans or strategies for identifying evidence needed to determine contributors to this issue have not been developed. In the area of student satisfaction, the College collects data through the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and end-of-semester Course and Instructor Evaluations. With the SSI, it is unclear however whether any progress has been made over time since only results from the 2012

administration were provided without any historical perspective. It was also not clear whether the results have influenced academic and program decision-making.

With co-curricular programs, the self-study report discussed student support programs with learning outcomes that are assessed (i.e., College Access Challenge Grant), but the only evidence provided in the self-study report was a copy of the actual survey without any data analysis of the results. The Dean's Student Engagement Fund was also cited in the report, but specific data or analysis was not provided. NMC also stated this as an area of concern, "Specific co-curricular programs to support students' personal and professional development, such as Learning Communities, need to be developed or reestablished, as well as integrated with academic programs and assessment measures." (CFR 2.11)

NMC provides extensive advisement including early admission, early intervention, and transfer admission planning to their students starting with mandatory new and returning student orientations. Students are assigned advisors who are instructors within the students' chosen degree program. Individualized Degree Plans (IDPs) are completed for each student with their advisors to guide their planning and progress to degree completion. Students are required to meet with their assigned academic advisor prior to registering for courses to evaluate their course selection and individual academic goals. The College also publishes the NMC Student Handbook and Catalog, both available on their website, and reviewed and updated periodically (CFR 2.12). NMC students rated higher importance and satisfaction with the quality of their academic advising when compared to national community colleges' ratings (Noel Levitz SSI, 2012).

NMC provides the appropriate academic and other student support services including tutoring, services for students with disabilities, financial aid, counseling, and career counseling and placement (CFR 2.13). The College has dedicated counseling staff to assist students with both personal and academic issues and uses technology to extend this support to online students via Instant Messaging and Video Teleconferencing. With the high percentage of first-time freshmen (approximately 90%) needing one or more remedial course, academic tutoring is a priority with over 1,949 tutoring sessions provided in FY2013. Effectiveness of these student support services programs based on end-user data and plans for improvement was provided and demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement.

Formal policies as well as partnership and articulation agreements are in place for transfer students with 54 institutions including the University of Hawaii and American Samoa Community College (CFR 2.14). In 2012 NMC joined the Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE) providing opportunities to their undergraduate students and graduates to continue their academic endeavors beyond the College. Transfer policies are articulated in the NMC Catalog including credit for military service and schooling, foreign language courses, foreign credentials, and advanced placement credit. WSCUC expects that institutions "ensure [students] are not unduly disadvantaged by the transfer process" **into** the institution (CFR 2.14), and the College is urged to further develop the evaluation of transfer credit function to evaluate transferability based on student learning outcomes at the course and general education level. Published transfer policies do not explicitly address transferability of general education courses into GE categories, which could possibly cause issues for transfer students.

PROAC is responsible for program review for all divisions (academic and non-academic) across the College. As the College develops a more comprehensive academic program review process, there will be a need for a more faculty-driven entity to monitor and assess program-level effectiveness related to educational learning and improvement. (CFRs 2.4, 4.5)

Standard III: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

Faculty and Staff

NMC has eight degree programs (note: the two Business associate's degrees are not counted separately): seven associate's degree programs and one baccalaureate degree program. Counting different specializations with the programs, there are 15 separate curricula. In addition, there is an English Language Institute (ELI) that serves the needs of international and developmental students for English courses below college level. The Developmental Mathematics program provides mathematics courses below college level. To support these programs, NMC employs 31 full time faculty members and 23 part-time faculty members. These numbers, particularly those of adjuncts, vary as the needs and enrollment varies, however, during the fall 2013 semester, all classes were covered and taught by qualified faculty members (CFR 3.1).

In 2013, there were about 1200 students, 76% of them studying for an associate's degree and 23% of them towards a baccalaureate degree in Education. Almost all students are on some type

of financial assistance, with 90% of them supported by Title IV aid, such as Pell grants. In 2013, NMC awarded 133 associate's degrees and 29 bachelor's degrees.

This means approximately 14% of the students enrolled at the time, actually graduated in 2013. This number is low and, since it is in fact their approximate six-year graduation rate as reported, this provides the College an opportunity to conduct focused research on the paths the students take to graduation, their goals and barriers to success, and provide an evidence-based intervention to improve the rate.

A review of the resumes and qualifications of the faculty indicated that their numbers, although small in some areas, appear to be sufficient by discipline and degree level to offer the associates degrees and one baccalaureate degree currently approved for NMC (CFR 3.1). Of the 31 full-time faculty members, about a third of them are newly hired this academic year. They are reported to bring enthusiasm for the role of the faculty as academic leaders and a new perspective to the curriculum and pedagogy, a view supported by student comments as well. This enthusiasm should be used to lead the assessment and program review activities mentioned elsewhere in this report.

Faculty and staff recruitment processes are managed by the Human Resources Office. A review of the documents used for advertising and hiring provided evidence that the process is aligned with the College's mission and purpose (CFR 3.2). Over the last year or so, the College was faced with an issue, noted by the ACCJC, wherein faculty members were teaching in areas that were not matched to their education qualifications, although many of the faculty members had

years of experience in teaching the subjects. The College reviewed qualifications of all faculty and determined that several of them were not appropriate for the subject they were teaching. Of those, most were reassigned and given an opportunity, subsidized by NMC, to add educational qualifications by further course or degree work. Only one of those affected left the College. The College is commended for making difficult but academically appropriate decisions about faculty qualifications, and incorporating these into the hiring procedures (CFR 3.2).

Performance appraisal relies heavily on student evaluations for faculty; however, as the faculty move towards assessment from multiple sources and peer review, this should change to include assessment results to demonstrate student learning and appropriate peer review. Faculty evaluation activities are supervised by HRO and organized by the division or department chair, conducted regularly each academic year, and the evaluation reviewed by the Dean of Academic Programs and Services (CFR 3.2). As the institution moves toward an academic assessment cycle owned by the faculty, it is important that performance appraisal of the faculty be linked to student learning. In conjunction with the soon-to-be-defined faculty roles (noted below), it is recommended that faculty evaluation criteria be aligned with expectations of faculty leadership in academic assessment, and that the evaluative processes use best practices of evaluation (multisource feedback, appropriate peer review) and that the evaluations are used to improve teaching and learning.

Adjunct and new faculty orientations are held regularly each semester, and all faculty (full and part time) are evaluated each semester, using student evaluations and some course review

material. These evaluations are recommended to include peer review and be better linked to program learning outcomes, advising, and retention and graduation rates (CFR 3.3).

NMC currently uses funds for faculty/staff development, mostly centered on travel and webinars (CFR 3.3). There is never enough funding to support all the needs for development. As the institution continues to grow and develop more programs, the roles and expectations of the faculty will change, specifically in the areas of assessment, program review and new pedagogies. Since NMC is located on an island in Micronesia, it is not possible to simply hire more new faculty or staff for the new roles, nor is that desirable since all faculty should be encouraged to participate in these activities. Therefore, a thoughtful and focused faculty and staff development program (perhaps a series of workshops) is recommended to be put in place, linked to student learning and the NMC strategic plan. There may be faculty development resources available in the region, possibly through joining forces with other institutions such as University of Guam (UOG) or Guam Community College (GCC) or bringing in experts to conduct workshops on the areas of development.

In order to empower the faculty to exercise effective academic leadership to sustain educational quality, engage in peer review and assessment activities, and ensure student learning by curricular and pedagogical improvement, the team recommends that NMC:

a) Carefully define the roles (teaching, scholarship, service) and assessment expectations (academic program review and peer review) for a faculty member appropriate to NMC and its development and to ensure quality student learning outcomes.

b) Consider preparing a comprehensive and focused development plan for faculty to provide them with the tools and information necessary to manage the learning outcomes-assessment-quality improvement cycle of the various degree programs.

c) Include resources for these items in the college budget.

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources

Revenue for the College comes primarily from three sources, only one of which is under the direct control of the College through the Board. The first source is CNMI Legislative appropriation, which funds personnel expenses. Cash flow is an issue as the allotments are not always available in a timely manner and the late payments may produce a forced surplus at the end of the year. The second source is tuition and fees. The College has authority to set tuition and fee rates; the only restriction is that non-resident student tuition is set at no more than twice the resident student tuition (CNMI Public Law 08-18). The College is currently conducting internal discussions about the possibility of an increase in tuition and fees. Although the present tuition appears low when compared nationally ($95 per credit hour for residents; $190 per credit hour for non-residents), the regional and local context is always taken into account and the College carefully works with the community in setting up these charges. The third portion of the revenue basket is Federal money, which comes from financial aid (Title IV and Pell Grants), and some grants. A small amount of funds may be available from investment income from college investments or the emerging endowment foundation.

The College has a unique land-grant status, as it hosts the CREES (Cooperative Research, Education and Extension Service) program, funded by the US Department of Agriculture. At the

Federal level, the name "CREES" was changed to NIFA (National Institute of Food and Agriculture) in 2008 and has a mission of research, education, and extension; however, the program is identified locally as CREES. NIFA/CREES is funded through USDA (US Department of Agriculture) and has priority areas of food security and hunger, climate change, sustainable energy, childhood obesity, and food safety. The NIFA/CREES program is part of a regional land-grant consortium that covers the US Associated Pacific Islands, including American Samoa, Palau, FSM and CNMI. This is an excellent opportunity for the faculty to be involved in research and outreach to the community in areas of great need for the island, such as sustainable energy, childhood obesity and climate change.

Although the institution relies heavily on Legislative appropriations for operational and personnel costs, a review of the previous three years of audits shows they are able to manage within the budgets, and have produced clean audits each year, with a reserve (CFR 3.4). That is well done, considering the fiscal state of affairs of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands during recent years resulting in a drop in appropriations by 7% in 2013-14.

In the area of enrollment management, there is room for development as the faculty make changes to the curriculum, consider an appropriate *faculty-to-student ratio* and implement intervention strategies to increase retention and graduation rates. Enrollment management might be handled at the department/division level and it could provide an opportunity to collaborate with Student Support Services, linked to student advisement and degree plans.

NMC has a well-qualified and enthusiastic Information Technology unit, consisting of eight employees serving Media Services, IT support, and Information Services. Their mission is to provide "support, instruction, and access to information and technology in order to enhance student learning, promote professional development, and support assessment and improvement at NMC." In meetings with IT staff, it is clear to the site visit team that this is an area that is poised to take leadership on the island. Training and support is regularly provided in collaboration with the Office of Distance Learning; there is a plan in place for wireless access throughout the campus, computer labs are well-supported, and mission-critical processes and hardware are maintained. While there are never enough funds to provide the hardware and software that IT understand the campus needs, especially in the classrooms, this unit has a long term plan in place and implements it as funds are available. All of their work and plans have been aligned with and support student learning, as evidenced by their strategic plan, their actions, and the results of these actions, documented in evidence binders and verified by interviews and observations (CFR 3.5).

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

Interviews with NMC's leadership and a review of minutes of meetings and documents on file provided a picture of dedicated and capable leadership, with high energy, committed to the institution. The management team members have appropriate responsibility indicated in the job descriptions and reinforced at the implementation level (CFR 3.6). The initiation and institutionalizing of the notion of "participatory governance" has allowed the three main constituent groups on the campus: faculty, staff and students, to provide input and review of all policies before they go to the Board of Regents. This is welcomed by all groups and has been

used extensively during the past year as the President and Board grappled with differentiating policy and procedures. They are urged to continue those discussions and move the discussions at the Board meetings to a high level, at a more transformational level, rather than at the transactional level.

Over the past year, the Board and President, with the assistance of her Management Team, reviewed the Board policies, with a goal of differentiating between policy which rises to the level of Board action, and procedures, which would be under the control of the President, as part of her management authority. This resulted in a series of Board policies (BOR Policies 1001-1020 and 5000-5010) that include personnel evaluation, presidential duties, a code of conduct, a conflict of interest policy, Regent's self-evaluation, institutional governance, ethics, grievances, and EEO and harassment policies. This comprehensive look at institutional policies tested the new participatory governance model, with positive results (CFRs 3.6, 3.7).

There are several documents in place that clearly outline organizational structures and decision-making processes. These include an organizational chart that included names as well as titles, and NMC's Institutional Excellence Guide, "an organizational guide to participatory governance, planning, assessment and budgeting." The Institutional Excellence Guide was a valuable tool for the team as the review progressed. One of the appendices "Different Jobs, Different Tasks: Board and CEO Roles and Responsibilities" clearly lays out the roles and responsibilities of these two levels of authority. Assuming the institution sustains the momentum that produced these documents and continues implementing what was approved, it will serve the NMC community well as they work towards becoming a learning organization (CFR 3.7).

The President of NMC has been at the helm of the campus since July 2011 and has consistently managed the institution and developed an administrative team, most of who have been in their positions less than two years. A chart of their effective dates of employment is included on page 31 of the NMC Self Review under the Standards document. Despite their apparent newness to the positions, the interviews and documents provided to the team, demonstrated that this group of administrative leaders is enthusiastically invested in the future of the College. The key position of Chief Financial Officer was filled last spring (May 2013). A joint interview was held with the CAO and CFO, which provided evidence of academic-financial collaboration, with both of their teams focused on student learning. One suggestion from the team was to develop a "capital (equipment and project) budget," linked to the Facilities Master Plan, and then galvanize support to fund items from this budget from multiple sources. Such a plan might also include other major projects that could be funded from grant or Federal sources, such as developing the needed information technology infrastructure in the classrooms to support student learning. This CAO/CFO interaction bodes well for the future of NMC (CFR 3.7).

Reporting and advising the President is a Management Team consisting of Deans and Directors who report directly to the President, the Student Association President, and the Faculty and Staff Senate Presidents. The Management team reported satisfaction with the leadership development activities designed by the President. There are 21 administrators and 80 support staff, which appears sufficient in quantity and experience to provide leadership and support for the academic enterprise (CFR 3.8). In interviews with the management team and various administrators it was reported that they had input into new policy development, they are considering procedures to implement policies, and they operate at a high level in thinking through problems, such as

alternative revenue sources or how to address the low graduation rate. In order to move to action from some of these discussions, research is needed and data collected that speak to some of the questions such as "why do students take so long to complete a program?" or "Why do Developmental Students drop out at such an alarming rate?" When these questions are answered with evidence and not anecdotes, then action or interventions can be taken in a considered manner, which should affect the graduation and retention rate in a positive manner. This is an area where faculty could contribute their expertise in conducting research and analysis of data.

The management team also provided an overview of current initiatives and revenue generation activities (CFR 3.4), e.g., WICHE membership, producing an alliance with Rio Salado College, to offer further certificates and two-year programs to CNMI citizens at a discounted tuition rate; alternative revenue streams such as non-credit certification courses, using the research arm of the land grant division to offer training to local entrepreneurs and farmers; international students and alliances with institutions in Asia; and leveraging the IT department's expertise for IT training and support to other entities.

The Board reported and evidence provided in the self-study indicated that the Board operates with autonomy, free from political interference, while recognizing that they are accountable to the people of the Commonwealth for their actions (CFR 3.9). A large portion of the College's budget comes from Legislative appropriation and, as a result, there is a requirement of accountability and responsiveness to community needs, displayed in the actions of the College.

The Board reviews the President annually, based on a set of goals agreed to between the President and the Board at the beginning of the year. The evaluation process is reported to be mutually satisfactory and beneficial to both parties. Recently, the Board and the President reviewed Board policies and procedures and produced a series of broad policy statements, subsequently reviewed by all constituencies on the campus and approved by the Board. It is now the responsibility of the administration to respond by developing processes and procedures to implement these policies. Procedures would subsequently be approved by the President as part of her operational responsibility.

The Board conducts a self-evaluation annually, supplemented by evaluations at the end of each meeting. These individual evaluations are then discussed by the Board and adjustments to the operations of the Board made as needed. The Board has been involved in training by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) and other groups in the roles and responsibilities of the Board (CFR 3.9). It is anticipated and expected that this ongoing training will continue as the Board monitors policy and supports the College.

The institution has been in crisis mode for several years, and, as a result, the Regents have felt the urgency and met at least monthly. However, as recommended by both the Regents and the college community, there appears to be a consensus that the Regents may return to meeting less regularly (say, quarterly?); to allow time for new procedures to be developed and deployed on the campus in response to new policies; to avoid any temptation to be involved in management of the campus; and to continue to raise the level of Board attention to broader issues such as a sustainable future for the College or fund-raising activities (CFR 3.9).

NMC's faculty are actively involved in reviewing programs and data through the PROAC, approving curriculum and new programs through the Academic Council, and providing input and advice on policy development and strategic planning through the College Council (CFR 3.10). The work and responsibilities currently expected of the faculty are defined in the Institutional Excellence Guide, the Faculty Senate/Assembly constitution, and individual faculty contracts. Courses are reviewed regularly. At this stage of development, enrollment management and academic program review should provide the data necessary for continuous improvement in student outcomes (including both retention and graduation rates and program learning outcomes). It is suggested that faculty development activities be designed to assist faculty to design and use program-level assessment to improve student success and academic quality.

Governance roles of faculty and staff are defined in the Institutional Excellence Guide. Each of those groups reported satisfaction with the amount and type of input into governance that is now practiced under the participatory governance model.

Standard IV: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning and Improvement

Quality Assurance Processes

As noted in the NMC's self- study, since 2007 there has been continuous improvement in audited financial statements, internal control and compliance (CFRs 1.6., 4.1). While in the area of data collection and analysis of the review of academic programs, NMC recognizes the need to "close the loop" on its assessment feedback processes (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3). The team also identified the

need for procedures for systematic disaggregation and use of data for enrollment management, student learning and achievement, and degree completion, specifically to meet its strategic goals to shorten the time to degree (CFR 2.10). In the self –study report, program review documents, the NMC Fact Book, and data on the website, the team noted missing data elements and reports that indicated required data were not available. The lack of trend analysis was also evident in a number of areas. The team investigated the causes for these deficiencies on the site visit in meetings with staff and faculty, and identified some strategies and plans for improvement.

In the College's self –study response to CFR 4.1, quality control was viewed as one of the strengths of NMC both in its program review processes for academic and non-academic areas under the direction of PROAC and in the function of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Nevertheless, NMC also recognized that data collection and analysis to support program and institutional review are areas of weakness (CFR 4.2). Through interviews, the team discovered that the Office of Admissions and Records (OAR) and OIE had several open positions and this lack of human resources with adequate training had contributed to the effectiveness of the institutional research capacity over the years. In addition, the limitations of the Student Information/Management System which required manual entry of enrollment data and also required increased communication between the OAR and the OIE to collect aggregate data, further exasperated the challenges for data collection and analysis. Even with recent hiring, such as the Database Administrator, new training on the newest features of PowerCampus provided by the outside vendor (available Fall 2014), and increasing coordination with the Office of Information Technology improvements in data collection and analysis should remain a priority for NMC (CFRs 4.1, 4.2).

Institutional Learning and Improvement

NMC is committed to a philosophy of program review that applies to both academic and non-academic units (CFRs 2.4, 2.11, 4.3). One of the strengths of the system is that there are clear standards using a respected model (Nichols 5 column model) and an established schedule whereby academic and non -academic departments are reviewed on a biannual basis. Composite feedback reports are given to the units from the program review committee (PROAC) based on data submitted on Form 2. A review of the composite reports for 2011 by the team noted that the majority of the recommendations concerned equipment, facilities and human resource needs, rather than pedagogical or program curriculum improvements. There is a close link between the program review process and the annual budgeting process. Results of assessments and program reviews are tied to fiscal spending and linked to strategic direction, mission and changes which are reviewed at the Annual Planning Summit in August which include a number of stakeholders (CFRs 4.3 4.5, 4.6). While the program review process is a biannual one, and there is also an annual budgeting process, the focus of using the program review primarily to generate budget requests, may overshadow the importance of feedback for effective ongoing program development which requires a longer time frame to implement. In addition, no study of grading practices in academic programs was evident (CFR 4.4). NMC recognizes the need to "close the feedback loop" through the delivery of feedback to the academic departments (CFRs 4.3. 4.4).

While there have been significant improvements in participation across the College since the program review process was implemented in 2007, one weakness is that often the departments are not able to justify their recommendations based on data (CFRs 4.3, 4.4) because it is not

collected. Columns 4 and 5 of Nichols' model require a summary of findings regarding the outcomes, assessment tools and criteria for success, evidence on the implications of data and how the results of the review are being used for program improvement regarding student learning as well as resources required. The weakness in departments' abilities to fully complete this component of the program review process is identified in the OIE's 2013 compliance report. The self-study report (CFR 4.2) also indicates the lack of data provided to the departments from the OIE, including data from external sources such as program market demand and job placement statistics which are required elements in program reviews (CFR 4.5).

A current initiative to train more faculty in the use of data analysis is underway, but departments need more training and support in involving external stakeholders, such as employers, alumni, and community members in the regular assessment of program effectiveness (CFR 4.5). There has been recognition that the Program Advisory Councils (PACS) may provide recommendations for program assessment, growth and development. However, these observations and recommendations are likely to be anecdotal rather than evidenced-based and the level of participation and quality of PACs members vary from program to program. Difficulties in working with community stakeholders to provide relevant competencies for student learning outcomes have already been identified in the Self-Study Report Though faculty have been trained in the DACUM (Developing a Curriculum Model) to work with community panels, cultural factors unique to CNMI have made it difficult to set up effective panel opportunities (CFR 4.5). NMC may need to extend its own research and analysis to provide external data from the community to support program review and institutional effectiveness (CFR 4.5). Similarly, student feedback is primarily collected through end–of-semester course

evaluations, but there is no evidence of student input into academic program-level assessment process (CFRs 4.4, 4.5). While data from a survey of students' assessment of the campus climate had been collected by Noel Levitz, it was not clear what trend analysis had been done or how the results were used to drive improvements (CFR 4.5). In another study of the residents of Tinian and Rota islands, where NMC has outreach sites to provide students degree and non-degree- bearing educational programs, the raw survey data was provided, but there was no analysis of its implications or how it will be used for program improvement and resource allocation (CFRs 4.1, 4.5).

In regards to CFR 4.6, NMC's recently completed a 15-month process for its Strategic Plan 2015-2020, which represents a strong foundation for institutional reflection and planning, and involvement with numerous stakeholders. The new NMC Mission and Vision statements were generated through this process and received feedback from multiple levels of constituencies. The new plan has five "Imperatives", namely to increase relevance to the CNMI workforce, to ensure continued accreditation, to accelerate the time to completion, to improve student success and support, and to strengthen operations and resource development. The strategic plan aligns with the Complete College America Agenda that was signed in 2013 by an alliance of 33 states to boost college completion and close attainment gaps. In February 2014, NMC issued a Call to Action to accept the College Completion Challenge. Their five "Game Changers" include performance funding, co-requisite remediation coursework, full-time enrollment defined as 15 units, structured schedules, and guided pathways to success, will provide NMC with challenging specific operational goals that tie to changes in the higher education environment (CFR 4.7).

In the Strategic Plan, NMC identified 24 benchmarks (data points) for success. However, no specific targets or benchmarks for NMC were identified for each of the criteria in terms of measurable objectives for the annual operational plans which are guided by the Strategic Plan. These will be necessary to monitor the Strategic Plan and measurable objectives linked to each goal as mandated by the BOR (CFRs 4.6, 4.3).

The College's Annual Planning Summit in August provides the opportunity for a number of stakeholders to review changes in priorities and tie them to budget planning (CFR 4.6). The plan for the institution as a whole to become accredited by the WSCUC Senior Commission was not envisioned at the time of the last strategic planning process, but it will lead to a number of long-term initiatives to support this process to meet the standards of the Senior Commission. NMC's self-study report gave little evidence of reflection on the needed changes as it transition from ACCJC to Senior WSCUC (CFR 4.7). These issues were explored with a number of constituencies and representative groups during the site visit and it is evident that the implications over time of changing accreditation bodies are still being absorbed by the BOR, the administration and faculty. At the local level NMC has responded aggressively, once the sanctions of ACCJC were lifted, to propose offering a bachelors-level degree program in Business to meet the workforce demand of the CNMI as the non-citizen contract workers lose their immigration status (CFR 4.7).

Similarly NMC is developing apprenticeship programs with an emphasis on high growth industries based on survey data from the U.S Census and CNMI Workforce Development Office. In order to provide opportunities for its associate degree graduates to pursue their further

education at the undergraduate and graduate degree levels, NMC recently joined the Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE), which gives NMC students and CNMI citizens discounted tuition rates and access to approximately 250 public undergraduate universities and colleges in 15 Western states, at a tuition rate that cannot exceed 150% of the resident tuition. A recent proposal to provide access to the online certificate and two-year degrees through Rio Salado Community College in Arizona is also being pursued to enhance CNMI citizens and NMC student's opportunities to study a wider variety of majors and technical fields (CFR 4.7).

SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations

1. The College is commended for evaluating and refining its governance processes to transition to a participatory governance structure. The visiting team observed signs of efficacy in the new structure, since stakeholders at all levels of the college (students, faculty, staff, and administration) reported that they had input into decision-making and were pleased with the arrangement (CFRs 3.7, 4.5).

2. The Student Support Services are to be commended for having established measureable Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and evaluated them using target criteria with evidence gathered from end-user data resulting in program action plans to ensure continuous improvements (CFR 2.13).

3. The NMC Board of Regents, administration, faculty and staff are commended for their fiscal performance, as evidenced by an unqualified audit (CFR 3.4).

4. The NMC Board of Regents is commended for transforming itself over the past few years and for supporting the President during these changes that were necessary to ensure continued student success (CFR 3.9).

5. The Northern Marianas College is commended for the recently completed strategic planning process, which redefined NMC's mission and vision, involved a broad range of stakeholders, and allowed them to focus on a sense of purpose to serve the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CFR 4.6).

6. The NMC community of staff, faculty, administrators, students, Regents, and community stakeholders are commended for their diligent work to research, develop and implement a series of new policies that provide the direction for the College for the future (CFRs 3.7, 4.6).

7. The College is commended for making difficult but academically appropriate decisions about faculty qualifications, and incorporating these into the hiring procedures (CFR 2.1).

Recommendations

1. In order to collect and analyze data effectively, and support evidence-based decision making, the team recommends that the capacity of the College for institutional research be further developed (CFRs 4.1, 4.2).

2. In order to ensure sustainable quality learning environments that promote student success, the team strongly recommends that the college transition from course-level assessment to a comprehensive program-level review with emphasis on collection and analysis of data, focused on student achievement of PLOs and program completion data (i.e., retention and graduation rates). (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 4.3, 4.4).

3. The team recommends that the College further develop NMC's general education philosophy so that this philosophy will guide development and serve as the underlying structure and basis for GE at NMC. Additionally, the team notes that there should be increasingly higher level of expectations from General Education as students progress from the Associates to the Bachelor's degree. This means assessments should be conducted separately at each level to inform improvements in student learning and course completion (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a, 2.6).

4. In order to empower the faculty to exercise effective academic leadership to sustain educational quality, engage in peer review and assessment activities, and ensure student learning by curricular and pedagogical improvement, the team recommends that NMC:

   a. Carefully define the roles (teaching, scholarship, service) and assessment expectations (program review and peer review) for a faculty member appropriate to NMC and its development and to ensure quality student learning outcomes (CFR 2.9).

   b. Consider preparing a comprehensive and focused development plan for faculty to provide them with the tools and information necessary to manage the learning outcomes-assessment-quality improvement cycle of the various degree programs (CFR 2.4).

   c. Include resources for these items in the college budget (CFR 3.3).

5. In conjunction with the soon-to-be-defined faculty roles, the team recommends that faculty evaluation criteria be aligned with these expectations and that the evaluative processes use best practices of evaluation (multisource feedback, appropriate peer review) and that the evaluations are used to improve teaching and learning (CFRs 3.2, 3.3, 3.10).

6. The institution has been in crisis mode for several years, and, as a result, the Regents have felt the urgency and met at least monthly. However, as recommended by both the Regents and the college community, there appears to be a consensus that the Regents may return to

meeting less regularly (perhaps quarterly); to allow time for new procedures to be developed and deployed on the campus in response to new policies; to avoid any temptation to be involved in management of the campus; and to continue to raise the level of Board attention to broader issues such as a sustainable future for the College or fund-raising activities (CFRs 3.7, 3.9).

Appendix I Credit Hour Policy

Hour Policy Checklist: Northern Marianas College, 5/2/14, Completed by Megan Lawrence

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? X YES ☐ NO
	Where is the policy located? General Catalog, 2013 – 2014, p. 67 – 68 ("Academic Workload" policy)
	Comments: Policy addresses the amount of time students spend in class plus out of class assignments. However, the policy can be enhanced by accounting for online, hybrid, and internship course.
Process(s) for periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? ☐ YES X NO
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? n/a ☐ YES ☐ NO
	Comments: The institution seems to have an informal process by which faculty evaluate courses; however, I could not find evidence that there is a formal, systematic process to evaluate out-of-class time to validate the unit assignment.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.*	How many syllabi were reviewed? 6
	Type of courses reviewed: X online X hybrid
	What degree level(s)? X AA/AS ☐ BA/BS ☐ MA ☐ Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Nursing, Education, Business
	Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: It appears that out-of-class hours align with the credit hour policy; however, number of hours can be made more explicit on the online and hybrid syllabi.
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.*	How many syllabi were reviewed? 3
	What kinds of courses? Internship, student teaching, nursing practicum
	What degree level(s)? X AA/AS ☐ BA/BS ☐ MA ☐ Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Nursing, business, education
	Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: Students are completing a sufficient number of hours in each areas to meet federal regulations; in some cases (such as student teaching), the hours spent teaching supersede the required minimums.
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 3
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Business, Nursing, Education
	What degree level(s)? X AA/AS X BA/BS ☐ MA ☐ Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Business, Nursing, Education
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of an acceptable length? X YES ☐ NO
	Comments: All bachelor's degrees require a minimum of 120 college-level units; associate degrees require a minimum of 60 college-level units.

Appendix II Students Complaint policy

Northern Marianas College Procedure
Procedure No.: 410 Procedure Title: Student Grievance Procedure
Issuing Date: 10.24.12 Adoption Date: Effective Date: 2.1.13
Office of Origin: Dean of Student Services
Procedure Approval Authority: Dean of Student Services
Board Policy No. associate with this procedure: 8201 Student Grievances/Complaints
This Procedure Supercedes [sic]/Replaces: 8.2.2P approved on 1.25.05
Procedure No./Title: 410 Student Grievance Procedure Page No. 1

The written steps necessary to appropriately and uniformly perform a task in carrying out

policies and activities of the College.

Introduction

NMC is committed to a policy against illegal, arbitrary, or unreasonable discriminatory practices.

All groups operating under the Board of Regents, including administrators, instructional faculty,

non-instructional faculty, staff, student government, and programs sponsored by NMC, are

governed by this policy of nondiscrimination. NMC, in accordance with applicable federal and

Commonwealth law and college policy, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the

basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, medical condition, ancestry,

marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

A. Purpose and Scope. The purpose of this procedure is to provide NMC students an opportunity

to resolve complaints alleging discrimination based upon any of the grounds listed above. This

procedure is also available for the resolution of complaints alleging inappropriate application to a

student of any other rules or policies of NMC resulting in injury to the student, except as noted in

I.B. below. It is the intent of this procedure that student complaints should be resolved, if at all

possible, informally in the department or unit where they arise.

B. The Student Grievance Procedure does not apply to complaints coming under the following

campus processes, unless those processes specifically refer matters to the Student Grievance Procedure:

1. Grade Appeals – Board of Regents Policy 8002.10. This procedure is to be used for complaints that grades in courses of instruction are based on the application of non-academic criteria.

2. NMC Code of Student Conduct. This procedure is to be used for complaints against students or student organizations that have allegedly violated campus student conduct rules.

3. Drug Free Workplace Smoking Tobacco and Betelnut Chewing Policy.

C. The student grievance procedure may be used for complaints of sexual harassment and complaints of failure to provide proper accommodation for the academic needs of students with disabilities.

D. In the event any other policy at NMC or any other version of this policy conflicts with this official Student Grievance Policy, this official version controls.

Definitions A. Complaint Resolution Officer (CRO): The person designated to receive, investigate, mediate, and resolve complaints brought under this procedure. The CRO shall be a member of the NMC instructional faculty, non-instructional faculty, or staff and shall be appointed for a term of one year by the President.

B. Alternate Complaint Resolution Officer(s) (Alternate CRO(s)): Two persons who may serve as CRO for any specific grievance in the event of a conflict of interest between the complainant and/or respondent and the CRO. The alternate CROs shall be appointed by the President at the same time and for the same term as the CRO.

C. Student: An individual who (a) is enrolled in or registered with an academic program or class

at the college, including as an auditor; (b) has completed the immediately preceding term and is

eligible for re-enrollment, including the recess periods between academic terms; (c) is on

approved educational leave or other approved leave status, or is on filing-fee status; (d) has

ended studies at the college, whether for a degree or otherwise, but has nonetheless filed a

grievance within the time limits specified in these procedures.

D. Respondent: The person against whom a complaint is filed.

E. Grievance Fairness Committee (GFC): The committee charged with reviewing formal

complaints filed by students. The GFC is composed of seven members: three faculty members

appointed by the faculty senate, two staff members appointed by the staff senate, and two non-

voting students selected by the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College. This is a

standing committee that sits for a term of one academic year. The chair shall be elected from

among the membership.

F. Notification: Notification takes place upon the date of receipt of any document, when properly

addressed. Written communications to a complainant are properly addressed when sent to the

address given in the complaint or the last address given since the filing of the complaint.

G. Time: All time periods referred to in this procedure refer to days of the work week, including

the summer and college recesses, but excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and campus holidays. The

time periods designated in this procedure may not be extended for any reason.

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Department or Unit Level Resolution Procedures

A. Informal Process and Exhaustion of Informal Remedy

Before filing a grievance under this policy, a student must attempt to resolve the matter

informally with the person alleged to have committed the violation and with the head of the department or unit in which the alleged violation occurred. The student may contact the Office of the Dean of Student Services for assistance with informal resolution, and any involved party may seek guidance from the relevant dean or division head. Attempts to resolve the matter informally shall be initiated within thirty (30) days from the time the action leading to the grievance occurred. If a student wishes to file a formal grievance, he or she must do so within sixty (60) days from the time the action leading to the grievance occurred regardless of the progress of the informal process.

Formal Campus Resolution Procedures

A. Filing

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process, a student may file a formal student grievance within sixty (60) days from the time at which the action leading to the grievance occurred. Students must file the formal grievance with the Office of the Dean of Student Services. The student may file the grievance directly with the Dean of Student Services, or the Dean of Student Services may designate another individual in his or her office to receive complaints.

Student grievances must be in writing and signed by the student or the student's designated representative, if any. The Student Grievance Procedure Form must be completed. Grievances must contain the student's address and phone number to the law, policy, or rule alleged to have been violated, a description of the evidence extent available, a detailed statement of the specific action being grieved, the approximate date when the action took place, the resulting injury or harm, the specific supporting the grievance, whether informal procedures were attempted and completed, and the remedy or relief requested. Incomplete grievances will be returned without

action. It is the responsibility of the complainant to update the CRO as to the appropriate address to use throughout the grievance process.

If the student is to be assisted by an advisor, their parent(s), or a lawyer licensed to practice in the CNMI, the student must submit the name of this individual. The student also must submit a signed statement authorizing the advisor to receive copies of relevant student records and correspondence regarding the grievance and to accompany the student to any meetings or hearings.

B. Initial Review and Investigation

Upon receipt of a formal student grievance, the CRO shall review the grievance and make an initial determination regarding whether the grievance is complete, timely, within the jurisdiction of the Student Grievance Procedure, and alleges facts that, if true, would constitute a violation of law or college policy. The CRO shall then commence an investigation of the grievance by sending a copy of the written grievance and any supporting documentation to the respondent and asking for a written response.

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The respondent shall (1) confirm or deny each fact alleged in the grievance; (2) indicate the extent to which the grievance has merit; and (3) indicate acceptance or rejection of any remedy requested by the grievant or outline an alternative proposal for remedy. The CRO will provide the complainant with a copy of the respondent's answer.

A notification to the student will be provided if the grievance filing is incomplete, untimely, or within the jurisdiction of another procedure. During the course of the investigation, the CRO shall also seek the opinion of the department or division head involved in the informal grievance

process. The CRO shall also consult with the relevant dean or division head where the complaint arose. The contents of these discussions shall be included in the CRO's report as outlined below. The CRO may seek to mediate a resolution or negotiate an informal settlement of the grievance at any time during the course of the investigation. If a resolution satisfactory to both the grievant and the respondent is reached, the CRO will notify both parties of the voluntary resolution in writing and the formal grievance will be permanently dismissed.

The CRO shall complete the investigation and produce a report within thirty (30) days of the initial receipt of the grievance in the Office of the Dean of Student Services. The report should contain the CRO's initial determination of the completeness, timeliness, and jurisdictional soundness of the grievance, a summary of the issues presented by the grievance, the CRO's factual findings reached in the investigation, the CRO's opinion as to whether these factual findings constitute a violation of law or college policy, a summary of the CRO's discussions with the relevant department or unit head and dean or division head, and a conclusion regarding the recommended outcome of the grievance, including proposed corrective actions, if any.

C. Consideration by Grievance Fairness Committee

The report shall be given to the Dean of Student Services, who shall convene the GFC within ten (10) days to review the matter. The Dean of Student Services shall provide each member of the GFC with a copy of the CRO's report and any other relevant documentation. The complainant and the respondent shall be notified of the time and date of the hearing and given an opportunity to submit written materials to the GFC and to present oral testimony. Both the complainant and the respondent shall be given copies of all materials provided to the GFC, as well as copies of these procedures, and a list of the names of the members of the GFC.

Before the hearing, either the complainant or respondent may request that any member of the

GFC remove himself or herself on the grounds of conflict of interest. The member will be immediately informed of this request. If the member does not agree to remove himself or herself, the party requesting their removal make ask that the recusal of the member be considered as the first order of business at the committee hearing. Recusal shall then be determined in confidential deliberations by majority vote before the committee hearing begins.

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Any member of the GFC may remove himself or herself on his or her own initiative from a case if he or she believes a conflict of interest exists. If more than two members of the GFC are removed for a conflict of interest, then temporary alternates must be appointed by the appropriate appointing bodies until a minimum of five members of the committee are able to serve before the case can proceed. In the event that the chair is recused for a conflict of interest, or is otherwise absent, the committee shall elect an acting chair.

The GFC shall meet in closed session and all deliberations and proceedings shall be confidential, unless both parties agree to open the proceedings. The hearing shall begin with the chair introducing himself or herself and the other members of the committee. The complainant shall then be asked to make a verbal statement regarding the grievance he or she filed, which must include the events that led to the grievance, the NMC policy or law that was alleged to be violated, and their proposed remedy for the grievance. The respondent will then be asked to reply to the allegations. The CRO will then be asked to speak regarding his or her investigation and what it revealed. Any relevant additional witnesses or parties may be called by the grievant or

respondent, provided this decision is made before the hearing. The members of the committee may question the complainant, the respondent, the CRO, and any other witnesses both during and after their respective statements and at the conclusion of all testimony.

During the proceedings, the chair shall preside and shall rule on all matters of procedure. Any decision of the chair may be overturned by the full GFC. The chair shall not vote except in the event of a tie.

Formal rules of evidence shall not apply and the GFC may consider any evidence it considers relevant and reliable. Upon completion of questioning, the committee will begin deliberations in executive session. No persons other than members of the committee and its legal counsel (if any) may be present for deliberations.

For each allegation made in the complaint, the GFC will make a determination of what actually occurred and whether those facts constitute a violation of law or college policy.

The GFC's decision is final and binding on the parties to the dispute and all NMC personnel and offices. However, while the GFC may recommend discipline be imposed on the respondent (or, in some circumstances, such as if a fraudulent grievance is filed, the complainant), it may not actually impose discipline itself. If the outcome of the grievance involves a recommendation for disciplinary action to be taken against any college employee or student, the GFC shall refer the matter and its recommendation to the appropriate NMC disciplinary channel.

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The GFC chair shall issue a yearly report that includes summaries of cases handled by the GFC.

These summaries shall be written without reference to any specific persons and in such a way

that the identities of the parties involved will not be apparent.

Appendix A Student Grievance Form

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<p align="center">Northern Marianas College</p>

<p align="center">**Board of Regents Policy**</p>

SUBJECT:	Student Affairs	**EFFECTIVE:**	**September 26, 2013**
SECTION:	**4008**	**POLICY NAME:**	Student Grievances/Complaints
ACCJC Standard/Policy:	**II.B.2, II.B.3.b**		
At Northern Marianas College (NMC), students who feel their rights as students have been violated may take their complaint through the student grievance process.			
HISTORY:	**Replaces 8201 Student Grievances/Complaints**		

Appendix III Marketing and Recruitment Review

NMC is the only institution of higher education in the CNMI serving the population of 49,000 residents. It has an open admissions policy for resident students and publishes its policies in its catalog and on its website. Admission to the School of Education and to the nursing program require additional entry requirements. NMC also assists transfer-in students, and international student applicants with visa and transfer of foreign credentials. International student tuition rates are set at double the resident tuition rates.

NMC has benefited from a federally funded College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) which has allowed it to reach out to the CNMI high schools to "promote the value of higher education and prepare low-income and Pacific Islander students for admission to college and success through first year enrollment"

This grant has allowed NMC to provide direct services and programming including financial aid advising, professional development for high school guidance counselors, career and college fairs, parent workshops, outreach activities for at -risk students, need -based financial aid and to conduct an annual summer academy for high school students. 18 staff have been funded to attend professional development through grant support. While the grant ends in August 2016, NMC has made preparations to continue to fund staff salaries in outreach activities, including on Tinian and Rota islands, when the grant is over.

Appendix IV Substantive Change Review

This takes the form of the action letter sent to the President and ALO on May 8, 2014 as

attached.

WASC *Senior College and University Commission*

May 6, 2014

Dr. Sharon Hart
President
Northern Marianas College
P.O Box 501250
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear President Hart,

During the recent site visit to Northern Marianas College on April 30-May 2, 2014, by members of the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) for Pathway B accreditation, a parallel review process was conducted by two members of the team for the Substantive Change proposal for the Bachelors of Science in Business Management (BSBM). The two members of the substantive change review panel, Penelope Washbourn and Megan Lawrence, had reviewed the proposal prior to the site visit. During the visit, they provided preliminary feedback to the Business Department, and met with the Chair of the Business Department, members of the full time faculty, and the ALO on May 1, 2014.

This substantive change proposal is not the first bachelor's degree program for NMC, since there has been an approved Bachelors in Education degree with four concentrations since 2001. NMC had operated under a shared accreditation agreement between the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). This continued until 2013 when it was required by the US Department of Education to have only one accreditor. The Bachelors in Education degree was therefore included under ACCJC's standards in 2013.

The panel commended the proposal for establishing a clear fit between the institutional mission and the BSBM program. The panel reviewed the Strategic Plan (2015-2020) and its Imperative I, which defines an important role for NMC in creating an educated workforce for the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), particularly in the area of business. Data was provided that defined the impact on the CNMI economy of the immanent end of the contract worker status as defined by US immigration policy. Under this policy, CNMI will lose 14,000 residents, out of a population of 49,000, many employed in key industries and professional roles.

The proposal was also commended for its market research to establish a demand for the program both for its survey research among current and former associate degree business students as well as labor force data for CNMI. As the only institution of higher education in CNMI, this program would provide a valuable opportunity for prospective students to stay on the island to complete an accessible bachelors degree program, rather than be forced to transfer off-island to pursue more expensive options.

The panel found, however, that in several critical areas the proposal was lacking information or was not sufficiently well developed to grant Interim Approval, which would also be contingent upon WSCUC's affirmation of NMC's Initial Accreditation. The panel advised the department that the proposal could be resubmitted and then elected to use the meeting time with the Business Department to review the WSCUC substantive change process and to give feedback to the Department on areas of strength and weaknesses in the proposal, with particular attention to where further information is required as outlined below.

Questions were raised by the faculty as to the likelihood of NMC being able to offer the BSBM in August of 2014 (given that registration for classes takes place August 11-15, 2014). The department was counseled that advertising that NMC is preparing a new BSBM program was permissible at this stage, clearly indicating that implementation of the program depends on WSCUC approval and that no students could be formally admitted until the institution as a whole is formally accepted into WSCUC and that the BSBM substantive change proposal has been approved by the Commission.

This letter sets forth those areas in which the panel requests additional information or revisions so that the proposal can meet the expectations of the Substantive Change Committee.

Section III. Program Description and Evaluation (CFRs 1.7, 2.1-2.5, 2.12, 2.14, 4.4, 4.7)

Curriculum

1. The program learning outcomes for the BSBM were not defined in a manner that could be effectively measured by student outcomes, nor did they reflect the breadth and depth of baccalaureate-level business programs.

2. Additionally, the philosophy guiding the general education course requirements at the upper-division level was not fully articulated.

3. The department was advised to review the PLOs to ensure that they are measurable goals and define the unique characteristics of the NMC business graduate so that the degree has an internal coherence, rather than being a list of courses.

4. The department was asked to address the design of the degree program, which presently assumes that all students entering the BSBM already have an Associates degree in Business, as evidenced by the Individual Degree Plan (IDP) in which students were required to completed the associate-level business degree courses as well as the upper-division business courses. This curriculum design makes this program a "2+2," meaning that the degree is comprised of a two-year associate degree followed by two additional years of coursework. Such a structure does not allow the transfer of coursework from other majors; however, the admissions procedure identified in the proposal indicated that a student could enroll in the program with 60 college-level credits. Therefore, the 2+2 structure of the degree plan without any elective units is not compatible with a philosophy that students from other associate degrees can enroll in the program. Assuming the department intends to include students from other majors without unduly disadvantaging them, the business faculty should revisit their curriculum design to explore how best to serve their intended student population.

5. The department needs to define the minimum level of lower division business courses that are required pre-requisites to enter the BSBM degree program.

6. The department should consider the addition of elective units, which will help facilitate the transfer of non-business students into the degree program.

7. The department may also want to explore the number of upper-division course credits required and compare their standard of 50% to other regionally-accredited institutions.

8. The department is encouraged to work with the Registrar to design transfer options to allow returning students a pathway to the degree so that this population will not be significantly disadvantaged.

9. Upper division GE requirements also deserve additional consideration, for these requirements are currently limited to two specific courses. The curriculum would be strengthened by a coherent general education philosophy at the lower-division and upper-division level.

10. Additionally, the faculty may want to consider "double counting" courses to fulfill both general education and business course requirements (such as courses in business writing or business ethics), as this may provide some flexibility in the curriculum by allowing for transfer of elective units.

11. The curricular map presently aligns the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) with the General Education outcomes. The curriculum map should also list how individual courses fulfill the stated program outcomes.

12. It is important to show how the Capstone course allows students to demonstrate mastery of the PLOs.

Syllabi

1. Three sample syllabi were submitted, but when there is a Capstone Course this also needs to be submitted, along with an assessment rubric. (See WSCUC website for sample under Documents).

2. Missing from all of the syllabi were any rubrics which evaluate student performance, for example in written assignments or group work. More detail in the syllabi in terms of student learning activities would demonstrate how higher order (Bloom's Taxonomy) skills are being developed in upper division courses.

3. How is information literacy (CFR 2.2 and 3.6) being developed in the syllabi? No outside research assignments were evident.

Cooperative Education

1. Please describe the system to monitor student performance in these courses? What guidelines are there for the site supervisors to evaluate student performance?

Schedule/Format

1. The schedule has been developed for a full time student, but since other types of students (evening, weekend and hybrid) are projected, what would a sample schedule look like for a part time student to reach her degree? What is the plan to add upper division courses to the online format? What weekend/evening courses will be offered in Fall 2014-16?

Plan for Evaluating Educational Effectiveness (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3, 4.4)

1. As currently defined, the program is to be reviewed under NMC's bi-annual staggered review process. As part of ACCJC's standards, these reviews have focused on course level assessments and student learning outcomes rather than comprehensive program reviews as reflected in the WSCUC CFRs. The site visit team for the Pathway B accreditation review process made several recommendations for the program review process and assessment of educational effectiveness. These are detailed in the NMC site visit report and will also inform this proposed program.

2. Other than the regular two-year cycle for evaluating SLOs for each course, please describe the plans for program assessment following the completion of a suitable number of graduates.

Section IV: Resources (CFRs 2.1, 3.1-3.3)

Faculty CVs

1. Six CVs were attached, and most possess Master's degrees or above. Please specify which courses will be assigned to current faculty and in which academic areas will new faculty be recruited. Indicate the budget lines adequate to complete these hires.

2. What effect will removing five faculty from teaching at the associate level have on the faculty pool available for that program?

3. Please address an apparent discrepancy concerning the number of additional sections needed between the narrative (Section A.1.) and the projected budget for 90 students.

Support Services (CFRs 2.3, 2.13, 3.1, 3.7)

1. Given the current hours, how will the library services, IT helpdesk, counseling and Office of Admissions and Records accommodate evening and weekend students?

Information Literacy (CFRs 2.3, 2.13, 3.7)

1. How will these competencies be defined and evaluated for the bachelor's graduate?

Financial Resources (CFRs 3.4, 4.2)

1. The five year projection figures on enrollments and fees do not account for attrition or those who may take less than a full load. What proportion of current students in the associate business program complete their degrees in two years?

Appendix F: NMC Business Management and Cost and Benefits Analysis

1. While projections for 90 students to begin the program may be realized based on assumptions about pent-up demand, budget projections need also to include the break-even costs and revenue for lower enrollments. The revenue estimates and the Accumulated Enrollment number need to be referenced in the five year table.

2. Clarify whether the budget projections of faculty costs represent the assumed cost of new faculty or whether it includes a proportion of current faculty contracts for those existing faculty who will be teaching a portion of their load in the bachelor's program. Assumptions need to be clearly stated.

Teach-out Plan (CFR.1.8)

1. Please provide NMC's teach-out or program discontinuation policy.

Please directly address the issues noted above within a resubmission proposal. The proposal should be submitted via LiveText in a fresh proposal document entitled "Resubmission: [*original proposal name*]." Please be sure to use the appropriate proposal template. For those sections in which the panel did not have concerns you should state that no additional concerns were noted. For those sections in which issues were cited, please state the concern as described in the action letter and respond directly to that concern.

Once you have completed your response, submit the resubmission proposal to the "WASC Admin" address in LiveText. Send an email to Marcy Ramsey, Accreditation Resources Coordinator, (mramsey@wascsenior.org) when you have resubmitted your proposal. She will forward the information to a panel and will schedule the resubmission review. Please note that a $750.00 resubmission fee will apply and must be received to proceed with the scheduling of the resubmission review. Staff will make all reasonable efforts to expedite the review of the institution's submissions in view of the urgency of the deadlines.

Sincerely,

Sharyl McGrew
Director of Substantive Change

Cc: Amanda Allen, ALO
        Richard Winn, WSCUC Vice President
        Member of the Substantive Change Committee