

OFFSITE REVIEW (OSR) SUMMARY OF LINES OF INQUIRY GUIDE

Directions: This form is to be completed by the team at the conclusion of its daylong Offsite Review of the institutional report and supporting materials. The form will be sent to the institution within one week by the WSCUC liaison, and a response to section IV will be sent back from the institution eight weeks in advance of the Accreditation Visit. This form can be in a bulleted list, outline or narrative format. Please do not delete this first page, i.e., this cover page. Instead complete information as requested and submit it with the Lines of Inquiry.

OFFSITE REVIEW (OSR)

Institution under Review: Northern Marianas College

Date of Offsite Review: March 12, 2020

Team Chair: Lui Hokoana

The Offsite Review team recommends the following actions be taken:

Proceed with the Accreditation Visit scheduled in: September 29, 2020 - October 2, 2020

Reschedule the Accreditation Visit to: _____

The reason(s) the Team recommends rescheduling the visit is/are:

Due date for institutional response to Section IV (specify exact date):

August 4, 2020

Outline

- I. Overview of the lines of inquiry. Please include the following language in this section:

This document identifies **8** lines of inquiry for the Accreditation Visit (AV) that are derived from the institution's report. In addition, this document includes questions or issues the team discussed during the Offsite Review (OSR) that may be pursued during the visit. The team does not expect or invite a written response to these questions before the Accreditation Visit. The only written materials that the team expects from the institution before the visit are those listed in Section IV: "The team requests that the institution supply the following additional documents and information before the Accreditation Visit."

- II. Commendations. The team commends the institution for the following accomplishments and practices:

1. Providing a very helpful and insightful contextual narrative about the institution and its self-study report detailing how it continues to persevere through the "storms" of geopolitical uncertainty, socioeconomic disruptions, and climate change and the impact these storms have had on the college and on the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI or Commonwealth).
2. Demonstrating institutional resiliency through a culture of communal help and solidarity as evidenced by recovery efforts from storms and by student success efforts.
3. Recognizing the importance of addressing the needs of its students and of the workforce development needs of the CNMI.
4. Having educational effectiveness indicators at the academic program level. The college continuously cultivates a program review and assessment culture on campus.
5. Managing limited financial resources as shown by its lack of debt, stable financial reserves, and combined with recent \$21.9 million grant award for construction of new upgraded facilities, which offers flexibility for growth and recovery.
6. Conducting rigorous capstone assessments of some programs and faculty reviewing and discussing learning outcomes throughout the semester to improve teaching.
7. Securing external partnerships and grants like the success of Project PROA and AHEC.
8. Pursuing programs in place to support students and care about students reflected in defining student success as "connection and contribution".

- III. Lines of inquiry. The team has identified the following lines of inquiry for the Accreditation Visit:

1. Presidential Leadership:
There have been a number of key leadership positions that have turned over

and/or are vacant. What is the Board's thinking on how and when to select and retain a President?

2. Governance

i. Shared Governance

1. The Board of Regents and the Academic Council have undergone structural changes since the last visit. How do these two bodies function and interact with each other and with other bodies including the College Council, Budget and Finance Committee, NMC Foundation, and the CNMI?
2. What is the role of the Faculty Senate?

ii. Board of Regents

1. How does the Board of Regents know about and ensure the use of common higher education governance practices and incorporate those in the selection, orientation, and development of board members?

3. Strategic Planning: NMC's strategic plan expires in 2020 and its implementation has been impacted by the "storms" of geopolitical conflict, socioeconomic disruptions, and climate change.

- i. What were the lessons learned from the 2015-2020 strategic plan?
- ii. What are NMC's aspirations for the future involving
 1. Its peer institution(s);
 2. Its processes for seeking input into its strategic planning process;
 3. Its new strategic planning efforts including how strategic goals and initiatives will be formulated, prioritized, funded, timed, and measured for success?
- iii. How are planning efforts for technology, facilities, budget, and academic programs being linked to strategic planning?

4. Faculty and Staff:

How does NMC determine if it has sufficient, qualified, and diverse administrators, faculty and staff? In addition, what are the strategies deployed or under consideration to recruit and retain faculty and staff?

5. Financial Sustainability:

The team is interested in learning more about NMC's past, present, and projected financial position. What strategies are in place or are being put in place that address enrollment management inclusive of financial aid, fundraising, federal and Commonwealth support, revenue diversification, contingency planning, potential debt issuance, and long-term financial sustainability?

6. Physical and Technology Resources:

NMC's physical and technological resources were negatively impacted by "storms". What is the status of planning and rebuilding efforts to restore and enhance the college's physical and technology resources and measurements to be

used to gauge their success? Do these efforts help prepare the college to perform its core functions in spite of natural disasters?

7. Culture of Evidence and Data Supported Decision-Making:
 - i. Personnel – NMC has had an Interim Director of Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) Director since 2018. What is the status of hiring/appointing the OIE Director and team? What will be the roles and responsibilities of each member of the team?
 - ii. Capacity – What is the status of NMC’s efforts to establish a comprehensive system to collect and track data? How are the resources and personnel sufficient to meet these data needs?
 - iii. Use of data – How are data effectively being analyzed and reported for decision-making (broken down; disseminated at the institutional and programmatic levels)? In what ways is the use of evidence to improve outcomes consistent and coordinated?

8. Evidence for Student Success:
 - i. Student Outcomes: What are your plans for, and evidence of, improved graduation rates (for associates and bachelors) versus peer institutions as well as job placement rates in certain academic programs?
 - ii. Assessment of Learning: What are the roles of Academic Council and Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) in the assessment of student learning?
 - iii. What’s the status of the assessment of institutional learning outcomes (ILOs)?
 - iv. Program Review:
 1. What are the roles of Academic Council and PROAC in the program review process?
 2. How do you plan to address the self-described cumbersomeness of the process?
 3. What is the current status of Program Reviews?

9. COVID-19 Impact and Response:
 - i. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted NMC and the Commonwealth?
 - ii. How have NMC’s responses to the pandemic affected its operations and strategic plans for the future? And how will NMC better support its students and employees who are affected by the pandemic?

IV. Request for additional documents and information. The team requests that the institution supply the following additional documents and information before the Accreditation Visit:

The only written documents and information the team expects before the visit are listed in this section. The team does not expect or invite a written response to any of the questions posed or issues raised in other sections of this form.”

1. Bylaws or the appropriate authority granting document for the:
 - i. Board of Regents
 - ii. NMC Foundation
2. Recent (2020) meeting minutes from the Board of Regents and NMC Foundation.
3. Recent and at least three years of meeting minutes from the:
 - i. Committees of the Board of Regents
 - ii. College Council
 - iii. NMC Foundation
4. The 2019 audits:
 - i. NMC financial and federal programs
 - ii. NMC Foundation
5. Charge or appropriate authority granting document for the Budget and Finance Committee along with current and past meeting minutes.
6. The current NMC operating budget along with the most current three- or five-year budget projections.
7. The current catalog for NMC
8. Employment success data of NMC graduates
9. Updated enrollment and degree completion data by program for the last 5 years
10. Evidence of student grievance process and files to include disposition of complaints and the location of the files
11. NCLEX and PRAXIS results for the past 3 years including student pass rates

V. Individuals and groups to meet during the visit. The team requests that the following groups and individuals holding the specified positions be included on the schedule for the Accreditation Visit. In developing the schedule for the visit, the team may identify additional individuals or groups with whom they wish to speak.

1. Opening session to help educate the team about the current status of recovery efforts at NMC and in the CNMI.
2. Interim President and, separately, his direct reports (CREES Dean, VP for Student and Learning Success, VP of Administration and Advancement, and the Tinian and Rota Center Directors).
3. Direct reports (CFO, IT Director, CDI Director, Marketing & Communications Director, Facilities Director, and HR Director) of the Administration and Advancement Vice President.
4. Independent audit partner for NMC (could be teleconference).
5. Institutional Effectiveness Dean.

6. Members of the Academic Council, College Council, and Budget and Finance Committee.
7. Members of the Board of Regents.
8. Members of the NMC Foundation, unless there is sufficient overlap with the NMC Board of Regents.
9. Members of the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Associated Students, and Alumni Association.
10. Adjunct faculty if not represented on the Faculty Senate.
11. Admissions director and financial aid director.
12. The Registrar.
13. The OITE staff.
14. Student success and early intervention officer.
15. Committee or taskforce that manages the storm recovery efforts and creates the emergency plan.
16. Open forums with faculty (both tenured track and adjunct), students (undergraduate and graduate), and staff.

GUIDELINES

For Institutions

- a) The Lines of Inquiry form can serve as a planning tool for the institution as they prepare for the Accreditation Visit.
- b) The only written documents and information that the team expects in response to the Lines of Inquiry are listed in section IV. The team does not expect or invite a written response to any of the questions posed or issues raised in other sections of the form, even though institutions may be tempted to do so.
- c) The institutional response is due eight weeks before the start of the Accreditation Visit.
- d) Institutional responses are submitted through box.com. About ten to twelve weeks before the visit, the institution will be provided with a link to a folder on box.com. The institution's response to the Summary of Lines of Inquiry can be uploaded to the folder. Once the response has been uploaded, WSCUC staff will share the materials with team members.