

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Show Cause Activities Update

By Carmen Fernandez, President
June 5, 2008

March 15 Special Report Update: Resolution of FY2006 Audit Findings:

As of this date, 11 of the 14 audit findings have been resolved. One of the most difficult findings, having to do with the Retirement Fund accumulated debt of about \$3 million has been corrected through the efforts of Governor Fitial's assumption of debt for FY2005-2006 and approval of PL 16-2 which reduces NMC's employer share to 11% from 36.77%.

Accomplishments since January 2008 Show Cause Letter:

Since February 2008, NMC has made every effort to communicate as widely as possible. Meetings were held with the Board of Regents (BOR), NMC Foundation, students, faculty, staff, Governor and executive department heads including the Public School System, House of Representatives and Senate, the communities of Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. Press conferences were also held. Regular accreditation updates are provided to the community and are available on the FrontPage of NMC's new website at nmcnet.edu.

To ensure that the college stays on track with corrective actions, a compliance action plan (CAP) and CAP financing worksheet was developed. The CAP consolidates all activities required with their timeframes for completion and the financial worksheet lists and tracks the funding requirements. These documents have been widely shared with the entire NMC community, the executive and legislative branches, and other interested parties.

NMC has enjoyed tremendous support from local, regional, and national levels. The Governor and the Legislature worked together to relieve NMC's \$3 million debt to the Retirement Fund. The Governor recently approved a reprogramming of \$800,000 towards the \$1.4 million required for urgent short-term facility renovation and repairs - with a commitment for the balance in the near future.

The U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, awarded NMC a \$375,000 operations and maintenance improvement program (OMIP) grant for consultative services to facilitate and support our program review, SLO, planning, and evaluation efforts to ensure that we meet the October deadline to report compliance with all recommendations. The House Speaker Arnold Palacios sees NMC's accreditation as so critical that he appointed the Chair of Health, Education, and Welfare, Representative Ralph Torres to be the NMC accreditation liaison.

We have also enjoyed the assistance of Dr. Wilson Hess, College of the Marshall Islands President, who visited the campus on a donated basis to meet with the college community and elected officials as well. With the support of the CMI Board of Regents, Dr. Hess continues to work closely with the NMC president. Dr. Rockne Frietas, Hawaii

Community College president, has also assisted by providing a week-long facilitation of the strategic education master planning (SEMP) process.

We are thankful for the visit by Commissioner Takeuchi and President Dr. Beno in April. This visit was helpful in providing more clarity and understanding to the NMC community and elected leaders regarding our show cause status.

To signify the urgency of NMC's status, the BOR passed resolution no. 08-01: relative to declaring exigency relative to ACCJC show cause order and meets regularly to address any actions required for compliance. On May 2, the BOR exercised its authority under this resolution by approving emergency procurement of Key Trio Consultants to assist the college with program review, SLO's, planning, and evaluation.

Team Recommendation 1: Integration of planning, program review, and resource allocation based on wide community participation and driven by college mission and goals.

With the assistance of Key Trio, the students, faculty, staff, management, and BOR participated in visioning workshops. This helped to gauge participant's perception regarding NMC's current status and what the college's priorities should be for the next five years. This is the first step of the strategic education master planning process that will be completed by September 2008. The president attended all sessions.

Team Recommendation 2: "The team recommends again that the college institutionalize a coordinated, systematic process for evaluating program effectiveness. This process should include definitions of learning outcomes for all programs, a determination of program relationships to labor markets, and objective measures of student performance, which can inform and guide decisions to improve programs."

In January 2008, the campus was closed to allow for maximum participation at an all day assessment training with Dr. Ray Somera, Guam Community College (GCC) Academic Vice President. Agenda included a review of assessment activities and further training on completion of Memo 1, which is based on the Nichols and Nichols five-column model used by GCC.

Throughout the spring semester, the Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) members have been meeting with programs on an individual basis and a series of assessment workshops have been held for faculty, staff, and students. The BOR and NMC Foundations have also begun work on Form 1.

During the week of May 20, Dr. Alan Belcher of Key Trio met with all groups to discuss their Memo 1's. All groups were given feedback to improve their memos as they work on Form 1 completion. The president attended all sessions.

The Academic Council, in Spring 2008, acted to place a number of certificate and degree programs on inactive status. Evidence used to guide the decision included examination of data on market demand, enrollment and graduation trends, program costs, and personnel costs. A total of 18 programs (out of a total of 51) were placed on inactive status. Many other programs are undergoing this analysis.

To date, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) has made strides in attaining and distributing Student Achievement Data (STA-Data) in support of program review. The following is data available or in the collection process:

1. Course completion data (available)
2. Retention term to term (available)
3. Progression to next course level (available)
4. Program completion (available)
5. Transfer to four-year institutions (available for liberal arts majors)
6. Degree/certificate completion (available)
7. Scores on licensure exams (NCLEX available; PRAXIS pending)
8. Job placement/post training (being collected)

A Student Satisfaction Survey, Graduating Student Survey, and Alumni Survey have been conducted and should be reported by mid-June. An Employer Survey is being developed and will be deployed no later than the end of June. The results of these surveys will be acted on for program/services improvement.

Team Recommendation 4: “The team recommends the college complete the cycle of developing, measuring, analyzing, and discussing student learning outcomes, and acting on the findings, as part of a continuous effort of improvement.”

In fall 2007, the college institutionalized a program review/SLO process, based on the Nichols and Nichols five-column model, to operate on a two-year cycle. This process has now been accelerated so that all program reviews will be completed by early fall 2008 for reporting and linking to planning and budgeting. The following is the status of Form 1 submissions:

Group A (General education, Bachelor, and Associate Degree Programs): 46.67%

Group B (Certificate Programs): 27.78%

Group C (Student Services and Administrative Units): 20%

Group D (Special Programs and Services): 62.29%

All Form 1's are due June 23, 2008 and program review reports (Form 2) are due July 7. PROAC is now working on reviewing the Form 1's already submitted.