# Northern Marianas College

# Supplemental Report to ACCJC

December 18, 2013

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# Executive Summary

This report is a voluntary Supplemental report to the October 15, 2013 Show Cause Report provided by Northern Marianas College (NMC) to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). This report is comprised of two parts. The first part focuses on the College's efforts to sustain the actions detailed in the October 15, 2013 Show Cause Report. The second portion addresses remaining Recommendations from the 2012 External Evaluation Team Report. This section details both actions taken and sustainability of efforts to improve effectiveness.

Under the regulations of the United States Department of Education, institutions that are out of compliance with regional Accreditation Standards or that are on sanction are expected to correct all deficiencies within a two-year period. The College has demonstrated its capability to meet the Eligibility Requirements (ERs), comply with the Accreditation Standards, and complete the Recommendations described in the ACCJC Action Letter of February 11, 2013. The College has promptly and systematically established the needed policies and implemented the appropriate procedures to demonstrate compliance.

It is the College's strong opinion that it has met its burden to show that it has fully resolved all deficiencies noted in the Action Letter. At the same time, NMC has made a concerted effort to focus its full attention on sustaining its adherence to the tenets of Accreditation.

The College has showcased its commitment to sustainable compliance in its fiscal year 2014 Operational Goals, which focus the institution on Accreditation matters. In so doing, NMC seeks to provide assurance to ACCJC that the College's dedication to meeting the ERs, Standards, and Commission Policies can and will be sustained.

As the only regionally accredited institution of higher education in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI), the College has taken to heart its mission to provide high quality, affordable and accessible programs and services for the individuals and people of the Commonwealth. With the impending departure of approximately 10,000 foreign workers from the CNMI (for perspective, the population of the CNMI is approximately 54,000), it is important that the institution be returned to full affirmation so that it can once again focus on new program offerings to help fill this employment gap.

Indeed, the future of the College is linked to the future of the CNMI. Recognizing this important connection, the NMC Board of Regents (BOR), President Sharon Y. Hart, and the employees have worked exceedingly hard to address any and all deficiencies. NMC is looking forward to the road ahead, and respectfully ask the Commission to once again fully

reaffirm this College.

## Part I: Sustainability of College Efforts to Meet Standards

**Library and other Learning Support Services (Recommendation 2)**

**Actions Taken**

In response to the Action Letter issued to the College on February 11, 2013 by the ACCJC, the Library Programs and Services (LPS) department and eight other Learning Support Services (LSS) established and assessed 31 student learning outcomes (SLOs) to meet Recommendation 2. A detailed description of this process can be found in the Standard II.C.2 and Recommendation 2 sections of the October 15, 2013 Show Cause Report (12-14; 87-90).

**Sustainability**

The staggered two-year assessment plan for SLOs is supported by the six-year outcomes assessment schedule, which will help sustain the evaluation process of SLOs. The composite report created as a result of this program review assessment plan is provided to the president, campus and BOR to close the review cycle. In addition, LPS and LSS have taken the following actions to further the long-term sustainability of their assessments.

LPS has collaborated with instructional faculty to develop an information literacy evaluation to be administered at strategic points in the College's degree programs, beginning spring semester 2014. A pre-test component will establish an information literacy baseline for incoming students. Two subsequent tests will measure student progress at the middle and end of students' academic careers at the College. This increasingly systematic approach will allow the library and academic programs to gather high-quality data to assess their stated outcomes and accurately measure student learning in the area of information literacy.

In order to better provide information literacy education to online students, the library will be piloting an "embedded librarian" program beginning with the spring semester of 2014. In this model, students taking the required core course EN 101 (English Composition I) online will have direct access to the academic librarian through a designated area in the Moodle course delivery program. The librarian will be able to promote effective search and information evaluation techniques and provide research assistance to students in NMC's distance education program.

In order to support the expanding instructional role of LPS, the College's management team approved the hire of a second full-time academic librarian in early November. The College has completed the interview process of qualified candidates, a selection has been made, and the new academic librarian will begin in January 2014.

**Administrative Capacity (ER 5) and Minimum Faculty Qualifications (Recommendation 3 and ER 13)**

**Actions Taken**

To meet ERs 5 and 13 and Recommendation 3, the College took decisive action to hire faculty, staff and administrators with appropriate qualifications and experience to support its student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to provide all services necessary to support its mission and purpose. A detailed description of this process can be found in the Eligibility Requirements Standard III.A and Recommendation 3 sections of the October 15 Show Cause Report (3-11; 15-26; 90-91).

All positions in the College's upper administration have been filled by updating position descriptions and offering competitive compensation. Many vacancies, whether full-time or adjunct, can be filled with qualified local personnel, but it is essential for highly specialized faculty to be recruited.  Through venues such as higheredjobs.com and the Chronicle of Higher Education and others, the College has great success in recruiting qualified faculty as needed. When the BOR adopted Policy 5005 on the eve of the fall 2013 semester, the College met the urgent need to maintain course offerings by recruiting and relocating additional full-time faculty within three weeks of the start of classes.

**Sustainability**

**Personnel Planning Survey**
A personnel planning survey for the purpose of identifying needs for the upcoming fiscal year was completed in July 2013. This survey asked all deans, directors and department chairs to list all positions in their departments, and to identify any positions proposed for addition or elimination.  For each new position the respondent outlined the department's goals, how the new position would assist in achieving these goals, and how the position would align with the College's mission.  This data collection procedure helped determine the recent faculty hires and will aid in sustaining sufficient numbers of qualified personnel to meet the needs of the institution.

**Salary Study**
In addition to filling all administrative positions with qualified, well-compensated professionals, the College is in the process of implementing a revised salary structure to give the institution "growing room" with respect to competitive compensation.

During the spring 2013 semester the Human Resources Office conducted a salary study comparing the salaries of three peer institutions to those of NMC. Fiscal analysis regarding how best to standardize compensation for positions within the College is in process and will be presented to the board for review in January 2014.

The study also highlighted the need to reflect merit in the salary structure by creating a faculty ranking system. The Faculty Assembly, along with the administration, is developing

a proposal to establish a faculty ranking system. Approval of the recommendation is expected early in spring 2014 and implementation will begin in fall 2014.

The College acknowledges the need for a systemic change in the CNMI legislature's funding allocation process and amount allocated for higher education. The College's goal is to address these needs in the upcoming budget year through the College's appropriation request of the legislature and through other fundraising efforts such contributions from the NMC Foundation. As the BOR monitors the fiscal condition of NMC over the course of fiscal year 2014, the BOR will advocate for a more reasonable CNMI allocations.

**Retention and Succession Planning**
In order to sustain administrative capacity and experience, the BOR began discussion in 2013 for creating a succession planning model. This model will prepare individuals within the College with the knowledge, skills, and experience for advancement within the College. Succession planning will increase the availability of experienced employees who are prepared to assume key roles as they become available. The model will include building a series of feeder groups and incentives throughout the leadership pipeline, from the level of faculty to that of president. Two major emphases of succession planning will be retention and building of local capacity. The goal of this model is to manage the top talent in the institution for the greater good of the College and the CNMI.

**Adoption of New Procedures**
By updating personnel policies as they were shifted to the jurisdiction of the president in the form of newly adopted procedures, a framework has been established that is transparent, meets the needs of the institution today, and contains capacity for growth to ensure sustainability in the future.

**Employee Appreciation**
To create a sense of unity, the College has set aside funding for an employee appreciation program to begin in fiscal year 2014. The human resources office included this set amount in its annual budget for the program.

**Professional Growth and Development**
Several of the institution's present full-time faculty were impacted by the recent adoption of BOR Policy 5005 regarding minimum qualifications. The institution has made great effort to treat these individuals with fairness and support. In the 2014 Operations Budget, funds were set aside to assist affected faculty in attaining the credits necessary to teach in the disciplines they taught prior to adoption of the new policy.

The College recognizes that many of its senior administrators have served in their current roles for fewer than three years. To expand awareness and understanding of important issues affecting higher education, the president is now focusing one management team meeting each month on key national topics in higher education. Mid-level managers are invited to attend these important sessions. Plans are also underway to focus professional development efforts for senior administrators on team building and topics of interest in educational administration. Incumbent administrators will be encouraged to obtain postgraduate

certifications and/or terminal degrees in their fields. For new senior administrators, the institution will focus on an expanded breadth of experience, and will seek applicants who have been successful in multiple increasingly responsible relevant positions.

**Board of Regents (Recommendation 8)**

<u>**Actions Taken**</u>

The College has worked decisively to align its governance policies and structure with best practices. A detailed description of this process can be found in the Eligibility Requirements Standard IV.A and Recommendation 8 sections of the October 15, 2013 Show Cause Report (26-87; 92-95). The BOR is committed to exceeding accreditation standards, resolving Commission recommendations and moving into a new period of innovation and leadership for the College and the people of the CNMI.

<u>**Sustainability**</u>

**Policy**
To maintain and sustain its focus on its policy-making role, the BOR set a five-year calendar for periodic review of all its policies. In the October 15, 2013 Show Cause Report, the College reported that the regents had completed a comprehensive review and update of all of its operational policies. These operational policies include self-evaluation processes, setting meeting agendas, and delegation of authority to the president.

After finding that many policies contained language that was procedural in nature, the BOR undertook the meticulous review of all institutional policies—including human resources, student services, finance, and academics—to remove any sections that reflected procedure more than policy. All policies were updated as of October 2013. In its monthly meetings the BOR continues to adhere to its five-year calendar for policy review.

**Training**
In addition to extensive training in governance and the different roles of the president and the BOR over the last few years, the regents have completed training in a number of other areas. On December 17, 2013, the regents completed a second round of boardsmanship training sessions facilitated by Dr. Narcisa Polonio, Vice President of Education, Research, and Board Leadership Services at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT).

As a result of this training and the regents' new comfort level with their responsibilities, the BOR is committed a higher level of effective boardsmanship. The regents have developed a new era of proactive leadership. The BOR's commitment is to continue to develop a twenty-first century vision for the College that meets the emerging needs of the CNMI; to foster an environment of innovation and engagement between education, business, and government; to bring the various voices of that community into dialogue; and to champion student success.

The BOR members will also be continuing their training through a subscription to live and virtual education events for the next 12 months through the ACCT Trustee Education Webinar Series. Examples of the seminars in which they will be participating include "The Trustee's Role in Fundraising," "Keeping Order: Robert's Rules for Trustees," "The Role of the Chair of the Board" and "How the Board can Organize and Effective Meeting: Basic Board Procedure."

**Advocacy**
The BOR is increasing its level of communication and advocacy on behalf of the College. BOR members will meet with members of the education committees of the CNMI Senate and the CNMI House of Representatives on a quarterly basis. More frequent meetings provide the president and all regents with opportunities to dialogue with CNMI leaders about developing the College's role in partnership with the community, to advocate for the College's vision and financial needs, and to communicate about accreditation status and other issues.

The regents continue to work as a cohesive and stable group, which lends to the effectiveness of their advocacy. A new regent was added in December 2013, and two others whose terms had expired in November 2013 were re-nominated by the CNMI Governor and reconfirmed by the CNMI Senate in early December.

**Evaluation and Contract of the President**
The BOR recognizes its critical role in creating sustainable presidential leadership for the College. The BOR annually evaluates the president using a mutually-agreed-upon instrument. The most recent evaluation occurred in October 2013 at the conclusion of the fiscal year, and led to a second two-year contract for the current president, based on benchmarks from the presidential evaluation. The personnel committee of the BOR worked with the president to develop a well-crafted, mutually-agreed-upon contract. The contract was completed and signed at the next BOR meeting. Stability at the executive level enables the institution to better organize itself in fully meeting Accreditation Standards.

## Part II: Actions Taken to Improve Effectiveness

**Access to Tinian and Rota (Recommendation 1)**

It is the College's committed goal to provide higher education that addresses the needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Only three of the CNIMI's 14 islands are permanently inhabited: Saipan, Tinian and Rota. The vast majority of the CNMI's population, 89.5 percent of the 2010 US Census population count of 53,883, lives on the island of Saipan, where the College's central As Terlaje campus is located.

**Sustainable Actions and Planning**

The College's commitment to providing meaningful post-secondary and adult educational opportunities for the CNMI includes ongoing work to meet the needs of students on Tinian and Rota. Instruction at these sites includes both face-to-face and online formats.

NMC Online courses include interactivity and content delivered via the Moodle Learning Management System. NMC hybrid courses require students to meet regularly on-campus for at least 50 percent of the required contact hours with the remained being taught online. NMC Web-enhanced Courses are traditional face-to-face classes that are augmented with NMC Online. All courses follow the same high standard of expectations for quality, integrity and effectiveness as classroom courses. An intensive online orientation is required for students who take online and hybrid courses.

A registration liaison officer serves the Tinian and Rota instructional sites, assisting students on Tinian and Rota who are taking online courses from their home island, as well as those who move to Saipan to attend courses.

Three different levels of instruction are provided to students in Tinian and Rota. For-credit academic courses are offered online in the form of distance education. "Continued and non-traditional education," a second level, offers courses for professional development and continued education, online certificate courses through Ed2Go, Apprenticeship courses and other nontraditional courses. Many of these courses are provided by the NMC Community Development Institute (CDI). The third type of instruction available for students on Tinian and Rota is adult basic education coursework to prepare students for the General Educational Development (GED).

In November, 2012, the Standard IIA team met to discuss ideas to how best to address the learning needs of the Tinian and Rota communities and facilitate a more reliable approach to supporting online and hybrid classes. The course offerings were re-evaluated and it was determined that students in Tinian and Rota need remedial courses including lower level math and English, as well as for-credit courses.

Eight web-enhanced, 20 hybrid courses, and 19 courses were fully online and offered in spring 2013. Nineteen web-enhanced, 24 hybrid courses, and 17 fully online courses were offered for fall 2013. Seventeen web-enhanced, 19 hybrid courses, and 17 fully online courses are being offered for the spring 2014. Online courses are monitored by the director of Distance Learning Education, following ACCJC's Policy on Distance Education, WCET Best Practices, and ACCJC's Guide for Evaluating Distance Education. The course offerings via distance education of hybrid and online courses are also examined to ensure that these constitute less than 50 percent of credits needed for a students' program, degree, or Individual Degree Plan.

Student support services that accompany online courses include Learning Support Services, Matriculation and Enrollment Services, direct online chat with counseling programs and services, web-conferencing for tutoring services, direct online chat with NMC Library Services, book pouching, online eBook Academic Subscription Collection, and NMC site coordinators on Tinian and Rota to assist with registration and admissions processing.

The College prepares students for and connects them to future educational opportunities. NMC holds memorandums of agreement and articulation agreements with various institutions of higher education throughout the region and stateside, allowing students to gain exposure to professional opportunities and complete degrees in addition to those offered at NMC. Under the leadership of the current president, the CNMI also become a member of Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE), with financial support from the CNMI governor and legislature. Approximately 220 colleges and universities across the 15 western states including the CNMI participate in the WICHE Undergraduate Exchange Program at tuition rates not to exceed 150 percent of in-state tuition. Many of these institutions offer online degree programs and certificates, greatly increasing educational access for students in the CNMI.

**Pursuing funds for the Facilities Master Plan (Recommendation 4)**

<u>Sustainable Actions and Planning</u>

In September 2011, the College's Facilities Master Plan was approved, and the BOR asked the president to create a Facilities Planning Committee shortly thereafter. Since then the Facilities Master Plan has provided each of the College's programs and services with adequate usable space and resources for development. Funding for facility renovation and new construction are now organized into short-term funding projects and long-term funding projects. The distinction helps the administrative services department focus on meeting program and department needs more effectively and sustainably.

**Short-term Funding Projects**
Short-term funding projects include yearly upgrades, renovations, and immediate program facility needs and are mainly funded through a yearly operations plan which is incorporated into the yearly financial plan. Since the October 2012 ACCJC visit, NMC has continued regular preventive maintenance and renovation of existing facilities as cost-effectively as possible while still providing the necessary physical resources for programs to continue to

accomplish the mission of the College. The College continues to work on securing funding to maintain, repair, renovate, and/or replace facilities, equipment, and fixtures to support its programs and services.

**Completed Short-term Actions**
The following projects were completed in fiscal year 2013, which ended September 30, 2013.

- Renovation of the Admissions and Records Office and Financial Aid building was completed.
- The International Student Center was created in an existing building.
- Several spaces in Building V were combined to create a large, well-appointed classroom that seats 42 students.
- Classroom upgrades at the Rota Instructional Site that allow for video teleconferencing capabilities in three classrooms seating a maximum of 45 students each were completed.
- The Tinian Instructional Site closed circuit TV (CCTV) security system camera upgrade was completed.
- A Curriculum Resource Center to better serve School of Education students was created.

**Long-term Funding Projects**
The Facilities Planning Committee works to develop and ensure vision and to procure funding for long-term improvements. The committee has been tasked with scaling phase one of the Facilities Master Plan. It works with other departments to identify and pursue appropriate funding sources.

**Ongoing and Completed Long-term Actions**
The following projects were completed in fiscal year 2013, which ended September 30, 2013, or are ongoing with expected completion by the end of fiscal year 2014.

- Work has begun on preliminary design concepts and cost assessment for a general-purpose instructional classroom building with an attached large lecture hall. On completion of this preliminary work, the design will be shared with the college community for input.
- The installation of a new roof and insulation at Building A and the continuation of the renovation of Building K was completed.
- The As Terlaje Campus LED lighting retrofit was completed.
- An operational Deep Well on the As Terlaje Campus for use at the CREES Aquaculture Program is under construction, with plans in the works for a reverse osmosis system to provide for potable water.
- A $300,000 grant by the US Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs for the retrofit of air conditioners to Energy Star-rated high efficiency units. Preliminary work for the supply and installation of these units has begun.

To assist the College in ensuring funding for long-term projects, a grant writer was hired in December 2013 to work within the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, with a priority on

securing funding for facilities master plan projects. A foundation director to seek additional funding from external and non-traditional sources was also hired in December 2013. The chief financial officer and others are seeking federal funds and other sources similar to counterparts on Guam, Hawaii, and other peer institutions.

**Improvement to Information Technology (Recommendation 5)**

**Actions Taken**

In response to ACCJC recommendations, the key positions of IT director, network specialist, and database administrator were filled. The new IT team implemented a new firewall by Barracuda Systems, which includes content filtering, intrusion prevention, WAN optimization, online backup system for disaster recovery, and site-to-site VPN to securely connect the three NMC campus networks on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. The VPN solution enables users to access servers and network resources from all three locations.

The College's email system was upgraded to Google Apps, an email system which supports collaborative tools that improve the College's electronic communication. A digital Mitel VoIP phone system with advanced features replaced the old PBX analog phone system. A new online helpdesk ticketing system supports the College's operations and projects. The network monitoring system was upgraded to monitor network equipment and servers to better manage network resources.

In September 2013, the BOR approved a new IT policy which clearly defines the role of information technology within College, and based on this policy an IT services operational plan was adopted and approved, and a new IT procedures document is under review. Procedures for implementing the BOR IT policy were developed, including reclassification of the Technology in Education Committee, formerly an ad hoc committee, as a minor governing body which is now engaged in planning technology use at the College.

**Sustainability**

Now that the IT department is fully staffed, its focus is on employee retention. The IT director is working with the human resource department and management team to develop a more competitive salary structure. The department is conducting in-house professional development and cross training to standardize skills throughout the department. The IT department also plans to promote IT certifications for its staff. The department used the employee evaluation procedure supplied by the human resource department to create a career development plan for each IT staff member.

To sustain the quality of IT services, the department is actively working on improving the College's video teleconferencing services. The newly hired network specialist is working to improve telecommunication connections between campuses. The IT department partnered with the College's Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service program (CREES) to procure funding for additional Polycom equipment. A Polycom gatekeeper

device (CMA 4000) was procured to better manage videoconference calls and to expand services. Another area of focus is the Student Information Management System. The newly hired database administrator is working with the vendor (Ellucian) to upgrade the system to allow the students to register online. Online registration will be fully operational by fall of 2014. The department is also conducting technology training open to everyone in the College through regularly scheduled "Tech Hour" training sessions. The department is developing customer satisfaction surveys to improve upon helpdesk services.

The IT director's continuous participation in several governing bodies in the College promotes alignment of technology policy and procedures with the overall mission of the College, effective use of technology throughout the College, and a proactive approach to evaluating and funding appropriate systems.


**Governance Structure and the Institutional Excellence Guide (Recommendation 6)**

**<u>Actions Taken</u>**

As demonstrated in the October 15, 2013 Show Cause report, the College has taken major actions to revise, clarify, and communicate its governance structure to its constituents.

**<u>Sustainability</u>**

The major changes in governance structure and roles of faculty, staff, administrators, and students in the participatory governance system are clearly indicated in the 2013 Institutional Excellence Guide (IE Guide) adopted in September 2013. The IE Guide describes key governance bodies, their responsibilities, and their relationships with each other. Description of *participatory governance* in lieu of *shared governance*, mutually agreed upon guidelines for participation in governance, membership, voting rights and protocols are all laid out in the IE Guide. The guide also includes definitions of facets of best practices in participatory governance.

In October 2013, 100 percent of NMC's faculty and staff attended either of two workshop presentations on the 2013 IE Guide. Workshop participants submitted input for continuous improvement, and a revised Governance and Decision Making Chart providing a visual depiction of the governance system was created as a result of that input. The IE Guide is now required reading as a part of the new employee orientation process.

The College's ongoing professional development activities are focused on raising awareness of and appropriate participation in the new governance structure. A professional development workshop held in October 2013 sought to determine and improve all College employees' knowledge of institutional governance. A pre-test revealed that 77 percent (89 out of 115) participants already knew and understood the new governance processes, including the roles and responsibilities of each governance body, and especially those of the president and the BOR. A post-test indicated that 89 percent understood the processes and responsibilities. To encourage all members of the College community to continue to stay informed about

institutional governance at the college level, an ongoing series of articles has been regularly distributed via email since October 31, 2013.

The major government bodies—the College Council, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate—all worked with their constituents in the fall of 2013 to review and realign their bylaws with the College's newly adopted mission, vision, and governance structure. These changes will be submitted to the president for final review in January 2014, and are expected to be reviewed and acted on by the BOR in February 2014.

**Board of Regents Policies (Recommendation 7)**

During its visit to the Northern Marianas College, the ACCJC External Evaluation team found that the BOR had been making progress in reviewing its policies and that it was in the midst of a six-year policy review calendar where policies were being evaluated, updated, and replaced.

The team also found that the BOR had a policy in place for the conduct of a regular self-evaluation and even made note that a self-evaluation activity performed in 2011 where an instrument developed by a consulting firm was utilized. However, the team also observed that although the regents expressed "a clear intention to perform a comprehensive self evaluation based on the information gained during recent training sessions, one has yet to be undertaken." The team also concluded that while the meeting assessments that the BOR was undertaking after each of its meetings was helpful, there was still a general need to evaluate how the BOR was performing as a unit or body.

<u>**Actions Taken**</u>

**Updating Policies**
The College has in place a thorough policy review and adoption process that encourages participation from the students, staff, and faculty on board policies. The review process for operational policies originates from a policy steward who then brings policies to the management team. These are then advanced to governance bodies, including College Council, for input and recommendation prior to final review by the president before being transmitted to the BOR for final review and policy action.

The BOR has continued to work with Dr. Narcisa Polonio of ACCT to evaluate policies that deal specifically with BOR operations. These policies cover BOR self-evaluation processes, regent conduct, policy adoption, and committee structure, among other functions. In its meeting held in August 2013, the BOR approved the revision of all of its operational policies. The BOR also took action on its policies regarding honorary regents, as recommended by the visiting team.

Furthermore, recognizing that many existing policies were procedural in nature, the BOR spent considerable time reviewing and updating all policies and removing any sections that were procedural in nature. The entire project was completed by October 2013. To sustain its goal of maintaining updated polices that set high standards of quality for the College's

operations, the BOR is already implementing its new five-year calendar for reviewing all BOR policies.

**Board of Regents Self Evaluation**
Each regent completes each monthly BOR meeting with a meeting assessment to reflect on both individual and collective BOR performance. Also, the regents have committed to reviewing their performance through a well-defined policy for self-evaluation. The BOR annually conducts a thorough assessment of how it fulfills its role, including individual regent performance. This assessment includes analysis of BOR functions, BOR and president relations, community and CNMI relations, ethics and conflicts of interest, fiscal responsibilities, educational quality, and policy decisions. The results will be used as a basis for planning BOR development activities and identifying goals and objectives for the following fiscal year.

**Mission Statement (ER 2)**

**Actions Taken**

At the time of the ACCJC visit in October 2012, the mission statement of NMC was constitutionally prescribed by Amendment 38, leaving the College unable to revise it as needed. Prior to that visit, NMC had begun an initiative to authorize the College to control its mission statement. This initiative passed in the November 2012 general election, and on September 27, 2013 the College adopted a new mission statement with the objectives of defining its broad education purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning. The BOR also approved a new vision statement on the same date.

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

Both the new mission and new vision statements articulate the board's commitment to building student success across the institution. The new mission statement better reflects the Commonwealth's needs and aligns with Accreditation Standards now that it has the authority to do so.

Working with multiple government bodies to achieve legislative action and constitutional revision allowing the College to revise its mission statement was an extensive process. A few steps of this process included launching the Public Initiative 17-12 Campaign to give NMC the authority to revise its mission statement, when necessary. The initiative passed with more than 10,000 "Yes" votes (almost 90 percent of all votes cast). On September 13, 2013, the College submitted an electronic inquiry to ACCJC regarding substantive change. Dr. Susan B. Clifford, Vice President of Commission Operations for ACCJC, found that the draft mission statement was not substantially different from current mission statement. The new mission statement contained the same purpose, target population, and commitment to student success, which meets Accreditation Standard I.A. House and Senate bills were passed in the respective CNMI legislative bodies. On November 13, 2013, CNMI Governor Eloy S. Inos signed into law a bill granting NMC the flexibility to revise its mission statement. House Bill

18-1115 is now Public Law 18-28. With the new law, the Commonwealth Code's Title 3 Section 1305 subsection (1) is amended to read: "The Board of Regents shall establish, and from time to time amend, the mission statement of the college."

**Sustainability**

The College will review both its mission and vision statements periodically, as the first step in NMC's long-term strategic planning cycle. This methodical approach will allow for incorporating input from the broad base of the institution's stakeholders. BOR Policy 2000 affirms the Board of Regents' commitment to providing leadership in the next five years and beyond. In addition, the BOR now has the ability to use the institutional governance and decision-making process to review and revise its mission statement as necessary.