

# FULL SPEED AHEAD



Northern Marianas College  
**Strategic Plan**  
2015-2020



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Contents

Letter from the President & Board Chair _____	1
Northern Marianas College Administration & History _____	2-3
Development of the Strategic Plan _____	4
Complete College America _____	10
The Game Changers _____	13
Establishing Benchmarks For Targets and Success _____	15
Imperative One: Increase Relevance to CNMI Workforce _____	16
Imperative Two: Ensure Continued Accreditation _____	18
Imperative Three: Accelerate Time to Completion _____	20
Imperative Four: Improve Student Success and Support _____	22
Imperative Five: Strengthen Operations and Resource Development _____	24

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

## Letter from the President & Board Chair

Dear Stakeholders,

Our new college motto, ***“Full Speed Ahead”*** was unveiled on Friday, February 7, 2014 just as we received the exciting news that the College had been reaffirmed by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges. But for any organization to move forward, or steam ahead, it must have a clearly defined path of where it is, where it wants to go, and how it plans to get there.

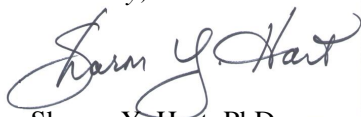
The *Northern Marianas College Five Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020—Full Speed Ahead* paves the road we will travel and clearly defines every step we will need to take along the way. It starts with our new mission and vision statements, which were both approved by the Board of Regents in September, 2013. The new mission, ***“Northern Marianas College, through its commitment to student learning, provides high quality, affordable and accessible educational programs and services for the individual and people of the Commonwealth”***, clearly defines our purposes for existing. It defines to our stakeholders what they should be expecting from NMC. Everything that the College does is reflected back to and supported by this mission statement. And, it is NMC’s new vision statement, ***“Northern Marianas College will serve as the engine to drive the economic growth and the social and cultural vitality of the Commonwealth,”*** that provides us with a picture of our future-- defining what we want to achieve. It is an inspiration and is reflected throughout the strategic plan.

We encourage all stakeholders to read this plan in detail and to embrace our new mission statement, and reflect on our new vision statement. We know you will be as excited as we are once you have the chance to examine our five strategic imperatives. These become our roadmap for the future, which is outlined in the pages to follow. Each year the College will then develop an Operational Plan that will further outline specific responsible parties, needed resources, and a timeline for implementation

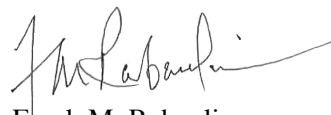
Yes, this is a very demanding yet achievable set of strategic imperative, aimed at fulfilling the collective vision of our many stakeholders. When fully implemented, the strategic imperatives will allow the College to continue to meet its stated mission for its students and the Commonwealth and to maintain a strong accreditation position for the benefit of all.

With this plan, we will now proceed ***“Full Speed Ahead”!*** Jump on board this Proa and join us!

Sincerely,



Sharon Y. Hart, PhD.  
President



Frank M. Rabauliman  
Chairperson, Board of Regents

## Northern Marianas College

### Board of Regents

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Juan T. Lizama, Regent  
William S. Torres, Regent  
Michaela U. Sanchez, Regent  
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### President

Dr. Sharon Y. Hart

### Management Team

David J. Attao, Dean of Administration and Resource Development  
Jacqueline Che, Director of Institutional Effectiveness  
Ni Deleon Guerrero, Faculty Senate President  
Frankie Eliptico, Director of External Relations  
Tracy Guerrero, Chief Financial Officer  
Ross Manglona, Dean/Director of CREES  
Floyd Masga, Staff Senate President  
Barbara Merfalen, Dean of Academic Programs and Services  
Leo Pangelinan, Dean of Student Services  
Chenglong “Alex” Shen, Student ASNMC President  
Christopher Timmons, Director of Human Resources/Legal Counsel  
Jonathan Liwag, Director of Information Technology  
*(Note: Management Team Reports to President Hart)*



## History of NMC

Northern Marianas College was established in May 1981 when Governor Carlos S. Camacho created the College as an official governmental entity through Executive Order #25. The Executive Order established the College as one of the divisions within the Commonwealth Department of Education. By mid-summer of 1981 the College was offering training programs for government employees and teachers of the public school system.

In January 1983 Public law 3-43 established NMC as a public, nonprofit corporation having the Board of Education as its governing board. In March of 1985 the passage of CNMI Public Law 4-34 made NMC a public corporation under the general governance of its own Board of Regents, and granted it autonomy in both fiscal and personnel matters. This law stipulated the mission of the college and designated NMC to serve as the land-grant college for the Commonwealth.

In November of 1985 the Second Constitutional Convention in the CNMI adopted a series of proposed amendments to the CNMI Constitution. Among them was Amendment 38 concerning education in the Commonwealth. Article 15, Section 2 of that proposed amendment provided for the establishment of Northern Marianas College, and stipulated that the College's Board of Regents should have autonomy in conducting its affairs. This amendment restated the mission of the college and guaranteed annual funding. Amendment 38, among others, was adopted by the people of the Commonwealth in a special election held in January of 1986.

In June 1985 the college received its initial accreditation from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The accreditation was reaffirmed in 1990, 1996, 2001, and 2009. In March 2001, the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges & Universities of WASC granted NMC initial accreditation for offering a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. This marked the first time in history of WASC that a two-year community college offered a four-year degree.

Since its beginning, NMC has focused on meeting the higher education and vocational training needs of the CNMI. From the times of its first program in teacher education, NMC has developed a comprehensive set of academic programs and services to meet the social, cultural, occupational and economic development needs of its island communities. Today, students are enrolled in various educational programs of study leading to Certificates of Completion, Associate Degrees, and Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. In addition, there are hundreds of students enrolled in credit and non-credit, continuing adult education courses.

Throughout the years, more than 20,000 people have enrolled in regular NMC degree and certificate courses, over 3000 persons have been awarded certificates and/or degrees in programs offered or coordinated by NMC; and more than 12,000 individuals have been served in our community through such programs as the Adult Basic Education, Continuing Education, and the Cooperative, Research, Extensions, and Education Service.

And also through the years, the institution has been engaged in significant strategic planning efforts. The most recent long-term strategic plan, "PROA Strategic Plan 2008-2012", which identified four strategic goals, established a number of priority initiatives that extended beyond 2012 and continued until the adoption of this new Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

# Development of the Plan

## *An Overview of the Strategic Planning Process*

*“Northern Marianas College, as a result of our recent accreditation reaffirmation, is now in a better position to become the institution which the CNMI needs and expects as the engine for economic growth and development. The future of the CNMI is partly in our hands. Trusting us with this responsibility is predicated on our success to deliver on our five strategic imperatives. Working together as a team at NMC, I know we can deliver!”*

**Dr. Sharon Y. Hart, President  
Northern Marianas College**

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

## Development of the Plan

*An Overview of the Strategic Planning Process*

The *Northern Marianas College Five Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020—Full Speed Ahead* provides the overall direction for prioritizing future key initiatives, which will ultimately link to the allocation of resources. This Plan will assist NMC in focusing its efforts to cost-effectively provide the best services and learning opportunities for students across the Northern Mariana Islands of Rota, Saipan, and Tinian.

## Initiation and Agreement on the Five-Year Strategic Planning Process

Setting the direction was the starting point for the Strategic Planning Task Force, in conjunction with the president. In early 2012 an initial agreement on how the strategic planning process would develop was created. It was decided the best option would be to seek a national expert to assist the institution with data gathering, community input, and suggestions for strategic priorities. The development of the final plan would best be developed by an internal group of decision-makers—the Management Team—who would synthesize the information gathered by the consultant into the final version, which would then be disseminated to all employees and governance bodies for input.

Funding for this project was provided through a grant received from the U.S. Department of Interior – Office of Insular Affairs.

## Assessing the External and Internal Environments

An effective long-term strategic plan must include an assessment of the environment and input to the College. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the College? What are the opportunities and threats it may encounter in the (near) future? Often an external environmental scan will include many elements that are beyond the College's ability to control or change (e.g. pending departure of CNMI contract workers). Yet, these elements must be reviewed in the context of their impact on the institution.

Beginning in the fall of 2012, a broadly based and representative group of private sector and community leaders, elected officials, the NMC Board of Regents, NMC president, and selected members of the NMC Management Team gathered in a strategic planning



# DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

roundtable. The roundtable was organized to gather input from stakeholders who would help to outline the future direction of the institution. It was facilitated by Dennis Jones, president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). This organization has received widespread acclaim for developing practical responses to the strategic issues facing public and private leaders, including higher education institutions across the nation such states as Hawaii, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. An Environmental Scan was provided to the roundtable participants as a starting point for group discussion. Stakeholders were specifically asked the following questions:

- What important factors were missed in the Environmental Scan?
- What are the important takeaways?
- What are the implications for
  - NMC?
  - The government?
  - The private sector?

At the end of the roundtable, next steps were identified for these three constituent groups—NMC, government, and the private sector. Thus, NMC was provided a significant number of suggestions to prioritize within its strategic planning efforts.

Additionally, Mr. Jones held a daylong strategic planning retreat with all NMC employees to share the results of the roundtable, gather additional input from internal stakeholders, and then to provide the institution with a set of strategic priorities, which would be further reviewed in the development of the NMC 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

In mid-October, Mr. Jones provided NMC with a final report, outlining his observations and suggestions.

## Development of NMC's Mission, Vision and Values

From the observations and suggestions provided by Mr. Jones, the College was next challenged to develop both mission and vision statements. A solid mission statement clarifies the purpose of the College, how it operates, and who it serves, while a vision statement addresses the direction the institution wants to go. Values are those drivers that guide how the employees of the College will work and operate together.

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

From the information collected, a series of mini-retreats were held which culminated in the development of a new mission and vision statement.

## Mission Statement

**Northern Marianas College, through its commitment to student learning, provides high quality, affordable and accessible educational programs and services for the individual and people of the Commonwealth.**

*Adopted by the Board of Regents, September 26, 2013*

## Vision Statement

**Northern Marianas College will serve as the engine to drive the economic growth and the social and cultural vitality of the Commonwealth.**

*Adopted by the Board of Regents, September 26, 2013*

## Development of Strategic Initiatives to Address the Strategic Issues

After the Board of Regents approved the new mission and vision statements, the College's Management Team began to assemble all information from stakeholders in order to develop the *Northern Marianas College Five Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020 –Full Speed Ahead*. It began by using an alignment approach, which took the critical issues identified by Dennis Jones and determined the significance of each of these in order to develop the final strategic initiatives. Basically it is similar to a car. All four wheels must be in perfect alignment in order to properly function. Thus, the strategic initiatives must all work together and be properly aligned in order for the College to be in complete balance.

Questions had to be asked. Are these new strategic initiatives the most relevant ones for the College? Are these addressing the right needs of the College's stakeholders and the CNMI community? How are these matched up against key national priorities for higher education? Does the institution have the required resources available in order to implement these?

After months of deliberation and review at the Management Team level, added review and input by internal stakeholders and members of the College Council, the *Northern Marianas College Five Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020 –Full Speed Ahead* was submitted to the President for

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

final review and input. It was then provided to the Board of Regents for review, discussion and consideration for formal adoption.

## Implementation

After Board of Regents' approval of the *Northern Marianas College Five Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020—Full Speed Ahead* is secured, it then becomes the responsibility of the president to implement. As such, the president will work to develop an effective implementation process for the actions that the College will be taking over the next five years. All required actions will be identified and outlined within an Annual Operational Plan. This yearly plan will include expected outcomes, specific action steps, timelines, means of assessment, success criteria, resources needed, and the persons responsible. Additionally, it will be submitted to the Board of Regents no later than September of each year for its review and approval.

The strategic plan must always be kept up to date and a monitoring system by the Board of Regents will be established at an early stage to ensure that the plan is implemented according to its stipulated strategy, vision, mission, and values.

## Evaluation

An evaluation of the Annual Operational Plan will be conducted at the end of each fiscal year. At the same time, as the Board will be monitoring the progress of this Plan as part of its key role and responsibility, it will in fact be fully aware of the progress and/or of any obstacles the College is encountering.

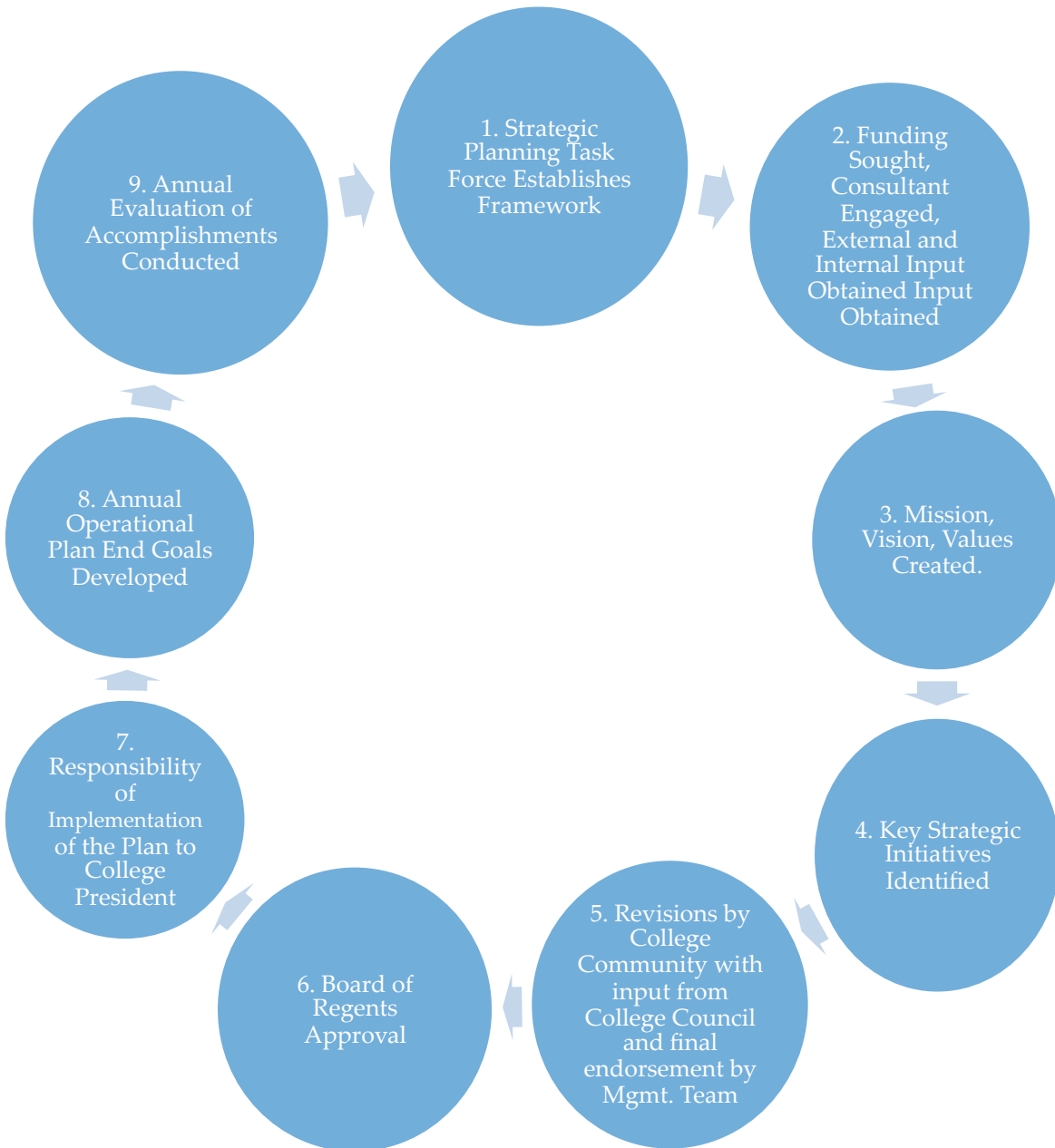
The evaluation process is meant to strengthen and reinforce the strategic plan. The need for a reassessment of the plan, and a decision as to whether it should be modified or not, can in fact happen. The Board can choose, in consultation with the president, to modify the plan should new factors arise--either inside or outside of the institution. For example, a change to the plan can occur if the leadership of the college changes, new national reforms or legislation are pending, needs have changed, or the internal or external environment (stakeholders) provide new and important relevant input.



# THE FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLACE REVIEW PROCESS

## The Five-Year Strategic Place Review Process

*The entire strategic planning process, from start to finish, is outlined below.*



# *Recognizing* Complete College America *as the Game Changer*

*As the one and only publicly funded higher education institution in the CNMI, is Northern Marianas College working with local government and other leaders to implement the best reforms to produce more college graduates?*

*"I am pleased the College is developing innovative solutions to address the most pressing and key challenges facing higher education today--both at the national and local levels. When it comes to college completion, the CNMI can't afford to wait any longer. The challenge to dramatically increase the number of completion rates in our degrees and certifications is a national imperative. Therefore, NMC must tighten its focus and add more clarity to help ensure the success of all students who enter the doors of this College."*

**Frank M. Rabauliman**  
Chairperson, NMC Board of Regents

## Complete College America

### 33 States, 1 Mission

**With a dynamic alliance, our country is poised to significantly boost college completion and close attainment gaps.**

Four years ago, Complete College America reached out to governors throughout the country and asked them to join our Alliance of States — a network that would make challenging commitments to substantially boost college completion and increase student success. Seventeen governors immediately accepted this call to action, and since that time, the Complete College America Alliance of States has doubled in size.

Over the course of our work, we have conducted detailed research, compiled and evaluated extensive volumes of data, and sought out best practices from around the nation. Overall, public awareness has expanded dramatically around the straightforward and staggering fact that America faces a college completion crisis.

In our groundbreaking reports *Time is the Enemy* and *Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere*, we have outlined some of the most pressing challenges facing today's students and pointed to the structural deficiencies that perpetuate abysmal graduation rates and persistent attainment gaps. Our joint statement on the principles for transforming remediation with the Charles A. Dana Center, Education Commission of the States, and Jobs for the Future has inspired transformative state policy and legislation at scale, making clear that these are solvable problems.

Taken together, this important work has shed light on the consequences of inaction and spurred movement from many states and higher education leaders who are getting serious about college completion. But to maintain our economic recovery and ensure the future financial strength of our states and country, we must tighten our focus and add more clarity to our advocacy, pushing harder to quicken the pace and broaden the scale of reform.

Admittedly, our mission is difficult — requiring an analysis of every facet of higher education structure and delivery. More important, success demands the sober recognition that, at the most basic level, what we are intending to accomplish is a reinvention of centuries-old institutions that now must change to help ensure the success of students who have rarely succeeded in the past.

While immense challenges lie before us, proven strategies that lead to real and lasting results are available — methods that not only create the conditions for success but also provide a pathway for how we get there. When it comes to college completion, our nation can't afford to wait any longer. Now is the time for Game Changers.

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# COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

## Complete College America

### Governors Who Get It

The progress we have made thus far, as well as our future success, is possible because of the dynamic and growing Alliance of States, the governors who get it, the higher education leaders who recognize the urgency of this work, and the impatient reformers who know this is about the future of this country.

- Governor Mike Beebe (Arkansas)
- Governor John Hickenlooper (Colorado)
- Governor Dan Malloy (Connecticut)
- Governor Rick Scott (Florida)
- Governor Nathan Deal (Georgia)
- Governor Neil Abercrombie (Hawaii)
- Governor Butch Otter (Idaho)
- Governor Pat Quinn (Illinois)
- Governor Mike Pence (Indiana)
- Governor Steve Beshear (Kentucky)
- Governor Bobby Jindal (Louisiana)
- Governor Paul LePage (Maine)
- Governor Martin O'Malley (Maryland)
- Governor Deval Patrick (Massachusetts)
- Governor Mark Dayton (Minnesota)
- Governor Phil Bryant (Mississippi)
- Governor Jay Nixon (Missouri)
- Governor Steve Bullock (Montana)
- Governor Brian Sandoval (Nevada)
- Governor Susana Martinez (New Mexico)
- Governor John Kasich (Ohio)
- Governor Mary Fallin (Oklahoma)
- Governor John Kitzhaber (Oregon)
- Governor Tom Corbett (Pennsylvania)
- Governor Lincoln Chafee (Rhode Island)
- Governor Dennis Daugaard (South Dakota)
- Governor Bill Haslam (Tennessee)
- Governor Rick Perry (Texas)
- Governor Gary Herbert (Utah)
- Governor Peter Shumlin (Vermont)
- Governor Earl Ray Tomblin (West Virginia)
- Governor Scott Walker (Wisconsin)
- Governor Matt Mead (Wyoming)

# THE GAME CHANGERS

## The Game Changers

### Performance Funding

Pay for performance, not just enrollment. Use the Complete College America and National Governors Association metrics to tie state funding to student progression through programs and completion of degrees and certificates. Include financial incentives to encourage the success of low-income students and the production of graduates in high-demand fields.

### Corequisite Remediation

Default many more unprepared students into college-level gateway courses with mandatory, just-in-time instructional support. Combine reading and writing instruction. Align mathematics to programs of study, matching the curriculum to real-world career needs. For many more unprepared students, provide remedial help parallel to highly structured coursework.

### Full-Time is 15

Incentivize students to attend full-time and ensure that full-time means 15 credits per semester. Use banded tuition so 15 credits per semester cost students no more than 12 credits. Cap degree credit requirements (120 for bachelor's and 60 for associate) to ensure degrees can be completed on time. Ensure college credits can be transferred.

### Structured Schedules

Help working students balance jobs and school by using structured scheduling of classes to add predictability to their busy lives — doing so enables many more students to attend college full-time, shortening their time to completion.

### Guided Pathways to Success

Enabled by technology, default all students into highly structured degree plans, not individual courses. Start students in a limited number of “meta majors,” which narrow into majors. Map out every semester of study for the entire program, and guarantee that milestone courses will be available when needed. Use built-in early warning systems to alert advisers when students fall behind to ensure efficient intervention.

# Accepting the College Completion Challenge

## *A Call to Action*

In recognition of the central role that Northern Marianas College has in meeting the educational and training needs in our community and, more broadly, in contributing to an educated U.S. citizenry and a competitive workforce, we pledge to do our part to increase in the number of Americans with high quality postsecondary degrees and certifications to fulfill critical local, state, and national goals. With the “completion agenda” as a national imperative, Northern Marianas College has an obligation to meet the challenge while holding firmly to traditional values of access, opportunity, and quality.

- We believe the student success and completion agenda is the future of Northern Marianas College.
- We believe that completion matters and that every student counts.
- We believe in every student’s potential and responsibility to succeed—and that an engaged student is more likely to persist in college.
- We believe the “open door” must not be a “revolving door,” and that Northern Marianas College must take responsibility for student success.
- We believe that community colleges are the gate ways to the middle class and beyond for millions of Americans.
- We believe that community colleges are an invaluable economic engine driving the nation toward renewed and sustained economic prosperity.
- We believe that talented and committed people working “heart and soul” at Northern Marianas College are ready to take on leadership roles to increase student success and college completion.
- We believe to change an institutional culture, from emphasis on access only to emphasis on access and success.
- We commit to courageous conversations about diversity, equity, and evidence reflecting student success and institutional performance.
- We commit, while increasing success rates for all students, to eliminating the attainment gaps that separate student groups on the basis of race, ethnicity and family income.
- We commit to acting on facts to make positive changes in the interest of student success and college completion.
- We commit to promoting faculty and staff development focused on evidence based educational practice.
- We commit to providing development opportunities, for college administrators, trustees, faculty, staff, and students to build and sustain leadership for student success.
- We ask every regent, administrator, faculty member, counselor, advisor, financial aid officer, staff member, and student organization to examine current practices, to identify ways to help students understand the added value of degrees and certifications, and to help them progress toward their goals.
- We ask every student to help one other student succeed.
- We ask community members to support and work with us to help more students succeed.
- We ask elected officials to create the policy conditions that enable, support, and reward our work to strengthen student success.
- We ask other community colleges to join us by signing and sharing this commitment and call to action.



President, Northern Marianas College



Chair, Board of Regents, Northern Marianas College

February 21, 2014

Date





# ESTABLISHING BENCHMARKS FOR TARGETS AND SUCCESS

## Establishing Benchmarks For Targets and Success

The following measures will outline a culture of student and institutional success at NMC. How will the College know that it has been successful as it undertakes the work necessary to complete the *Northern Marianas College Five Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020 – Full Speed Ahead*. Because establishing benchmarks and target goals—and appropriately comparing the College’s performance against national or regional standards—will help the institution to gauge overall success.

1. Student Access – Total Enrollment and by Student Type
  - Percentage of PSS graduates entering NMC (FY11-FY20)
  - Percentage of PSS graduates requiring remediation (FY11-FY20)
  - Percentage of Student Population over 25 (FY11-FY20)
  - Percentage of International Students (FY11-FY20)
  - Enrollment by Total Credit Unduplicated Headcount (FY11 – FY20)
  - Enrollment by ABE (FY11-FY20)
  - Enrollment by CREES (FY11-FY20)
  - Enrollment by Community Development Institute (FY11-FY20)
2. Percent of Transfer Degree Completers who transfer to a four-year institution within two years of completing an AA, AS, AAS. (FY11-FY20)
3. Percent of Entering Remedial Students (FY11-FY20)
4. Percent of Remedial Students who Complete a Degree (FY11-FY20)
5. Number of ABE and ELI students who advance to College-level courses (FY11-FY20)
6. Link NMC credit programs to CNMI industry needs
7. Link NMC non-credit programs to CNMI industry needs
8. Completion Within Two / Three / Four Years of Associate Degree Programs (FY11-FY20)
9. Completion Within Four / Six / Eight Years for Bachelor’s Programs (FY11-FY20)
10. Credit Retention From Fall to Fall Semesters (FY11-FY20)
11. Percent who Transfer (FY11-FY20)
12. Full time student success rates vs. part-time success rates (FY11-FY20)
13. Number of dual credit (FY11-FY20)
14. Increase articulation agreements with two and four-year institutions (FY11-FY20)
15. Number of Internships/Work Experiences (FY11-FY20)
16. Percentage of Job Placement by Program (FY11-FY20)
17. Earnings of Graduates by Program (FY11-FY20)
18. Net Instructional Cost per FTE (FY11-FY20)
19. Percent of unrestricted fund balance to total expenses (FY11-FY20)
20. Increase the amount of money awarded through grants and revenue generating programs (FY11-FY20)
21. Increase retention of all employees by type: faculty, staff, administration (FY11-FY20)
22. Increase educational attainment level of CNMI residents
23. Cost per Completion of Two-Year Programs
24. Cost per Completion of Four-Year Programs

*Imperative One*  
Increase Relevance to CNMI  
Workforce and Community Needs

*"Our vision is for the CNMI to become a globally recognized workforce that is well educated, trained, and skilled with the character and work ethics needed to foster and sustain a demand driven and robust economy. An educated citizenry and work-ready community is essential to the CNMI's long-term economic strength that will bring increased revenues from business growth/expansion for the generation of more employment opportunities with comparable wages based on education and training."*

**Edith Deleon Guerrero**  
CNMI Secretary of Labor

# IMPERATIVE ONE

## *Imperative One*

### **Increase Relevance to CNMI Workforce and Community Needs**

In order to ensure the relevance of its programs and courses, Northern Marianas College will assure the alignment of its offerings in these specific areas:

- a. Strengthen the link of the Public School Systems' (PSS) curriculum to Northern Marianas Colleges' curriculum.
  - Work with Public School System to align the English and Math curricula and utilize assessment tools so students can easily transition to NMC while reducing the need for developmental courses.
  - Provide alignment of PSS's career programs to offerings within NMC.
  - Initiate dual-enrollment opportunities and expand other early admission initiatives for high school students.
  - Ensure NMC is preparing teachers competent in international standards or the Common Core State K-12 Standards to ensure student achievement.
- b. Ensure the relevance of developmental curriculum to a student's chosen academic program of study.
- c. Ensure the relevance of NMC's remediation program curricula to the College's credit curriculum.
  - Improve the rigor of remedial program offerings to align with college level offerings.
- d. Ensure program offerings match the employment needs of the CNMI.
  - Build local workforce capacity to include preparing for the loss of working non-US citizens.
  - Expand a broad array of post-secondary programs and services to address CNMI workforce needs.
  - Utilize research-based strategies to assist in the development of sustainable CNMI industries.
  - Align program curricula with the needs of CNMI employers in key industries leading to economic growth and economic value to graduates.
  - Integrate entrepreneurship, work ethic, and life skills across all curriculums.
  - Create stronger relationships with local employers to improve curriculum, engage students in internships or related work experiences, and enhance job placement upon graduation.
- e. Ensure that NMC's courses designed for transfer are closely aligned with WICHE and other regional institutions.
  - Strengthen existing articulation agreements and partner to secure more agreements with specific WICHE institutions that support a high CNMI enrollment possibility.
  - Ensure students transfer in a manner that maximizes their credit enrollments and minimize their financial investment.

*Imperative Two*  
Ensure Continued Accreditation

*"I would like to once more recognize Northern Marianas College on its efforts to maintain accreditation. This is important as only students attending accredited colleges and universities are eligible for Title IV funding. In addition, it is a key factor in helping students to transfer to other two or four-year institutions. As governor, I will continue to support NMC and to ensure its "sustainability" for the residents of the CNMI."*

**Hon. Eloy S. Inos**  
Governor, CNMI



# IMPERATIVE TWO

## *Imperative Two* **Ensure Continued Accreditation**

The College will commit to ensuring continued institutional accreditation and explore, where appropriate, program accreditation. To do this effectively, it will embrace the culture of accreditation using the standards and criteria for review and demonstrate effective performance by focusing efforts to follow accreditation standards.

- A. Define clear institutional purposes and ensure educational objectives.
- B. Achieve educational objectives through core functions.
- C. Develop and apply resources and organizational structures to ensure quality and sustainability.
- D. Create an organization committed to quality, assurance, institutional learning and improvement.
- E. Maintain ongoing institutional accreditation practices that include program level accreditation.

*Imperative Three*  
**Accelerate Time to Completion**

*"It is great that Northern Marianas College is committed to making the necessary changes to enable more graduates to get out of college sooner and to enter the labor market or to successfully transfer on to other four-year colleges or universities. We need these graduates to sustain or to help grow our many businesses."*

**Jerry Tan**  
**CEO, Tan Holdings Corporation**

# IMPERATIVE THREE

## *Imperative Three* **Accelerate Time to Completion**

The College understands that time can be an enemy to students. To ensure students complete on time and do not fall through the cracks, the institution will target time in the following key strategic areas:

- A. Reduce the time between a student's entry into Northern Marianas College and his or her enrollment in a program of study.
  - Improve advising support to get students on a planned pathway of success.
- B. Reduce time-to-degree and increase the number of students completing a two-year or a four-year degree on time.
  - Explore strategic scheduling and other pathways to reduce drop/stop-outs.
  - Align credits required to graduate with national standards.
  - Implement a guided pathway that guarantees courses.
  - Establish 15 credits as full time.
- C. Reduce time and accelerate success for a student to complete remediation for transition into college credit.
  - Ensure a complete set of gateway courses for a program of study.
  - Ensure the content of required gateway courses align with a student's academic program of study.
  - Ensure enrollment in a gateway college-level courses is the default placement for many more students.
  - Provide additional academic and student support.
  - Initiate co-requisites (enrolling students in remedial and college-level courses simultaneously).
  - Provide accelerated routes into programs of study.
  - Provide multiple measures to provide guidance in the placement of students.
  - Ensure all remedial students enter a program of study in their first year at NMC.

*Imperative Four*  
**Improve Student Success  
and Support**

*"Hats off to Northern Marianas College for focusing on student access and support services. These strategies will help to produce positive outcomes for all students who choose to enroll at the College. NMC is definitely developing a system that will support students who must often balance work and family with their coursework. I am glad I chose to study at NMC and for those students enrolling over the next five years, remember that our College is constantly committed to your overall success."*

**Chenglong "Alex" Shen**  
*President, Associated Students of NMC*



# IMPERATIVE FOUR

## *Imperative Four* **Improve Student Success and Support**

To ensure more students are successfully entering and completing their education at NMC, the College will focus on improving student access and in providing the necessary student support services. This will require a student-focused and data-driven environment within the institution. To do this effectively, the College will:

- A. Implement strategies to enhance recruitment and retention rates
  - Expand first year experience and other retention activities like the Learning in Communities (LinC) program to ensure strengthened student retention
  - Develop and expand programs and services that are geared toward adult learners, including veterans and other military personnel
  - Launch a sustainable prior learning assessment program that recognizes knowledge and competency acquired through informal lifelong learning
- B. Work with local government leaders to establish educational attainment and completion goals on those jobs requiring post-secondary education to more closely align with federal benchmarks.
- C. Provide data in a format that will improve and lead the institution to student success.
  - Expand access to important data for all faculty and front-line staff.
  - Identify students at academic risk early to provide effective interventions.
  - Create reports around key performance indicators.
- D. Understand students by obtaining more information about them and their educational goals.
- E. Provide innovative and high quality support services that enable students to successfully navigate their pathway to achieving their educational goals.

*Imperative Five*  
**Strengthen Operations and  
Resource Development**

*“NMC cannot be that ‘engine of economic growth’ for the CNMI if its engine is not fully charged with the resources required for it to steam ahead! For NMC to fully implement a plan that will strengthen the overall economic vitality of the CNMI will require an infusion of resources. This needs to come from the private sector, the government, the NMC Foundation, and other key entities.”*

*Dr. Alan Markoff,  
Owner, Toothworks Dental Clinic, NMC Foundation*

# IMPERATIVE FIVE

## *Imperative Five* **Strengthen Operations and Resource Development**

All strategies described throughout this Plan require a strong level of operations along with adequate human, financial, and technical resources. Without these elements, NMC will not be equipped to focus on performance goals and key strategies. Thus, to ensure effective and efficient operations, the College must achieve the following through a culture fostering organizational entrepreneurship.

- A. Implement NMC's facility master plan to support the student learning environment.
- B. Enhance NMC's institutional image.
  - Execute an integrated marketing plan to position NMC as a world-class institution.
- C. Sustain a skilled and productive workforce by improving human resource practices.
  - Ensure continued professional development and efficient succession planning.
  - Ensure salaries of ALL employees are competitive and benchmarked to at least 85% of the average of peer institutions.
- D. Maximize funding opportunities through appropriations, grants, NMC Foundation, and other sources to align with institutional priorities.
- E. Improve information data systems and other technology resources to support student learning.
  - Increase capacity of internet services.
  - Improve inter-island communications through appropriate technologies.
  - Implement online registration
- F. Enhance financial monitoring and institutional accountability.



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