

Accreditation Evaluation

Northwest Iowa Community College

***Interim On-Site Visit Conducted
March 15-17, 2010***

***Iowa Department of Education
Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation
Bureau of Community Colleges Services***

STATE OF IOWA
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Northwest Iowa Community College
Accreditation Visit
March 15-17, 2010**

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Northwest Iowa Community College's Interim State Accreditation

Conducted March 15-17, 2010

Purpose of the Visit:

The purpose of the visit was an interim accreditation of Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC) by the Iowa Department of Education (DE).

Organizational Context:

NCC began in January 1964 under the name of Northwest Iowa Vocational School as a pilot program sponsored by the DE and conducted by the Sheldon Community School District.

In July 1965, the legislature enacted Senate File 550, a statute which permitted formation of area schools. In January 1966, the State Board of Public Instruction approved an application for Merged Area IV, composed of the same area which had been served in the pilot project. Due to consolidation of school districts, Merged Area IV is now comprised of 13 school districts.

While NCC was originally organized as an area vocational school, it applied for approval to provide a limited Arts and Sciences program in 1973, and began offering the program in 1975. This limited program, which offered courses in an evening college format, served the needs of area residents including many veterans. As the period of peak veteran enrollment passed, overall enrollment fell to a modest level, and the Arts and Sciences program was discontinued in 1980.

In 1975, the college changed its name to Northwest Iowa Technical College (NITC). In 1988, the college received permission from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and the DE to again offer programs leading to the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees. On July 1, 1993, the name of the college was changed to Northwest Iowa Community College to reflect its status as a comprehensive community college.

NCC has a long tradition of offering outstanding career and technical programs, and students and graduates have shown the results. Each year students from the technical programs receive top state and international awards in student competitions. At NCC, students learn on the latest technologies, and graduates are sought after as a result. NCC is also proud of its long tradition as a comprehensive community college offering Associate Degree transfer programs, Business programs and Health Occupation programs which include Nursing, Radiologic Technology, and Biotechnology Lab Technician. New programs that will be offered in the coming years include Bio-Fuels Control Technician, Bio-Fuels Operator, and Professional Photography. The college also

offers a wide range of continuing education activities and business and industry training. All of this, coupled together with NCC's strong technical programs, brings true meaning to the NCC brand, "There's A Place for You." Students at NCC also have the experience of being a student at a college without being "lost in the crowd." NCC provides a campus atmosphere where students and instructors alike know each other. Students experience small class sizes, and have plenty of opportunities for involvement in NCC activities such as Student Ambassadors, the Student Government Association, the Collegian newspaper staff, or intramural activities. NCC also provides a strong student support system to assist students in having a successful learning experience while at the College.

NCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and the DE.

Mission of the College

Mission Statement

NCC is a progressive learning college rapidly responding to the changing needs of our global community.

Vision Statement

We are driven to be the community college of choice for learning.

Guiding Principles

- We believe that as a comprehensive community college we respond to our communities' needs.
- We believe that all people can learn.
- We believe that education is an investment in society.
- We believe that accessible, lifelong educational opportunities and services enable people to maximize their potential and improve quality of life.
- We believe in the dignity and worth of all individuals.
- We believe in embracing diversity.
- We believe in maintaining high standards through innovation and continuous improvement.
- We believe that effective leadership, education and training will enhance community and economic development.
- We believe that partnerships are essential.

General Education Statement

NCC is committed to providing students the knowledge and skills that will enable them to graduate, continue their education, pursue the career of their choice, and be productive citizens. To meet this educational goal, all programs at NCC will encompass

general education core competencies in the areas of Personal Development, Global Perspective, Critical Thinking, Written and Oral Communications, and Math. These core competencies are taught and assessed in classes, labs, field experiences, and other co-curricular activities.

Interactions with Institutional Constituencies

1. Executive Council
2. President
3. Vice President for Education and Learning Services
4. Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Enrollment Services
5. Executive Director of College Operations and Finance
6. Student Services Staff
7. Director of Human Resources
8. Executive Director of Business Development and Training Center
9. Extended Learning Staff (High School Partnerships)
10. Career and Technical and Arts and Sciences Students
11. Equity Coordinators and Affirmative Action Committee
12. Support Staff
13. Academic Deans
14. Assessment Committee
15. Arts and Sciences and Career and Technical Education Faculty
16. Institutional Research personnel
17. Advisory Committee
18. Board of Trustees
19. Continuing Education and Business and Industry Coordinators
20. Library Staff
21. Director of Continuing Education and Training
22. Technology and Information Services staff
23. Foundation, Grants and Marketing Directors/Coordinators
24. Business Office, Bookstore, Financial Aid, and Food Service staff
25. Learning Center/TRiO staff (including Adult Literacy)
26. Executive Director of Technology and Information Services
27. Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Directors
28. Diversity Committee
29. Distance Learning Staff
30. Staff Development Committee
31. Quality Faculty Plan Committee
32. Curriculum Committee and Title III Staff

Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

1. Web Site: www.nwicc.edu
2. Board Policies
3. Career and Career Option Programs Program Review Process: Program Evaluation and Nursing Program Evaluation Model

4. Articulation Agreements
5. PEAQ (Program to Enhance and Advance Quality) Documentation: NCA (North Central Association) Self-Study, Strategic Plan, and Fact Book
6. Board Minutes
7. Current Organizational Chart
8. Student Handbook
9. Faculty Handbooks—Employee/Faculty and Adjunct
10. Minutes from Advisory Committees, Curriculum Committees, and Diversity Committees.
11. Documentation of strategies to recruit, enroll, retain, and successfully serve students in nontraditional careers, students from under-represented racial/ethnic groups, English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, and other nontraditional students.
12. Long-range planning for building development and equipment; Facilities Assessment Report; Lifelong Learning; and Recreational Center Plan.
13. EEO/AA Documentation; Affirmative Action Plan 2010
14. Written Human Resources Policy and Procedures; Procedure Manual for Personnel
15. Publications, statement, and advertising; There's a Place for You DVD, Gender Equity and Career Choices DVD, Have You Ever Dreamed of....(English and Spanish); Hispanic Family and Career Night (English and Spanish), Take Your Next Step College Catalog, NCC Difference; Download Audiobooks Wilbor; Housing at Northwest Iowa Community College, North Iowa Community College Library Student Survey, Learning Center Assessment Survey 2009-2010, Diversity Committee Activities Survey Composite, Entreprep 2009 Graduation DVD, Spring Diversity Fair Poster, 2009 Commencement program, Walk a Day in My Shoes, Foundation and scholarship Opportunities, College Life 101, Continuing Education Catalog, Program Sheets (Spanish), and Career Exploration Day.
16. College Statement on General Education
17. College Catalog
18. College statements of Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals
19. Student Placement Data
20. Course Schedule—All Terms for FY10
21. Joint Enrollment Offering Information; High School Workbook 2009-2010
22. District Demographic Information
23. Procedures for valuation and revision of the mission and policies, based on assessment needs of constituents and community.
24. Student Satisfaction Surveys and Results; ESS Evaluation/Survey Services, ACT Evaluation Normative Data Report 2004-2008, ESS Summary Report 2009, Normative data report 2002-2006, Summary report 2007
25. Evidence of College's Assessment Planning and Implementation; CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement), Institutional Report 2007 and 2009, and High School Scan Results

26. Strategic plan; Operational Plan, Clarus Corporation Market Assessment Results, Clarus Corporation Community Scan Results
27. Schedule of Professional Development Activities and Participation
28. Teacher Load Information
29. Faculty Personnel Files
30. Official Letter of Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Status
31. Data on Student Enrollment in Campuses, Programs, and Courses on the Basis of Racial/Ethnic Background, Gender, and Disability
32. Quality Faculty Plan
33. Faculty Staff Development notebook; NCC Staff Development notebook
34. NCC Enrollment Report 2009

Additional State Review Requirements

- The Quality Faculty Plan (QFP), as required by Iowa Code, was reviewed and NCC was found to meet the stated requirements of the Iowa Code.
- Review of faculty personnel files, as required by Iowa Code, did not present any issues.
- The review of faculty load, as required by Iowa Code, did not present any issues.
- The Iowa Code requirement of reviewing 20 percent of CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs per year is being followed.
- A review of the catalog and the AS28s did not present any issues.

Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previous Accreditation Visit

- The college did not receive any recommendations during the previous visit.

Opportunities for Institutional Improvement

- The college should continue to build on its strategic plan and environmental scanning to determine the unique niche for NCC in northern Iowa.

Met. The college is continuing to revisit its strategic planning process and will develop a new strategic plan for two-three years.

- NCC staff should review publications and orientation workshops with students to determine if the requirements for an AA degree are clear and specific regarding the courses offered, credit hours, and methods of delivery. The vocational degree information is very clear and student friendly. Developing this same approach for Associate of Arts (AA) could greatly increase student understanding of the AA degree.

Met. The college has reworked its orientations and publications to meet these opportunities.

- NCC should continue its efforts to improve its institutional and student assessment method, as part of a larger continuous quality improvement process of acting, evaluating, and revising programs and courses to meet the needs of learners more effectively.

Met. The college is utilizing a Title III grant to address this need.

1. Mission and Governance

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students

1A. The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.

Strengths

- The college mission statement is readily available to the public through the catalog (both printed version and college web site version) and on the college's web site. The mission statement appears in the employee/faculty handbook, student handbook, and adjunct faculty handbook. The mission statement is also posted in the student lounge area as well as other areas of the college.
- The Board of Trustees indicated that new board members receive a one-on-one orientation to the college from the college president and other employees. This all-day training involved touring the college and obtaining program information and other items, such as financial information.
- The mission statements and philosophies of the college foundation, the Diversity Committee, and the Business and Industry Center complement the college mission statement, the vision statement, and the guiding principles (e.g. the mission of the NCC Foundation is to attract and manage financial resources, enhance awareness of the College, and to support access to lifelong learning opportunities). The NCC Business and Industry Center strives to be industry's first source for providing confidential assessments, knowledge solutions and customized skill building. Philosophy: Employers and their employees are valued customers. Each customer has unique, time-sensitive needs which demand customized and effective solutions. The Diversity Committee's mission states: We seek to create a welcoming atmosphere to all people, challenge stereotypes and promote sensitivity, inclusion and mutual respect for each other.

Opportunities for Improvement

Because the college culture exemplifies its mission, the college might consider posting the mission statement at other strategic locations on campus, such as by the main entrances. This placement would allow first-time visitors to gain an awareness of the mission.

1B. In its mission documents the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

Strengths

- The college mission statement and guiding principles reflect the college's commitment to honor the dignity and worth of individuals through diversity, and provide a basis for the college's basic strategies to address diversity.
- NCC's diversity definition is aligned with the non-discrimination statement: "We value the differences in people. A diverse workforce and a diverse student body both enrich the educational experience we offer and contribute to student success. We recognize the differences in people include but are not limited to: race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion or physical or mental disability."
- Examples of diversity activities of the college include:
 - ✓ Humanities Iowa Grant: Screening and discussion of "Little Salsa on the Prairie," evening September 30, 2009.
 - ✓ Fall Diversity Days, November 9-11, 2009: Panel discussion about service learning opportunities in connection with diversity projects; film on diversity issues.
 - ✓ Spring Diversity Fair
 - ✓ Hispanic Family and Career Night
 - ✓ Spring Fine Arts Display
 - ✓ The employment of a Hispanic recruiter.
 - ✓ Several bilingual publications (Spanish and English) to show representatives in nontraditional careers.
 - ✓ The college's expected behaviors and culture are congruent with the mission of the college. Multiple groups interviewed expressed that the mission guides the behaviors of the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.
 - ✓ The college's affirmative action plan states a major goal actively to recruit/interview minorities for positions which become vacant.
 - ✓ The Board of Trustees indicated that NCC exists for students' success. Members stated that one of the most important aspects of the college is to respond to the needs of students. Interviewees also indicated that the job placement rate is a credit to the faculty and programs of NCC. The Board of Trustees and other groups stated that they would like ensure that NCC is the college of choice. Interviewees also wanted to make sure that funding would not be a cause for students not being able to attend NCC.

Opportunities for Improvement

The college is encouraged to address the issue of gender balance on all committees.

1C. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Strengths

- Multiple interviews indicated that the college staff understands the mission of the college and, therefore, focuses on providing a high quality education for students.
- Team interviews substantiate investment in and advocacy for the college mission/goals and student success. The Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, community, and students feel strongly invested in NCC. Interviewees indicated that they proactively advocate for the institution, its programs, and students.
- Team interviews and document review indicate that college personnel and the Board of Trustees apply the mission statement to guide strategic decision-making and determining of budget priorities.
- The Board of Trustees meets monthly to discuss reports from college programs to understand better current initiatives, stakeholder needs, and learning outcomes. The Board of Trustees reviews the college's programs through the program evaluation process. The understanding of college programs provides the board members with the background needed to make policy decisions with confidence.

Opportunities for Improvement

None noted.

1D. The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Strengths

- Interviewees indicated that full-time instructors often come from the ranks of the adjunct instructors and that the leadership promotes from within. By focusing on placing staff and faculty into leadership positions, administration helps to build ownership.
- Interviews with the Board of Trustees indicate that their receiving timely communication from the President of the college allows the Board the appropriate time for decision-making. Members indicated that no quick decisions have been made since information has been provided well in advance.
- The college will review its mission statement as well as initiate a new strategic plan. The intent will be to include such college stakeholders as the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, students, and community members in the process.

Opportunities for Improvement

None noted.

1E. The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Strengths

The Board of Trustees functions in a fashion to ensure that the college operates with legality, responsibility, and fiscal honesty. Board of Trustees members indicated that they receive a monthly financial report as well as a review of the bills to be paid. In addition, the members indicated that they review the yearly auditor's report. The Board stated that their responsibility was to be good stewards of the tax dollars for people in their four-and-a-half-county community college region.

Opportunities for Improvement

None noted.

2. Preparing for the Future

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

2A. The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

Strengths

- The college provides timely financial reports and detailed budgets, allowing the board to utilize excellent financial data in making decisions.
- The college uses MyPlaceNCC, the web portal (activated January 2010), which allows one-stop access to e-mail, grades, unofficial transcripts, college calendars, emergency alerts, campus events, and other information.
- The college shares data from multiple sources for use by decision makers and as part of the program evaluation process.
- The college conducts bilingual marketing; offers workplace Spanish classes; and develops curriculum for pre-CNA (Certified Nurses Aid), for ESL (English as a Second Language), and Spanish CDL (Commercial Drivers License) classes.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The college is encouraged to continue to develop methods to assess the needs of the constituents in the college region.
- As the college explores opportunities for increasing growth in the Arts and Sciences/transfer area, it is suggested that the college review the formal and informal articulation agreements with four-year institutions, as well as the suggestions by Clarus Corporation in the March 2009 Community Scan Results.
- Multiple interview groups used the terminology "trades" when referencing the Applied Technology programs at the college. The college is encouraged to use consistently its current title of Applied Technology when referring to those programs.

2B. The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Strengths

- Noncredit staff tracks offerings to determine successes, reduce cancellation rates, and improve scheduling.
- NCC is part of the seven community colleges involved with the Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCO).
- NCC is a member of a four-college (Hawkeye Community College, Iowa Lakes Community College, NCC, and Northeast Iowa Community College) consortium having a server housed in Cedar Falls, with five employees who work on programming for the colleges to enhance data collecting and reporting.
- Review of the annual budget is an ongoing process throughout the year.
- The board has committed to a fund balance of greater than or equal to 8 percent of the General Fund's total annual expenditures and transfers by making it board policy.
- The college has hired a grant writer to assist the college in applying for grants that can further the college's mission and goals.

Opportunities for Improvement

None noted.

2C. The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Strengths

- Through a variety of focus groups and end-of-term and annual surveys, the college acquires information to make changes to services and programs.
- NCC was ranked first in the state (FY09) for success rate of students. (Success Rate=Number of students who received awards or transferred in 2009/number of students enrolled full-time for the first time in 2007.)
- Students interviewed expressed pride in achieving top honors at state and national competitions.

Opportunities for Improvement

None noted.

2D. All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

Strengths

- The strategic plan (2006-2008) includes strategic initiatives which reflect and support the mission statement. The initiatives include Enhancing Student Success, Expanding Learning Opportunities, Developing Alternative Resources, Expanding Enrollment Management, and Embracing a Collaborative Culture. Document review indicated that 79 percent of the total plan has been completed with 100 strategies completed at 100 percent.
- The college's strategic plan evidences the college's awareness of educational quality; student learning; and the diverse, complex, global and technological world.

Opportunities for Improvement

None noted.

3. Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates the fulfillment of its educational mission.

3A. The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program making effective assessment possible.

Strengths

- Document review indicated that 10 NCC programs and disciplines have developed assessment plans during 2009-2010 (17 during 2008-2009). These plans indicate commitment to continuing the assessment with these or revised tools. Fourteen (14) programs and disciplines have completed assessment reports based on the plans during 2008-2009.
- The Title III Committee is reviewing all course syllabi and reviewing learner outcomes for all programs.

Opportunities for Improvement

NCC Assessment Reports remain incomplete in several disciplines and programs; however, the reports contain explanations indicating the need to modify the original plans for current application. NCC is encouraged to continue to develop the assessment plans and the resulting reports.

3B. The organization values and supports effective teaching.

Strengths

- Interviews and a review of college documents indicated that all new faculty complete a one-week orientation. Other Interviews indicated that new hires are assigned a mentor to assist them in such areas as learning college policies.
- The Quality Faculty Plan Committee provides direction in professional development requested by faculty. The professional development occurs in various modalities, such as the online Learning Outcomes Workshop.
- The Quality Faculty Plan Committee reviews the annual individual faculty professional development reports to determine faculty observance of state code. The college uses the recommendations from the Quality Faculty Plan Committee to provide professional development for faculty.
- The college recognizes a full-time and an adjunct faculty of the year. Plaques at the college entrance acknowledge these faculty achievements.
- Interviews with Continuing Education, Foundation, administrative, and student groups indicated the importance of the quality of instruction. The ACT Student Survey indicates that course offerings and CTE (career and technical education) and academic reputation prove the chief reasons students come to NCC. This reason replaced the response of convenient location received in prior years.
- Administrators are accessible to faculty. Interviewees indicated an effective open door policy on the part of administrators.

Opportunities for Improvement

The membership of the Quality Faculty Plan committee needs to reflect gender balance.

3C. The organization creates effective learning environments.

Strengths

- Each classroom contains the same presentation technology, thus allowing faculty ease of use.
- Students in the automotive program were required to purchase netbook computers as part of a pilot program. Students use these in their training throughout the program. Since the required books for the program are online, students use the computers and the information accessed on the computers to conduct diagnostics on the cars and to complete tests.
- Faculty interviews indicated their primary responsibility is to the student as a person making life choices.
- Review of documents indicated that the retention policy for the full-time students in one-year and two-year programs between fall and spring semesters of the first year of the programs is doing an excellent job of retaining students: 98 percent of the full-time one-year program students are retained between fall and spring and 91 percent of the full-time two-year program students are retained in that time frame.
- While the campus remains free of crime, NCC has implemented additional security features. These include phones in classrooms and hallways, an outdoor speaker system, and lockdown features in classrooms.

Opportunities for Improvement

None noted.

3D. The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Strengths

- NCC's Learning Center is available to all students in providing the necessary services which contribute to their success (i.e. tutoring, computers, independent study in selected areas, test proctoring, resume' writing, and developmental coursework).
- NCC provides a \$500 scholarship to GED graduates who attend NCC.
- The college works to provide effective staffing and support for its learning resources, for instance, discussion to hire a full-time Humanities instructor to accommodate increasing enrollment.
- NCC provides a stipend to each full-time faculty, administrator, and support staff person for individual professional development, such as attending professional conferences.
- NCC provides education assistance for faculty and staff obtaining additional or advanced degrees. Tuition reimbursement is available for employees, spouses, and dependents who take college credit courses at NCC.
- NCC's Quality Faculty Plan Committee brings in speakers and other training providers at faculty request, for example, Title III training in developing course competencies for assessment.
- NCC names individual faculty in its organizational chart. This practice provides a culture of respect for the faculty members.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Interviewees indicated that the college Information Technology staff have previously not been included in providing input to the Computer Programming program at the college. These individuals might be beneficial in assisting in curriculum revision and/or the program evaluation process. The college is encouraged to consider involving this group on program advisory committees.
- Multiple interviewees indicated that NCC does not want to deny quality of instruction because of budgets. Because of budgets, off-campus educational experiences, such as job shadowing, may not be utilized because of transportation costs. The educational value of such experiences as job-shadowing at professional worksites can prove important to the students in the programs. The college is encouraged to study the cost versus the benefits of these educational experiences.

4. Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

4A. The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff that it values a life of learning.

Strengths

- The Board of Trustees has approved and disseminated educational policies to provide educational programs of the highest quality possible.
- As stated in the student handbook, the college catalog, and other documents, the college recognizes, embraces, and practices the general education learning outcomes across all programs.
- The college has embraced professional development at all levels of the organization, including faculty, as evidenced by such means as the faculty development committee activities, tuition assistance program, and in-service programs.
- The program evaluation process is a board-approved process. The team found evidence that the college is complying with the program evaluation process.
- The college supports and strongly encourages student participation in co-curricular activities--Phi Theta Kappa, Student Government Association, TRIO, STARS (Students Taking Advantage of Resources for Success), Student Newspaper--intramurals, and clubs. The team found evidence to support that these activities enhanced student engagement and retention.

Opportunities for Improvement

Document review indicates that Advisory Committee Minutes were provided for all Career and Technical programs to evidence that the committees are meeting once a year. The college is encouraged to collect for documentation minutes from each advisory committee meeting.

4B. The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry is integral to its educational programs.

Strengths

- Evidence exists to support that the college provides broad educational experiences for students to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom and function in a global society.
- The Title III grant will greatly assist the college as it continues to work toward aligning its curriculum with measurable outcomes and establishing assessments that measure those outcomes. Authentic assessments are being applied whenever possible. Career and technical education programs are also reviewing their assessments to align them with the Perkins requirements. Industry certification assessments are being used whenever possible. If no industry certification assessments exist, the advisory committees are reviewing and approving the assessments utilized.
- NCC faculty and staff survey graduates to gain valuable insights regarding placement rates, program revisions, and starting wages, as well as other relevant information.
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Opportunities for Improvement

None noted.

4C. The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Strengths

- Regular program reviews include attention to currency and relevancy of courses and programs. Program reviews also include representatives from the advisory committee, current students, faculty, and support services.
- Dedicated advisory committees consisting of students, alumni, employers, and constituents provide valuable input for each career and technical program at NCC.
- General Education learning outcomes and the college's guiding principles reflect the emphasis on global awareness and technology.
- Interviewees indicated that the students are involved in unique service opportunities. Students traveled to Texas for a Habitat for Humanities service project. The Powerline students went to Kansas to disassemble a temporary substation in operation after a tornado. These kinds of opportunities provide students with exposure to working in a global, diverse, and technological society, along with citizenship experiences.

Opportunities for Improvement

The college is encouraged to continue to focus on a global context and ensure that NCC can become a leader in the global economy.

4D. The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover and apply knowledge responsibly.

Strengths

- The NCC student handbook answers student questions dealing with academic integrity, access to information, conduct, and rights.
- The NCC employee handbook addresses ethical, social, and workplace policies. New faculty and staff are familiarized with these policies during orientation sessions and in-services.
- The college's communications and information systems policy and the computer usage policy ensure that faculty, staff and students use technology in an effective, efficient, ethical and lawful manner.

Opportunities for Improvement

Board policy 614 includes a policy regarding intellectual property and copyright guidelines. The college is encouraged to incorporate this information into the faculty handbook and other applicable publications.

5. Engagement and Services

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

5A. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Strengths

- The college is committed to making decisions using data. Some of the methods of information collection are via the ACT Surveys, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), literature reviews, and focus groups.
- The President and Vice Presidents hold regular meetings with students and faculty/staff to hear comments and suggestions for what needs improvement and/or what works well at the college. Examples include the Ice Cream Social, Eggs and Issues with Bill, and regular meetings with faculty.
- A Vice President is part of a task force with Sioux County to explore ways to meet the needs of the growing diverse community.
- The community needs are assessed in a variety of ways. Interviews indicated the following methods were used to assess community needs:
 - Conversations in the community
 - Review of Skills 2000 Report
 - Foundation and feasibility studies
 - Skills 2006 assessment of workforce needs
 - Hospital administrators meeting
 - Advisory Committees
 - Membership on Sheldon Development Corporation
 - Visits by Principals and Superintendents on a regular basis to the campus
 - Meetings with Guidance Counselors regularly on campus
 - Employees representing the college through different clubs and organizations

Opportunities for Improvement

The advisory committee minutes demonstrate that in many cases, the meetings consist of the college employees sharing information with the advisory committees rather than getting input and gaining business and industry insight. The college is advised to have the Career and Technical Education programs examine the Advisory Committee Manual on the DE Website: http://iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id-265&itemid-1428 for ways to benefit more fully from the advisory committees.

5B. The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

Strengths

- The college has a strong commitment to serving all its constituencies in a variety of ways. These include:
 - ✓ A new recreational center that will be open to the community (spring 2011).
 - ✓ Continuing education and business and industry courses that meet the needs to the community.
 - ✓ A Hispanic recruiter to meet the needs of the Hispanic community.
 - ✓ Eighth Grade and Junior Career Days
 - ✓ An EntrePrep Program to help secondary school students gain on-the-job experience through internships.
 - ✓ Career Exploration Day focused on displaced workers.
 - ✓ A variety of concurrent enrollment courses for secondary students.
 - ✓ Hispanic Family Night and Career Night

Opportunities for Improvement

- The students at the community college are each assigned advisors to assist with decisions, such as courses to take, transfer issues, and employability matters. During the interview with faculty, several mentioned that they also meet with students in an informal way to assist in these areas. The college is advised to review the establishment of a faculty advisory process. With the increase in numbers of students and the limited number of advisers, this system might better serve all students.
- Interviewees indicated that there was additional need for promoting the multiple skills sets of NCC faculty and staff in both credit and noncredit programs. Additional marketing of the many programs and services that college employees can provide could ensure that the community/students would first think of seeking the college's services before services outside of the community college's four-and-a-half county region.

5C. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Strengths

- The development of a new web site serves the constituents by helping individuals and businesses find the information they need regarding the college. The different sections of the web site are designed to focus on various groups of people. Each school district in the community college area has its own web page to help with student registration and information about college programs.
- New programs have been established or expanded as a result of demand by business and industry. These include:
 - Addition of a Photography Program
 - Expansion of the Nursing Program
 - Addition of the Radiologic Technology Program
 - Revision of the Production Welding Program
 - Addition of the Biotechnology Program
 - Expansion of the Powerline Program
 - Revision of the Computer Science Program

Opportunities for Improvement

The college is encouraged to review articulation agreements to ensure they are updated on a regular schedule.

5D. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

Strengths

- All groups interviewed have pride in the community college and value the programs and activities offered.
- Continuing education works with the businesses and industries in the four-and-one-half-county area to offer required training and other training requested by the businesses. The college collaborates with other community colleges in order to offer programs that might not otherwise have enough students. This practice provides businesses an opportunity to gain the required and necessary CEU training.
- NCC's "Making a Difference" honors employees whose dedicated service leaves a lasting impression on students.

Opportunities for Improvement

The college might consider reviewing the purpose of the Faculty Staff Development Committee regarding its function in approving professional development for college personnel. Interviewees indicated that faculty currently propose a faculty plan and obtain approval of the plan and the travel by their Deans prior to submitting the request to the Staff Development Committee. Interviewees reported that this committee's purpose is to verify the employees have not previously spent their allotted amount of professional development money. The college might want to consider studying the current process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

None noted.

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None noted.

The State Accreditation Team recommends continued accreditation for Northwest Iowa Community College. A State Comprehensive Accreditation visit will be held in five years to coincide with the district's next Higher Learning Commission visit in 2015.