

October 12, 2018

Charlotte Cepeda  
Director, School of Education and Accreditation Liaison Officer  
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Dear Charlotte,

The WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) has completed its Mid-Cycle Review of Northern Marianas College (NMC). The purpose of the Mid-Cycle Review is to "identify problems with an institution's ...continued compliance with agency standards" while "taking into account institutional ... strengths and stability" (Code of Federal Regulations, §602.19(b)).

Areas examined. The Mid-Cycle Review focuses on factors related to the WSCUC Standards and includes student achievement, enrollment changes, financial indicators, and institutional information. Data are gathered from your institution's annual report and from public sources. Below are the factors examined, the relevant CFR, source of the data, and the reference point for making comparisons.

Factor	CFR	Source of Data	Data Point
4 year graduation rate	1.2	College Navigator	Regional average: 39%
6 year graduation rate	1.2	College Navigator	Regional average: 59% Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions: minimum 25%
6 year graduation rate disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender	2.10	College Navigator	No specified data point
Enrollment changes	3.4	WSCUC Annual Report	WSCUC practice: 20% increase or decrease
Pell grant recipients	1.4	College Navigator	Regional average: 39%
Median graduate borrower debt	1.6	College Navigator	Regional average: \$21,522
Student default rate	1.6, 3.4	College Navigator	California Student Aid Commission: less than 15.5%
Composite score	3.4	Federal Student Aid	US Department of Education: minimum 1.5
Student/faculty ratio	2.1, 3.1	College Navigator	No specified data point
Faculty/degree ratio	2.1, 3.1	Calculated from College Navigator	WSCUC practice: minimum 1

A review is also conducted of the institution website's student achievement link, submitted in the annual report, to determine whether:

- student achievement data are easy to find
- data include:
  - retention rates, aggregated and disaggregated and for multiple years
  - graduation rates, aggregated and disaggregated and for multiple years
  - brief and focused evidence of student learning (i.e., typically learning outcomes assessment results)
- data and evidence are displayed in a user-friendly way

A review is made of the institution’s updated Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) to determine:

- whether learning outcomes have been developed (for programs and general education)
- where outcomes are published, what evidence is used to assess outcomes, who interprets results and what the process is, and how findings are used
- when was/is the date of each program’s Program Review

Results. Below are the findings from [institution]’s review, beginning with a summary of the basic data points:

<b>Data Point</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>CFR</b>	<b>Region Mean Or Data Point</b>	<b>Institution Value</b>
4-year graduation rate (2013 cohort)	College Navigator	1.2	39%	3%
6-year graduation rate (2011 cohort)	College Navigator	1.2	59%	15%
Enrollment changes	WSCUC Annual Report	3.4	No more than 20% increase or decrease	-3.4%; -12.59%; 9.73%
Percent of students receiving Pell Grants	College Navigator	1.4	39%	75%
Median graduate borrower debt	College Scorecard	1.6	\$21,522	N/A
Cohort default rate	College Navigator	1.6; 3.4	Less than 15.5%	N/A
Composite score	Federal Student Aid	3.4	Minimum of 1.5	N/A

WSCUC staff notes the following for NMC:

NMC is commended for its efforts to make student achievement data public. To make this assessment, staff reviewed the URL provided to WSCUC during annual reporting. The data are readily easy to find on the NMC website and displayed in a user-friendly way; NMC clearly articulates expected outcomes and standards of performance for program outcomes. Retention and graduation data reflect multiple years of results.

NMC’s IEEI substantiates an effective leveraging of professional accreditation to evidence program review for several degree programs. The IEEI indicated that the institution’s ILOs and General Education program were reviewed in spring 2018 and spring 2017, respectively. It will be important to share results from these reviews in the institution’s report for the upcoming comprehensive review. In fact, all 19 degree programs were scheduled for review during 2017-2018; the institutional report for the comprehensive review should share significant findings from these reviews and how results were used to make improvements.

NMC's graduation rates are very low and, notwithstanding student context, need to be engaged with a significant sense of urgency. This will likely be a focus of the comprehensive review team. It will be helpful to include in your institutional report retention and graduation data for comparable institutions (the comparative data available for this review reflects 4 year undergraduate institutions and not junior and community colleges).

Next Steps. Albeit not an explicit focus of this review, staff will encourage the comprehensive review team to investigate the recent and abrupt change in NMC leadership. We updated the accreditation history to reflect this conclusion from the MCR and notified the Commission.

If you have feedback for us regarding your experience of the Mid-Cycle Review process, please share that feedback with me. As always, please contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

*Maureen A. Maloney*

Vice President

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