

**NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
PROGRESS VISIT REPORT UPDATE**
January 8, 2008

Program Review/Assessment

Within the last five months since NMC launched its PROA (Program Review and Outcomes Assessment) initiative, it has made tremendous progress with the program. On January 8, the president authorized a campus closure so that all NMC could participate in a full day of assessment training facilitated by Dr. Ray Somera, Guam Community College Academic Vice President. In addition to faculty, staff and administration, the training was attended by students, a Board of Regents member, the Vice Speaker and a Senator. Most beneficial is the dialogue that is occurring across the campus at all levels, especially between academic programs.

The first part of the workshop summarized and highlighted the college's assessment accomplishments in the last five months. Through the coordination of the PROAC (PROA Committee), the college was able to establish an assessment plan focusing on student learning outcomes and administrative unit outcomes for all of its programs and services. The assessment plan was developed through extensive dialogue within and across programs and services.

Dr. Somera shared with the college the assessment principle of "beginning at the end." The focus was on using assessment results to make improvements at the course, program, and institutional levels. This was given as a preview for the college as it nears the completion of the first cycle of assessment. He also assisted the college in establishing baseline data on individual perception and understanding of assessment program implementation at the institution. The workshop participants completed the Levels of Implementation and the Patterns of Characteristics Analysis Worksheet. The data will be analyzed in order to make improvements on how we do assessment at NMC and to track changes in the assessment process and characteristics.

Dr. Somera also met with the Management Team and PROAC to discuss the Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness. He shared a draft instrument designed to evaluate institutional effectiveness at GCC. NMC will use this as a starting point to develop a tool that works best for NMC. Below are just some examples of improvements being made based on program review.

Liberal Arts

As part of the on-going Liberal Arts Program review process, during the months of June and July 2007, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) attempted to contact and interview all students who earned a Liberal Arts degree between the years 1997 and 2006, and that were known to have transferred to another institution. Based on data from the National Student Clearinghouse, 164 (33%) of the 490 Liberal Arts graduates from this period successfully transferred to other schools.

OIE was able to contact and interview 73 (45%) of these 164 students. Extremely valuable information was gathered, including course transfer and student satisfaction data, and

recommendations for program improvement. The survey showed that 27 were working on completing a baccalaureate degree, 25 had successfully completed a baccalaureate degree, and 13 had earned a masters degree.

The information gathered from these interviews was shared with the Dean of Academic Programs, Counseling, Academic Council, Liberal Arts Program Committee, and the Management Team. Under the leadership of the dean, this information has been used by the Academic Council and the Liberal Arts Program Committee to review and amend the Liberal Arts degree plan, and has provided impetus for course review in several academic departments. The dean has also used the information to renew efforts to update articulation agreements with regional schools, including the University of Hawaii.

Counseling Programs and Services (CPS), which provides academic advising and transfer advising for Liberal Arts majors, has also made use of the information in its services to students. Information from the interviews has been integrated into transfer planning and advising services, which include written materials, one-on-one advising sessions, and for the first time this fall, transfer advising workshops open to all interested students. Information will also be presented at the next CPS-sponsored Academic Advising Workshop for faculty advisors, to increase faculty's awareness of transfer and articulation issues and of our students' experiences here and at other institutions.

Accounting Program

NMC received feedback from the community that its accounting majors were under-prepared. In response to this report, the program has empaneled an expert advisory council composed of the CNMI Public Auditor; NMC's Chief Financial Officer; Deloitte & Touche Partner, Joeten Enterprises CPA/CFO, and an accounting graduate. The group has evaluated the program concerns and the following actions have been taken: (1) archive certificate of completion program; (2) strengthen certificate of achievement program; (3) improve curriculum of AA program; and (4) adopt textbook used by University of Guam and University of Hawaii. The program is also articulating with the University of Hawaii, University of Guam, and Argosy University. Additionally, accounting courses are now be taught by highly qualified experts including the CNMI Public Auditor, NMC's CFO, and Joeten's CPA/CFO.

Archiving of Certificate Programs

The assessment process found a proliferation of certificate programs, many with no graduates in many years. The Academic Council took the lead to review the programs and set up criteria to be used to put programs in "inactive" status. This Friday, the Academic Council will take action to archive at least five programs and will continue the review process for all other programs.

Registration Survey

In an effort to improve the registration process for students, NMC implemented a registration survey beginning fall 2006. The counseling office has implemented a transfer service to help students with transfer research and planning and regularly offers an academic advising workshop to faculty during professional development days. The registration committee has streamlined the process to minimize lines/waiting. Advisors are able to get placement test scores online which will speed up course registration. The number of people assisting for course registration, financial aid, and cashier will be doubled. Over 20 student volunteers will also be helping. A