



Appendix C

May 27-30, 2008 On-Site Visit Report from Key Trio Consulting to Dr.
Carmen Fernandez, President. NMC July 14, 2008

May 27-30, 2008 On-Site Visit Report
From
Key Trio Consulting
To
Dr. Carmen Fernandez, President
Northern Marianas College
July 14, 2008

On May 27-30, 2008, three central administrators from the College of the Marshall Islands, and under the aegis of Key Trio Consulting, conducted individual group sessions with students and staff, faculty, administrators, and board members of Northern Marianas College (NMC). An open invitation to all members of the respective constituent groups was extended to participate in the sessions. Approximately fifty-six individuals affiliated with NMC participated in the mini-sessions. Individuals from Tinian and Rota also participated via audio/video conferencing. During each two-hour session:

- information regarding the current state of NMC,
- future wishes and aspirations for the college, and
- perceptions of the current status of planning efforts at NMC utilizing the ACCJC planning rubric

were gathered and shared. These efforts were taken as “first steps” in addressing Team Recommendation 1 in the college’s January 31, 2008 Action Letter from the ACCJC.

The structure of the sessions followed Peter Senge’s learning organization premises, while subscription to Alex Osborn’s brainstorming guidelines were recognized, allowing all ideas to be accepted with all judgments deferred. Active participation in all of the sessions was obvious.

I. SWOT Analysis:

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was conducted to determine individual NMC-family member perceptions and opinions regarding the current state of NMC with respect to the college’s strengths, weaknesses, internal and external opportunities, and internal and external threats. Session participants worked individually to complete their own SWOT analysis, and then members of each group were encouraged to share their ideas with the larger group. (The staff and student group did not complete a SWOT analysis.) These data were captured in tables by constituent group for subsequent reflection and decision-making.

Next, suggested steps:

While the SWOT analyses are not directly related to the college’s outstanding accreditation sanctions, the process of examining the current state of NMC provides precious, foundational information to augment the planning efforts to date. It is recommended that NMC continue its dialogue regarding the results of the SWOT results, explore similarities and difference in and between the various campus groups, and focus

on the identified similarities in identified perceptions across groups as the basis for the college's ongoing planning work.

II. Current State of Northern Marianas College:

Upon completion of the SWOT analysis, each group was asked to rate, on a five-point (1-5) Likert Scale, the current state of the institution with regard to its viability and its ability to thrive over time. A score closer to one (1) indicated extreme concern, while a score closer to five (5) indicated extreme confidence and optimism.

The results of the four NMC constituent groups:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Staff/Students	24	4.13
Management Team	5	4.80
Faculty	16	3.34
Board of Regents	3	3.33

All groups appear to be "cautiously optimistic" to "very optimistic" about NMC's current state of being.

III. Visioning about NMC's Future

After the SWOT analysis exercise, the individual groups began dreaming about what they would like NMC to look like five years from now, in the year 2013. For the management team and the faculty groups, individuals brainstormed at least ten different items. Then the groups synthesized the individual cards into thematic families/groups. For the staff/student and board groups, teams of individuals wrote their brainstormed ideas on charts and then voted for their favorite suggestions. The four groups collectively generated over 100 ideas.

While the envisioning exercise was carried out slightly differently for each of the four groups, the process of choosing from among the alternative futures proposed was the same. Each participant selected his/her top three action items or aspects of a vision for NMC that he or she would like to see implemented. A review of participant images for the College's future highlights a range of expectations for the College and offers the opportunity for further delineation of how we go from here to there.

Next, Suggested Steps:

As Northern Marianas College works towards articulating its shared vision, it is recommended that the common items in the group summaries, detailed in the attachment, be considered as a starting point. All of the items in the group summaries could be placed into smaller and larger categories and themes could be articulated for each group. The themes could then be used as specific aspects of the college's vision statement. It is anticipated that the common items from among the four campus groups will relate to the

seven specific items outlined in the College's January 31, 2008 Action Letter, as these should be the focus of immediate planning efforts for the College.

It is recommended that NMC continue open dialogues with all constituent groups on action steps that could be taken to implement all of the common items that emerged from these mini-sessions. The action steps could form the basis for an updated and revised plan for the college as it works to implement its shared vision.

IV. Current Level of Planning at NMC – Based on the ACCJC Rubric

The final item covered by the visioning sessions was to determine NMC's current status along the ACCJC's planning rubric. Every person participating in the mini-sessions was given a copy of the rubric and asked to score each of the items the accrediting commission has outlined that it expects its member institutions to achieve. The ACCJC rubric presents four levels of implementation, that include:

- awareness,
- development,
- proficiency, and
- sustainable continuous quality improvement.

At NMC, the Management Team and the Faculty believe that NMC is doing planning at a fair/poor level. This appears to suggest that the Management Team and Faculty is aware of the need for planning, but that the institution is still developing its planning processes and implementing its plans.

The students/staff have a much more optimistic outlook on planning at NMC and believe that NMC is completing planning at a fair/good level. This would seem to imply that NMC students/staff believe NMC is not only aware of the need for planning, but that the college is at the development stage in its planning processes and implementation of its plans.

Next, Suggested Steps:

In light of the information garnered from the ACCJC rubric exercise, across the participating groups, it is suggested that NMC:

1. Set a timetable for reaching the level (awareness, development, proficiency, or sustainable continuous quality improvement) that it wishes to achieve,
2. Continue to monitor its progress on the ACCJC's planning rubric at various points in time as the timetable that the College has set approaches, and
3. Hold open dialogues regarding the institution's movement along the various levels of the ACCJC rubric.

**Working Together Towards a Shared Vision for Northern Marianas College
Key Trio Consulting, May 27-30, 2008**

Under the auspices of Key Trio Consulting, three top administrators from the College of the Marshall Islands conducted a series of mini visioning retreats with students, faculty, staff, administrators, and board members at Northern Marianas College (NMC). During each two hour session, information regarding the current state of NMC; future wishes and aspirations for the college; and perceptions of the current status of planning efforts at the institution utilizing the ACCJC planning rubric were gathered and shared. These efforts were taken as initial steps in addressing Team Recommendation 1 in the college's January 31, 2008 Action Letter from the ACCJC.

An open invitation to all members of the respective constituent groups was provided to participate in the mini-retreats, and individuals from Tinian and Rota joined in via video conferencing technology.

The structure of the sessions followed Peter Senge's learning organization premises. Standard brainstorming rules applied, which means that all ideas generated by individuals were collected and shared. Active participation in all of the sessions was evident.

I. SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was conducted to determine employees' thoughts regarding the current state of NMC regarding: strengths, weaknesses, internal opportunities, external opportunities, internal threats, and external threats. Employees worked individually to complete their own SWOT analysis, and then members of the group were asked to share their ideas with the larger group. Below are summaries of the shared SWOT analyses for the faculty, administration, and board constituent groups:

Strengths

Management Team

Proximity to Asian countries--recruitment
Good staff/faculty ratio
I)
Educational tax credit--up to \$5000/business (CNMI)
Bookstore/snack bar--inviting learning environment
ACCJC WASC accreditation
Strong management team
Good people working @ NMC
Dedicated employees (committed)
General support from public/private sector
Motivated students

Good, long history (1981)--longstanding
Strong nursing, education, land grant programs
Energy of management team
Good location on Saipan (physical)--airport, view
Faculty/staff know students well (small community)
good IT usage
Only 2/4 institution in CNMI (constitution)
low crime rate on campus

Faculty

New teacher support--materials, help
Proximity to Asia
Geographical location on island (middle)

Diversity

Increased immigration interest (right now)
Increased technology, internet, computer labs
Alumni in community
B.S. in Elementary Education, ELI program
Local hires into S.O.E.
Competitive tuition rates
Well known in community
Government provides great resources for students

2 accreditations--AACJC and WASC
Community needs us--only game in town

Students

Strong faculty/staff
Teaching quality
People want to be here
Beautiful campus--internal and external size--small institution--easy to relate to students

Board of Regents

Students--they are still here
Only institution on island--captive market
large community support

local staff/faculty

dedicated faculty
BA in SOE--organized
On island opportunities to earn BA/MA/Ph.D.
easy transfer of credits
strong foundation/endowment
community programs--ABE/GED/CREES
partnership with government/community

Weaknesses

Management Team

Lack of systems--standard operating procedures
Ethnic diversity faculty versus administration
Power back-up generator --part of campus not covered

Not capturing enough high school graduates
No clear governance structure/processes--some know, some do not

Lack of employee orientation

Lack of pay raises--more within NMC

Limited HR/physical resources

Old facilities/ small land space
non-competitive wages
isolation of faculty from others (physically, mentally, etc.)
lack of data usage--need more data
succession planning lacking
no dorms
lack of fiscal stability
lack of updated policies
lack of completed program reviews
lack of classification system for employees--two-year contracts
professional development program

Faculty

Increased workload without extra compensation
Lack of standard achievement data
Lack of systems to review/analyze achievement data
Hands tied due to increases prices in external economy, i.e., no field trips due to gas increases

Transfer of courses to other institutions
Lack of accountability--actions do not lead to discipline

Evaluation is worthless
Moral issue with contracts not requiring basis for not renewing

Lack of stable funding source
Facilities are old and in need of repair
Sense of mistrust between faculty/administration/staff (maybe)
Hiring process takes too long
Lack of following processes in hiring
High turnover in administration
Political interference
Show cause
Lack of institutional memory
Lack of communication/organizational planning

Board of Regents

Decreasing enrolment, high tuition, ACCJC sanctions
Communication at all levels

Job placement of grads--career services

Facilities (inadequate)

Not enough faculty in Business department

Need more/good valid data--open access
Faculty support services (services in one area right now)
Limited fiscal services to students from government
BOR policies need to be up to date/mission #s
Tinian/Rota no credit courses

High turnover of faculty/administration/staff
Lack of continuity/record keeping
Current contracts promote job insecurity
UOG/ACC geographically close--competitors

Internal Opportunities

Management Team

Good student learning support program
 Automation of document management to business processes

Upward mobility (has happened to some)

Understanding of policies/procedures
 Employee productivity through professional development

Participation in governance
 Working with professionals from diverse backgrounds

Cross-training
 Sustain quality student focus improvement

"Culture of evidence"—TQM

Faculty

Decrease budget--restructure--become leaner/meaner

Criminal justice program--homeland security
 Long-term contracts after two-year probation for new hires

Good student success in nursing
 Change scheduling to meet various student group needs--time of day/day of week
 Instructional computer programs to install and use

Some academic programs ready to be implemented, but not while on sanction
 Some academic programs ready to be implemented, but not while on sanction
 Show cause--"look in mirror" time
 Meet minimum wage training needs of CNMI --real possibility
 IR/IE is getting good data--analyses are now happening
 Education Friday morning workshops on teaching methodology
 On job training opportunities
 Untapped expertise in faculty/staff

Board of Regents

Good adjunct faculty pool

Government laws--tax credits

CREES solid stream of income
 NMC protected from government by constitution

High school 2 + 2 program via scholarships
 Scholarship funds given to Board of Regents for H.S. 2 + 2
 Vocational monies could come to federal government

External Opportunities

Management Team

Increasing enrollment
 Increasing donor base
 Increasing community engagement
 Institution of choice

 Brand name recognition
 Expand to different markets
 Business partnerships/military
 Network with other colleges (mainly regional)
 Scholarships external groups

Faculty

Linkages with other institutions
 Grants east to get
 Increase external funding sources
 Community-based training programs
 Increase international recruitment efforts (Asia)
 A lot can do for CNMI

Board of Regents

close to Asia as a way to increase enrollments
 20 K nonresident workers

Internal Threats

Management Team

Undermining of college work (from insiders & external parties)

 Outside interference
 Same ideas--group think

 Job security
 Lack of communication

 Crab mentality/tall poppy syndrome
 Losing CFO next week
 Employees lack willingness to come forward and ask for help/assistance

Faculty

Morale

 Funding allocations
 Job security

 Salary levels
 Mismanagement of resources
 Need more faculty involvement in planning and budget
 Infrastructure and physical facilities
 Power situation on campus --impact on equipment
 Confusion with assessment--how to do it at program and course level

Board of Regents

Lose ACCJC accreditation
 Some possible health/safety concerns with facilities
 Priority of funding
 Possible people leaving--contract issues concerning lifetime employment
 Organizational structure of NMC

External Threats

Management Team	Faculty	Board of Regents
Community may not believe in what NCM is doing	Newspaper misreporting	Government funding decreasing
Political interference	Political interference	Federal immigration laws--unknown at this time
Offsite recruitment (UOG/UOH)	Possibility of economy decreasing in CNMI--scholarships/funding sources	Increased cost of living
Competition with service providers	Budget/fiscal issues	ACCJC
Perception of quality of education--students go to mainland.	Outmigration from CNMI	
decreased funding from federal government	Rumor mill--goes to government--lack of understanding and government role	
Natural disasters	Non-competitive salaries	
Decreasing CNMI economy	Competing institutions coming to CNMI--international/non-accredited	
	Government micromanaging	

All of the individual SWOT analysis items are included in the appendix. It should be noted that the staff and student group did not complete a SWOT analysis.

NEXT, SUGGESTED STEPS:

While the SWOT analyses in and of themselves are not directly related to outstanding accreditation sanctions, the process of examining the current state of the institution provides invaluable, foundational information to start the planning process. In light of the information above, it is recommended that NMC continue its dialogue regarding the results of the SWOT analyses shown above. Similarities and differences could be explored, with a focus on similarities to be used as the basis for the college's ongoing planning work.

II. Current State of the Institution

Upon completion of the SWOT analysis, each group was asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert Scale, the current state of the institution. A score closer to 1 indicated extreme concern; while a score closer to 5 indicated extreme confidence and optimism.

Below are the results for the four constituent groups:

Staff/Students

Likert Score	Count
1	1
1.5	0
2	1
2.5	1
3	3
3.5	1
4	4
4.5	0
5	13
Count =	24

Average = 4.13

Management Team

Likert Score	Count
1	0
1.5	0
2	0
2.5	0
3	0
3.5	0
4	1
4.8	1
5	4
Count =	5

Average = 4.80

Faculty

Likert Score	Count
1	1
1.5	0
2	4
2.5	0
3	2
3.5	0
4	6
4.5	1
5	2
Count =	16

Average = 3.34

Board of Regents

Likert Score	Count
1	1
1.5	0
2	0
2.5	0
3	0
3.5	0
4	1
4.5	0
5	1
Count =	3

Average = 3.33

From the results one will notice that all groups are cautiously optimistic to very optimistic about NMC's current state of being.

III. Visioning about NMC's Future

After the SWOT analysis exercise, groups began dreaming about what they would like NMC to look like five years from now, in the year 2013. For the administration and the faculty groups, individuals brainstormed at least ten different items. Then the groups organized the individual cards into thematic groups. For the staff, student, and board groups, teams of individuals wrote their brainstormed ideas on charts and then voted for their favorite items. The detailed information concerning the more than 100 different ideas is given in the appendix.

While the visioning exercise was carried out slightly differently for each of the four groups, the end result was the same. Each participant select his/her top three (3) action items or aspects of a vision for NMC that they would like to see implemented. A summary of these results is given below:

Staff/Students

What would you like NMC to look like in the year 2013?	Total Votes
renovated and/or new campus/facilities (including paved roads, designated parking, student union, etc.)	46
maintain accreditation	26
increased and/or stable/dependable budget/funding	12
increase student enrollments	11
more scholarship opportunities and/or loans	10
add and/or reinstate vocational/trade programs	9
more degree programs	9
self-sufficient alternative energy source (with possibility of for profit use)	7
increase use of/availability of high technology at NMC (with training on how to use it)	6
more/better qualified faculty and staff	5
better student services (foreign student program, programs for students with special needs, etc.)	4
day care/child care	4
increased and/or stable/dependable budget	3
better employee benefits (salary levels in particular)	2

Board of Regents

The three action items or aspects of a vision for NMC that I would like to see implemented are:	Total
maintain accreditation	6
comprehensive professional development program for all employees - as a means for better retention	4
better, ongoing assessment of programs (academic and academic support) - including program reviews	3
increase student enrollments	3
lower student tuition	2
1st rate faculty	1
improved/streamlined/open communication and transparency throughout the institution	1

Management Team

The three action items or aspects of a vision for NMC that I would like to see implemented are:	Total
increased and/or stable/dependable budget/funding	6
better student support programs that nurture and increase student retention	4
better, ongoing assessment of programs (academic and academic support) - including program reviews	4
renovated and/or new campus/facilities (including paved roads, designated parking, student union, etc.)	4
maintain accreditation	3
meeting CNMI community needs to improve the livelihood of the CNMI citizens	3
strong support by the CNMI community for NMC.	3
(blank)	3
increase use of/availability of high technology at NMC (with training on how to use it)	2
strengthened systems (policies, technology, etc.)	1

Faculty

The three action items or aspects of a vision for NMC that I would like to see implemented are:	Total
improved/streamlined/open communication and transparency throughout the institution	14
better, ongoing assessment of programs (academic and academic support) - including program reviews	8
comprehensive professional development program for all employees - as a means for better retention	8
adjusting to rapidly changing community program needs/accelerated degree programs on evenings and weekends targeted to working adults	6
renovated and/or new campus/facilities (including paved roads, designated parking, student union, ADA compliance, etc.)	6
better student support programs that nurture and increase student retention	4
maintain accreditation	3
more partnerships with universities to offer their bachelor's degree programs here.	3
quality and diverse faculty and staff	3
better use of local talents	2
faculty tenure system	2
increase use of/availability of high technology at NMC (with training on how to use it)	2
more involvement/partnerships/dialogue to community	1

NEXT, SUGGESTED STEPS:

As NMC works towards articulating its shared vision, it is recommended that the common items in the group summaries above are used as a starting point. All of the items in the group summaries could be grouped even further and themes could be articulated for each group. The themes could then be used as specific aspects of the vision statement. It is anticipated that the

common items from among the groups will relate to the seven specific items outlined in the college's January 31, 2008 Action Letter, as these should be the focus of immediate planning efforts for the college.

The faculty, students, and staff selected one aspect of the vision and worked on action steps that NMC can take to implement each of the items. It is recommended that NMC continue open dialogues with all constituent groups on the action steps that could be taken to implement all of the common items contained in the group summaries above. These action steps could form the basis for an operating plan for the college as it works to implement its shared vision.

A summary of the faculty, student, and staff action steps for their selected item is given in the appendix.

IV. Current Level of Planning at NMC – Based on the ACCJC Rubric

The final item covered by the visioning retreats was determining NMC’s current status along the ACCJC’s planning rubric. Each retreat participant was given a copy of the rubric and asked to score each of the items that the accrediting commission has outlined that it expects its member institutions to achieve. A summary of each group’s thoughts regarding the level of planning at NMC is given below:

Employee Group	ACCJC Levels of Implementation			
	Awareness	Development	Proficiency	Sustainable, Continuous, Quality Improvement
Management Team				
average	2.1	1.94	1.5	1.29
median	2	2	1	1
mode	3	2	1	1
Faculty				
average	2.41	2.11	1.49	1.65
median	2	2	1	1
mode	3	2	1	1
Staff/Students				
average	2.76	2.89	2.89	2.93
median	3	3	3	3
mode	3	4	3	3
count	19	19	19	19

Overall: The Management Team and the Faculty believe that NMC is doing planning at a fair/poor level. This seems to imply that the Management Team and Faculty believe NMC is aware of the need for planning, but that the institution is still developing its planning processes and implementing its plans.

The Staff/Students have a much more optimistic outlook on planning at NMC and feel that NMC is completing planning at a fair/good level. This seems to imply that NMC Staff/Students believe NMC is not only aware of the need of planning, but that the institution is at the development stage in its planning processes and implementation of its plans.

NEXT, SUGGESTED STEPS:

In light of the information above, it is suggested that NMC (1) set a timetable for reaching the level (awareness, development, proficiency, or sustainable continuous quality improvement) that it wishes to achieve, (2) continue to monitor its progress on the ACCJC’s planning rubric at various points in time as the timetable that it has set approaches, and (3) hold open dialogues regarding the institution’s movement along the various levels of the rubric.