NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
SHOW CAUSE REPORT

March 15, 2011

Northern Marianas College
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I. Statement of Preparation of Report

After receiving the January 31, 2008 Show Cause letter from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (the "Commission"), the Northern Marianas College submitted multiple reports that addressed the deficiencies noted in the letter. These reports included the March 15, 2008 Special Report, the May 13, 2008 Update to the March 15, 2008 Special Report, the October 15, 2008 Show Cause Report, the December 31, 2008 Supplemental Report, the April 1, 2009 Show Cause Report, and the May 29, 2009 Supplemental Report.

At its meeting June 9—11, 2009, the ACCJC reviewed the April 1, 2009 Show Cause Report, the report of the evaluation team that visited the NMC As Terlaje Campus Monday, April 20—Thursday, April 23, 2009, and reviewed information presented by college representatives. The Commission took action at the meeting to accept the report, remove Show Cause, and reaffirm accreditation. The Commission also acted to require a visit by Commission representatives following the submission of the October 15, 2009 Midterm Report.

At its January 2010 meeting, the Commission reviewed the Northern Marianas College Mid-Term Report of October 2009 and the report of the evaluation team that visited the college in October 2009. The commission took action to accept the mid-term report. Due to receipt of information from Northern Marianas College and from Saipan, the Commission also took action to require a Special Visit to determine whether the institution was still in compliance with the following Eligibility Requirements and Standards: ER 3 - Governing Board, ER 4 - Chief Executive Officer, ER 5 - Administrative Capacity, ER 21 - Relations with the Accrediting Commission, and Standards I.A, III.A and IV.A and B.

An evaluation team visit was conducted on April 13-14, 2010. Based on the findings and report of the Special Visit, at its June 2010 meeting, the Commission took action to issue an order of Show Cause against the College for being out of compliance with Eligibility Requirements 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, and 21 and significant parts of Standards I.A, I.B, II.A, II.B, III.A, III.D, and IV.B. The Commission required the College to submit a Show Cause Report by October 15, 2010, to be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

To prepare the October 15, 2010 Show Cause Report to the Commission, NMC's Management Team was expanded into an Accreditation Reaffirmation Action Plan (ARAP) team. The team proceeded to treat preparations for the October 15, 2010 Show Cause Report as a scaled-down Self-Study for the Commission and divided into Standard Teams aligned along the Commission Standards cited in the June 30, 2010 Action Letter. These Standard Teams worked with faculty, staff, and students and began meeting on a regular basis, while the ARAP Steering Team also met every week to discuss and review the work of the Standard Teams. That work culminated in NMC's submission of its October 15, 2010 Show Cause Report to the Commission.

The October 15, 2010 Show Cause report was followed by an evaluation team visit on October 20-22, 2010, by Dr. Douglas B. Houston, Team Chair, Superintendent/President of Lassen College; Dr. Louise Pagotto, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Kapi'olani College, Dr. Nancy Quam-Wickham, Professor and Chair of the History Department at California State University, Long Beach and Dr. Worku Negash, Vice President for Administrative Services at Mission College, Santa Clara.

NMC prepared and submitted a December 28, 2011 Supplemental Report to the Commission and requested an audience with the Commission at its January 11—13, 2011 meeting. At the meeting, the Commission received the supplemental report and heard comments from myself, as Interim President, and NMC Board Chair, Maria Paz Younis.

At the January 11—13 meeting, the Commission took action to continue the College on Show Cause and require that the College submit a Show Cause Report by March 15, 2011. In a January 31, 2011 letter, Commission President Dr. Barbara Beno informed the College of the Commission's action because the College is out of compliance with Eligibility Requirements 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, and 21 and significant parts of Standards I.A, I.B, II.B, III.A, III.D, and IV.B.

To prepare the March 15, 2011 Show Cause Report, the Accreditation Reaffirmation Action Plan team was reconvened as the Accreditation Reaffirmation Team (ART). Members of ART, in turn, reconvened the following standard teams to prepare their respective parts of this Report.

I.A: Mission
  Dr. Joe Peters, Director of School of Education (Team Leader)
  Dr. John Griffin, Chair, Business Department
  Dr. Dean Papadopoulos, English Instructor
  Matt Pastula, Director, Library Programs and Services

II.A: Instructional Programs
  Barbara Merfalen, Dean, Academic Programs and Services (Team Leader)
  Maria Aguon, Program Coordinator, NMC Tinian
  Dr. Alfredo De Torres, Chair, Natural Resource Management
  Velma Deleon Guerrero, Instructor, School of Education
  Marcelo Gonzalez, Instructor, English
  Hervin Jacinto, Instructor, Nursing
  Michele Joab, Career Services Manager
  Jim Kline, Chair, English
  Lisa Lunde, Instructor, Health and Athletics
  Velma Mafnas, Counselor/Instructor
  Teresa Sablan, Personnel Assistant
  Joyce Taro, Administrative Manager
  Rosa Tudela, Chair, Nursing
  Shelly Tudela, Instructor, Business

I.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness
  Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Director, Office of Institutional Effectiveness/Accreditation Liaison Officer (Team Leader)
  Dora Ada, Work Study, Office of Institutional Effectiveness
  Lisa Hacskaylo, Institutional Researcher
  Daisy Manglona-Propst, Director, Financial Aid
  Wil Maui, Instructor, Business Department
  Ray Muna, Program Coordinator, Office of Institutional Effectiveness
  Keane Palacios, Program Manager, Office of Institutional Effectiveness
  Marian Tudela, Director, Upward Bound Program

II.B: Student Support Services
  Leo Pangelinan, Dean of Student Services (Team Leader)
  Dr. Tim Baker, Director, Counseling Programs and Services
  Cindy Deleon Guerrero, Director, Admissions and Records
  Hedwig Hofschneider, Guidance Specialist, Upward Bound
  Michele Joab, Career Services Manager
  Daisy Manglona-Propst, Director, Financial Aid
  Randall Nelson, Data Administrator
  Matt Pastula, Director, Library Programs and Services
  Theresa Taylor, Guidance Specialist
  Antonio Tiples, President, ASNMC
  Marian Tudela, Director, Upward Bound

III.A: Human Resources

John Manalo, Human Resources Manager (Team Leader)
Eric Abragan, Acting Director, Information Technology
Bobbi Hunter, Personnel Specialist
Jack Kiyoshi, Personnel Specialist
Larry Lee, Instructor, Business
Marissa Seidler, Admissions Specialist

III.D: Financial Resources

Dawn Chrystal Revilla, Acting Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (Team Leader)
David Attao, Director, Community Programs and Services
Marie Coleman, Accountant
Ivy Ealy, Accountant
Roger Madriaga, Director, Special Projects
Martin Mendiola, Program Coordinator, NMC Rota
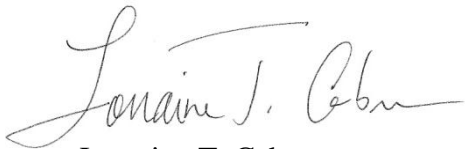Frank Sobolewski, Instructor, Social Sciences and Fine Arts

IV.B: Board and Administrative Organization

Frankie Eliptico, Director, Office of Institutional Advancement (Team Leader)
Johnny Aldan, Instructor, Nursing
Clarice Arriola, Administrative Manager
Lorraine T. Cabrera, Interim President
Maria Frances Calilong, Vice President, Associated Students of Northern Marianas College
John Cook, Archivist
Zenaida Javier, Outreach Counselor
Dan Kintol, Data Entry Clerk
Skep Palacios, Budget Analyst
Geri Willis, Director, Student Engagement/First Year Experience Learning Communities

The College hereby submits this March 15, 2011 Show Cause Report to demonstrate that the College fully complies with Eligibility Requirements 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, and 21, fully meets all of Standards I.A, I.B, II.A, III.A, III.D, and IV.B, fully meets Standard II.A.7.a and Standard II.B.3.f, and has resolved the specific deficiencies referenced in all the recommendations made by the April 2010 Special Visit Team.

We certify that the contents of this Report were prepared with considerable input and participation from the College community, including students, faculty, and staff members, as well as representatives of the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College, the Faculty Senate, and the Staff Senate.

We also certify that the College's Board of Regents unanimously adopted this Report at its Special Meeting on March 14, 2011.

Lorraine T. Cabrera

Lorraine T. Cabrera,
Interim President

II. Executive Summary

The proa, the ancient vessel of Micronesia, holds a deep and abiding power among the people of Saipan. It is the chosen symbol of Northern Marianas College. What must Magellan have wondered the first time he saw a boat with the hull that might look the same whether it were coming or going? It would take a subtle and discerning eye to know for sure the difference, especially in a storm. That the College has found itself in a storm is beyond question. Such reality is the reason for this report. And now Northern Marianas College must explain that it has found a path through the storm. It must also provide evidence that its explanation should be believed, that it should be allowed to continue its voyage.

The sanction of "Show Cause" indicates a breach of the trust that normally allows an institution to work with its accrediting body and leaves instead a troubled relationship. That same sanction also indicates that a breach of trust existed within the levels of the College itself. To begin to repair that trust, Northern Marianas College has had first to look in the mirror and see itself as clearly as is possible. For an institution, that studied introspection requires individuals to step back from their passions and perspectives and begin to think in terms of the whole. For an institution to rebuild trust within itself and outside itself requires countless iterative, confidence-building steps that occur over time. Such an effort requires cohesion and common purpose and civil discourse. Contrasting the difference between the reports of the Show Cause Visiting Team in April 2010 with that of October 2010 reveals that roughly six months' passage (the blink of an eye in institution years) had yielded a genuine change in atmosphere. The College is confident that the passage of another six months will show that same atmosphere sustained, but now with concrete evidence to show genuine progress as well.

The College is becoming a learning institution, one that is learning where it wishes to go and how to get there. Viewed from afar and with justifiable reserve, that progress might be hard to see. The College hopes those who read this report will do so with the subtle and discerning eye. There is a long way to go, but the evidence of real movement is palpable.

The College had been directed by the Commission to respond deficiencies in Eligibility Requirements, Standards for Accreditation, and Recommendations drawn from its review. Those responses are detailed in this report, but here are the highlights of the progress embodied in those responses.

Eligibility Requirements

The Commission had asked for evidence of compliance with its Eligibility Requirements 3, 4, 5, 17, 18 and 21. The College believes that much hard work and purpose have brought it into compliance with all of the above. Some markers of progress include the following.

ER 3—Governing Board

- The College has corrected the misimpression that the Governor of CNMI had exercised a line-item veto that resulted in specific positions being eliminated. All of the positions identified in the Governor's characterization of overall budget reductions were in fact filled through the College's normal governance and budget processes.

- In a time of serious economic downturn, the Board of Regents has taken concrete steps to serve as a buffer between and a bridge to the CNMI government. As a result, the College was again exempted from the work-hour reductions mandated for Commonwealth employees.
- The pace and effectiveness of Board development show dramatic increases, and the Board has, for the first time, put in place concrete policies and procedures to assess the performance of its members.

ER 4—Chief Executive Officer

- While the interim president continues to serve, the Board began a formal search for a permanent president and retained the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to complete an initial screening of applications. The Presidential Search Committee (PSC) was diverse and representative.
- While the process did not always run smoothly, the Board has exhibited the discipline to adhere to its path and is in the late stages of the process of selecting a new president, having interviewed the finalists put forward by the PSC.
- The Board has enacted policies to ensure that it does not infringe on the administrative responsibilities of a chief executive and acts appropriately in its dealings with the president.

ER 5—Administrative Capacity

- After a period of instability, the College can point to numerous key administrators who have been in their positions for more than a year, many of them also serving as team leaders in this reporting process. Those employees include two deans, five directors, and one department chair.

ER 17—Financial Resources

- By learning to adjust nimbly in a time of economic distress and uncertainty, the College has a five-year history of maintaining fairly stable revenues. It has managed to shield itself from the worst of the Commonwealth budget cuts, and is pursuing a more comprehensive campaign of educating the government about the centrality of the College to the CNMI economy.
- The College has managed to steadily increase enrollments, and thereby that source of revenue, despite its Show Cause status.
- The College has moved to identify greater efficiency in its operations, as well as to address the need for long-term financial planning.

ER 18—Financial Accountability

- Poor execution of the back end of the audit process—response and corrective action—has been a persistent concern of the Commission. The College has taken a more forthright and realistic approach to responding to audit findings and to developing corrective action plans when called for.

- The College has taken concrete steps to improve the communication of audit results and financial reports to the Board Finance Committee and to the full Board. The volume and character of these reports provide evidence of improvement in financial accountability

ER 21—Relations with the Accrediting Commission

- While the October Show Cause Visit Team reported the College to be in compliance with this requirement, they voiced concern about the breadth and depth of campus understanding of accreditation. In response, the College has undertaken a full menu of activities to create a culture of accreditation awareness. These activities are documented in this report and in the WASC evidence room. It may be that one of the strongest pieces of evidence in this regard is the broad and sustained participation of the campus community in the preparation of this report—in fact, an unprecedented level at NMC of long hours, meetings, and writing and revision. Fifty-three individuals and thirteen members of the Accreditation Reaffirmation Team worked on the report. These teams will continue meeting for at least the rest of the academic year. In that sense, the next visit team will find the institution markedly changed for the better.

Standard I.A: Mission

- To ensure alignment between the institution's mission and each program's Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose (ESIP), at its March 11, 2011 meeting, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) recently reviewed and approved updated ESIPs for all College programs.

Standard I.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness

- In the most recently completed cycle of program review, Cycle 3, participation in the process improved towards the end of the cycle. 35 out of 40 programs, or 85.5%, submitted complete program review (Form 2) documents. The figure also reveals the submission rates for annual program assessment (Form 1) in the current cycle are also improving. (Note that Form 2 submission rates for the current cycle are not available as Form 2s are due at the end of the cycle, in June.)

Standard II.A: Instructional Programs

- In the fall of 2010, the Academic Council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule. Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23-24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have also begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

Standard II.B: Student Support Services

- As result of ongoing recruitment efforts, NMC experienced a substantial enrollment increase for the fall 2010, a continuing trend. Students have been voting with their feet (and tuition) regarding their confidence in the College.

Standard III.A

- The College can finally point to progress in revising its human resources policies. The revisions are completed and were approved by the Board of Regents at its Special Meeting on March 11, 2011.

Standard III.D

- With the exception of FY 2007, the College has managed to balance its revenue sources over the last five years in a way that sustains its programs and offerings. The steady increase in enrollment provides a significant increase in revenue, now approaching 20% of operating revenue. Revenue from grants has also increased over that period.
- The college has begun to show links between its program review process and budget decisions. Acquisition of a back-up generator represents a significant example of that activity.
- The College has become more forthright and responsive in addressing audit findings and communicating those results to the Board of Regents and campus stakeholders.
- Under the leadership of current Finance Office staff, the College has begun planning to balance greater short-term and long-term integration with the strategic planning and program review processes.

Standard IV. B

Through ongoing development and training and self-evaluation, the Board of Regents has increased its ability to exercise its authority to protect the autonomy of the College.

- The Board has taken seriously its responsibility to review and develop policies to guide itself and the College. In the past several months, the Board has ratified over 30 new or revised policies, many devoted to remedy specific issues related to accreditation.
- The Board is nearing completion of a search for a new president, one of its weightiest responsibilities. Specific new or revised polices relate specifically to the relations between the Board and the chief executive officer, including evaluation.
- The Board has begun to act as a unit rather than a group of individuals. Recent successful efforts helped to exempt the College employees from work hour reductions that faced other Commonwealth employees for the last two years. There is evidence that the legislature is also learning from Regents about the College and its needs.
- Various Board members attended the 13 different training or development activities offered since February of 2010.

Commission Recommendations

By the actions it has taken to strengthen the institution, many of which are highlighted above, the College believes that it has placed itself in compliance with all of the Commission Recommendations in the January 31, 2011 Action Letter—excepting only the anticipated hire of a permanent president, which should occur shortly. As important, Northern Marianas College believes that the revised polices in place and the broad-based participation in this process help to ensure that Northern Marianas College will remain in such compliance in the future.

The shift in culture at the College will be palpable to visitors and readers of this report. The steps towards basing decisions on self-examination and evidence are real, if yet modest. This report serves as the equivalent of a position fix for the College. It is a source of accomplishment that, while the journey ahead is long, Northern Marianas College can look backwards with somber relief and forward with hope.

Eligibility Requirement 3

Northern Marianas College (NMC) is
governed by a duly authorized Board of
Regents. The Board of Regents consists of
seven members who are appointed directly
by the Governor of the Commonwealth of
the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The
Board of Regents is responsible for the
quality, integrity, and financial stability of
Northern Marianas College and the
successful completion of its mission. This
responsibility is outlined under Section 2(a)
of Article XV of the Commonwealth
Constitution, which states:

> **ACCJC Eligibility Requirement #3:**
> **Governing Board**
>
> The institution has a functioning governing board
> responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial
> stability of the institution and for ensuring that the
> institution's mission is being carried out. This board is
> ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial
> resources of the institution are used to provide a
> sound educational program. Its membership is
> sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all board
> responsibilities.
>
> The governing board is an independent policy making
> body capable of reflecting constituent and public
> interest in board activities and decisions. A majority
> of the board members have no employment, family,
> ownership, or other personal financial interest in the
> institution. The board adheres to a conflict of interest
> policy that assures that those interests are disclosed
> and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of
> governing board members or outweigh the greater
> duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal
> integrity of the institution.

> The legislature shall establish by law a
> Northern Marianas College that shall be
> headed by a president. The president of the
> college shall be appointed by a representative
> board of regents. The board of regents shall
> be appointed to staggered terms by the governor and shall have autonomy in the administration of
> its affairs and shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth
> of the Northern Marina Islands. The composition of the board of regents and other matters
> pertaining to its operations and duties shall be provided by law.

Under statute, the general duties and authority of the Board of Regents are reinforced by 3 CMC
§ 1304(b), which directs that "the Northern Marianas College is established as a nonprofit public
corporation under the general control and direction of a board designated as the Board of
Regents of the Northern Marianas College . . ." Commonwealth Code also specifically
empowers the Board of Regents in 3 CMC § 1316 to perform a number of duties, including:

> (a) To hold in trust for the Commonwealth the property and assets of the college, and to have the
> authority to negotiate loan guarantees and, with the approval of the Commonwealth Development
> Authority, issue bonds.
> (b) To set the goals and general directions of the college, and to approve policies in pursuit of such
> goals and directions.
> . .
> (e) To adopt, amend and repeal policies governing the conduct of its business and the performance
> of the powers and duties grant to or imposed upon it by law or the Constitution. . .
> . .
> (g) To acquire for use by the college any property, whether real, personal or mixed, whether
> tangible or intangible, or any interest therein, and to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the same
> for the good of the college; . .
> . .
> (i) To establish and to oversee the activities of a Northern Marianas College Foundation as a
> private, nonprofit, tax exempt public corporation for the support of the college, . . .
> (j) To act as the state board of higher education for the Commonwealth for purposes of federal
> law.

(s) To enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its business and on such terms as it may deem appropriate with any agency or instrumentality of the United States, or with any state, Commonwealth, territory, or possession, or with any political subdivision thereof, or with any person, firm, association, or corporation.

(t) To determine the character of and the necessity for its obligations and expenditures, and the manner in which they shall be incurred, allowed and paid, subject to provisions of law applicable to the college.

(v) To establish procurement policies for the college, and to expend funds appropriated by the federal or commonwealth government or donated to the college by any other entity.

(w) To take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the powers conferred upon it by law and the Commonwealth Constitution.

Status

Both the authority and the responsibilities of the NMC Board of Regents are stipulated by the Commonwealth Constitution and Commonwealth statutory law. Those stipulations make the Board of Regents responsible for:

- the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution;
- the successful outcome of its educational mission;
- the use of its financial resources to ensure that its mission is met.

The Board has a broad mandate under Section 2(a), Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution and 3 CMC § 1304(b), and is specifically empowered to control the College's affairs, including its financial matters, under 3 CMC § 1316.

The independence of the Board is clearly defined in Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which grants the NMC Board of Regents "autonomy in its affairs." In an effort to ensure that the College's autonomy remains uncompromised, Board members and the interim president have met regularly with members of the CNMI government to remind them that the College must operate with autonomy in managing its affairs, even as economic stresses within in the Commonwealth threaten so many sectors of society. Few public institutions across the region and U.S. Mainland have avoided these stresses. The recent proposal by the Governor of Pennsylvania for a 50% cut in state support to higher education reflects this reality. Yet despite these stresses, the Board has successfully lobbied the CNMI government to exempt the College from the across-the-board work reduction imposed elsewhere, and they have done so for two successive budget years.

The recorded impression that the Governor of CNMI had implemented line-item vetoes cutting that eliminated specific NMC positions was *inaccurate*. Those line items reflected a pro forma characterization of funding cuts. None of the positions listed there was actually cut as the Board approved a budget whose priorities were determined by the institution itself. The positions that supposedly were cut, but were in fact filled, appear below.

Positions Noted in the Governor's Line Item Veto and Later Filled by NMC

Position

Department Chair, Science Math Health and Athletics

Director, Counseling Programs and Services

Director, Office of Admissions and Records

International Student Coordinator/Counselor

Enrollment Manager

Accountant Technician/Cashier

Marketing/Recruitment Coordinator

Furthermore, the results of the PROAC process summarized in the *Composite Report* for the last three years reveal that most of the recommendations in those reports have been met or are in the process of being met. These reports are available in the WASC Room and indicate that the Board has sustained the programs of the College during most difficult circumstances. These efforts, in combination with a steady increase in Board development activities and self-evaluation, can reasonably be seen as promising long-term effectiveness in carrying out this crucial Board role.

The Board is required to have diversity in its membership and, thus, reflects a variety of public and constituent interests. Specifically, 3 CMC § 1311 requires that: "[a]t least one member shall be a resident of Tinian, one member shall be a resident of Rota, at least one member shall be of Carolinian descent, and at least one member shall be a woman."

The Board includes four standing committees as detailed in Table ER 3.1 below.

Table ER 3.1 NMC Board of Regents Standing Committees

Standing Committee	Function
Fiscal and Legislative	Reviews and makes recommendations to the Board regarding the annual budget and other financial matters. It also takes the lead in working with the NMC president on proposed legislation and public policy initiated by the College and in working with the Commonwealth Legislature to ensure that appropriate legislation is enacted for the College.
Personnel	Reviews the College's personnel policies, monitors the implementation of equal employment opportunity policies, and works with the president on human resource-related activities and initiatives.
Program	Reviews and makes recommendations to the Board regarding the approval of new programs leading to a new degree or certificate program, academic and student development policies, and other programmatic matters
Training and Development[1]	Develops a work plan and establish a procedure for assessing Board members' knowledge (gained through training sessions and activities) throughout their term

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[1] Committee established 12/23/2010; members to be assigned by new Board chair.

The Board of Regents currently consists of five members, including the Chair. The College expects that the remaining two members will be appointed by the Governor in timely fashion. In the meantime, the Board has actively moved to address concerns noted by the Commission in 2010. In the past year, the Board has created and codified over 30 policies that relate directly to the ten Commission Recommendations from the January 31, 2011 Action Letter. These policy actions are listed in Table 1 below

Table ER 3.2. Recent Policy Actions by NMC Board of Regents.

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
Limits of Authority (Revision of BOR Policy #1022)	12/23/2010	To expand the existing policy #1002, which limits Board authority by delegating all administrative duties to the NMC President.
Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct	12/23/2010	To detail progressive disciplinary procedures to be implemented when Board members have violated the Code of Ethics.
BOR Policy Development and Review	12/23/2010	To set forth how policies shall be reviewed on a periodic basis. It also specifies the steps involved in the adoption of new policies and the revision of existing ones.
Board Member Training and Development	12/23/2010	To set forth the training and development requirements that each individual Board member must undergo upon becoming a part of the Board of Regents.
Procurement Policies and Procedures	2/10/2011	The Board of Regents adopted a comprehensive set of procurement policies that revises, updates, and replaces the prior set. This adoption of the new set takes into account audit recommendations.
B.O.R. Policy # 8001 (Admissions and Enrollment)	3/11/11	Clearly identify 8 categories of admission; additional requirements for international students; articulate Conditional Acceptance for admission to the College. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy # 8001.1 (Residency Classification)	3/11/11	To define "one year" as "12 consecutive months" and remove policy statement that allows non-resident students to qualify for resident status upon three consecutive years of enrollment to three consecutive years residence in the CNMI. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy #8001.3 (Registration and Enrollment)	3/11/11	Add the following sections articulated in catalog and performed in practice, but omitted from B.O.R. Policy – Changes of Personal Data, Prerequisite Requirements, Overlapping Classes, Repeating of Courses, Add/Drop/Withdrawal, Medical Withdrawal, and Withdrawal for Active Military Duty. Added the following sections: Late Registration and Census Date & Deadline. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.3 (Access to Student Records)	3/11/11	Modified to include FERPA 2010 updates, Employee Access to Student Records, and Disclosure to Parents. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.4 (Student Educational Rights and Privacy)	3/11/11	Policy includes a reference to the institution's Records Management Plan and adds the following sections: Deceased Student Information, Directory Information Release, Exceptions, and a Record and Approval of Disclosures. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #3017 (Changing Student Grades)	3/11/11	Policy outlines a time frame for students and the institution to act on an appeal of a grade. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
B.O.R. Policy #3021 (Privacy Rights of Students)	3/11/11	This policy is housed in the Educational Programs Series and makes reference to the institution's Records Management Plan and provides clarification on the restrictions of Grade Postings and any other personally identifiable student ID. Also includes student's right to "Opt Out" of release of Directory Information. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.1 (Changing Student Grades)	3/11/11	This Policy was deleted. It was discovered that B.O.R. Policy #3017 contained identical information.
B.O.R. Renumbering of Policies	3/11/11	To remove the decimal numeric system, specifically for B.O.R. policies in the Student Development Series. Also calls for renumbering to remove decimal references in other policies of the B.O.R.
Part II.A Personnel Files	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which directs and guides HR in keeping and maintaining personnel files.
Part III.B Vacancy Announcements	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which puts in place how the vacancy announcements processed and the content of the VA.
Part III.C Eligibility for Employment	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which enables the college to hire qualified employees. **Compliance with Accreditation Standard III.A**
Part III.D	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, All recruitment, hiring, and selection of employees must be based on the requirements of the job, on the qualification of the applicants, and the needs of the college.
Part III.E Employment Contracts Staff and Faculty	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, All full-time employees of the College, other than limited-term appointees and adjunct faculty must enter into an initial two-year employment contract with the college. The college shall have three types of contracts for its employees: Ten month faculty (instructional faculty) / Twelve month faculty (all other faculty) / Twelve month staff contracts (for all other remaining employees of the college) **Compliance with Accreditation Standard III.A**
Part III.F Externally Funded Employees	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, The Board of Regents encourages the solicitation and application for grants that will enable the college to improve its programs, facilities, and general well-being. All individuals funded under such grants who are hired by the college and supervised by the college are employees of the college. These individuals will be employed on a staff and faculty employment contract.
Part IV.A Classification and Compensation	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, to establish and maintain a classification and compensation system that will allow the college to attract and retain qualified personnel effectively and to ensure that salaries are equitable and commensurate with the duties performed by each employee.
Part IV.B Establishing Salary Upon Appointment	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4015, Salary shall be fixed at the first step of the appropriate pay level upon initial appointment. Should a higher rate be deemed necessary to recruit, the salary may be fixed at any succeeding step but not beyond the eighth step for staff positions and the twelfth step for faculty positions. The salary for an employee hired for an ungraded position shall be at the rate established by the Board of Regents for that position.
Part V.A Types of Appointments	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4010 / 4062, Appointments in the Northern Marianas College are defined according to the following classes: Contractual Appointment / Limited-term Appointment / Acting Appointment / Intermittent Appointment / Other Appointments.
Part V.B Nepotism	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4040, For the purpose of this policy, nepotism is defined and bestowed in consideration of family relationship

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
		and not in consideration of merit. All applicants for employment with the college will inform the Human Resource Manager of any relative who is working for the college, and any relative who is a member of the Board of Regents.
Part V.C Orientation Program	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, The time and effort invested in a well planned and implemented orientation program will provide many positive returns to the college and its employees. By introduction the colleges mission, vision and goals explaining policies and procedures, and establishing work and behavioral expectations, and orientation program will help to reduce employees anxiety, develop positive attitudes, and create realistic job expectations.
Part V.F Annual Evaluation of Employees	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4212, Supervisors shall evaluate the performance of each of their assigned employees annually, at or near their anniversary date using established forms provided by the Human Resource Office. **Compliance with all Accreditation Standards.**
Part VI.B Tuition Waiver	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4215 Series, The Board of Regents encourages employees of the college to enhance their professional capabilities by taking courses offered by the college. Employees requesting a tuition waiver must first apply for scholarship or federal grant assistance, if eligible for such assistance. A tuition waiver may be granted to full-time staff and faculty members who do not receive such assistance, upon written request to and approval from the president.
Part VI.J Professional Development Leave	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4315, Professional development leave may be granted for formal education or other activities of professional merit, based upon the needs and capabilities of the college. Compensation may be provided for such leaves, as determined by the implementing policy and based upon the availability of funding in the discretion of the president.
Part VII.I Political Activities	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4240, To vote for the candidates of their choice and to express their opinions on political matters. To be active members of the political party or organization of their choosing etc.
Part VII.R Media Relations Protocol	3/11/2011	New addition to HR policy. The president of the Northern Marianas College is the official spokesperson of the college. In the president's absence the acting president or the director of the Office of Institutional Advancement shall serve as the official spokesperson. Other individuals, on a case-by-case basis, may be specifically and explicitly authorized by the president to officially speak on behalf of the college. **Compliance with Accreditation IV.B**
Part VII.T Program Review	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, As part of the College's commitment to data-driven, evidence-based decision making for continuous quality improvement, all employees of the college shall participate in the program review process. This shall include, but is not limited to, participating in the development and monitoring of program mission and outcomes, collecting and interpreting program appropriate data and evidence, evaluating program effectiveness, developing action plans for improvement, and participating in activities led by the planning, program review outcomes and assessment committee (PROAC). Participation in the program review process shall be considered in each employee's annual evaluation. **Compliance with all accreditation standards.**
Part VIII.A Delegation of Authority	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4060, The president in cases of planned absence will designate an acting president. In a situation where the president is absent or is unable to make an appointment, the chair of the Board of Regents will designate an acting president. The president will assign acting officials to cover the absence of key staff and faculty. **Compliance with Accreditation III.A**

Recognizing that initiating policy actions by itself does not guarantee sustained attention to those polices, the Board of Regents initiated an annual Self-Evaluation that ties that sustained attention to the self-evaluation of Board members and reflection on ongoing improvement and development. The Board now has a two-year history of these self-evaluations, and these will be available in the WASC Room. Table ER 3.3 details the recent training and development activities of NMC Board members.

Table ER 3.3. History of Training and Development Activities of NMC Board Members

Date	Activity	Topic	Organizer
02/19/10	Training Session	Accreditation 101	ALO
02/26/10	Training Workshop	Self Study Workshop	ACCJC
06/14/10	Training Session	Boardsmanship and Accreditation	PPEC
08/04/10	Training Conference	New Trustee Governance Leadership Institute (Washington DC)	ACCT
09/08/10	Lunch Training Session	Role of Governing Board	ALO
09/29/10	Training Workshop	FERPA	President's Office
10/13/10	Lunch Training Session	ACCJC (Site Visit Prep)	ALO
01/05/11	Lunch Training Session	Governing Board and Institutional Quality & Effectiveness	ALO
02/25/11	Lunch Training Session	Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and Standards	ALO
03/04/11	Lunch Training Session	CNMI Constitution, Commonwealth Code, and Standard IV	LinC Director
03/10/11	Accreditation Standards Team Briefings	Standard 1.A, Standard, 2.A, Standard 2.B, Standard 3.A	President's Office
03/11/11	Accreditation Standards Team Briefings	Standard 1.B, Standard 3.D, Standard 4.B	President's Office

The Board is responsible for assuring that the College has sufficient resources to carry out its Mission and support its programs. The Board approves the budget and during the year receives quarterly update reports from the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer.

Eligibility Requirement 3 stipulates that a majority of board members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The NMC Board of Regents requires this condition of *all* its members. The Board has a conflict of interest policy that assures that such interests are disclosed, and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing board members or outweigh their greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. These requirements are found in Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1019 and 1022.

Northern Marianas College believes it has demonstrated full compliance with standards of Eligibility Requirement 3.

Two Stories of How the Current NMC Board of Regents Acted as a Buffer and a Bridge

Fighting for Funding

 The Board of Regents, together with the Interim President, diligently and consistently lobbied the Governor, the House of Representatives, and the Senate to justify government funding for the College and to defend against any potentially drastic cuts to the College's budget. Regents and the Interim President have represented the College at numerous budget sessions, including a Senate budget session held on Tinian on September 3, 2010. **As a result, despite the government shutdown that occurred late last year, Senate Bill 17-26 and the Governor's Executive Order 2010—11 both exempted the College from the government shutdown.** Furthermore, the College has been exempted from government austerity measures, including one that reduces government employees' work hours to 64 (from 80) per week.

Preserving Institutional Autonomy

Members of the Board of Regents, together with the Interim President, have met with legislative leaders to prevent legislation that would be detrimental to the College from being passed into law. For instance, Regent met with members of the Senate on January 24, 2011 and on February 8, 2011 and on campus to discuss pending legislation that affected the College. As a result of those meetings, the members of the Senate Committee on Education recognized that certain legislation introduced may infringe upon the College's autonomy. In this process, board members were able to explain the ways that autonomy is crucial the College's ability to achieve its mission and to sustain its relationship with its accrediting Commission. That this interaction bore fruit is evidenced by a Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs' February 11, 2011 report, which states, in part, "[t]herefore, this Committee has taken into consideration the Legislature's indirect actions that might infringe on the autonomy of the College. Therefore, this Committee emphasizes that it is of high importance that the Legislature or the Governor's office do not infringe or jeopardize the autonomy of the Northern Marianas College."

Eligibility Requirement 4: Chief Executive Officer

> **ACCJC Eligibility Requirement 4:**
> **Chief Executive Officer**
>
> The institution has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board, whose fulltime responsibility is to the institution and who possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies. Neither the district/system chief administrator nor the college chief administrator may serve as the chair of the governing board.

The chief executive of Northern Marianas College has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution. He or she is tasked with providing effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.

The president's authority as the college's chief executive officer stems from 3 CMC § 1321, which directs that "[t]he board [of Regents] shall appoint a president to serve as the chief executive officer of the college and the board" and from Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1009(I), which states that "[t]he President is the chief executive officer of the Northern Marianas College, and in this capacity is charged with full administrative responsibility for the College."

The president, who is the College chief administrator, does not chair the Board of Regents. This prohibition is made clear in two Board documents:

- Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1005, which sets forth that "the Board [of Regents] will elect a Chair and a Treasurer from among its members, and will appoint the President as Secretary to the Board"
- Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1006, which requires that "[t]he President shall act as Secretary of the Board."

There is no district/system chief administrator in the Commonwealth since Northern Marianas College is its only institution of higher education.

Status

At the time of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' evaluation team's visit on October 20-22, 2010, an interim president was continuing to serve as the college's chief executive officer. In accordance with Board of Regents Resolution 2010-03 (Second Amendment), a Presidential Search Committee was formed to hire a permanent president. The Presidential Search Committee had a diverse composition that included members from the private and public sectors as well as the President of the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College and a member from Tinian. To begin the selection process, the Board of Regents retained the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to complete an initial screening of applications. ACCT screened thirty-one applicants and referred seven to the Presidential Search Committee. The Presidential Search Committee then interviewed the seven applicants and sent the names of finalists to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents, at this writing, is evaluating the three finalists.

Eligibility Requirement 5: Administrative Capacity

> **Eligibility Requirement 5: Administrative Capacity**
>
> The institution has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

The Northern Marianas College (NMC) has a total of 192 full-time employees in administration, instructional and non-instructional faculty, and administrative staff. NMC has an Interim President, Ms. Lorraine T. Cabrera. Interim President Cabrera's full-time responsibility is to the institution until the Board of Regents selects a new president. NMC maintains the following administrative positions: Dean of Academic Programs and Services, Dean of Student Services, acting Dean of Community Programs and Services, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Director of Institutional Advancement, acting Director of Information Technology, and acting Chief Financial and Administrative Officer.

Status

NMC is currently conducting searches to fill these acting positions. The Interim President, Deans, and Directors oversee qualified faculty and staff who provide instruction and administrative services sufficient to support the mission and purpose of the College. The Human Resources Office provides the Management Team with weekly updates on the status of these searches. Copies of these updates appear in the WASC Evidence Room.

The following administrative positions at Northern Marianas College are filled by regular, full-time administrators. Important positions held by permanent hires include:

- Dean of Academic Programs and Services
- Dean of Student Services
- Director of Institutional Advancement
- Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Director of Counseling Programs and Services
- Director of the School of Education
- Director of Library Programs and Services
- Department Chairperson of the Nursing Department

Most of these positions have been filled more than a year, in contrast to the turnover in previous years. Currently, the following administrative positions are filled in an acting capacity, Dean of Community Programs and Services (COMPASS) Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, and Director of Information and Technology. The process of accepting applications for full-time administrators for these positions is ongoing, with the exception of Dean of Community Programs and Services (COMPASS).

In 2010, NMC eliminated the "or comparable qualifications" wording from its position requirements, thereby ensuring the applicants for these positions would possess qualifications that truly match expectations. Despite this more restrictive wording, NMC can point to increased stability in these crucial positions that help lead and sustain the progress noted in other parts of this report, as well as in the report of the October, 2010 visiting team from ACCJC. Dossiers of current administrators appear in the WASC Room.

Given these improved circumstances in administrative capacity, NMC believes it meets the criteria for Eligibility Requirement 5.

Eligibility Requirement 17: Financial Resources

Funding for Northern Marianas College (NMC or College) comes from multiple sources: legislative government appropriations, student tuition and fees, federal grants, direct contributions, contributions to The NMC Foundation, and miscellaneous revenue such as from facility rentals and community and professional development workshops and courses.

For Fiscal Year 2011, the College worked aggressively within the economic and political climate to secure appropriations funding that exceeds the constitutionally mandated one-percent of expenditures minimum guarantee. This effort was especially significant given the austerity measures the CNMI government has applied because of the severe economic downturn, including a 16-hour work reduction every two weeks and unpaid holidays. The College has secured legislative appropriations funding for FY 2011, and enrollment in FY 2011 has increased by 25% compared to FY 2010. Securing revenue from these various sources has resulted in an adequate funding base for the current fiscal year.

Public institutions across the U.S. and the Pacific region face an extended period of reduced or uncertain funding from their respective legislative bodies. Even large states such as New York, Pennsylvania, California and Illinois face severe budget shortfalls that promise significantly lower levels of state support for higher education. NMC's ability to balance revenues from varied sources from year to year must become part of a longer-term strategy rather than just a yearly necessity. Fortunately, the College has begun those steps.

- The College continues its discussions with members of the legislature to secure the guaranteed $6,000,000 funding base established by Public Law 9-53. Until this funding base is assured, the College must assertively engage with the annual legislative budget hearings because the constitutional mandate that the College receive one-percent of the Commonwealth's general revenues is insufficient for its operations (1% of the FY 2011 general revenues would equal just $1,491,710).
- The Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) has established a standing sub-committee that is developing funding strategies designed to ensure long-term financial stability. The sub-committee meets weekly and has submitted a preliminary list of recommendations to BAFC. Updates of these recommendations appear in the WASC Room.
- The College qualifies for and avails of almost $7 million in annual federal funding from several grants and major programs including Adult Basic Education and Cooperative Research Education and Extension Service.
- In 1997, the Board of Regents established the NMC Foundation, a non-profit organization charged with acquiring, managing, and disbursing funds from alternative sources to support the advancement of NMC's educational programs and services. In addition to providing institutional financial support, the NMC Foundation also provides

two-year scholarships to students. Together, these funding sources help ensure that the College's financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness.

Moving forward, the College will have to secure revenues from all these sources and from new sources. The College-wide Planning Summit scheduled for May of 2011 will provide for linking resource planning with planning for the academic and support programs.

Funding for Northern Marianas College (NMC or College) comes from multiple sources: legislative government appropriations, student tuition and fees, federal grants, direct contributions, contributions to NMC's Foundation, and miscellaneous revenue such as from facility rentals and community and professional development workshops and courses.

Table ER 17.1—NMC Revenue History by Sources: FY2006-FY2010

Operating Revenue ($)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
U.S. Federal Grants	5,724,628	5,992,859	6,393,751	6,702,752	7,854,990
Student Tuition & Fees (net of scholarship discounts and allowances)	1,043,474	1,069,752	1,763,563	1,629,829	2,067,753
Private Gifts, Grants, Donations	73,194	49,187	156,276	40,278	121,069
Other	1,181,863	1,194,419	1,194,372	1,224,946	314,275
Total Operating Revenue ($)	8,023,159	8,306,217	9,507,962	9,597,805	10,358,087

Non-operating Revenue ($)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CNMI Appropriations	7,078,228	5,056,682	5,618,211	5,657,018	4,442,023
Net Investment Income	56,339	241,535			74,703
Change in Fair Value of Investments	168,816	270,115	(693,577)	302,851	470,442
Other				103,375	
Total Non-operating Revenue ($)	7,303,383	5,568,332	4,924,634	6,063,244	4,987,168
TOTAL ($)	15,326,542	13,874,549	14,432,596	15,661,049	15,345,255

Notes:
- FY 10 figures are preliminary.
- The FY 2006-Fy 2009 figures were taken directly from the Single Audit report. In FY06 and FY07, the report shows 1) Investment Income, net of expenses, and 2) Change in fair value of investments. For FY08 and FY09, the report shows 1) Net increase (decrease) in fair value of investments, and 2) Other revenues. Notes to the financial statements and the management discussion and analysis and gave no explanation for the different presentation and, therefore, the amounts are as listed in the reports.
- In FY2007 NMC was not held exempt from work-hour reductions enacted by the CNMI legislature. Note that in the last three fiscal years, the College has been exempted from such cuts even as the Commonwealth's budget situation worsened.
- The category of "Other" in Operating Revenue includes contributions from the NMC Foundation and revenues such as those from sales and services of educational departments and auxiliary services.
- The $103,375 listed as "Other" in Non-operating Revenue in FY 2009 represents a one-time special appropriation by the CNMI government.

The amounts listed in the table below affirm that the College has managed to maintain a stable revenue base over a period of several fiscal years, despite the surrounding economic difficulty in the Commonwealth. The net results of that stable revenue base are reflected in the narratives of sustained improvements in institutional effectiveness in evidence throughout this report.

With Commonwealth budget cuts anticipated for Fiscal Year 2012 and the expiration of ARRA/SFSF funding, NMC is revisiting its planning, program review, and budgeting processes to make more efficient use of limited resources. The Board of Regents Fiscal and Legislative Committee, the College Council, BAFC, and PROAC are drawing from the experience of Drake University in 2000 to improve the link between program review, planning, and budgeting and resource allocation. In particular, PROAC has established a Form 2 Subcommittee that is developing criteria by which program review submissions will be evaluated. Criteria will include:

- link to NMC's mission
- internal/external demand
- performance, cost-effectiveness
- promising opportunities.

The revised program review and planning process will lead to budgeting and resource allocation decisions *to increase*, *to maintain*, or *to decrease* funding for a program.

Despite the uncertain economic environment (one in which it is not alone), NMC has shown agility and imagination in maintaining and developing revenues from its various sources and in pursuing greater efficiencies in existing operations. Add to these the fact that the College has been able to complete or maintain the majority of its initiatives from program review recommendations, and NMC has reason to assert that it complies with ER 17.

Eligibility Requirement 18: Financial Accountability

Northern Marianas College participates in annual audits in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. NMC has clearly demonstrated financial integrity and stability as evidenced in the audit reports for Fiscal Years 2009, 2008, and 2007, by receiving an "unqualified opinion" by the independent accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLC. This major positive milestone is due to the on-going effective implementation of internal controls and is especially significant as NMC had previously received qualified opinions on the audit of its financial statements since the mid-1990s. Copies of the annual audit reports are provided to members of the Board of Regents, the president, and the Chief Financial and

> **Eligibility Requirement 18: Financial Accountability**
>
> The institution annually undergoes and makes available an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or an audit by an appropriate public agency. The institution shall submit with its eligibility application a copy of the budget and institutional financial audits and management letters prepared by an outside certified public accountant or by an appropriate public agency, who has no other relationship to the institution for its two most recent fiscal years, including the fiscal year ending immediately prior to the date of the submission of the application. The audits must be certified and any exceptions explained. It is recommended that the auditor employ as a guide Audits of Colleges and Universities, published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. An applicant institution must not show an annual or cumulative operating deficit at any time during the eligibility application process.

Administrative Officer. Copies are also available through the Office of the President and through the Web site of the CNMI Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) at www.opacnmi.com. Corrective action plans to audit findings are documented and pursued.

Status

The Commission had observed that Northern Marianas College had passed through a period in which few aspects of its audit process were executed well. While audit reports may have been transmitted to Board members, the impact of audit results, and particularly the explanations of audit findings, the communications between auditors or granting agencies were poorly communicated to the Board of Regents. Nor was it clear that Board members had been sufficiently trained to recognize the fundamental importance of financial accountability to the accreditation process and to the integrity of its relations with the ACCJC. That situation has changed.

A summary of the recent audit history and the College's resolutions appears below.

Finding: *No. 2009-1* Criteria/Condition Receivables should be periodically assessed for validity and collectability. Additionally, the adequacy of the allowance for doubtful accounts should be assessed and collection efforts pursued. **Recommendation** We recommend that the College implement procedures to monitor and analyze receivables and address inefficiencies in its accounting systems.	**Response** As a result of this finding, Finance Office staff reviewed its analysis of doubtful accounts and determined that is has adequately reserved for any doubtful receivables. This report was provided to the auditors after the June 30 deadline of the audit. Although, these accomplishments were not reported to the October 2011 evaluation team, the requirements for this analysis are described in the draft *Finance Office Guide* and were implemented throughout FY 2010. The College is confident that this will not be a repeat finding for the FY 2010 audit.
Finding: *No. 2009-2* **Criteria/Condition** The College's Property Management and Accountability Manual requires that an annual physical inventory of fixed assets be taken. The fixed asset physical inventory records should be reconciled with the general ledger fixed asset balances. Additionally, all properties of the College should be identified by a property control number which shall be permanently affixed to each individual property in such a manner as to be readily observable. **Recommendation** We recommend that the College strengthen control procedures to ensure that a physical inventory is completed and is reconciled to fixed asset records. Further, we recommend that property, plant and equipment activities be recorded in the plant fund accounts. **Response** The College's last physical inventory was done in December 2008 for the Saipan Campus only. While the College has amended its Policies and Procedures to mirror the Federal expectations that physical inventories of fixed assets be conducted at least once every two years, such amended Policies and Procedures were not effective in FY2009.	**Response** The auditors' response is incorrect. Physical inventories of Tinian and Rota sites were conducted in 2009. Physical inventory guidelines of College property are addressed in the *PPMO Property Manual* not the *Policies and Procedures manual*. Section IV.B of the Property Manual that was approved on August 2000 states, that, "A physical inventory of property shall be taken and the results reconciled with the property records every two (2) years. Any differences between quantities determined by the physical inspection and those shown in the accounting records shall be investigated to determine the causes of the differences. The College shall, in connection with the inventory, verify the existence, current utilization, and continued need for the property." Although this was discussed with the auditors, this finding was not removed. A physical inventory of college property on all three islands, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota was started in February 2011. The College is in compliance with its policies and procedures. Property records have been successfully migrated to the College's computerized inventory system, FAS Gov. These records have been updated and maintained throughout FY 2010 and the program has generated adjusting entries that are included in the FY 2010 trial balance. The College predicts that this finding will not be repeated in the FY 2010 audit report.
Finding: *No. 2009-3* **Criteria/Condition** Proper budgetary control provides for adequate monitoring and tracking of commitments related to open purchase orders and unfulfilled contracts. Amounts reserved for encumbrances should be reconciled and adjusted for balances that are no longer valid. **Recommendation**	**Response** As a result of this finding, FY 2009 encumbrances were reviewed and adjusted. The College recognizes, however, that open encumbrances have no direct bearing on the College's financial statements. The review and adjustment were conducted on a regularly scheduled basis throughout FY 2010 and the College expects that this finding will not be repeated in the FY 2010 audit report.

We recommend that the College ensure that all encumbrances be supported by encumbering documents and be reduced when actual expenses are incurred. Further, we recommend that long outstanding encumbrances and debit balances be examined to ensure validity.	
Finding: *No. 2009-4* *a.* For three items (Check Nos. 25197, 25195, 25559) the contract for professional services was not signed by the contractor or vendor.	**Response** Signed contracts were located for Check Nos. 25197 and 25195. At the time of this response, a signed contract for Check No. 25559 has not been located.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* b. For one item (Document No. PO-113671), amounting to $7,910, the purchase order was not approved prior to incurrence of expenses.	**Response** The actual cost of services provided, based on attendees, was not available until after the event occurred. The requesting department has been instructed that an estimated amount that will cover projected costs should be used for preparation of the PO. Unused amounts will be de-obligated.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* c. For one item (Document No. 09-002), amounting to $4,000, documentation of the determination that the service was not available in-house and of the vendor selection could not be provided.	**Response** Unable to locate documentation.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* d. For one item obtained through sole source procurement (Document No. C-3042), amounting to $8,600, there was no evidence that other available sources were considered prior to using sole source procurement.	**Response** The justification for the Sole Source procurement indicates that continuity is a reason for the selection of the company
Finding: *No. 2009-4* e. For one item obtained through sole source procurement relating to a construction project (Document No. C-090001), amounting to $53,352, documentation of efforts made to contact other available sources was not provided. Further, there was no documentation why competitive sealed bidding was not utilized.	**Response** The justification for the Expedited, Sole Source procurement documents efforts made to contact other sources. Competitive sealed bidding was not utilized because the company selected is the only company on-island that supplies the paving materials required for the project.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* f. For one item obtained through sole source procurement (Document No. C-3061), amounting to $10,000, justification of the procurement method used does not appear sufficient and reasonable.	**Response** The College agrees with this condition.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* g. For one item (Document No. C-3059 SEPT09),	**Response** Section 11 – C, 3a of the Property Policy and Regulation Manual states:

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amounting to $7,500, with a total contract price of $25,000, the contract was not signed by the Board of Regents Chairperson. Further, the voucher for independent service contract was not signed by the Chief Finance and Administrative Officer to certify approval of payment.

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The acquisition of services for all College programs shall be subject to the following procedures:

3. Subsequent to completion of the appropriate source selection process, the following procedure shall apply:
    a. Professional Services

 i. The program shall notify the Human Resources Office in writing of the consultant selected to provide the services.
 ii. The Human Resources Office shall prepare a Contract for Professional Services for the selected contractor.
iii. The contract shall be signed by the following individuals in order:

- Legal Counsel
- College official with expenditure authority of the program
- Director, Finance & Administrative Services
- President
- Chairperson, Board of Regents Fiscal & Legislative Committee, if the contract amount exceeds $25,000.00 and upon Board of Regents approval
- Contractor

The questioned contract does not exceed $25,000; therefore the signature of the Board of Regents member is not required. The voucher for independent services contract requires only the expenditure authorities signature, the signature of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer is not required.

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Finding: *No. 2009-5*

Criteria
The College's procurement regulations state that for independent contract services, programs should first determine whether their requirements may be met by available in-house resources or through other employment options authorized by College policy, prior to initiating the acquisition of services via procurement procedures.

Recommendation
We recommend that the College revisit its existing policies and regulations to ensure that a clarification is made on whether evidence of internal attempts should be in writing and be kept on file.

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Response
Existing policies and regulations are silent as to whether evidence of internal attempts should be in writing and be kept on file.

In the past the Human Resources Office has e-mailed the entire campus announcing the need for services as a method of documenting the attempt to determine if the services could be provided in-house. At the same time NMC procurement regulations prevent employees from responding to these kinds of requests. The approved revised Procurement Policy/Regulations addresses and clarifies some ambiguous areas and the Finance Office has developed a set of procedural guidelines that strengthen financial management performance.

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Findings 2009-6 to 2009-14
To address audit findings, 2009-6 to 2009-14, for federal programs noted in the audit of the College for the financial year ended September 30, 2009, the Interim President, the Director for the College's Cooperative Research Extension and Educational Services (CREES) program, and a consultant for the College met with officials from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Department of Education (USDOE) from December 13 through December 15, 2010. Resolution of these findings continues to be discussed with the relevant

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grantor agencies.

Note: The College received a Program Determination Letter dated November 10, 2009 from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The letter contained detailed discussions of OVAE's determinations for finding numbers 2006-8, 2006-10, 2006-12, and 2006-13. The PDL was issued nearly two and a half years after the audit report was completed. The determinations indicated which findings were resolved and resolved and closed. The College responded to the PDL's request to provide evidence of corrective action within sixty days of receipt of the PDL in a letter dated January 11, 2010. No further correspondence from OVAE regarding these findings or requests for further action or evidence has been received. This indicates that these findings have been resolved.

The College received a letter dated February 10, 2011 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requesting detailed explanations and supporting documentation regarding NMC's position for Finding 2009-1 through Finding 2009-9 and Finding 2009-15 for final determination. The College response was to be provided to USDA by March 10, 2011. A consultant hired by NMC is working closely with this and other federal grantor agencies to resolve current and previous findings.

Corrective Actions to Address Federally Funded Program Audit Findings:

The Procurement and Property Management Office (PPMO) has reminded departments that purchases should be delivered to the PPMO and if items are delivered directly to the department, the department should inform PPMO so proper documentation of receipt can be recorded. Purchase Orders are routinely stamped with a notification that purchased items should be delivered by the vendor to PPMO for recording of receipt.

An added control procedure that has been implemented is a compliance check prior to authorizing payment to a vendor. Upon receipt of an invoice or other payment request, a checklist of required documentation and recording is reviewed. Any items on the checklist that are not completed will delay release of payment until the requirement is satisfied.

The PPMO will resume its quarterly procurement policy and procedures training for expenditure authorities and support personnel by department. These training sessions had been suspended awaiting the approval of the revised policies and procedures. The requirements of the competitive sealed bidding/proposal section will be the initial focus of the training. Meetings have been held with program staff and management to discuss this finding.

Documentation for travel expenditures such as Travel Authorizations, trip reports, travel vouchers, boarding passes, must be submitted or the travel cost will not be charged to the program. A more careful review and reconciliation is being done avoid further occurrences. Travel Authorizations that do not meet the three quotation documentation requirement will not be approved.

Meetings have been held with program staff and management to discuss audit findings and corrective actions.

Finding 2009-15

See response to Finding 2009-2.

Based on its improved internal procedures and competent financial management staff, Northern Marianas College believes that it will not repeat the period during which audit findings were not properly explained or addressed. Moreover, audit results will be subject to more traditional review by the Board of Regents. Corrective actions will be routinely taken when necessary. The College believes its current audit practices demonstrate that it is compliance with ER 18.

Eligibility Requirement 21: Relations with the Accrediting Commission

> **Eligibility Requirement 21: Relations with the Accrediting Commission**
>
> The institution provides assurance that it adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission, describes itself in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities. The institution will comply with Commission requests, directives, decisions and policies, and will make complete, accurate, and honest disclosure. Failure to do so is sufficient reason, in and of itself, for the Commission to impose a sanction, or to deny or revoke candidacy or accreditation.

Northern Marianas College is committed to abiding by the Standards, Policies, and Procedures established by WASC. The October, 2010 Visiting Team observed that a broadly and collaboratively developed Show Cause Report "was chief among the concerns for this Eligibility Requirement." The Team also observed that in its judgment Eligibility Requirement 21 had been met. The Commission's ongoing concern suggests that it wishes to observe sustained effort in this regard. NMC has taken pains to institutionalize that effort and make it a shared value of all constituencies in the College. One illustration of that effort is the broad and in-depth participation in preparing this report, as noted in the Statement on Preparation of this Report, more than 53 members of the campus community participated in this effort, including 13 members of the Accreditation Reaffirmation Team (ART). In fact, the Standards Teams within ART will continue to meet weekly even after this report has been submitted until it has assessed the College's performance against *all* the accreditation standards and sub-standards, including those not covered by the January 31, 2011 Action Letter.

The Team also confirmed that the college had engaged faculty, staff, administrators, and the Board of Regents in a number of training sessions related to accreditation, but that some areas "still reflect a shallow understanding of the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards." Even though the Visiting Team indicated that Recommendation 2 had been met, the College has taken seriously its compliance with ER 21 and has responded to the caution of the "shallow understanding" observation by continuing a program of professional development and educational opportunities for regents, administrators, faculty and staff and students.

Status

When any institution receives the sanction of "Show Cause," that sanction signifies a breach of trust between the institution and its accrediting Commission. In addition, that sanction would normally indicate a breach of trust among the constituencies of the institution itself. That dynamic gets magnified when those constituencies exhibit passionate concern for the institution combined with an imperfect understanding of the role of accreditation in assuring the quality and integrity of its mission. In its show cause visits, subsequent reports and action letters, ACCJC has

noted all of the above conditions. And for all of those conditions, rebuilding trust is an iterative process that occurs over time, with each step forward based on preceding steps.

As noted in the Show Cause Visit Report of October 20-22, 2010, NMC had already taken significant steps to bring itself into compliance with ER 21. In fact that report determined that NMC met ER 21, with a caveat that it was concerned about the breadth and depth of understanding on campus about the accreditation process. The College has assertively continued to address that concern and, in doing so, to restore trust in accreditation as a process that supports institutional integrity and effectiveness.

The institution has been forthcoming in communicating changes in its accreditation status by making timely announcements in the media and on its Web site of Commission actions. In fact, there is a portion of the home page of the College Web site dedicated to informing the community about the College's accreditation efforts. The College also created a Q&A flyer and poster and disseminated it to students to answer some basic questions about the show cause status. The Q&A was also published in the local newspaper to aid the general community's understanding of show cause.

The broad and intensive dialogue and education on accreditation matters has been promoted at the College among faculty, staff, administrators, and regents, through workshops, trainings, and professional development interaction. These activities stem from a conscious and deliberate attempt to eliminate misconceptions about the accreditation process and to promote more honest and accurate discussions. The results of these activities have contributed to a culture of "accreditation awareness" evident at all levels of the institution. Recent examples of these activities include the following:

Activity	Date	Description
Board of Regents workshop	Jan 5, 2011	Accountability & Institutional Effectiveness. A 90-minute workshop delivered by the ALO and followed by questions.
Board of Regents workshop	February 25, 2011	The Board's Role in Accreditation. A 90-minute workshop delivered by the ALO that included pre-test and post-test exercises, with results to be used in planning subsequent Board workshops.
Institution-wide e-mail	February 1, 2011	The ALO forwarded to every NMC employee a copy of ACCJC's publication *Twelve Common Questions and Answers about Regional Accreditation*.
Board of Regents review of show cause report efforts	March 10-11, 2011	All standards teams met with the Board over two days and reported on their work on respective standards and how NMC meets those standards.

The Board of Regents has established a Training and Development Committee, with a charge to "develop a work plan and establish a procedure for assessing Board members' knowledge (gained through training sessions and activities) throughout their term." That step, combined with the decision of the Accreditation Reaffirmation Team to expand and continue its work, reflect a commitment to sustained effort in this arena.

Northern Marianas College has moved systematically and consistently to respond to the concern noted by the October 2011 Show Cause Visit Report and restated as Recommendation 2 in the January 31, 2011 ACCJC Action Letter. It has moved to perpetuate steps taken to rebuild trust with the Commission and within the institution itself. The progress noted in response to the other nine Commission recommendations should verify that the institution is broadly and deeply aware of its responsibilities in the accreditation process and complies with Eligibility Requirement 21.

Standard I.A:

Mission

Northern Marianas College's mission
statement was established in the Constitution
of the Commonwealth of the Northern
Mariana Islands (CNMI) in 1985 by Amendment 38, which states:

> **ACCJC Standard I.A**
> **Mission**
>
> The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

> The mission of Northern Marianas College shall be to provide the best quality and meaningful
> post secondary and adult educational opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life
> for the individual and for the Commonwealth as a whole. The College shall be responsible for
> providing education in the areas of adult and continuing education, post secondary and adult
> vocational education and professional development for the people of the Commonwealth.

The mission establishes the key components of a mission of "Who are we?" and "What are we
about?" as identified by Norris & Poulton (2008) in a publication of the Society for College and
University Planning. "Who we are" is the only public postsecondary institution within the
CNMI. "What we are about" is providing associate-level degrees and certificates, a bachelors
degree in education, and a variety of adult and continuing education opportunities to promote
student learning for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The College understands its mission as being two-fold: (1) to provide educational opportunities
to students enrolled in its academic programs and services, and (2) to provide educational
opportunities to the broader community through its community programs and services.

To fulfill the first aspect of its mission, the College offers a Bachelor of Science degree, seven
associate degree programs, four certificate programs, and two developmental programs. All
programs have complete sets of program learning outcomes (PLOs) that are reviewed on a
regular basis as part of the College's ongoing program review and course assessment processes,
and all courses have complete sets of student learning outcomes (SLOs).

To fulfill the second part of its mission, the College provides educational opportunities to the
broader CNMI community through a variety of continuing and outreach programs under the
Division of Community Programs and Services (COMPASS). These programs are offered
through the Community Development Institute (CDI), University Center for Excellence in
Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Adult Basic
Education (ABE), and Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Services (CREES). The
College also serves the community with its Upward Bound and the Educational Talent Search
(ETS) TRIO programs, which serve public school students.

The College also fulfills its mission by supporting students with a wide array of student services
such as Counseling Programs and Services (CPS), the College Access Challenge Project
(CACP), Career Services and Testing, the Office of Admissions and Records (OAR), the Office
of Financial Aid (FAO), and the Office of Student Activities and Leadership (OSAL).

Furthermore, the College's English Language Lab, the Olympio T. Borja Library, the CNMI Archives, the Curriculum Resource Center (CRC), and the Office of Information Technology (IT) support academic programs, community programs, and student services that enhance student learning.

NMC's institutional mission is a focal point for the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment (PROAC) Committee during its normal program review cycle. Consistent with Shults & Seybert's (2007) principle that the mission must be aligned with stakeholder's needs, the mission is integral to program review and budgetary planning. The mission of the institution, along with specific individual program or service missions aligned with the institutional mission, are provided in the biennial program review cycle.

Lucas (2000) warns of rushing headlong into assessment without stopping to ensure what outcomes need to be looked at or if they are aligned with the mission. To ensure appropriateness, all programmatic planning, assessment, and review is based on the mission of the institution in accordance with the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model (Appendix I.A-1 Sample Form 1), which builds on the combination of the institution's mission and individual program and service Expanded Statements of Institutional Purpose (ESIP) (APPENDIX--Standard 1.A.11).

The College's annual budget-call requires each program to link budget items to priority initiatives within the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP) (I.A-2—PROA STRATEGIC PLAN 2008—2012), as well as program review data. Between the program review and the budgeting process, the College's shared governance model helps ensure that programs, services, and resources uphold the mission.

Program review at Northern Marianas College begins with annual assessment of every program following the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model, known at NMC as the Form 1. In this model, Column 1 lists the college mission and the program or service. The institutional mission and individual program mission statements that appear in the first column of the model drive all subsequent activity in assessment and program review. The individual program or service missions are seen as Expanded Statements of Institutional Purpose (ESIP) in the Nichols and Nichols (2000) model and directly support the broader institutional mission. They are reviewed biennially and also updated as needed.

According to Gardiner (1996), linking program missions to institutional missions provides a direct linkage between the institutional mission and the individual program or service work in support of student learning. Column 2 of the model contains a program's intended outcomes that are aligned to that program's mission. Outcomes are either program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs). Column 3 establishes the assessment tools to measure those outcomes that support the mission. Column 4 summarizes the current assessment findings and is aligned to the prior three columns to show the lineage back to the mission. Column 5 completes the process with a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the assessment data and mission-based recommendations for programmatic improvement.

The results of annual program assessment inform the program review narrative (Form 2) (I.A-3—Sample Form 2) for each program during each cycle of program review. Like the Form 1, the Form 2 begins with NMC's mission and the program's linked ESIP, which links data and evidence presented in the Form 2 to the mission.

Status

To ensure alignment between the institution's mission and each program's Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose (ESIP), at its March 11, 2011 meeting, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) recently reviewed and approved updated ESIPs for all College programs.

Recently, a Form 2 Subcommittee in PROAC was formed to better align the program review with the mission, planning, budgeting and student learning outcomes and assessments. In addition, to better align the institutional mission with NMC's program review, planning, and budgeting processes, PROAC created a subcommittee to review and revise the templates for program review narrative (Form 2). The new Form 2 will require that each program explain and justify the link between that program's ESIP and the College's mission. PROAC and the Form 2 subcommittee are also developing criteria for assessing and evaluating the link between a program's ESIP and the College's mission.

Standard I.A.1

NMC's mission statement provides a declaration directly related to student learning that NMC "provide the best quality

> **ACCJC Standard I.A.1**
>
> The institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes, its character, and its student population.

and meaningful postsecondary and adult educational opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the individual and for the Commonwealth as a whole." The mission statement also states that NMC is "responsible for providing education in the areas of adult and continuing education, postsecondary and adult vocational education and professional development for the people of the Commonwealth". The institutional mission is seen as an overarching espoused mission with broad purposes as discussed by Kuh and his colleagues (2005).

The NMC mission delineates overall educational priorities. There are also Expanded Statements of Institutional Purpose (ESIP) for each program. These are seen as an enacted mission or what NMC actually does in relation to student learning. Since NMC's programs have ESIPs that are directly related to the institutional mission, NMC has a close match between the espoused and enacted missions. Kuh and his colleagues (2005) suggest this close match is a positive indicator of an institution dedicated to student learning. Kuh (2005) also notes that in his research, institutions do not necessarily have to change their institutional mission over time. The important thing is to have structures in place to meet the "students' educational and social needs, interests, and abilities" (p. 62; See Standard 1.A.44).

The ESIP also allows individual programs in the College an opportunity to make their individual missions alive and able to guide day-to-day activity as suggested by Kuh. The ESIP also provides benchmarks for success as well as a sense of purpose that Morrill (2007) suggests is needed for all faculty and staff to become engaged.

To ensure that its mission and efforts to fulfill that mission meet the needs of its student population, NMC includes student representation on governance so that students can voice their concerns and needs. A comprehensive student survey is also provided during each registration to survey student needs, the results of which are used by NMC programs to inform continuous quality improvement efforts.

For example, the Fall 2010 Registration Survey revealed that students were generally dissatisfied with the registration process, with many respondents complaining about how long and tedious the process was. In response, NMC's Registration Committee implemented changes for the Spring 2011 spring registration, changes that met with positive student feedback in the Spring 2011 Registration Survey.

Many student needs are also addressed through student services provided such as Library Services, the gym, Breakpoint Cafe, Counseling Programs and Services, Career Services, and the CNMI College Access Challenge Project for low-income families which is an effort to increase the number of students who are Native Pacific Islanders and from low-income families in the Commonwealth to enroll, remain, and succeed in college. NMC also has an active TRIO Upward Bound and TRIO Educational Talent Search. Other support services include Information Services such as computer labs, Distance Learning support, Learning Technology Services, and Media Services.

The primary assessment of institutional effectiveness in meeting NMC's mission is the biennial program review cycle that uses the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form) and expanded program review narratives known as Form 2s. As part of program review, academic programs measure mission effectiveness by reporting student achievement data such as transfer rates of Associate degree students in Liberal Arts, job placement rates, licensure exam data, and course completion rates.

Program review is ongoing for all units within the institution and the review supports measurement and future resource support of established student learning outcomes, consistent with recommendations provided by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and others involved in *Learning Reconsidered 2* (2006). Coupled with strategic planning, the institution positions itself to establish and support the programs and services to meet its students' needs.

Status

To ensure alignment between the institution's mission and each program's Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose (ESIP), at its March 11, 2011 meeting, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) recently reviewed and approved updated ESIPs for all College programs.

In addition, to better align the institutional mission with NMC's program review, planning, and budgeting processes, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) recently created a subcommittee to review and revise the templates for program review narrative (Form 2). The new Form 2 will require that each program explain and justify the link between that program's ESIP and the College's mission. PROAC and the Form 2 subcommittee are also developing criteria for assessing and evaluating the link between a program's ESIP and the College's mission.

Standard I.A.2

NMC's mission statement was established in the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the

> **ACCJC Standard I.A.2**
>
> The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published.

Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in 1985 by Amendment 38. Although the Board of Trustees does not officially approve the mission, they can request updates through the normal legislative process to amending the constitution.

The Board also charges the President with developing and maintaining an institution that fulfills the mission and achieves the goals of the Northern Marianas College in accordance with the Mission Statement. As part of that process, the President charges the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) to establish individual program missions that directly support the broader institutional mission. These individual program missions, which serve as Expanded Statements of Institutional Purpose (ESIP), are reviewed and approved biennially as part of the program review process which is ultimately accepted by the Board.

NMC's mission is widely published in program review documents, the catalog, on the website, in the annual report, and external publications. It is also prominently displayed in the board room of the Regents and at the main entrance to the institution near the President's office.

Status

To ensure alignment between the institution's mission and each program's Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose (ESIP), at its March 11, 2011 meeting, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) recently reviewed and approved updated ESIPs for all College programs.

Standard I.A.3

The College mission statement is seen as a shared vision that is used to guide individual unit missions. Nolan, Goodstein, and Pfeiffer (1993) discuss how the widespread

> **ACCJC Standard I.A.3**
>
> Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.

understanding of the mission promotes loyalty and commitment to the organization. The mission is written to promote student learning in degree-seeking and non-degree programs throughout the CNMI. The mission is well documented and made available to all stakeholders in the Commonwealth (See Standard 1.A.1).

Mission development and approval is currently a legislative process and the communication of the mission is through the Commonwealth's Constitution and statutes. The Board can request a legislative change to the CNMI Constitution if the nature of the institution or the populations it serves warrant a change to the mission.

However, the Expanded Statements of Institutional Purpose (ESIP) are developed and approved through individual units and subsequently approved by the PROAC, President, and Board of Regents. They are communicated in the catalog, on the individual program's website, and in program review documents. ESIPs are seen as a working mission and are updated on an ongoing basis as opposed to the more generalized mission statement for the institution. The process for periodic review of the mission statement currently focuses on the ESIPs, which are updated and reviewed as part of the biennial program review cycle.

An important feedback mechanism for mission review is the discussion provided by the various Program Advisory Councils. These community-based stakeholders are charged with program evaluation as one of their important roles. Program Advisory Councils help NMC review its mission on a regular basis by involving representatives from the community to identify where NMC can support community needs to better serve intended student populations.   A primary function of these councils is to determine the need for educational programs and continuing education offerings at NMC.

Status

At its Professional Development Days (PDD) from August 10 through August 12, 2010, the College community engaged in discussions in which students, faculty, staff, and administrators reviewed the institutional mission for currency, relevancy, and appropriateness. The Board of Regents held a similar discussion at a boardsmanship training session on September 8, 2010 As demonstrated by notes from both the College's PDD discussions and the Board training discussion, the following themes emerged:

- The mission statement is appropriate and the College's programs and services strive to fulfill that mission.
- The College's shared governance and assessment model helps foster a college-wide commitment to student learning.
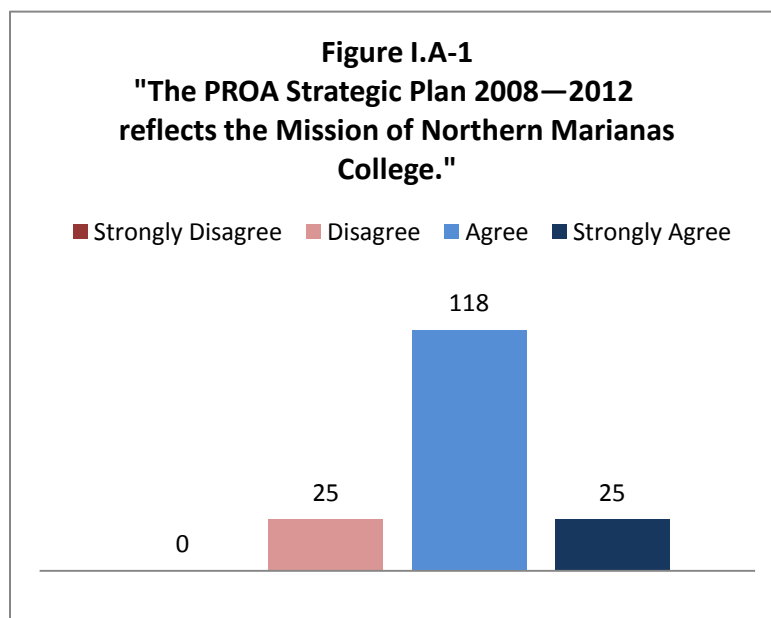
- All programs have developed PLOs and administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) that support the mission.

To further review NMC's mission and how the institution fulfills the mission, at its October 1, 2010 Fall Planning Summit, students, faculty, staff, and administrators reflected on and discussed the link between NMC's mission and its PROA-Strategic Plan 2008—2012. As notes from those discussions demonstrate, a majority of the College community believes that the PROA-SP reflects the College mission. In a survey administered at the workshop, participants were asked to respond to the statement, "The PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 is reflects the Mission of Northern Marianas College" with either "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree", "Agree", or "Strongly Disagree". As Figure I.A-1 reveals, out of 168 respondents, 143 participants, or about 85%, either agreed or strongly agreed that the PROA-SP reflects the College's mission.

NMC has also taken steps to ensure regular review of its mission statement by its stakeholders.

Figure I.A-1
"The PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 reflects the Mission of Northern Marianas College."

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

118

0   25   25

To ensure alignment between the institution's mission and each program's Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose (ESIP), at its March 11, 2011 meeting, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) recently reviewed and approved updated ESIPs for all College programs.

In addition, to better align the institutional mission with NMC's program review, planning, and budgeting processes, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) recently created a subcommittee to review and revise the templates for program review narrative (Form 2). The new Form 2 will require that each program explain and justify the link between that program's ESIP and the College's mission. PROAC and the Form 2 subcommittee are also developing criteria for assessing and evaluating the link between a program's ESIP and the College's mission.

Standard I.A.4

The mission is central to the strategic planning process and program review process. It is also included as part of the budgeting and resource allocation process at the institution.

> **ACCJC Standard I.A.4**
>
> The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision making.

To effectuate its mission, on September 25, 2008, Northern Marianas College's Board of Regents adopted a five year institution-wide strategic plan, the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP) (APPENDIX--Standard 1.A.36). The plan identified four strategic goals

1. Promote student learning and success.
2. Respond to the professional development, continuing education, and personal enrichment needs of the Commonwealth.
3. Optimize financial and human resources.
4. Accelerate the upgrade of physical and technology infrastructure.

To further define these goals and reinforce the focus of the plan, several priority initiatives were identified for each strategic goal. The following table lists some sample priority initiatives linked to each of the four goals:

Goal 1: Promote student learning and success	Priority Initiative 1.1: Improve the literacy and analytical problem-solving skills of students and strengthen student services.
	Priority Initiative 1.2: Strengthen student services and assess their effectiveness in meeting defined outcomes.
	Priority Initiative 1.5: Assist students in establishing and realizing their educational goals.
	Priority Initiative 1.6: Serve as a bridge to higher educational opportunities.
Goal 2: Respond to the professional development, continuing education, and personal enrichment needs of the Commonwealth.	Priority Initiative 2.1: Build basic skills for personal enrichment and prepare individuals for rewarding careers.
	Priority Initiative 2.2: Enrich workforce skills by providing quality training and learning opportunities.
	Priority Initiative 2.4: Provide broad access to NMC programs through various community outreach services.
Goal 3: Optimize financial and human resources.	Priority Initiative 3.2: Implement campus-wide customer service principles.
Goal 4: Accelerate the upgrade of physical and technology infrastructure.	Priority Initiative 4.6: Enhance technology support of teaching and student learning.

Status

As the current PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP) is set to expire within a year, the Office of the President has schedule a strategic planning summit for May 18, 2011 (Appendix I.A-4—Memorandum from Interim President Lorraine Cabrera re May 18, 2011 Strategic Planning Summit). The summit will convene the Board of Regents, College stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, and administrators—and community stakeholders—business leaders, elected officials, and community representatives—to develop a new five year strategic plan. The College's mission will be central to all summit discussions as participants explore how the College can best fulfill its mission and meet the evolving needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Standard I.B:
Improving Institutional Effectiveness

Board of Regents Policy 1025, Section I establishes the framework for the College's use of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished. The policy states:

> **ACCJC Standard I.B**
> **Improving Institutional Effectiveness**
>
> The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and makes changes to improve student learning. The institution also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning. The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by providing 1) evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and 2) evidence of institution and program performance. The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning.

> Northern Marianas College shall establish and maintain a system to ensure institutional effectiveness and a high standard of quality in academic programming. To enable such effectiveness and quality, institutional research, planning, evaluation, and other activities shall be conducted in a collaborative manner with input from all appropriate sectors of the College and the community it serves.

BOR Policy 1025 has been implemented at the College through a shared governance model and manuals and guides that promote a collegiate culture of data-driven, evidence-based decision-making for continuous quality improvement. As defined in the College's Institutional Excellence Guide (Appendix I.B-1—Institutional Excellence Guide), shared governance is "the process of consulting with and enabling various constituencies within the College community to be informed and to provide input that affects decisions made at the Northern Marianas College."

Standard I.B.1

Dialogue at NMC is structured through a shared governance model, program review processes, administrative channels, College assemblies, and various forms of print and digital communication.

> **ACCJC Standard I.B.1**
>
> The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.

NMC Board of Regents Operations Policy 1026 states:

> The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents recognizes the major constituencies of the College, namely the administration, the faculty, the support staff, and the students, as participants in the governance of the institution. Each of these constituencies is to have a role in the formulation of the mission and goals of the institution and in the development of policies governing it.

This recognition of shared governance as a structure for dialogue is reinforced by NMC's "Institutional Excellence Guide" (Appendix I.B-1—Institutional Excellence Guide), which states, "Shared governance is meant to foster a sense of empowerment, equal partnership and a vested interest in successful outcomes of institutional policy and implementation decisions. The

collegial model proposes a community of scholars, with consensual decision making processes involving all constituencies affected by the decisions."

NMC's shared governance model routes dialogue through the following governance bodies: The College Council, the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC), the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), and the Academic Council.

The College Council was created to ensure that appropriate members of the College community participate in the development of annual budgets, annual strategic plans, new programs and services, and major facilities planning prior to adoption by college officials; and to ensure that all members of the college community have access to information regarding ongoing developments and issues and that there is an open forum for full participation in decision-making of areas defined under the Board and CNMI policy, as well as administratively and mutually agreed shared governance matters.

BAFC is responsible for reviewing, approving and advising the President on all financial matters. It is charged with aligning institutional priorities with the allocation of resources; reviewing and adjusting the budget in accordance with present circumstances and future projections; and for producing reports requires of it by the membership.

PROAC is tasked with building and sustaining a campus-wide culture of evidence and shall concern itself with matters relative to accreditation, assessment and with monitoring the fidelity of initiatives and other actions being implemented as recommended through program review, other means of assessment.

The Academic Council assists the Dean of Academic Programs and Services on all matters related to instructional programs and academic regulations. It reviews and offers advice on the quality of and continued need for various instructional programs, and, as appropriate, offers advice on the deletion of academic programs. It facilitates assessment of student learning outcomes at the course level, and works closely with PROAC on all assessment and program review activities. In particular, the Academic Council and the Dean of Academic Programs and Services facilitate and oversee annual course assessment and instructor evaluations in all academic programs

NMC's shared governance model also routes self-reflective dialogue through the following representative bodies: the Associated Students of NMC (ASNMC), the Faculty Senate, and the Staff Senate.

The ASNMC serves as the representative body of all students enrolled at the College and acts on behalf of and serves as a forum of the student assembly. ASNMC is directly involved in shared governance and participatory decision-making through voting membership on the College Council. The President of the ASNMC also sits on the Board of Regents as a non-voting, advisory honorary member.

The Faculty Senate is the official representative body and legislative body of the Faculty Assembly of NMC. The Faculty Senate participates in shared governance at NMC by initiating,

developing, and reviewing policies on academic and administrative matters of NMC; providing advisory comments on proposed Board of Regents policies on academic and administrative matters prior to their adoption by the Board of Regents; and participating in maintaining the integrity of the academic processes of NMC. In participating in the governance process of NMC, the Faculty Senate has voting representation on the College Council, and the Faculty Senate President serves as a nonvoting honorary advisory member of the Board of Regents.

The Staff Senate serves as the official representative body of the Staff Assembly. The Staff Senate provides an open forum for the concerns brought to it by the Assembly and directly participates in the governance of the college by assisting in determining the need for, initiating and developing, and reviewing policies on administrative matters affecting the welfare of the College. The Staff Senate is directly involved in shared governance and participatory decision-making through voting membership on the College Council. The President of the Staff Senate also sits on the Board of Regents as a non-voting, advisory honorary member.

In addition to NMC's shared governance model, self-reflective dialogue is also structured through NMC's program review processes. As stated in the "Institutional Excellence Guide", "Each academic, student services, and administrative programs uses the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model (Form 1) (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) to identify student learning outcomes (SLOs) and/or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs). Programs develop specific measures and criteria for determining success for each outcome. Data are gathered and analyzed to determine if the outcomes are being met or if curricular/administrative processes need change. A program's Form 1 is incorporated into its program review report (Form 2) (Appendix I.A-3—Sample Form 2), which provides a comprehensive analysis of the program's effectiveness and presents recommendations for the program and the institution based on a thorough analysis of data."

Dialogue at NMC is also structured through the administrative hierarchy of the college. Employees in each division and department communicate ideas and concerns through their respective supervisors who, in turn, route those ideas and concerns up the hierarchy.

Dialogue is also structured through assemblies held throughout the academic year, including Semester Professional Development Days (PDD), the annual Planning Summit, and various workshops. Over the past year, several assemblies have provided faculty, staff, and students with venues for engaging in self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.

Dialogue is also structured through various communication media, including email, the College's website, and internal memoranda.

Status

Since February 11, the College Council has met every Friday in order to engage all NMC stakeholders in self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of institutional processes. Agendas and minutes from those meetings reflect a body that regularly discusses matters that have significant implications for the entire institution, including policy changes, budgeting, planning, program review, curriculum, instruction, and accreditation. For example, in the past two months, the Council has addressed the following:

- NMC's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget for submission to the Office of the Governor
- Proposed revisions to student records policies
- Proposed revisions to human resources policies
- Proposed revisions to NMC's shared governance structure
- How to improve the link between program review, planning, and budgeting/resource allocation

Anticipating a possible reduction in funding from the central government and the expiration of funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), BAFC has been meeting regularly to discuss not only budget decisions for FY 2012, but also ideas for reducing expenditures and increasing revenue. In particular, BAFC has formed a subcommittee, the Long-Term Financial Stability Committee, which is charged with brainstorming and researching specific proposals for cutting costs and raising revenue.
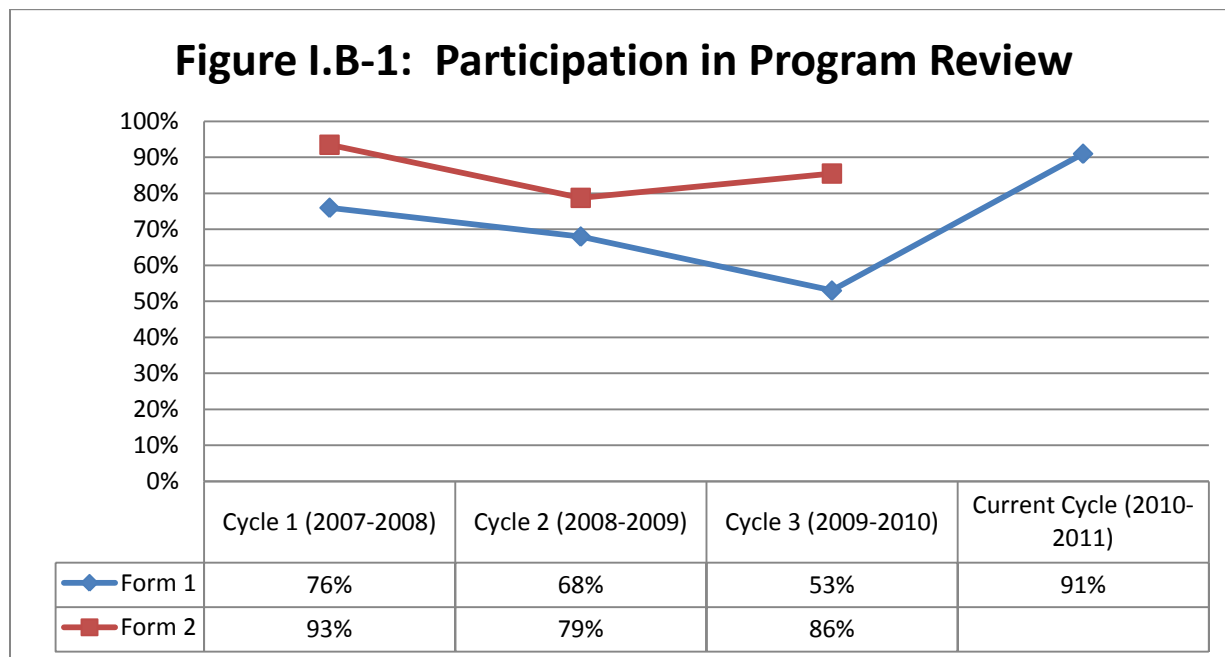
In addition to overseeing NMC's program review processes, since Fall of 2010, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) has engaged in a dialogue about how to improve the link between program review, planning, and budgeting and resource allocation (Appendix I.B-2—Linking Program Review, Budgeting, and Planning PowerPoint Presentation). Drawing from the program review experience at Drake University in 2000 and 2001, PROAC has assigned a subcommittee, the Form 2 Revision Committee, to revise NMC's program review reporting template, the Form 2, to focus on five criteria by which program review submissions will be evaluated by PROAC:

- Link to NMC's Mission and Strategic Plan
- Performance
- External/Internal Demand
- Cost Effectiveness
- Opportunities

By improving the link between program review, planning, and budgeting and resource allocation, PROAC intends to align these institutional processes to have a more clear, direct, and positive impact on student learning.

In the most recently completed cycle of program review, Cycle 3, participation in the process improved towards the end of the cycle. As Figure I.B-1 reveals, 35 out of 40 programs, or

85.5%, submitted complete program review (Form 2) documents. The figure also reveals the submission rates for annual program assessment (Form 1) in the current cycle are also improving. (Note that Form 2 submission rates for the current cycle are not available as Form 2s are due at the end of the cycle, in June.)

Figure I.B-1: Participation in Program Review

	Cycle 1 (2007-2008)	Cycle 2 (2008-2009)	Cycle 3 (2009-2010)	Current Cycle (2010-2011)
Form 1	76%	68%	53%	91%
Form 2	93%	79%	86%	

The cycle also concluded with the 2010 Composite Report, which synthesized program review reports from all academic and non-academic programs at the college into a set of recommendations to programs and to the institution. Reflecting discussion within PROAC and from across the institution, the report also included 15 recommendations to improve the next cycle of program review, which PROAC and the institution have begun implementing. As the College entered its fourth cycle of program review in Academic Year 2010-2011, the program review calendar has shifted into two-year program review cycles, with academic programs and non-academic programs participating in full program review on alternating years.

PROAC has also added a question to the agenda of each of its meetings that invites each member to reflect on what impact the dialogue at each meeting has had on student learning. In addition to documenting the impact meeting dialogue has had on student learning, the question orients each member towards proactively thinking about how PROAC can have a positive impact on student learning.

Since the Fall of 2010, in addition to ongoing dialogue and decision-making about NMC's courses and curriculum, the Academic Council has engaged in dialogue about improving instructional quality by modifying course assessment and enhancing NMC's instructor evaluation process. In the Fall of 2010, the council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule.

Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23—24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have also begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

In addition to weekly meetings, over the past year, the Faculty Senate has held a number of assemblies to discuss matters that affect the entire institution, including faculty evaluations, student records policies and procedures, accreditation, and human resource policies. Assemblies were held on the following dates:

- February 12, 2010
- August 27, 2010
- December 15, 2010 (joint assembly with Staff Assembly)
- January 21, 2011 (joint assembly with Staff Assembly)
- February 25, 2011

Minutes from these assemblies reflect a faculty engaged in dialogue about improving institutional processes. In particular, since Fall of 2010, the faculty have focused on updating and revising NMC's human resource policies and have brought their input and concerns before both the College Council and the Board of Regents.

As with the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate has held a number of assemblies to discuss matters that affect the entire institution, including student records policies and procedures, accreditation, and human resource policies. Assemblies were held on the following dates:

- December 15, 2010 (joint assembly with Faculty Assembly)
- January 21, 2011 (joint assembly with Faculty Assembly)
- February 24, 2011

Minutes from these assemblies reflect a staff engaged in dialogue about improving institutional processes. Along with the Faculty Senate, these assemblies have focused on updating and revising NMC's human resource policies.

To gauge how effective NMC's governance model is at structuring self-reflective dialogue towards improving institutional processes, in February of this year, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted a campus-wide online survey, the Governance Evaluation Survey. The survey had respondents assess five dimensions of governance—democracy, openness and transparency, effectiveness, accountability, and mission—and rate each NMC governance and representative body according to those dimensions.

Survey results suggest that NMC is effectively using its governance model to engage stakeholders in ongoing dialogue about institutional effectiveness. For example, as Figure I.B-2 shows, in response to the statement, "Decisions that affect the entire institution are informed by extensive dialogue with key stakeholders," 44 respondents, or about 61%, either agreed or strongly agreed.
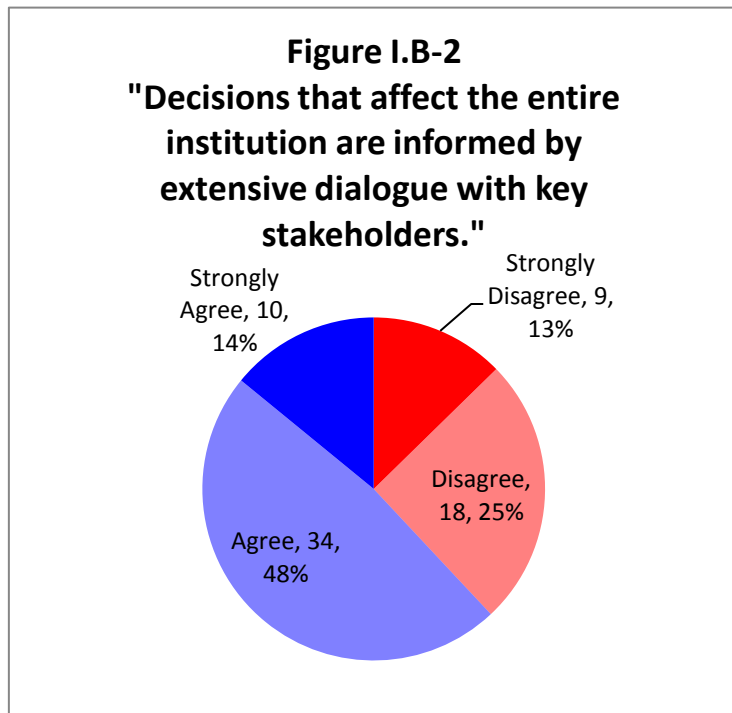
The Fall 2010 Professional Development Days, which were held from August 10 to August 12, involved the entire College community in discussions about how well NMC complies with eligibility

**Figure I.B-2
"Decisions that affect the entire institution are informed by extensive dialogue with key stakeholders."**

requirements and meets the accreditation standards of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). That institution-wide dialogue was continued at an Accreditation Workshop on March 4, 2011, which involved the College community in focused discussions on NMC's responses to questions posed in ACCJC's "Guide to Evaluating Institutions".

In addition to these accreditation sessions, NMC held a Planning Summit on October 1 that brought the College community together to review and discuss the proposed Operational Plan for Fiscal Year 2011. The summit proved to be an effective venue for promoting healthy dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.

Standard I.B.2

The PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP) (Appendix I.A-2—PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012) lays out four goals and 28 priority initiatives that serve as general criteria for determining institutional priorities. The PROA-SP was developed following a campus-wide "visioning" process

> **ACCJC Standard I.B.2**
>
> The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.

and planning workshops during spring and summer of 2008. The Operational Plan (Ops Plan) supplements the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP). It organizes actionable items in support of the priority initiatives in addition to identifying responsible parties, establishing implementation timelines, and specifying resources needed for each of those actions.

Status

To keep the Ops Plan current, and to improve its link to program review, at the 2010 Planning Summit, the entire College community engaged in dialogue about how to link each program's outcomes (SLOs, PLOs, and AUOs) to the 28 priority initiatives articulated in the PROA-SP. This approach to the Ops Plan directly links the PROA-SP to every program, ensuring fidelity to the goals and priority initiatives in the plans.

With the links between programs' outcomes and the PROA-SP's priority initiatives established, the College continues to monitor achievement of those outcomes via TracDat, which organizes annual program assessment into the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) format for annual program assessment. At the conclusion of the current cycle of program review, when programs report in TracDat progress on achieving their respective program outcomes, the College will measure the extent to which it is achieving and implementing the goals and priority initiatives of the PROA-SP.

As NMC entered the current cycle of program review, the Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) modified the Record of Dialogue template and took action to require programs to submit quarterly Records of Dialogue. The Record of Dialogue allows the program to report on the progress of approved recommendations from the 2010 Composite Report, both to the program and the institution.

In January 2010, PROAC used the results of Cycle 2 of program review to generate a list of 10 Institutional Priorities that were lifted from priority initiatives set forth in the PROA-SP. That list of priorities was, in turn, submitted to the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) to inform decisions about budgeting and resource allocation in the FY 2011 Budget Call. BAFC continued using those same priorities for its deliberations on the FY 2012 Budget Call.

Standard I.B.3

As explained in the "Institutional Excellence Guide" (Appendix I.B-1—Institutional Excellence Guide), NMC's governance model structures the dialogue and processes for ongoing systematic evaluation, planning, resource allocation, and reevaluation of planning efforts. Through annual program assessment and cyclical program review, NMC evaluates institutional effectiveness through analyses of quantitative and qualitative data.

> **ACCJC Standard I.B.3**
>
> The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and reevaluation. Evaluation is based on analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Planning at the institutional level is articulated in the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP) (Appendix I.A-2—PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012), which lays out the five year strategic

plan for the College. The Operational Plan (Ops Plan) supplements the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP). It organizes actionable items in support of the priority initiatives in addition to identifying responsible parties, establishing implementation timelines, and specifying resources needed for each of those actions.

Program review is a college-wide activity that presents findings and recommendations unique to each program with the clear intent of facilitating both improvement and accountability as they relate to program effectiveness. The direct result of the institutional program review process is to meaningfully inform the College's decision-making, planning, and budgeting processes, particularly with regard to making improvements at the course, program, and institutional levels. It is a coordinated systematic process for evaluating program effectiveness.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) provides quantitative and qualitative data to the institution to assist in planning, evaluation, and institutional dialogue. For program review, OIE provides academic departments with student achievement data that will be integrated into each department's program review submissions. OIE also compiles institutional data into various reports, including the 5-32/10-66 Annual Report to the Legislature, IPEDS updates, and the 2009 Update to the Key Performance Indicators.

OIE also works with programs, committees, and governance bodies to facilitate campus surveys to gather data on the opinions, knowledge, and satisfaction of stakeholders about various aspects of the College. For example, OIE facilitates the Registration Survey at the beginning of every semester and presents the survey data to the Registration Committee which, in turn, uses the data to inform decisions and planning for future registration processes.

Status

The current approach of linking program outcomes to priority initiatives from the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP) (Appendix I.A-2—PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012) will update the Operational Plan (Ops Plan) and demonstrate ongoing planning at the program level. With the links between programs' outcomes and the PROA-SP's priority initiatives established, the College continues to monitor achievement of those outcomes via TracDat, which organizes annual program assessment into the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model format (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) for annual program assessment. At the conclusion of the current cycle of program review, when programs report in TracDat progress on achieving their respective program outcomes, the College will measure the extent to which it is achieving and implementing the goals and priority initiatives of the PROA-SP.

As NMC entered the current cycle of program review, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) modified the Record of Dialogue template and took action to require programs to submit quarterly Records of Dialogue. The Record of Dialogue allows the program to report on the progress of approved recommendations from the 2010 Composite Report, both to the program and the institution.

In Spring 2011, PROAC also took action to shift the College's program review processes into two-year program review cycles, with academic programs and non-academic programs participating in full program review on alternating years.

Standard I.B.4

The shared governance model of the College provides mechanisms for stakeholders to participate in planning through governance and representative bodies: College Council, the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC),

> **ACCJC Standard I.B.4**
>
> The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), the Academic Council, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and the Associated Students of NMC (ASNMC). All constituents are represented adequately on the following governance bodies, which each play a role in planning.

Regular and special assemblies are held throughout the year to allow stakeholders to participate in the dialogue for planning. These assemblies include General Assemblies, Faculty Assemblies, Staff Assemblies, Term Professional Development Days (PDD), the annual Planning Summit, and various workshops. These assemblies are often scheduled to accommodate maximum participation. In some cases, such as the 2010 Planning Summit, classes are suspended and offices are close to enforce mandatory attendance at assemblies. Attendance is documented at all assemblies to monitor participation and video teleconferencing (VTC) is enabled for each assembly and governance body meeting to ensure participation from Rota and Tinian stakeholders. Moreover, information about assembly meetings and governance body meetings are circulated via email to all employees.

At the program level, programs participate in planning by identifying outcomes to focus on during each cycle of program review. Progress on such plans is reflected in each program's annual assessment and program review reports. Participation in program review, as a component of planning, is required of every employee and embedded into each employee's contract and annual evaluation.

Each cycle of program review results in an annual Composite Report, which lists recommendations for resource allocation that in turn inform decisions about budgeting and resource allocation.

Status

In January 2010, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) used the results of Cycle 2 of program review to generate a list of 10 Institutional Priorities that were lifted from priority initiatives set forth in the PROA-SP. That list of priorities was, in turn, submitted to the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) to inform

decisions about budgeting and resource allocation in the FY 2011 Budget Call. BAFC continued using those same priorities for its deliberations on the FY 2012 Budget Call.

Many positive changes that have occurred as a result of these planning, budgeting, and program review processes, including the launch of the Learning in Communities (LinC) initiative; the English Language Institute (ELI) English Labs; enhanced Individual Degree Plans (IDPs) in the School of Education; laptops for instructors from the Information Technology (IT) Plan; improved registration processes from the Registration Committee; and other improvements at the program level as a result of plans that have emerged from program review.

NMC recognizes, however, that successful implementation of its plans requires financial resources. In this era of fiscal austerity, NMC has thus taken steps to identify and follow strategies to increase its capacity. Of the four main goals in the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP), Goal # 3 is to "Optimize financial resources." Under that goal, seven priority initiatives are listed to help the College identify and follow strategies to increase its financial resources.

In 2008, NMC secured funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) for two years to provide resources in order to fulfill goals and priority initiatives in the PROA-SP. The College's Foundation also continually works to identify strategies to increase the College's financial capacity, holding an annual golf tournament, sponsoring fundraising events, and soliciting financial contributions such as the Education Tax Credit. In addition, BAFC recently formed a committee that is exploring ways to reduce spending and increase revenue.

Since 2010, the Board of Regents and the College Leadership worked aggressively to lobby against budget cuts and other actions from the central government that would have threatened the College's limited financial resources. These efforts resulted in the College from being spared from a recent government shut down.

With budget cuts anticipated for Fiscal Year 2012 and the expiration of ARRA/SFSF funding, NMC has begun revisiting its planning, program review, and budgeting processes to make more efficient use of limited resources. The Board of Regents Fiscal and Legislative Committee, the College Council, BAFC, and PROAC (Appendix I.B-2—Linking Program Review, Budgeting, and Planning PowerPoint Presentation) are drawing from the experience of Drake University in 2000 to improve the link between program review, planning, and budgeting and resource allocation.

In particular, PROAC has established a Form 2 Subcommittee that is developing criteria by which program review submissions will be evaluated. Criteria will include link to NMC's mission, internal/external demand, performance, cost-effectiveness, and opportunities. To provide for more accountability and efficient use of limited resources, the new program review and planning process will lead to budgeting and resource allocation decisions that either increase, maintain, or decrease funding for a program.

Standard I.B.5

Each program at NMC collects its own unique set of assessment data as part of the program review process. Data, such as market demand, student profiles, and student enrollment is

> **ACCJC Standard I.B.5**
>
> The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.

documented in each program's annual assessment in TracDat and further examined in the program's program review reports. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) works with academic programs to integrate student achievement data into program review reports. Student achievement data include:

- Course Completion Data
- Retention Term-to-Term
- Progression to next course/level
- Program Completion
- Degree/Certificate Completion Rates

- Transfer rates to four-year institutions
- Scores on licensure exams
- Job-placement/post training
- Direct Evidence of Student Learning

OIE also works with various programs to administer and compile and analyze results for a number of surveys including the registration survey, the graduation survey, the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) and the Community Colleges Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).

OIE also prepares a number of institutional reports for internal and external use, including the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Update, the NMC Fact Book, and the 5-32/10-66 Annual Report to the Legislature of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The Budget and Finance Office also compiles and provides financial data to programs, the institution, and agencies outside the College. The Office of Institutional Advancement assists in preparing and distributing reports to the public, making all public reports available on NMC's website. NMC also communicates information about institutional quality to the public through reports, press releases, and presentations.

Status

Recent reports from OIE include the 2010 NMC Fact Book and the 2010 5-32/10-66 Annual Report to the Legislature. OIE is currently preparing data for the 2011 Update to the Key Performance Indicators.

OIE is also working with the Office of Admissions and Records (OAR) to improve data collection from NMC's student database software, PowerCampus. Improved data collection mechanisms from PowerCampus will allow OIE, programs, and the institution to more easily access and compile student achievement data for program review and institutional reporting.

Standard I.B.6

As part of NMC's program review processes, each program completes Records of Dialogue that document and track the impact of planning, budgeting, and program review on that program. Each program's program review report also includes a discussion of the impact that program review has had on the program.

> **ACCJC Standard I.B.6**
>
> The institution assures the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes by systematically reviewing and modifying, as appropriate, all parts of the cycle, including institutional and other research efforts.

Each cycle of program review results in an annual Composite Report, which lists recommendations for resource allocation that in turn inform decisions about budgeting and resource allocation. The Composite Report also includes a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of that cycle of program review and makes recommendations to improve the next cycle of program review.

Status

The 2010 Composite Report included 15 recommendations to improve the next cycle of program review, which PROAC and the institution have begun implementing. One recommendation that has been implemented is that the program review calendar has shifted into two-year program review cycles, with academic programs and non-academic programs participating in full program review on alternating years.

As NMC entered the current cycle of program review, the Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) modified the Record of Dialogue template took action to require programs to submit quarterly Records of Dialogue. The Record of Dialogue allows the program to report on the progress of approved recommendations from the 2010 Composite Report, both to the program and the institution.

To systematically evaluate NMC's planning, program review, and budgeting processes, a Governance Review Task Force (GRTF) was appointed by the Office of the President to assess the College's governance model, including planning, budgeting, and program review processes, and to develop a mechanism for assessing those processes.

The GRTF worked with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to develop and administer a survey that would gauge how effective NMC's governance model is at structuring self-reflective dialogue towards improving institutional processes. The survey had respondents assess five dimensions of governance—democracy, openness and transparency, effectiveness, accountability, and mission—and rate each NMC governance and representative body according to those dimensions.

Survey results suggest that NMC is effectively using its governance model to engage stakeholders in ongoing dialogue about institutional effectiveness. For example, as Figure I.B-3 shows, in response to the statement, "Decisions that affect the entire institution are informed by extensive dialogue with key stakeholders," 44 respondents, or about 61%, either agreed or strongly agreed.
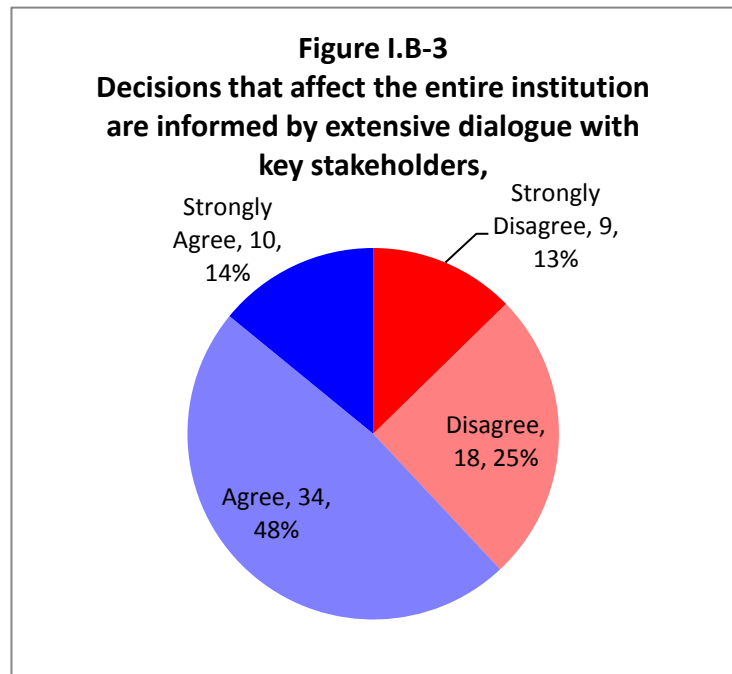
The GRTF used the results of this survey to develop recommendations to improve the College's governance structure. The task force issued recommendations to the College Council on March 4 and has also developed an evaluation instrument

Figure I.B-3
Decisions that affect the entire institution are informed by extensive dialogue with key stakeholders,

Strongly Agree, 10, 14%
Strongly Disagree, 9, 13%
Disagree, 18, 25%
Agree, 34, 48%

(Appendix I.B-3—Governance Evaluation Survey Form) that can be used for regular, systematic review of NMC's governance structures and processes.

Governance and representative bodies, including the Board of Regents, used to participate in annual program assessment, but have not done so for the past two cycles. Since participation in annual program assessment is one mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the different parts of the cycle of planning, budgeting, and program review, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) recently took action to reinstate some of these governance and representatives into the current cycle of program review and annual program assessment.

Standard I.B.7

ACCJC Standard I.B.7

The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services.

Each cycle of program review results in an annual Composite Report, which lists recommendations for resource allocation that in turn inform decisions about budgeting and resource allocation. The Composite Report also includes a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of that cycle of program review and makes recommendations to improve the next cycle of program review. The Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) facilitates the implementation and evaluation of each recommendation in subsequent cycles of program review.

The Academic Council facilitates assessment of student learning at the course level, including routine discussions of how to effectively assess learning and evaluate instructional quality. The council also works closely with PROAC on all assessment and program review activities.

Status

The 2010 Composite Report included 15 recommendations to improve the next cycle of program review, which PROAC and the institution have begun implementing. One recommendation that has been implemented is that the program review calendar has shifted into two-year program review cycles, with academic programs and non-academic programs participating in full program review on alternating years (Appendix I.B-4—Program Review Calendar).

Since the Fall of 2010, in addition to ongoing dialogue and decision-making about NMC's courses and curriculum, the Academic Council has engaged in dialogue about improving instructional quality by modifying course assessment and enhancing NMC's instructor evaluation process. In the Fall of 2010, the council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule.

Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23—24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have also begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

Standard II.A

 NMC offers a Bachelor of Science degree, seven associate degree programs, four certificate programs, and two developmental programs. Degrees offered include a Bachelor of Science degree in Education, Associate in Arts degrees in Liberal Arts and Business, Associate in Science degrees in Nursing and Natural Resource Management, and Associate in Applied Science degrees in Criminal Justice, Business Administration, and Hospitality Management. A Certificate

> **ACCJC Standard II.A**
> **Instructional Programs**
>
> The institution offers high-quality instructional programs in recognized and emerging fields of study that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs consistent with its mission. Instructional programs are systematically assessed in order to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional activities offered in the name of the institution.

of Completion is also offered in Basic Law Enforcement. To ensure that these degree programs meet the needs of the community, degree programs work with Program Advisory Councils composed of members of the broader community who provide input on the efficacy and impact of the programs on the community.

The College also provides developmental programs in math and English. Through the Division of Community Programs and Services (COMPASS), the College offers continuing education and outreach programs with the following: the Community Development Institute (CDI), University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Services (CREES).

Membership in the Pacific Post-secondary Education Council (PPEC) provides for the transferability of all credits earned in 100-level courses or higher to other PPEC member institutions such as Guam Community College, the University of Guam, and the College of the Marshall Islands. Credits earned in 100-level courses or higher have also been transferable to other public and private post-secondary institutions such as Chaminade University, Stanford University, Portland State University, and Seattle University.

The quality of academic, outreach, and continuing education programs is monitored and improved through the College's program review processes as laid out in the Institutional Excellence Guide (Appendix I.B-1—Institutional Excellence Guide). As the guide states, "Program review is a college-wide activity that presents findings and recommendations unique to each program with the clear intent of facilitating both improvement and accountability as they relate to program effectiveness."

Facilitated by the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), program review at NMC utilizes the Nichols and Nichols Five-Column Model (Form 1) (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) to identify program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), and/or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) that are consistent with the College's mission. Programs develop specific measures and criteria for determining success for each outcome. Data are gathered and analyzed to determine if the outcomes are being met or

if curricular/administrative processes need change. A program's Form 1 is incorporated into its program review report (Form 2), which provides a comprehensive analysis of the program's effectiveness and presents recommendations for the program and the institution based on a thorough analysis of data.

In addition to program review, the Academic Council and the Dean of Academic Programs and Services also facilitate and oversee annual course assessment and instructor evaluations in all academic programs. Each department conducts course assessment by analyzing student achievement data such as course completion rates and progression to subsequent courses and then shares the analysis with Academic Council for further discussion and action. For instructor evaluations, BOR Policies 3003 and 3011 set forth guidelines for the supervision and evaluation of instructors, including annual performance evaluations and student evaluations at the end of each term. These evaluations are intended to hold instructors accountable to instructional obligations and professional ethics as set forth in BOR Policies 3001 and 3002.

Pursuant to BOR Policies 3008 and 3009, the Academic Council also oversees and discusses all curriculum changes before they are forwarded to the President and the Board for final approval. Curriculum changes include the introduction, revision, or discontinuation of degree or certificate programs and courses. All curricular changes must comply with and/or follow substantive change policies as set forth by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

As part of program review, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) works with academic programs to compile and study student achievement data, including longitudinal data on course completion rates, graduation rates, licensure passage rates, and job placement rates. As part of program review process, the analysis of such data is part of the College's overall efforts in data-driven, evidence-based decision making for continuous quality improvement.

Status

The College's program review processes, begun in Cycle 1 of program review in academic year 2007—2008, led to important developments for instructional programs. The Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) and the Academic Council provided guidance and support to all programs in developing their respective program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), and administrative unit outcomes (AUOs). Now, all programs have established PLOs, SLOs, and AUOs, which are assessed and evaluated as part of program review, which lead to changes in programs. For example, Cycle 1's program review by PROAC and course assessment by the Academic Council led to programs being placed on inactive status, thereby ensuring the currency of academic programs and freeing up resources for other programs.

Participation by academic programs in program review also improved in Cycle 3, with 90% of all academic programs submitting summative review narratives (Form 2) to PROAC by the end of the cycle. That level of participation has continued into the current cycle of program review, with 91% of all programs current with their annual program assessment (Form 1) entries into TracDat.

Since Fall of 2010, PROAC has also engaged in a dialogue about how to improve the link between program review, planning, and budgeting and resource allocation (Appendix I.B-2—Linking Program Review, Budgeting, and Planning PowerPoint Presentation).

By improving the link between program review, planning, and budgeting and resource allocation, PROAC intends to align these institutional processes to have a more clear, direct, and positive impact on student learning.

The Academic Council has also engaged in dialogue about improving instructional quality by modifying course assessment and enhancing NMC's instructor evaluation process. In the Fall of 2010, the council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule. Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23—24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have also begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

Standard II.A.1.a

NMC meets the varied education needs of its students through a variety of programs that fall into two main areas: (1) providing educational opportunities to students enrolled in its academic programs and services; and (2) providing educational opportunities to the broader community through its community programs and services.

NMC offers a Bachelor of Science degree, seven associate degree programs, four certificate programs, and two developmental programs. All programs have complete sets of program learning outcomes (PLOs) that are reviewed on a regular basis as part of the College's ongoing program review and course assessment processes, and all courses have complete sets of student learning outcomes (SLOs).

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.1**
>
> The institution demonstrates that all instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, address and meet the mission of the institution and uphold its integrity.
>
> **ACCJC Standard II.A.1.a**
>
> The institution identifies and seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with their educational preparation and the diversity, demographics, and economy of its communities. The institution relies upon research and analysis to identify student learning needs and to assess progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes.

NMC also provides educational opportunities to the broader CNMI community through a variety of continuing and outreach programs under the Division of Community Programs and Services (COMPASS). These programs are offered through the Community Development Institute (CDI), University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Services (CREES). The College also serves the community with its Upward

Bound and the Educational Talent Search (ETS) TRIO programs, which serve public school students.

The institution ensures that all institutional offerings fit the mission of the College through its program review processes. As part of that process, each academic department must identify an Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose (ESIP) that links its respective program missions to NMC's institutional mission.

NMC's program review processes also ensure that programs and services are of high quality and appropriate to an institution of higher learning. For annual program assessment, NMC utilizes the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model (Form 1) (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) to identify program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs) and/or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) that are consistent with the College 's mission. A program's Form 1 is incorporated into its program review report (Form 2), which provides a comprehensive analysis for the program's effectiveness and presents recommendations for the program and the institution based on a thorough analysis of data. In the Form 2, academic programs present and evaluate student achievement data and direct and indirect evidence of student learning.

In addition to program review, the Academic Council and the Dean of Academic Programs and Services also facilitate and oversee annual courses assessment and instructor evaluations in all academic programs. Faculty members work together within each department to conduct course assessments by analyzing student achievement data such as course completion rates and progression to subsequent courses. Each faculty is also evaluated as part of the annual employee evaluation process.

Status

In the Fall of 2010, the Academic Council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule. Likewise, in Spring 2011, PROAC shifted the College's program review processes into two-year program review cycles, with academic programs and non-academic programs participating in full program review on alternating years.

PROAC also modified the Record of Dialogue template and took action to require programs to submit quarterly Records of Dialogue. The Record of Dialogue allows the program to report on the progress of approved recommendations from the 2010 Composite Report, both to the program and the institution.

Over the past year, NMC has begun using new, research-based assessment tools to better identify student learning needs and to more accurately assess progress toward achieving student learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. The table below describes the new assessment tools being used at NMC.

Assessment Tool	Description	Use at NMC
Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)	SENSE assesses student engagement in the early weeks of college life and its impact on student learning.	NMC began administering SENSE in the Fall of 2009 and continues to administer and collect data from the survey. While some programs have begun using data, once two year's worth of data is collected, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will compile and share results with governance bodies as part of planning, budgeting, and program review dialogue.
Community Colleges Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)	CCSSE assesses student engagement and its impact on student learning.	NMC began administering CCSSE in the Spring of 2010 and continues to administer and collect data from the survey. While some programs have begun using data, once two year's worth of data is collected, OIE will compile and share results with governance bodies as part of planning, budgeting, and program review dialogue.
Community College Learning Assessment (CCLA)	CCLA is a nationally standardized exam that assesses the degree to which community colleges contribute to their students' development in critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication. This information provides a benchmark against which to examine the effectiveness of institutions' programs for increasing student proficiency in the areas measured.	NMC began administering CCLA in the Fall of 2009 and continues to administer and collect data from the exam. While some programs have begun using data, once two year's worth of data is collected, OIE will compile and share results with governance bodies as part of planning, budgeting, and program review dialogue.
Accuplacer	The College Board's Accuplacer test is a computer-based placement test that assesses reading, writing and math skills, including reading comprehension, sentence skills, arithmetic, elementary algebra, college-level mathematics and the writing test.	Accuplacer was piloted from the Fall of 2009 to the Fall of 2010 by the English Language Institute and the Math department. In the Spring of 2011, the ELI began full implementation for all its courses.
Reading Plus	Reading Plus is a computer-based reading intervention system that uses innovative technology and engaging content to provide individualized silent reading practice for students in second grade and higher. In addition to providing elective, scaffolded reading instruction, Reading Plus® also ensures efficient development of foundational visual, perceptual, and information processing skills, the "unseen and unheard" skills required for skilled reading proficiency.	Reading Plus was piloted in the Fall of 2010 and is now being fully implemented in all sections of EN 093 Reading and Vocabulary Development III. As a formative assessment tool, Reading Plus is helping with instruction and learning. As a summative assessment tool, Reading Plus will inform planning and decision-making in English Language Institute .
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)	CASAS is the most widely used standardized assessment system for assessing adult basic reading, math, listening, speaking skills as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills throughout the United States. Approved by the National Reporting System (NRS) for English Literacy, Adult Basic Education, and Adult Secondary Education and most of all, it meets the Workforce Investment (WIA) accountability requirements.	NMC Adult Basic Education Program began full implementation of the CASAS Assessment Tool since 2008. The program uses the Life Skills Series and the Life and Work Series. The ABE Program submits a yearly Assessment Plan for approval to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE).

Standard II.A.1.b

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.1.b**
>
> The institution utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students.

NMC determines the delivery and modes of instruction that fit the objectives and content of its courses. Qualified instructors determine the best mode of delivery using pedagogical standards and professional experience. NMC also utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction that prepare students for transfer institutions, vocational examinations, certifications and employment. While instruction is delivered primarily in-person in classrooms, classroom instruction and community services are supplemented by online deliver modes, video teleconference (VTC), and email communication.

Delivery methods are evaluated for their department's level Faculty Peer and Student Evaluation. Discussion of the effectiveness of delivery systems and modes of instruction occur during Academic Council and Academic Program Services (APS) Leadership meetings and at the program/department level in faculty meetings and monthly reports. Discussion about delivery methods also occur between the college faculty and the community through Program Advisory Councils.

Status

To supplement in-class instruction, the College offers NMC Online as an additional delivery system. NMC Online is an e-learning platform that provides online access to course materials and tools for communication, collaboration, assessment, and more. NMC Online is powered by Moodle, an open source course management system (CMS)—designed to help educators "web-enhance" their courses, create quality online courses and allow students access to course material anytime of the day or night, from any computer with Internet access.

Standard II.A.1.c

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.1.c**
>
> The institution identifies student learning outcomes for courses programs, certificates, and degrees; assesses student achievement of those outcomes; and uses assessment results to make improvements.

Throughout the past three cycles of program review, NMC academic programs have developed and refined program learning outcomes (PLOs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs), using annual program assessment results to guide improvement plans. Program review at Northern Marianas College begins with annual assessment of every program following the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1), or, the Form 1. A program's Form 1 is incorporated into its program review report (Form 2) (Appendix I.A-3—Sample Form 2), which provides a comprehensive analysis of the program's effectiveness and presents recommendations for the program and the institution based on a thorough analysis of data.

In addition to program review, the Academic Council and the Dean of Academic Programs and Services afacilitate and oversee annual course assessment and instructor evaluations in all academic programs. Each department conducts course assessment by analyzing student achievement data such as course completion rates and progression to subsequent courses and then shares the analysis with Academic Council for further discussion and action.

The results of evaluations through the department chairs, the peer faculty and student evaluations of courses and instructors, as well as the field/clinical experience/practicum and internships and classroom observations are analyzed and the results are provided as feedback to the program and concerned faculty for the required improvements.

Status

As a result of ongoing assessment of program learning outcomes (PLOs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs), NMC recently made some minor changes to its curricula. A case in point is the School of Education (SOE). Working with the Academic Council and the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee, the SOE evaluated data from annual program and course assessment, results from program review, field research from classroom observations of SOE graduates, and discussions from its Program Advisory Council. Based on the evaluation, the SOE decided to offer two areas of emphasis for its Bachelors of Science degree in Education: Special Education – Mild/Moderate Needs, Early Childhood Education, and Rehabilitation and Human Services.

Since the Fall of 2010, in addition to ongoing dialogue and decision-making about NMC's courses and curriculum, the Academic Council has engaged in dialogue about improving instructional quality by modifying course assessment and enhancing NMC's instructor evaluation process. In the Fall of 2010, the council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule. Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23—24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have also begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

Standard II.A.2.a

Board of Regents Policy (BOR) 3009 sets forth the policy and procedures for new academic programs and courses, program and course modifications, and the discontinuation of programs and courses. According to the policy, any change to academic programs and courses is first discussed at the department level and then forwarded to the Academic Council. The council deliberates the proposed change before submitting its recommendation to the Dean of Academic Programs and Services for final decision.

In addition to academic programs and courses, Adult Secondary Education and Adult Basic Education and community program course

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2**
>
> The institution assures the quality and improvement of all instructional courses and programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, developmental, and pre-collegiate courses and programs, continuing and community education, study abroad, short-term training courses and programs, programs for international students, and contract or other special programs, regardless of type of credit awarded, delivery mode, or location.
>
> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.a**
>
> The institution uses established procedures to design, identify learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs.

offerings under Community Programs and Services (COMPASS) are offered in response to community needs and are tied to the specific requirements set forth by their federal granting agencies and institutional policies.

All programs have complete sets of program learning outcomes (PLOs) that are reviewed on a regular basis as part of the College's ongoing program review and annual program assessment processes, and all courses have complete sets of student learning outcomes (SLOs) that are reviewed as part of the College's ongoing course assessment processes.

Course and instructional quality are also evaluated by course and instructor evaluations. BOR Policy 3011 "Student Evaluations" requires that every "instructor in the College is to be evaluated by his/her students in every course, in every academic session." Such student evaluations are part of a broader instructor evaluation as set forth in BOR Policy 3033 "Evaluation of Instructional Faculty" and carried out by corresponding NMC Administrative Procedure 3033, which includes evaluation tools such as Student Evaluations, classroom observations, and conferences between the instructor and his or her respective Department Chair or Director.

In addition to program review and course assessment, the results of Math and English Placement Tests aid the College in determining how many students qualify for each individual course offerings in their respective educational areas.

Status

The College's program review processes, begun in Cycle 1 of program review in academic year 2007—2008, led to important developments for instructional programs. With guidance and assistance from PROAC and the Academic Council, after Cycle 1 of program, all programs and

courses at the college have developed complete sets of respective PLOs, SLOs, and AUOs, which are found in program review document submissions (PLOs and AUOs) to PROAC and course guides (SLOs).

Program review also led to notable developments in the English Language Institute. The new Language and Humanities building was opened, an English Language Lab was built, and the program began using two new assessment tools, Accuplacer and Reading Plus.

Cycle 1's program review by PROAC and course assessment by the Academic Council also led to programs being placed on inactive status, thereby ensuring the currency of academic programs and freeing up resources for other programs.

The program review calendar has also shifted into two-year program review cycles, with academic programs and non-academic programs participating in full program review on alternating years (Appendix I.B-4—Program Review Calendar).

Since the Fall of 2010, in addition to ongoing dialogue and decision-making about NMC's courses and curriculum, the Academic Council has engaged in dialogue about improving instructional quality by modifying course assessment and enhancing NMC's instructor evaluation process. In the Fall of 2010, the council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule.

Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23—24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have also begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

Standard II.A.2.b

Through program review, annual program assessment, and course assessment, faculty and departments evaluate student data to determine competency levels and measurable program learning outcomes (PLOs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs). Such evaluations are used by faculty and departments to justify

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.b**
>
> The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.

incremental changes to existing PLOs, SLOs, and competency levels. All changes must be approved by Academic Council. Program Advisory Councils also provide input from the community on the currency, relevance, and utility of SLOs, PLOs, and overall program and course offerings.

The relationship between student learning outcomes and competency levels for degrees, certificates, programs, and courses are structured through Academic Council's review of course guides and individual degree plans

All students have a clear path in achieving student learning outcomes as explicitly stated in the relevant course syllabus, individual degree plan, individual certificate plan and the college catalog. The effectiveness of learning at each level is evaluated through program review, annual program assessment, and course assessment.

Status

In the Fall of 2010, the Academic Council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule. Likewise, in Spring 2011, PROAC shifted the College's program review processes into two-year program review cycles, with academic programs and non-academic programs participating in full program review on alternating years.

Over the past year, NMC has begun using new, research-based assessment tools to better identify student learning needs and to more accurately assess progress toward achieving student learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. The table below describes the new assessment tools being used at NMC.

Assessment Tool	Description	Use at NMC
Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)	SENSE assesses student engagement in the early weeks of college life and its impact on student learning.	NMC began administering SENSE in the Fall of 2009 and continues to administer and collect data from the survey. While some programs have begun using data, once two year's worth of data is collected, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will compile and share results with governance bodies as part of planning, budgeting, and program review dialogue.
Community Colleges Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)	CCSSE assesses student engagement and its impact on student learning.	NMC began administering CCSSE in the Spring of 2010 and continues to administer and collect data from the exam. While some programs have begun using data, once two year's worth of data is collected, OIE will compile and share results with governance bodies as part of planning, budgeting, and program review dialogue.
Community College Learning Assessment (CCLA)	CCLA is a nationally standardized exam that assesses the degree to which community colleges contribute to their students' development in critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication. This information provides a benchmark against which to examine the effectiveness of institutions' programs for increasing student proficiency in the areas measured.	NMC began administering CCLA in the Fall of 2009 and continues to administer and collect data from the survey. While some programs have begun using data, once two year's worth of data is collected, OIE will compile and share results with governance bodies as part of planning, budgeting, and program review dialogue.

Assessment Tool	Description	Use at NMC
Accuplacer	The College Board's Accuplacer test is a computer-based placement test that assesses reading, writing and math skills, including reading comprehension, sentence skills, arithmetic, elementary algebra, college-level mathematics and the writing test.	Accuplacer was piloted from the Fall of 2009 to the Fall of 2010 by the English Language Institute and the Math department. In the Spring of 2011, the ELI began full implementation for all its courses.
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)	CASAS is the most widely used standardized assessment system for assessing adult basic reading, math, listening, speaking skills as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills throughout the United States. Approved by the National Reporting System (NRS) for English Literacy, Adult Basic Education, and Adult Secondary Education and most of all, it meets the Workforce Investment (WIA) accountability requirements.	NMC Adult Basic Education Program began full implementation of the CASAS Assessment Tool since 2008. The program uses the Life Skills Series and the Life and Work Series. The ABE Program submits a yearly Assessment Plan for approval to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE).

Standard II.A.2.c

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.c**
>
> High-quality instruction and appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning characterize all programs.

NMC provides high-quality instruction in its hiring processes. Hiring criteria are outlined in Board of Regents Human Resources Policy 4008 "Recruitment and Hiring Practices" and its respective Administrative Procedure 4008. The institution is committed to seeking and selecting the most qualified candidates for all positions, and ensures consistency in hiring through its strict compliance with hiring policies and procedures. The interview committees consist of administrators, staff and faculty who represent the various divisions in the College. Faculty members play a role in the selection of new instructors. Applicants with degrees from non-U.S. accredited institutions are certified using credential evaluators who are members of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to ensure the validity of transcript records and accreditation status of the institutions granting the degrees. Application packages including only qualified candidates are then provided to each member of the interview committee.

Each of the interview committee members is asked to submit interview questions, which are then reviewed and approved by the entire interview committee. Qualified applicants are asked the same set of questions, and each interview committee member scores each candidate. The candidate with the highest total score is recommended for hiring, followed by the second and third highest scorers as alternate candidates. The top three recommendations are forwarded to the president for final selection and approval.

The quality of instruction is continuously evaluated through student evaluation of courses and instructors and classroom observations by department chairs. Course syllabi use the language of Bloom's Taxonomy in all lists of student learning outcomes. Appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning breadth of each program are ensured

by Academic Council's review of the course guides. Some programs collect samples of students work at the beginning and end of each semester to demonstrate progress towards achieving student learning outcomes.

Status

Since the Fall of 2010, in addition to ongoing dialogue and decision-making about NMC's courses and curriculum, the Academic Council has engaged in dialogue about improving instructional quality by modifying course assessment and enhancing NMC's instructor evaluation process. In the Fall of 2010, the council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule.

Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23—24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have also begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

Standard II.A.2.d

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.d**
>
> The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students.

The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students. Assessments of student learning styles are administered in the BE 111 course, "College Success", a prerequisite for all non degree unit math courses. The Kuder Assessment is required of all students in BE 111 to evaluate their skills, interests, and values. These learning styles are also addressed in each course syllabus.

Instructors at NMC employ multiple ways of assessing student learning, such as portfolios, research papers, group projects, examinations, practicum, and presentations. The college determines modes of delivery on a course-by-course basis, in accordance with Academic Council approved course guides.

Commonly used teaching methodologies include: lecture, reading assignments, audio-visual materials, research assignments, oral presentations. These methods are selected at the program level and approved by Academic Council in course guides. Faculties discuss the relationship between teaching methodologies and student performance as part of program review, annual program assessment, and course assessment. Training sessions have also been offered by School of Education faculty to match methodologies with individual student learning styles by employing adult learning theory, multiple intelligences, differentiated instruction and a wide variety of other teaching strategies.

Status

Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23—24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios. This more comprehensive approach will help the council and the dean more clearly and thoroughly assess the effectiveness of instructors' delivery modes and instructional methodologies.

Standard II.A.2.e

Program review, annual program assessment, and course assessment are the primary processes that NMC uses to evaluate all courses and programs for their relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.e**
>
> The institution evaluates all courses and programs through an ongoing systematic review of their relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans.

Facilitated by the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), program review at NMC utilizes the Nichols and Nichols Five-Column Model (Form 1) (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) to identify program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), and/or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) that are consistent with the College's mission. Programs develop specific measures and criteria for determining success for each outcome. Data are gathered and analyzed to determine if the outcomes are being met or if curricular/administrative processes need change. A program's Form 1 is incorporated into its program review report (Form 2) (Appendix I.A-3—Sample Form 2), which provides a comprehensive analysis of the program's effectiveness and presents recommendations for the program and the institution based on a thorough analysis of data.

As part of program review, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) works with academic programs to compile and study student achievement data, including longitudinal data on course completion rates, graduation rates, licensure passage rates, and job placement rates. As part of program review process, the analysis of such data is part of the College's overall efforts in data-driven, evidence-based decision making for continuous quality improvement.

The Academic Council and the Dean of Academic Programs and Services facilitate and oversee annual course assessment and instructor evaluations in all academic programs. Each department conducts course assessment by analyzing student achievement data such as course completion rates and progression to subsequent courses and then shares the analysis with Academic Council for further discussion and action. For instructor evaluations, BOR Policies 3003 and 3011 set forth guidelines for the supervision and evaluation of instructors, including annual performance evaluations and student evaluations at the end of each term. These evaluations are intended to hold instructors accountable to instructional obligations and professional ethics as set forth in BOR Policies 3001 and 3002.

Status

The College's program review processes, begun in Cycle 1 of program review in academic year 2007—2008, led to important developments for instructional programs. With guidance and assistance from PROAC and the Academic Council, after Cycle 1 of program, all programs and courses at the college have developed complete sets of respective PLOs, SLOs, and AUOs, which are found in program review document submissions (PLOs and AUOs) to PROAC and course guides (SLOs).

Program review also led to notable developments in the English Language Institute. The new Language and Humanities building was opened, an English Language Lab was built, and the program began using two new assessment tools, Accuplacer and Reading Plus.

Standard II.A.2.f

NMC's program review, annual program assessment, and course assessment processes evaluate the currency and achievement of program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), and administrative unit outcomes (AUOs). These evaluations, in turn, inform improvement efforts and planning decisions at the program and institutional levels.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.f**
>
> The institution engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation and integrated planning to assure currency and measure achievement of its stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies.

Facilitated by the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), program review at NMC utilizes the Nichols and Nichols Five-Column Model (Form 1) (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) to identify program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), and/or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) that are consistent with the College's mission. Programs develop specific measures and criteria for determining success for each outcome. Data are gathered and analyzed to determine if the outcomes are being met or if curricular/administrative processes need change. A program's Form 1 is incorporated into its program review report (Form 2) (Appendix I.A-3—Sample Form 2), which provides a comprehensive analysis of the program's effectiveness and presents recommendations for the program and the institution based on a thorough analysis of data.

Each cycle of program review results in an annual Composite Report, which lists recommendations for resource allocation that in turn inform decisions about budgeting and resource allocation.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) provides quantitative and qualitative data to the institution to assist in planning, evaluation, and institutional dialogue. For program review, OIE provides academic departments with student achievement data that will be integrated into each department's program review submissions. OIE also compiles institutional data into various

reports, including the 5-32/10-66 Annual Report to the Legislature, IPEDS updates, and the 2009 Update to the Key Performance Indicators.

The Academic Council and the Dean of Academic Programs and Services facilitate and oversee annual course assessment and instructor evaluations in all academic programs. Each department conducts course assessment by analyzing student achievement data such as course completion rates and progression to subsequent courses and then shares the analysis with Academic Council for further discussion and action. For instructor evaluations, BOR Policies 3003 and 3011 set forth guidelines for the supervision and evaluation of instructors, including annual performance evaluations and student evaluations at the end of each term. These evaluations are intended to hold instructors accountable to instructional obligations and professional ethics as set forth in BOR Policies 3001 and 3002.

Status

In January 2010, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) used the results of Cycle 2 of program review to generate a list of 10 Institutional Priorities that were lifted from priority initiatives set forth in the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012 (PROA-SP). That list of priorities was, in turn, submitted to the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) to inform decisions about budgeting and resource allocation in the FY 2011 Budget Call. BAFC continued using those same priorities for its deliberations on the FY 2012 Budget Call.

The College's program review processes have also led to important developments for instructional programs. With guidance and assistance from PROAC and the Academic Council, after Cycle 1 of program, all programs and courses at the college have developed complete sets of respective PLOs, SLOs, and AUOs, which are found in program review document submissions (PLOs and AUOs) to PROAC and course guides (SLOs).

Program review also led to notable developments in the English Language Institute. The new Language and Humanities building was opened, an English Language Lab was built, and the program began using two new assessment tools, Accuplacer and Reading Plus.

OIE recently published the 2010 Fact Book and is preparing the 2011 update to NMC's KPIs.

Standard II.A.2.g

NMC has used standardized tests for its
developmental programs, the English
Language Institute (ELI) and the Math non-
degree unit courses (Math NDUs). These

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.g**
>
> If an institution uses departmental course and/or
> program examinations, it validates their effectiveness
> in measuring student learning and minimizes test
> biases.

tests are regularly evaluated at the department level through program review and by Academic
Council through course assessment to validate their effectiveness in measuring student learning
and to minimize test bias.

Status

The placement and exit tests for Math NDUs were developed by the program's instructors to be
directly aligned with the program's program learning outcomes (PLOs) and student learning
outcomes (SLOs). The program continues to analyze test data to validate their accuracy in
measuring student achievement of PLOs and SLOs and to minimize test bias.

The ELI used the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL as a placement and exit test for
its courses. However, the program began piloting alternative assessment tools in the Fall of
2009, Accuplacer and Reading Plus.

Accuplacer test is a computer-based placement test that assesses reading, writing and math skills,
including reading comprehension, sentence skills, arithmetic, elementary algebra, college-level
mathematics and the writing test. Accuplacer was piloted from the Fall of 2009 to the Fall of
2010 by the English Language Institute and the Math department. In the Spring of 2011, the ELI
began full implementation for all its courses.

Reading Plus is a computer-based reading intervention system that uses innovative technology
and engaging content to provide individualized silent reading practice for students in second
grade and higher. In addition to providing elective, scaffolded reading instruction, Reading
Plus® also ensures efficient development of foundational visual, perceptual, and information
processing skills, the "unseen and unheard" skills required for skilled reading proficiency.

Reading Plus was piloted in the Fall of 2010 and is now being fully implemented in all sections
of EN 093 Reading and Vocabulary Development III. As a formative assessment tool, Reading
Plus is helping with instruction and learning. As a summative assessment tool, Reading Plus will
inform planning and decision-making in the ELI program.

Standard II.A.2.h

The institution awards credit based on student achievement of the course's stated learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.h**
>
> The institution awards credit based on student achievement of the course's stated learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education.

Credits are determined by the course content based upon student learning outcomes and the number of contact hours needed to satisfy the course requirement. Credits awarded are consistent with accepted norms in higher education.

Status

As a result of work in Cycle 1 of program review, all programs' courses now have complete student learning outcomes (SLOs) that are consistent with course SLOs at comparable institutions.

NMC has developed articulation agreements with other post-secondary institutions in the Pacific region as a member of the Pacific Postsecondary Education Council. These agreements will help ensure that credits earned at NMC will be transferable to other institutions and vice versa.

Standard II.A.2.i

The institution awards degrees and certificates based on student achievement of program learning outcomes (PLOs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs).

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.2.h**
>
> The institution awards credit based on student achievement of the course's stated learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education.

The institution ensures that achievement of stated program learning outcomes, listed in the course syllabi, are the basis for awarding degrees and certificates.

The institutional level dialogue about expectations of students earning a degree or certificate is conducted in Academic Council, and results in changes to the catalog, Individualized Degree Plans, Individualized Certificate Plans. Dialogue also occurs during academic advising.

NMC identifies SLOs for its degrees and certificates at the program level by creating course guides for courses needed to meet the degree and certificate programs.   Academic Council reviews and acts on courses presented for creation, modification or cancellation as needed to meet program needs.

Status

As a result of work in Cycle 1 of program review, each program now has complete program learning outcomes (PLOs) that reflect that program's area of focus.

Standard II.A.3

The courses that have been deemed general education courses are those selected by faculty and subsequently submitted to Academic Council through the respective departments of said faculty. These courses have been approved by Academic Council and, as such, represent the philosophy and goals of General Education.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) guide faculty decisions to propose courses that are subsequently submitted to Academic Council. These courses are approved by Academic Council only when said learning outcomes are deemed to meet the requirements within the framework of general education. General Education SLOs can be found in the General Education Assessment Committee E-portfolio, Academic Council meeting minutes on proposed courses, and said discussion about these courses.

The rationale for general education is communicated to all stakeholders through a variety of means, including: course syllabi, NMC Catalogue, postings in classrooms (and other student venues), NMC's website, as well as at meetings open to the community.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.3**
>
> The institution requires of all academic and vocational degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on the expertise of its faculty, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum by examining the stated learning outcomes for the course.
>
> **ACCJC Standard II.A.3.a**
>
> An understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: areas include the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.
>
> **ACCJC Standard II.A.3.b**
>
> A capability to be a productive individual and life-long learner: skills include oral and written communication, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis/logical thinking, and the ability to acquire knowledge through a variety of means.
>
> **ACCJC Standard II.A.3.c**
>
> A recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen: qualities include an appreciation of ethical principles; civility and interpersonal skills; respect for cultural diversity; historical and aesthetic sensitivity; and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally, and globally.

The general education philosophy is reflected in the degree requirements in that students must demonstrate having achieved comprehensive learning outcomes in relation to a variety of disciplines within the areas of Languages, Humanities, Sciences and Mathematics. According to the NMC Catalogue: "The goal of the college's General Education Program is for students to acquire important general knowledge, develop basic academic skills, develop critical thinking skills, and be able to integrate their knowledge and skills so as to promote the capacity for life-long learning".

The basic content and methodology of traditional areas of knowledge are reviewed by the General Education Assessment Committee, whose responsibility is to verify that individual courses support one or more of the general education outcomes and to recommend changes to these courses as needed.

Once the General Education Assessment Committee has verified the content-related appropriateness of courses and made recommendations, these findings are presented to academic departments and subsequently are reviewed and approved by Academic Council. Periodic review of course guides and syllabi by instructors, department chairs and Academic Council ensures there is a consistent process for verifying the inclusion of general-education-appropriate content and methodology.

Status

In the Fall of 2009, NMC faculty and administrators worked with consultants Mary Allen and Fred Trap, both of whom have extensive expertise and experience in assessment and program review. Following that consultation, the General Education Assessment Committee revisited and evaluated NMC's General Education Outcomes to ensure that they were aligned with accreditation standards and best practice. As a result of its evaluation, the committee then proposed the adoption of 12 new General Education Outcomes to replace the prior 5 outcomes. The proposed outcomes were reviewed by the Planning, Program Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) in the Spring of 2010 and forwarded to the Academic Council and the Dean of Academic Programs and Services for further review. The council and dean are finalizing their review of the proposed outcomes for final adoption for the 2011—2012 Academic Year.

Standard II.A.4

All degree programs at NMC include at least one area of focused study. Programs are approved by the Board of Regents and are documented in the course catalog and in the individual degree programs (IDP).   In the School of Education for a Bachelor of Science degree the following emphases are: Elementary, Special Education, Early Childhood, and Rehabilitation and Human Services. In the Arts and Sciences, the Liberal Arts program offers an Associate in Liberal Arts. The Criminal Justice program offers an Associate in Applied Science in Criminal Justice and certificate of completion in basic law enforcement. The Business Department offers an Associate in Arts in Business, Associate in Applied Science degrees with an emphasis in accounting, business management, and computer application, as well as an A.A.S degree in Hospitality Management. The Nursing Department offers an Associate of Science degree in Nursing. Natural Resources Management offers an Associate in Science in Natural Resources Management.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.4**
>
> All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core.

Status

In the Fall of 2010, the School of Education developed new Individual Degree Programs in the following areas: Special Education – Mild/Moderate Needs, Early Childhood Education, and Rehabilitation and Human Services.

Standard II.A.5

NMC offers occupational and vocational degrees in Nursing and Education. These programs are required to complete a program review narrative, which analyzes the number of students who graduated and passed their respective licensure examinations, the NCLEX for Nursing and the PRAXIS I for Education. As part of NMC's program review, these test results are recorded and tracked for trends and growth patterns.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.5**
>
> Students completing vocational and occupational certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment and other applicable standards and are prepared for external licensure and certification.

NMC has individual degree programs (IDPs) and individual certificate programs (ICPs) that students must complete in order to graduate from the perspective program (2009 – 2012 NMC Catalogue). The IDPs and ICPs determine reliable information about its students' ability to meet professional competencies.

Status

The Praxis I requirement for job placement with Public School System (PSS) of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island (CNMI) is 170 for Mathematics, 170 for Reading, and 170 for Writing. Based on recent data retrieved for students in AY 2009-2010, 44 of 76 students, or 57%, met the requirements to fulfill the Praxis I scores for teacher certification in job placement with PSS.

Standard II.A.6.a

According to Board of Regents Policy 3008, Academic Council is the governing body that oversees and ensures accuracy of information in all academic programs offered at NMC. Degrees and certificates requirements are clearly described in individual degree programs (IDPs) and individual certificate programs (ICPs), course guides, and course syllabi. Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are included in the description of courses and programs.

Instructors ensure that all students receive a course syllabus that includes SLOs. NMC verifies that individual sections of courses adhere to the course objectives/learning outcomes through course observations, review of course syllabi and course evaluation by department chairs, and course assessment.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.6**
>
> The institution assures that students and prospective students receive clear and accurate information about educational courses and programs and transfer policies. The institution describes its degrees and certificates in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning outcomes consistent with those in the institution's officially approved course outline.
>
> **ACCJC Standard II.A.6.a**
>
> The institution makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements as appropriate to its mission.

The NMC website and catalogue also provides additional information on courses and programs, as well as clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies.

Status

The NMC Catalogue was updated and approved by the Board of Regents on March 11, 2011. Available on NMC's website, the new catalogue updates information on courses, programs, and relevant policies.

Standard II.A.6.b

Board of Regents policies 3008 and 3009 addresses program eliminations and major changes. An Academic Program Action Request is completed to eliminate or modify programs. This form is used to ensure that the students are advised on how to complete educational requirements when programs are eliminated or modified.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.6.b**
>
> When programs are eliminated or program requirements are significantly changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.

Standard II.A.6.c

The NMC website and catalogue clearly, accurately, and consistently provides current information on policies, procedures, and press releases to prospective and current students, the public, and its personnel.

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.6.c**
>
> The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently to prospective and current students, the public, and its personnel through its catalogs, statements, and publications, including those presented in electronic formats. It regularly reviews institutional policies, procedures, and publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

Status

The NMC Catalogue was updated and approved by the Board of Regents on March 11, 2011. Available on NMC's website, the new catalogue updates information on courses, programs, and relevant policies.

The Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA) regularly updates the website to keep content current and accurate.

Standard II.A.7.a

A number of Board of Regents (BOR) policies demonstrate Northern Marianas College's institutional commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge with the expectation that faculty balance their academic freedom with the responsibility to distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline.

BOR Policy 3001, "Professional Ethics", states, "In recognizing a special responsibility to their disciplines to seek the truth and to state it as they see it, they practice intellectual

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.7**
>
> In order to assure the academic integrity of the teaching-learning process, the institution uses and makes public governing board-adopted policies on academic freedom and responsibility, student academic honesty, and specific institutional beliefs or world views. These policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.
>
> **ACCJC Standard II.A.7.a**
>
> Faculty distinguishes between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. They present data and information fairly and objectively.

honesty." The policy further states, "Instructors encourage in their students the active pursuit of learning and honest academic achievement." To that end, the policy notes that instructors "adhere strictly to their proper role as intellectual guides and academic counselors…[and] present in their actions and in their person examples of the highest standards of professional discipline."

In upholding the highest standards of professional discipline, BOR Policy 3001 recognizes that instructors "measure the use of these rights and the urgency of these obligations in light of their responsibilities to their students, to the College, and to their profession." The policy further states, "When [faculty] speak or act as private persons, they avoid giving any impression that they speak or act for the College." This policy is reinforced by College procedure 4069, "Code of Ethics", which requires that faculty "take adequate precautions to distinguish between his/her personal views and those of the College."

BOR Policy 3001 is reinforced by BOR Policy 3004, "Academic Freedom and Responsibility", which states, "Academic freedom is the right of members of the academic community to conduct research, to teach and to communicate knowledge in their fields of expertise, openly and without influence by individuals with a particular bias."   The policy also requires that such academic freedom be exercised responsibly, stating that instructors "should also take care to distinguish between personal conviction and proven conclusions and to present relevant data fairly and objectively." The policy is reinforced by College procedure 4069, "Code of Ethics", which states that instructors "shall promote the student's independent action in his/her pursuit of knowledge and shall not prevent the student access to varying points of view [and] shall present the subject matter for which he/she bears responsibility."

These policies and procedures are embedded into the contracts of faculty according to BOR Policy 4020, which reiterates, "Faculty shall be guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize a special responsibility to their disciplines to seek the truth and to state it as they see it -- they practice intellectual honesty." In accordance with this policy, faculty contracts also state, "Instructors encourage the active pursuit of learning

and honest academic achievement in their students…[and] present in their actions as in their persons examples of the highest standards of scholarly discipline."

These policies that expressly require instructors to distinguish between their personal opinions and professionally accepted views and to present data and information fairly and objectively are enforced by instructor evaluation and employee disciplinary policies and procedures. BOR Policy 3011 "Student Evaluations" requires that every "instructor in the College is to be evaluated by his/her students in every course, in every academic session." Such student evaluations are part of a broader instructor evaluation as set forth in BOR Policy 3033 "Evaluation of Instructional Faculty" and carried out by corresponding NMC Administrative Procedure 3033, which includes evaluation tools such as Student Evaluations, classroom observations, and conferences between the instructor and his or her respective Department Chair or Director.

Should the evaluation process lead to the determination that an instructor has consistently failed to distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views within his or her respective discipline, Administrative Procedure 3033 calls on his or her Department Chair or Director to work with the instructor to develop a Professional Development Plan (PDP) to improve in that area. BOR Policy 4352 and NMC Administrative Procedure 4352 also provide mechanisms for suspending or terminating the instructor in the event that he or she fails to follow BOR policies, including BOR Policy 3004, which requires instructors "to distinguish between personal conviction and proven conclusions and to present relevant data fairly and objectively."

Status

These policies and procedures are enforced when instructors consistently fail to distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views within his or her respective discipline. However, evidence of such disciplinary actions cannot be divulged due to confidentiality of personnel matters.

Over the past year, faculty have also engaged in several discussions to deepen their understanding of the expectation to distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in their respective disciplines and to present data and information fairly and objectively. A Faculty Assembly was held on August 27, 2010, in which the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and the Faculty Senate President led a discussion about College policies and procedures that require faculty to distinguish between personal conviction and professional views, particularly in the classroom. At the assembly, copies of BOR Policy 3004 regarding Academic Freedom and Responsibility were provided, which the assembly discussed. The Faculty Assembly also discussed additional means of assessing the degree to which instructor comply with the policy.

Over the past year in Academic Council, faculty have continued the discussion of how to effectively measure and evaluate how instructors present data and information fairly and objectively and to what extent faculty distinguish between their personal views and professional views accepted within their respective disciplines. Central to this discussion has been a move to

improve instructor evaluations through a more comprehensive process that includes student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

Academic Council, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness have also developed additional questions for student evaluations of courses and instructors that will assess instructors' objectivity and professionalism in presenting data fairly and distinguishing between their personal opinions and professionally accepted views in the classroom. These questions will be included in the new Student Evaluation Form, which will be used for the first time at the end of the Spring 2011 term. The Dean of Academic Programs and Services will work with Department Chairs to incorporate results from those student evaluations into comprehensive evaluations of faculty to improve their compliance with BOR Policy 3004. The Dean will also work with the Office of the President and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to aggregate institutional level data from student evaluations to assess and improve the institution's compliance with that policy.

A Faculty Assembly was also held on Friday, February 25, 2011, in which faculty continued the discussion of distinguishing between professionally accepted views within their respective disciplines and their own personal opinions, both in and out of the classroom . As part of the discussion, faculty expressed support for the addition of questions to the Student Evaluation Form that will help instructors, Department Chairs, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services, and the institution as a whole to accurately evaluate the objectivity and professionalism of instructors in making the distinction between their personal convictions and professionally accepted views.

At the assembly, faculty also discussed the need to conduct a more immediate campus-wide student survey to gauge current student opinion on the issue. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness thus launched an online survey that ran for one week from March 3, 2011 to March 10, 2011. That survey posed the following questions to students, to which students would respond either "Never", "Rarely", "Sometimes", "Often", or "Always".

1. My instructors present information fairly and objectively.
2. My instructors spend class time on issues or topics related to the course.
3. My instructors respect and encourage the expression of differing viewpoints during class discussions.
4. My instructors present information from their perspectives.
5. My instructors spend class time discussing problems at the college.

Students were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments to clarify their responses.

A total of 300 respondents took the survey, which represents 25% of students enrolled for the Spring 2011 term. Figure II.A-1 reflects how students responded to the first statement, "My instructors present information fairly and objectively." These results reveal that a majority of students, 84%, believe that their instructors present information fairly and objectively often or always, while only a minority, 3%, believe that their instructor rarely or never present information fairly and objectively.

**Figure II.A-1
"My instructors present information fairly and objectively."**

Never, 2, 1%
Rarely, 4, 2%
Sometimes, 29, 13%
Always, 98, 45%
Often, 84, 39%
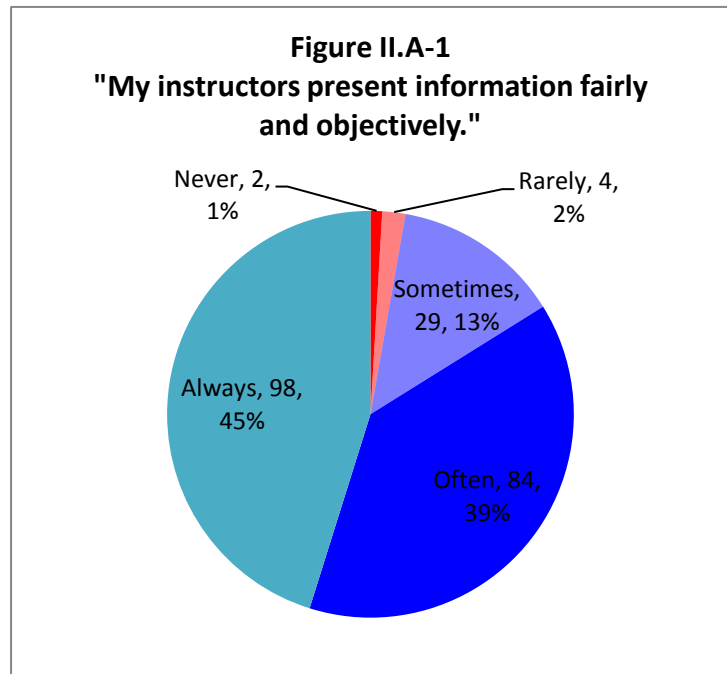
The Dean of Academic Programs and Services will embed these survey questions into the new Student End of Term Course Evaluation at the end of the Spring 2011 term.   Results from these evaluations will be used to determine professional development needs for all faculty, as well as develop personal Professional Development Plans (PDPs) for individual instructors. Where necessary, the dean will take appropriate disciplinary action against faculty that fail to present data and information fairly and objectively.

Standard II.A.7.b

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.7.b**
>
> The institution establishes and publishes clear expectations concerning student academic honesty and consequences for dishonesty.

NMC is committed to ensuring that students are made aware of its strict academic policies on plagiarism and cheating. Through various means, the College provides printed materials and conducts seminars to its students and faculty to educate about such actions and its consequences.

Academic dishonesty is clearly defined in the College catalogue, its website, and in the Board of Regents policies.

The section on "Institutional Policies" found in the College catalogue defines the two highly scrutinized categories of academic honesty, which are cheating and plagiarism. This is excerpt in the catalogue is taken directly from Board of Regent's (BOR) Policy No. 3010. A description of each category includes examples of activities that would qualify as either cheating or plagiarism. Students found engaging in such behaviors are subject to suspension or dismissal from the College.

Printed copies of the College's catalogue are a key reference resource available in all academic departments and those providing student services. The catalogue is also provided to all

instructional and non-instructional faculty members of the College upon publication to serve as a guideline for instructional purposes as well as advising and informing students. The NMC website also presents an electronic copy of the catalogue readily accessible for members of the community, including students.

All faculties are required to draft and submit a syllabi for every course being taught. A course syllabus is always provided to students on the first day of instruction that details information about the course as well as information related to applicable academic policies of the College, including academic dishonesty and consequences of such actions.

BOR Policy No. 3004 "Academic Freedom and Responsibility" is specific to the expectations of faculty and their interaction with students. The last section of the policy states that faculty members should be familiar with, not only the College's catalogue, but also with academic policies, regulations, and procedures published in various policy manuals.

All BOR policies are located on the College's network "N" drive. The "N" drive is installed on all staff and faculty computers to be made readily accessible in providing approved policies by the Board as supporting documentation for the College's standard operating policies and procedures. The Human Resource Office (HRO) serve as the main source of retrieving any Board approved policies. The HRO have both electronic and hard copies available on hand.

Status

Much dialogue has taken place in order to further educate faculty and staff of the existence of academic policies on academic dishonesty. Discussions have been included through Faculty Senate and departmental meetings.

As an on-going effort, Faculty Senate is in the process of revising the currently proposed faculty handbook. This handbook is a compilation of information faculty should be well are of, including those in the employment contract as well as academic BOR policies.

The NMC Catalogue was also updated and approved by the Board of Regents on March 11, 2011. Available on NMC's website, the new catalogue provides current and accurate information on BOR policies and NMC procedures regarding academic dishonesty.

Standard II.A.7.c

NMC is committed to ensuring that all members of the College, including staff, faculty, administrators, and students, are made aware of its strict conformity to specific codes of conduct as well as seeking to instill specific beliefs or world views in accordance to its

> **ACCJC Standard II.A.7.c**
>
> Institutions that require conformity to specific codes of conduct of staff, faculty, administrators, or students, or that seek to instill specific beliefs or world views, give clear prior notice of such policies, including statements in the catalogue and/or appropriate faculty or student handbooks.

codes of conduct. Through various means, the College provides printed materials and conducts seminars to its faculty, staff, administrators and students as well as offer programs to educate on the available resources that communicate such information.

Codes of conduct are clearly defined in the College catalogue, Board of Regents (BOR) policies, Presidential Directives and Memos, annual faculty evaluations, and during student advising. The section on "Institutional Policies" found in the College catalogue provides an emphasis on student regulations, responsibilities, and codes of conduct expected to be upheld by its students. The policies clearly indicate behavioral characteristics students should possess and behaviors the College will not condone on campus. Although the College has not developed a rigid code of conduct, students are expected to maintain a standard behavior within the community norm.

Printed copies of the College's catalogue are a key reference resource available in all academic departments and those providing student services. The catalogue is also provided to all instructional and non-instructional faculty members of the College upon publication to serve as a guideline for instructional purposes as well as advising and informing students. The NMC website also presents an electronic copy of the catalogue readily accessible for members of the community, including students.

Several Board of Regents policies address staff, faculty, and administrator codes of conduct including BOR Policy Nos. 3001, 4020a, 4069, 4212, 4352, 4352, 4365 and 4425. These policies include language to ensure adherence to the institution's core values, expectations, and conditions of employment for staff, faculty, and administrators as well as related language to ensure that faculty are in adherence with academic policies and its codes of conduct.

Aside from BOR policies are the administrative policies, the College's Administrative Policy No. 4069 entitled "Ethics" provides a clear and concise description of codes of conduct that are not deemed acceptable by faculty.

All Board of Regents policies are located on the College's network "N" drive. The "N" drive is installed on all staff and faculty computers to be made readily accessible in providing approved policies by the Board as supporting documentation for the College's standard operating policies and procedures. The Human Resource Office serve as the main source of retrieving any Board approved policies. The HRO have both electronic and hard copies available on hand. Throughout the academic year, the College's President has the full authority to issue Presidential Directives and Memos that stress and reiterate the importance in adherence with the College's academic and behavioral policies.

A course syllabus is another source documentation that is provided to students outlining course goals/outcomes, topics to be covered, expectations, as well as related College policies. Faculty makes note, both written and verbally, of the acceptable/unacceptable behaviors according to standards of the College. A calendar is included of the topics to be discussed for each class session to avoid topical digressions from subject matters to be covered within the course. Faculty and staff participate engage in various dialogues to ensure that the College sends its message about codes of conduct. Some of these include academic assemblies, departmental meetings, and one-on-one faculty and student conferences during pre-semester advising and regular semester advising week.

Various professional developments such as FERPA, EEO, and ADA workshops held throughout academic year to further educate, inform, and update faculty, adjunct faculty, staff, and administrators on their duties and responsibilities as employees of the institution.

The College's codes of conduct directly affect how the faculty seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views.

Again, several Board of Regents policies address faculty communicating specific beliefs and world views including BOR Policy Nos. 3004, 3008, 3011, 4020a, 4069, and 4425. These policies ensure the compliance of such standard while maintaining academic integrity and freedom towards students and the community.

The College seeks to inform and enforce its policies as well as align the policies with the goals to accomplish. The main goal of the College is to fulfill and live up to its stated mission and philosophy. Those two key components of the College's goals align directly with the stated General Education and Student and Program Learning Outcomes. The outcomes assist faculty members serve as a guideline on the expression of beliefs and world views in the classroom as well as outside.

Aside from policies, faculty should be well aware of their responsibilities on means and ways of educating students and the community while maintaining academic integrity and freedom as stated in the contract of employment.

Status

Although most of the departments and classrooms have the outcomes posted up to serve as a constant reminder to the College's staff, faculty, administrators and students, NMC aims to post up the outcomes, along with the institution's mission and philosophy, in every classroom, department, and building to increase awareness of institution wide goals and ways the College strives to achieve them.

A proposed faculty and adjunct orientation will be held annually to include Student Support Services, HRO, and Department Chairs in educating and reiterating the College's policies for clarifications and concerns regarding such policies.

As an on-going effort, Faculty Senate is in the process of revising the currently proposed faculty handbook. This handbook is a compilation of information faculty should be well are of, including those in the employment contract as well as academic Board of Regents policies that would apply to codes of conduct and trying to instill specific beliefs and world views.

Standard II.A.8

NMC does not offer curricula in foreign locations.

ACCJC Standard II.A.8

Institutions offering curricula in foreign locations to students other than U.S. nationals operate in conformity with standards and applicable Commission policies.

Standard II.B

Consistent with its mission, NMC recruits and admits a diverse student population who are able to benefit from the numerous programs and services offered by the College. In direct support of this commitment, the institution provides a broad spectrum of support services, both face-to-face and online, to assure student access, progress, learning, and success. Services provided by the Division of Student Services include: outreach and recruitment, admissions, credit evaluation, placement assessment, orientation, advising, academic tutorials, counseling, early intervention, disability support, assistance with financial aid, student leadership and civic engagement, library services, student employment, educational, historical and cultural workshops. On-going and additional support is provided to students by the Counseling Programs and Services, Disability Support Services (DSS), International Student Service, Academic Advising, Early Intervention, Recruitment and Outreach Programs, Career Services, New Student Orientation, and the Office of Student Activities and Leadership (OSAL).

> **ACCJC Standard II.B**
>
> The institution recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission. Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services. The institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution.

Other support services are in place to meet the needs of our underrepresented student populations, including College Access Challenge Program (CACP), TRIO Upward Bound, and Educational Talent Search (ETS), and Learning in Communities (LinC). Additionally, a host of events and activities are scheduled each month to engage diverse populations, ensuring their retention and success.

The Office of the Dean of Student Services oversees these departments/programs that support student learning and achievement, which includes the following:

Office of Admissions and Records (OAR)

OAR is the main office for admitting students, maintaining student records, providing Family Education Rights and Privacy Acts (FERPA) training, maintaining student enrollment data, articulating course credits, and coordinating registration and graduation events.

Financial Aid Office (FAO)

FAO administers grants and scholarships to provide financial aid to students who demonstrate financial need. FAO also reviews student academic standings, provides information on financial aid options, reviews and assists scholarship applicants, and reviews eligibility for student employment. FAO is directly responsible for administering the following financial aid programs:

- Federal Pell Grant Program
- College Access Challenge Project (CACP)
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal College Work Study (FCWS)

Other scholarships that are announced through FAO are:
- CNMI Scholarship
- Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Scholarship
- Micronesian Region of Different Island States Scholarship
- NMC Board of Regents Scholarship
- NMC Foundation Scholarship
- Tan Siu Lin Foundation Scholarship
- Businesswoman of the Year Scholarship
- Government Employees Professional Development Assistance Program
- US Army Reserve Tuition Assistance
- Veterans Educational Assistance Benefits Program (i.e. GI Bill)
- Pacific Islands Club (PIC Saipan) Scholarship

Library Services and Programs

The mission of the Library Programs and Services at Northern Marianas College is to provide both resources and an environment that enhances and encourages the college's academic and community-based programs.

The Library supports instructional curriculum and academic research for students in their respective areas of study. The primary goal of the library is to offer a wide range of resources to NMC students, staff and faculty by providing a collection of monographs, serials and audiovisual (AV) materials, along with access to electronic materials that reflect the information needs of the college. The Library also promotes Information Literacy through ongoing instruction and outreach efforts, and strives to continually improve access to in-print and online resources, such as electronic journal databases. These services are provided in fulfillment of Accreditation Standard IIC.

Counseling Programs and Services

Counseling Programs & Services (CPS), also within the Division of Student Services, works to empower students to articulate and achieve educational, personal and career goals. Counselors provide academic advising services   and personal counseling to assist students with educational planning, academic and life skills development, crises intervention, and personal issues that may hamper student success. Counseling Programs and Services also holds regular Student Success Series seminars throughout the academic year 2009-2010.

In addition, academic tutorial services are coordinated out of CPS to assist students who struggle with course instruction and material, particularly in developmental English and math courses.

Counselors assist the College to recruit, retain, and graduate these students and provide specialized services for students with disabilities, and international students.

Disability Support Services

The mission of Disability Support Services (DSS) is to provide a rewarding learning experience for students with disabilities at the Northern Marianas College.

DSS funcstions as the focal point for coordination of services and auxiliary aids for students with disabilities.   In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the College provides services in accordance with these federal regulations.

DSS works to assist students with permanent or temporary disabilities to receive "reasonable accommodations" in academic and non-academic programs that provide them with an equal opportunity to fully participate and enjoy all aspects of student life at NMC. DSS also undertakes efforts to increase awareness among NMC staff, faculty, and students of disability related issues.

The Disability Services Coordinator, who also functions as a counselor and academic advisor, assists students in identifying and achieving educational goals; assesses students for assistive technology needs; determines "reasonable accommodations"; and coordinates services for student support.

Federal law requires that students with disabilities be considered on a case-by-case basis. A student must identify himself/herself as an individual with a disability and provide appropriate documentation from an appropriate   licensed professional to diagnose their disability in order to receive services.

Students who have a documented disability which substantially limits one or more major life activities are eligible for services from DSS which may include but are not limited to: assistive technology and/or devices, alternative testing services, early/priority registration, sign language interpreters, note-taking assistance, readers, and tutors.

International Student Services

The International Student Counselor (ISC) provides individual counseling services to international students within the institution who have problems or may be affected by events within their country of origin. Additionally, the ISC also makes referrals to service providers and maintains a relationship with students for purposes of attaining success in their education. The counselor assists international students in finding housing, consults on day-to-day issues, and provides them with advice, as necessary. The International Student Counselor assists with the transition of international students to their new environment. The International Student Counselor also provides early intervention services to international students to promote retention and academic success at Northern Marianas College. The ISC interacts with students and coordinates campus and community resources, for example, general information on

transportation, housing, etc. This includes coordination and participation with international students during NMC student activities and other institutional events. The ISC assists international students in completion of the NMC admission application. Such activities include filling out of additional required forms and acquiring translation services, when appropriate.

The ISC assists international students in the processing of their U.S. I-20 Immigration Forms for purposes of applying to obtain student visas. The International Student Counselor is designated to maintain a tracking system of all international students who have applied or enrolled. The International Student Counselor is the designated school official (DSO) to maintain, update and report international student enrollment status with offices or departments within the Northern Marianas College. The International Student Counselor is tasked to maintain a relationship with international students by conducting outreach activities and events.

Career Center

The Career Center helps students identify their career interests and skills and locate training possibilities for specific academic or vocational interests.

The Center offers career guidance, self-assessment tests, identification of career choices, acquisition of employment skills, and on-the-job training. Applications and information pertaining to employment and educational opportunities, including college admission requirements and financial aid, are also available. The Center also has a comprehensive collection of audiovisual career materials for both students and faculty, in addition to videotapes on career exploration, job searches, and personal development. The Career Center staff organizes career fairs and similar events to connect students with career opportunities in the CNMI. The Career Center provides students with access to the following services:

1. **Kuder Career Portfolio**: The lifelong Kuder Career Portfolio allows individuals to take research-based assessments, explore education and careers, lay out a school-specific education plan, and plan for career success. The portfolio takes individuals step by step through the career development process starting with learning interests to choosing a educational institution and getting a job. Individuals can continue to access their portfolio throughout their lifetime for on-going career development.

2. **Internship Programs**: Available internship programs arranged with employers offers students an opportunity to acquire valuable training experience outside the classroom in their chosen fields of study. Students enrolled in internship courses receive both academic college credits and income for their training outside the College under this program. The program allows students to explore and train in one or more fields of employment in preparation for future career goals.

3. **Service Learning Program**: The Service Learning Program offers students the opportunity to enrich their classroom learning through the experience of service in the community, thereby promoting civic engagement and responsibility. Funded by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service through Campus Compact

National Center for Community Colleges, this program is available at the main campus and the instructional sites.

4. **Testing Services**: Many national admission tests are coordinated and administered through the Career Center's Testing Coordinator. These tests include the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I and SAT II) and the Graduate Record Examination.

TRIO Upward Bound Program

Upward Bound is a federally funded program, sponsored by the United States Department of Education. It is designed to help high school students prepare for college.

Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their pre-college performance and ultimately, in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families along with high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions postsecondary education. The Upward Bound Program offers the following services and activities:

- instruction in reading, writing, study skills, and other subjects necessary for success in education beyond high school;
- academic, financial, and personal counseling;
- exposure to academic programs and cultural events;
- tutorial and mentoring services;
- Information on postsecondary education opportunities;
- Assistance in completing college admissions and financial aid applications;
- assistance with college placement tests;
- a six-week summer enrichment program or a math & science summer program;
- recreational activities (swimming, baseball, basketball, table tennis, volleyball, etc.);
- career exploration activities (mentoring, guest speakers, workshops, and business tours);
- seminars (college information and orientation, study skills development, drug awareness and prevention);
- field trips (take occasional on-island field trips that will strengthen the academic content of the courses taken during the summer/academic year.) and;
- cultural awareness activities (cultural understanding, appreciation and awareness, field trips, guest speakers, workshops, training in local arts and crafts.

TRIO Educational Talent Search Program

The Educational Talent Search Program is a discretionary grant federally funded through the United States Department of Education designed to provide educational guidance and support to middle and high school students. The purpose of this program is to assist young people from the ages of 11 to 27 to complete high school and to enroll in college or in a vocational/technical institute after high school. Educational Talent Search offers the following services and activities:

- academic, financial, career, or personal counseling, including advice on entry and reentry to secondary or postsecondary programs;
- activities to enhance study skills and test taking abilities;
- workshops on how to take standardized tests (e.g., the Scholastic Assessment Test SAT , the American College Test ACT , aptitude tests, personality tests, etc.);
- career exploration and cultural activities;
- visits to area colleges and vocational training centers;
- information and assistance in completing college admission applications;
- financial aid workshops for students and their parents, and assistances in completing financial aid applications;
- academic support for students of limited English proficiency and;
- tutorial services (mentoring and peer tutoring).

Student Government

The Associated Students of Northern Marianas College (ASNMC) supports a robust student government, along with oversight of the clubs and other student organizations on campus. Numerous opportunities are made available to students through a variety of resources to participate in service learning, work experience, and other civic and community related activities.

NMC Recruitment

The NMC Recruitment Team promotes access to the College. Special Admission, Early Admission, and Ability-to-Benefit programs provide access to students who have the interest and aptitude to enroll in courses but have yet to complete a high school diploma or its equivalent. Similarly, the TRIO Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, and College Access Challenge Project (CACP) programs help prepare students for admission to college and college success. These programs target students identified as low-income, students with disabilities, and Pacific Islander students . Through the College's outreach and recruitment initiatives, the College recruits and admits students without regard to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and sexual orientation, relationship to the College, its employees, or social-economic status.

Students are made aware of the many services and resources available to them through multiple outlets, including the College website, the College catalog, New Student Orientation, student workshops), and the schedule of classes. These services are also detailed in the College website, which is updated regularly and available in print.

The College assures the efficacy of its student support services through an integrated planning, budgeting, and planning process that engages NMC programs in self-reflective dialogue how well the College is meeting student needs. In particular, through program review, programs in Student Services divisions analyze student learning outcomes assessment, tutoring/mentoring logs, and numerous student surveys, including student satisfaction surveys, point of service surveys, registration surveys, student advising surveys, and orientation surveys. Results are analyzed and acted upon by faculty and staff for improvement as part of the ongoing evaluation

cycle associated with program review. To this end, student services programs are mission driven with established goals, outcomes, and measurements.

The institution provides support services on many fronts, integrating them whenever possible and reaching out to ensure access, progress, learning, and success. In the subsequent sections of this standard, support services are detailed, making clear the level at which the institution meets this standard.

Status

In 2009, NMC applied for and was approved a grant for the CNMI College Access Challenge Project (CACP), a program designed to promote the value of higher education and prepare low-income, Pacific Islander students for admission to College and success through their first-year of enrollment. CACP is committed to building meaningful working relationships with its CNMI partner agencies to deliver programming, resources and direct services to increase access to higher education among underrepresented students. CACP provides the following services:

- College information sessions for students and families about higher education and financing options;
- Financial aid and FAFSA form completion workshops;
- Professional development for system-wide guidance counselors and student support personnel;
- Career and college fairs;
- Math, English, SAT and ACT enrichment classes;
- Academic summer camps;
- College exposure tours;
- Need-based financial aid and;
- Outreach activities for at-risk students.

Over the past couple of years, NMC has engaged in aggressive and successful recruiting efforts. In addition to community outreach into junior high and high schools throughout the islands, the College's flagship recruitment event is the annual Start Smart Seminar, held on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Co-sponsored by the Public School System, the seminar features various presentations from PSS, NMC and NMC Alumni. With the guidance of NMC and PSS staff, students are given broad overview of options for grants and various financial assistance programs available at the College. Hands-on activities are also a part of the seminar to help enhance exposure on proper ways to filling and completing college applications and financial aid forms.

Aside from personal guidance, current NMC students and alumni also share personal views and experiences of life on the college level, using NMC as an example. Presenters also discuss academic programs offered at NMC, including education, nursing, criminal justice, liberal arts, business, and hospitality management.

As result of these recruitment efforts, NMC experienced a substantial enrollment increase for the Fall 2010. As the Figure below demonstrates, the Fall 2010 term's 1,234, enrollment was up by 25% from the Fall 2009 term, which had an enrollment of 991, and up by 56% from the Fall 2008 term, which had an enrollment of 792.

NMC Enrollment

1400	
1200	1234
1000	991
800	792
600	
	Fall 2008 Fall 2009 Fall 2010
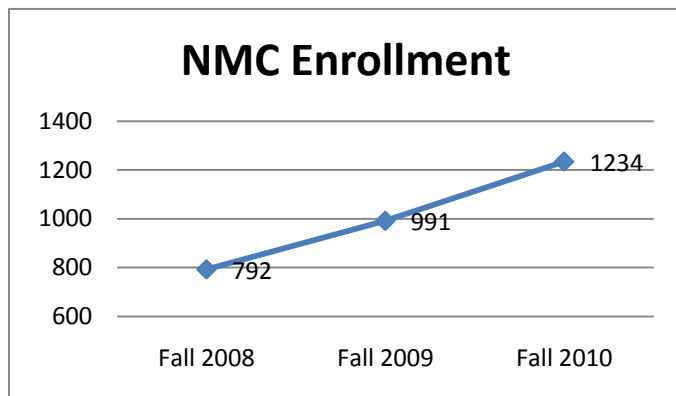
Standard II.B.1

NMC assures the quality of its student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the College.

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.1**
>
> The institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution.

The quality of programs in student support services is monitored and improved through the College's annual program assessment and biannual program review processes as laid out in the Institutional Excellence Guide (Appendix I.B-1—Institutional Excellence Guide). As the guide states, "Program review is a college-wide activity that presents findings and recommendations unique to each program with the clear intent of facilitating both improvement and accountability as they relate to program effectiveness."

Facilitated by the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), program assessment at NMC utilizes the Nichols and Nichols Five-Column Model (Form 1) (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) to identify program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), and/or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) that are consistent with the College's mission. Programs in student support services develop specific measures and criteria for determining success for each outcome. Data are gathered and analyzed to determine if the outcomes are being met or if administrative processes need change. A program's Form 1 is incorporated into its program review report (Form 2) (Appendix I.A-3—Sample Form 2), which provides a comprehensive analysis of the program's effectiveness and presents recommendations for the program and the institution based on a thorough analysis of data.

As part of annual program assessment and biannual program review, programs in student support services use the following surveys to gather data for analysis, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement:

- Registration surveys
- Kuder Career Assessments (Interest, Skills, Work Values)

- Graduate surveys
- Program surveys (Library surveys, Upward Bound – Comprehensive Testing for Basic Skills (CTBS), Academic Advising)
- Placement testing
- Survey on Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)
- Community College Learning Assessment (CCLA)
- Event evaluations (Start Smart, Cash for College, and Info. Sessions, Student Success Series workshop evaluations, and Career Fair)

Status

The College's program review processes, begun in Cycle 1 of program review in academic year 2007—2008, led to important developments for instructional programs. The Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) and the Academic Council provided guidance and support to all programs in developing their respective program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), and administrative unit outcomes (AUOs). Now, all student services programs have established SLOs and AUOs, which are assessed and evaluated as part of program review, which lead to changes in programs.

Program review has also resulted in notable improvements in student support services. In addition to improvements at the program level, program review led to the following developments in student support services:
- A full-time Disabilities Counselor was funded and hired in 2009.
- Four new full-time equivalent positions were added to the Office of Admissions and Records to improve registration and data entry into PowerCampus.
- The Curriculum Resource Center (CRC) was equipped with more updated curriculum content materials, duplicates of items for students' use including online resources, Video and DVD sets, and equipment such as LCD projectors, VHS and DVD players.

Notable improvements have also taken place in helping students. For example, the College Access Challenge Project (CACP) held a Summer Academy July 6 to August 13, 2010. There were a total of 44 scholarship recipients, 20 who had just graduated from high school. The calendar of events included a section of the College Life Skills (BE 111) class offered here at NMC, a Creative Writing Class, an orientation session aimed to introduce the Kuder Career Inventory Testing as well as other workshops aimed at supporting college success for students.

Standard II.B.2

NMC's General Catalog is a major publication of the college made available in print and digital form with updates provided in digital form at least once annually to provide precise, accurate, and current information. The General Catalog provides information about the College's programs, courses, services, admission and enrollment requirements, policies and procedures affecting students, and important characteristics unique to the institution.

Print copies of the catalog are distributed free of charge to students who participate in orientation events and to all full-time faculty and staff of the college. The College also provides print copies to local public high schools for recruitment and outreach purposes and to four-year institutions to support student transfers and course and program articulation processes. Digital copies are available for download on the college's website and distributed on Compact Disks upon request through the Office of Admissions and Records (OAR).

The Dean of Student Services is responsible for coordinating a campus-wide effort to review and update each section of the catalog to ensure content accuracy and compliance with internal deadlines for publishing in print and subsequent updates made to digital copies of each catalog series.

ACCJC Standard II.B.2
The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information concerning the following:
a. General Information • Official Name, Address(es), Telephone Number(s), and • Web Site Address of the Institution • Educational Mission • Course, Program, and Degree Offerings • Academic Calendar and Program Length • Academic Freedom Statement • Available Student Financial Aid • Available Learning Resources • Names and Degrees of Administrators and Faculty • Names of Governing Board Members
b. Requirements • Admissions • Student Fees and Other Financial Obligations • Degree, Certificates, Graduation and Transfer
c. Major Policies Affecting Students • Academic Regulations, including Academic Honesty • Nondiscrimination • Acceptance of Transfer Credits • Grievance and Complaint Procedures • Sexual Harassment • Refund of Fees
d. Locations or publications where other policies may be found.

The NMC General Catalog is organized thematically with each major section referenced with page numbers in the Table of Contents to locate important information in the catalog. Individual digital files containing each major section of the catalog are posted on the NMC website as distinct hyperlinks with headers to promote easy download, access and viewing of the catalog's contents.

The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information concerning the following:

General Information

Official Name, Address(es), Telephone Number(s), and Web Site Address of the Institution
The official name of the college is Northern Marianas College. The official name, address, telephone numbers and college web site address are clearly stated on the first page in the college catalog.

The mission of the college is stated in the catalog: "The mission of Northern Marianas College shall be to provide the best quality and meaningful postsecondary and adult educational opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the individual and for the Commonwealth as a whole. The College shall be responsible for providing education in the areas of adult and continuing education, postsecondary and adult vocational education and professional development for the people of the Commonwealth."

All active academic courses offered at the college are listed in the catalog. Each course listed is accompanied by descriptors, including a synopsis of the course, the course code, credit hours, pre-requisite coursework, and the term in which the course is normally offered. A complete listing of academic programs offered at the college can be found in the Degree and Certificate Programs section of the catalog. The description of each program leading to a certificate or degree listed in this section of the catalog includes the program mission statements, learning outcomes, course requirements, and other elements required of the major.

A description of the academic terms and a listing of important academic activities and dates that occur during each term are provided in the Academic Calendar section of the catalog. The academic calendar in the current catalog lists schedules for each activity for each academic term between Fall 2009 through Fall 2012. The academic calendar is organized with significant input from the college community and reviewed and approved by the Academic Council. The Course Load and Academic Work Load sections of the catalog provide information related to the duration of study for academic programs. The Degree and Certificate Programs section of the catalog indicates total credit unit hours required for graduation in each program.

The College's statements of value, philosophy, and expectations with regard to academic freedom are derived by college policy established by Board of Regents Policy 3004 and reiterated in the Academic Freedom and Responsibility section of the catalog.

The Financial Aid Information section of the college catalog lists the types of financial aid available to students, including federally funded financial aid programs, government, and private scholarships. Information regarding the purpose of each type of financial aid, eligibility and application requirements, and contact information are included for most featured financial aid programs. The function and role of the Financial Aid Office in administering federally funded financial aid programs is provided in this section, including information about its services to students.

The college's learning resources are described across multiple sections in the college catalog. Information describing campus facilities and campus safety is noted in the College Profile section of the catalog. A description of student support programs and services provided by the

Division of Student Services is provided in the Student Services section of the catalog. Resources available at the NMC Bookstore, including service hours, are located in the Auxiliary Services section of the catalog. Access to and responsibilities for use of student email as a communication tool is provided in the college catalog under the heading Student Email. The availability of technological support, training, services, and tools is outlined in the Information Technology of the catalog.

A current listing of all full-time faculty and staff of the college is provided in the Faculty & Staff Directory section of the college. The list is arranged in alphabetical order by last name and includes employees' first name, middle initial, telephone extension number, the acronym for the employee's highest degree earned, and the name of the school where such degree was earned.

The college is governed by a seven-member Board of Regents appointed by the Governor for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The names of individuals appointed to the Board of Regents, including honorary members, are listed in the College Profile section of the catalog.

Requirements

The college's admissions policies and procedures are described in the Enrollment Information section of the catalog. The college promulgates eight distinct admission programs for students seeking to enroll in academic courses, including an outline of eligibility and submission requirements for admission in each program. Important requirements and procedures for course registration, placement testing, and the awarding of transfer credit or credit for advanced placement is located in this section.

The college provides eligibility requirements in the catalog for the Adult Basic Education program a federally funded program which confers Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and General Educational Development (GED) diplomas. Both credentials demonstrate that students meet the equivalent of a high school diploma.

Eligibility requirements for participation in federally funded student support programs are outlined in the Student Services section of the catalog. The college administers the TRiO Upward Bound Program, TRiO Educational Talent Search Program, and College Access Challenge Grant Program each established to serve a defined target population in the community and/or among students enrolled at the college.

An itemized tuition and fee schedule for both resident and non-resident students is published in the Tuition and Fees section of the catalog. This section includes itemized administrative fees for services (i.e. transcript request), fees associated with enrollment in select courses, and a consolidated "flat fee" schedule based on the number of credits students enroll in. The flat fee provides funding for technology access, labs, and all instructional materials.

Consequences for non-payment of financial obligations (i.e. tuition) to the college are noted in the Tuition and Fees section of the catalog. A refund rate for tuition, the consolidated fee, and

other refundable fees for withdrawal from courses are clearly stated in the Refund Policies section of the catalog.

All course and credit hour requirements for degree and certificate completion are located in the Degree and Certificate Programs section of the catalog. The Degree Requirements section of the catalog contains a list of requirements for the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science and Associate in Applied Science degrees, the Bachelor of Science degree, including Certificate requirements.

A comprehensive list of graduation requirements is located in the Graduation Requirements section of the catalog. A policy statement in the Degree Requirements section entitled, Determining Applicable Catalog provides information to assist students and advisors determine the appropriate catalog to use in determining requirements that apply to students. With a few exceptions to this rule, students are expected to meet requirements published in the catalog in effect during their initial term of enrollment.

The college's policies and procedures for the acceptance and application of transfer credits awarded by other accredited colleges and universities are clearly outlined in the Admission with Transfer Credit section of the catalog. Information to assist students plan for transferring out of the college, including references to articulation agreements with regional colleges, is located in the Transferability of Credit section of the catalog.

Major Policies Affecting Students

The Institutional Policies section of the college catalog reiterates key Board of Regents policies for easy reference and to communicate expectations for the institution, faculty, staff, and students. This section includes statements, and procedures as appropriate, for the following major polices affecting students: Student Responsibilities, Class Attendance, Student Rights Regarding Records, Student Conduct, Academic Honesty, Academic Probation and Suspension, Readmission After Suspension, Academic Dismissal, Student Appeal, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Confidentiality of Academic Records, Policy on Nondiscrimination, Policy on Sexual Harassment.

Board of Regents Policy No. 3010, Academic Dishonesty, is promulgated in the catalog under the same title and includes definitions and consequences for cheating and plagiarism. Other important academic regulations affecting students are described in detail in the Academic Information section of the catalog. The Time Limit for Coursework policy statement in this section, for example, establishes an eight-year limit on the applicability of coursework to completion of degree requirements.

A statement of commitment to equal employment opportunities, nondiscrimination in employment and activities that demonstrate the college's compliance with federal regulations is stated in the Policy on Non-Discrimination section of the catalog. The policy indicates its application to admission, access and treatment in NMC programs and activities.

The college's policies and procedures for the acceptance and application of transfer credits awarded by other accredited colleges and universities are clearly outlined in the Admission with Transfer Credit section of the catalog. Information to assist students plan for transferring out of the college, including references to articulation agreements with regional colleges, is located in the Transferability of Credit section of the catalog.

Procedures for students to express concerns, grievances, or complaints are outlined in the Student Appeal section of the college catalog. The procedure provided are intended for students who have a complaint about campus conditions, facilities, policies, rules, or academic matters. The procedures outline steps students are expected to exhaust prior to the college convening a Grievance Fairness Committee to hear the student's appeal.

The policy on Grade Appeals provides another avenue for students to express complaints with regard to grades received in an enrolled course. The Grade Appeals procedure is stated in the college catalog and is intended for students who disagree with an assigned grade.

The Dean of Student Services maintains student grievances and complaints records. The records are stored and can be made available for review by authorized individuals.

The college's policy prohibiting unwanted and unlawful sexual conduct in employment, educational programs and services is clearly stated in the Policy on Sexual Harassment section of the college catalog.

A refund rate schedule for tuition, the consolidated fee, and other refundable fees for withdrawal from courses are clearly stated in the Refund Policies section of the catalog. The refund policy for courses, trainings, and other non-credit programs offered by the Community Development Institute or its partners through Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) is noted under the Community Programs and Services Courses and Workshops section of the college catalog.

Locations or Publications Where Other Policies May be Found

NMC policies stem primarily from policies adopted by the Board of Regents with each policy attributed to a policy series from one of five overarching areas of the college's operations: Board Operations, Finance & Procurement, Educational Programs, Human Resources, and Student Development. The full complement of Board of Regents Policies are filed on the college's network server ('N' Drive) and made accessible through the individual workstations of all full-time employees of the college. Copies of current Board of Regents Policies are kept in the Office of the President, Office of Institutional Advancement, Office of the Dean of Student Services, Office of the Dean of Academic Programs & Services, and the Office of the Dean of COMPASS. College departments and programs generally keep printed copies of sections of Board Policies that are most relevant to the function of their respective units or staff.

The policy on Academic Freedom is espoused in the Conditions of Employment section of the college's Faculty Contract. Signed copies are distributed to employees for reference throughout

their employment with the original maintained in the employee's personnel jacket in the Human Resources Office.

The web pages on the college's website featuring its programs and services include a reiteration of Board of Regents policies where appropriate. For example, the web pages maintained by the Office of Admissions provide information on the following admission requirements: Admission for Residents, Non-Residents, Early/Special Admissions, Admission with Transfer Credit, and Readmission of former students. Criteria for admission to the college is provided in the NMC Admissions Application form. A copy of the NMC Admissions Application is distributed at the Office of Admissions & Records, Counseling Center, and on the NMC website.

Status

The college distributed the Student Appeal & Grievances Procedures brochure during the fall 2010 term in an effort to communicate its grievance and complaint procedures in a more clear, concise, and student-friendly manner (Source: Student Appeal & Grievance Procedures brochure).

The Office of the Dean of Student services has oversight on a workgroup organized to publish a student handbook for distribution to its students in lieu of the college catalog. The workgroup drafted 2011-2012 NMC Student Handbook with important policies and procedures affecting students, including topics describing student life and useful tips to promote student success.

The Dean of Student Services also coordinated an effort to update the College catalog in February of 2011. The draft was approved by the Board of Regents on March 11, 2011. Available on NMC's website, the new catalog provides updates on general information, requirements, major policies affecting students, and locations where other policies may be found. The draft is scheduled for publication in Summer 2011 and distribution at student orientation in Fall 2011.

Standard II.B.3

NMC researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population through surveys, outreach programs, assessments, annual performance reports, Inter College

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.3**
>
> The institution researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.

Council, Program Review, along with a number of governance committees, departmental and division meetings.

Surveys provide feedback and data necessary to make well-informed decisions and continual improvements to our services. Surveys administered at NMC include the advising survey, course evaluations, orientation surveys, registration surveys, graduating student surveys, alumni surveys, and program specific surveys. Third party surveys such as Survey on Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) also inform NMC's efforts to meet student needs.

NMC also administers evaluations for College-sponsored events in order to improve similar events in the future. Evaluations are gathered at Start Smart, Cash for College, and Information Sessions for various programs, Student Success Series workshops, Career Fair, recruitment events, Welcome Week, International Student Workshop.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) compiles and reports data from numerous sources such as course evaluations, enrollment statistics, licensure exam data, transfer and graduate employment rates. OIE also publishes the following reports that inform decisions about meeting student needs: Key Performance Indicators (KPI) updates, the NMC Fact Book, a longitudinal analysis of the Registration Survey from Fall 2008 through Spring 2011 and 5-32/10-66 Annual Report. OIE is available to assist with the provision of specific data on request such as student completion and success rates, which are often included in departmental reports and programs' reviews.

When students first enroll at NMC, the College collects information about their educational goal, major, and support services that they may need. Math and English placement testing identifies course placement needs of students which can be used with counseling or academic advising for educational planning. Each student reviews an Individualized Degree/Certificate Plan with an academic advisor to guide the student through the academic processes, with follow up support being provided.

The Kuder Career Assessment is also given to assess students' interest, skills and work values which also feed into advising at the college. There are collaborations between different programs such as the Troops to Teacher program, Head Start program, Natural Resource Management (NRM) scholarships that financially support students.

The Office of Financial Aid evaluates information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine the financial need of students. Students deemed eligible for financial aid receive a combination of one or more of the following: Federal Pell Grant,

Supplement Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), and Federal Work-Study to support their educational expenses.

Student needs are identified and appropriate services are provided as a result of annual program assessment and biannual program review. Facilitated by the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), program assessment at NMC utilizes the Nichols and Nichols Five-Column Model (Form 1) (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1) to identify program learning outcomes (PLOs), student learning outcomes (SLOs), and/or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) that are consistent with the College's mission. Programs in student support services develop specific measures and criteria for determining success for each outcome. Data are gathered and analyzed to determine if the outcomes are being met or if administrative processes need change. A program's Form 1 is incorporated into its program review report (Form 2), which provides a comprehensive analysis of the program's effectiveness and presents recommendations for the program and the institution based on a thorough analysis of data.

Standard II.B.3.a

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.3.a**
>
> The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method.

NMC is situated on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. The main campus is located in the As Terlaje area of the island of Saipan. At present the full range of academic courses offered by the College is available only on Saipan. Classes are offered at the As Terlaje campus Monday through Saturday during daytime hours and in the evenings. While academic courses are only offered on Saipan, NMC utilizes video-teleconference (VTC), NMC Online, email communication, and postings on the College's website to assure equitable access to all of its students.

The institution also assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method. The College is committed to equitable access in all its educational programs as described by its nondiscrimination policy. The College assures equitable access through student surveys, training of staff, an integrated program review process, and assessment of numerous programs and student service areas.

The Registration Survey has been an effective tool for assessing how well the College meets student needs for services. The survey measures students' satisfaction with the availability of courses, bookstore services, academic advising, student orientation, placement testing, and registration information. Each student support services program also administers a survey to assess the effectiveness of its services. The analysis of these surveys, as well as systematic and ongoing evaluation of programs and services, is critical in ensuring that students are provided with relevant, adequate, and effective services. The College is always actively engaged in soliciting input and feedback regarding its programs and services utilizing both formal and informal means.

Status

As part of its Information Technology (IT) Plan, the IT Department has made some enhancements to NMC's video teleconferencing (VTC) system to improve and expand VTC access and use between Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. The Information Technology (IT) Department has also recently implemented a Google-based student email system that features improved access and connectivity for student email.

Standard II.A.3.b

The college has established a series of student development policies to promote a collegial learning environment for its students and to encourage the intellectual, aesthetic, and

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.3.b**
>
> The institution provides an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.

personal development of its student body. The following Board of Regents (BOR) policies provide statements of value with regard to the college's expectations for student conduct and responsibilities:

- BOR Policy 8001.5 Attendance Requirements
- BOR Policy 8001.7 Student Unit Load
- BOR Policy 8002 Students Rights and Responsibilities
- BOR Policy 8002.2 Non-Discrimination
- BOR Policy 8002.2 Student Grievances/Complaints
- BOR Policy 8002.5 Student Discipline
- BOR Policy 8002.6 Probation, Dismissal and Readmission
- BOR Policy 8002.7 Student Regulations
- BOR Policy 8002.11 Alcoholic Beverages
- BOR Policy 8004.6 Solicitation of Funds and Distribution of Literature on Campus

These policies are communicated to students during student orientation, counseling and advising sessions to clarify the college's rules with regard to student conduct and to promote expectations for student participation in its educational programs and student life.

Professional development activities scheduled for faculty and staff are often required of work-study students for the purposes of promoting awareness of their unique roles and responsibilities as students in supporting the educational endeavors of the college. In some cases, the college supports professional development among its students by funding travel requests for participation in student development conferences. In Spring 2010, for example, the College provided financial support for four student officers from the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College (ASNMC) to attend the National Conference on Student Leadership in Atlanta, Georgia. Furthermore, the TRiO Upward Bound and TRiO Educational Talent Search

programs routinely provide financial support for a select group of students to participate in college-preparatory programs and academies sponsored by other colleges.

The student development services policy series (BOR Policies 8003-8003.6) establishes student development programs in Counseling, Academic Advisement, Career Services, and Student Employment Training that complement the College's instructional programs. BOR Policy 8004 (Student Affairs) directs the college to "provide a diverse program of extra-curricular and co-curricular student activities that support student learning outcomes." BOR Policy 8004.1, for example, establishes the college's student government, ASNMC, to provide a representative voice for students and support activity programs sponsored by student organizations on campus.

The College has established student voting seats on the College Council, the Budget and Finance Committee, and the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee to ensure the inclusion of students in key governance groups and processes and to promote leadership development opportunities for its students. Students are further integrated into important decision-making processes and activities of the college by their participation on interview hiring committees as well as Registration, Recruitment, and Graduation Committees.

Student activities sponsored by the College are facilitated, in part, by student leaders or student volunteers. NMC's Registration Committee, for example, regularly enlists as many as 35 student volunteers to assist with orienting new and returning students to the college and disseminating important information about the College and its registration process. Student leaders participate in New Student Orientation as mentors and facilitators. The Office of Student Activities and Leadership and ASNMC develop and execute campus-wide events, such as International Week, to promote student interaction with the College's diverse student body and encourage students to show case their unique cultural heritages and artistic talents. The Student Center provides a space for group or individual study, educational workshops and events, and an environment for students to socialize and enjoy games and other recreational activities.

The Service Learning Program helps students identify community-based projects and activities to gain meaningful volunteer experiences while providing a service to non-profit agencies and members of the community. The Service Learning Program is supported financially, in part, by a three-year grant made possible by the Hawaii Pacific Island Campus Compact. This grant provides administrative support for the implementation of service learning activities and programmatic funds to enhance teaching, learning, and civic engagement at the college. During the 2010-2011 Project period, the college endeavors to engage students in academic tutoring, provide for the environmental needs of the community, and engage the community in energy efficiency and conservation practices. Furthermore, the Service Learning Program encourages service learning activities as course-affiliated projects and provides support to eight instructors and an average of 120 students per semester. In courses offered by the School of Education, for example, students participate in after-school programs and as volunteers in classroom settings in the public school system (K-8) in support of the instructors and as academic tutors. Most students who participate in these activities go on to earn a bachelor degree in Elementary Education and gain full-time employment as teachers in local public and private schools.

A series of educational and life-skills workshops sponsored by Counseling Programs & Services is offered every semester as part of its Student Success Series to engage students on important topics that support student academic and personal success. Some examples of workshop titles include: "Choosing a Career That's Right For You", "Resume Writing", "Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships: Knowing the Difference", and "Know Your Personality". Counselors partner with instructors who teach the BE 111 "College Success" course to align workshop topics and dates to maximize participation and complement student learning in this course. Each workshop topic is facilitated twice during the semester with as much as four distinct topics presented in any given calendar month during the semester. The counselors distribute evaluation forms to participants at the end of each workshop and utilize student feedback on the forms to make improvements to the delivery and content presented at each workshop.

The College's General Education Program curriculum is designed to introduce students to major content areas in higher education to provide students with knowledge and skills to fulfill their educational and occupational goals and to become better prepared to function effectively as citizens in a democratic society. The General Education Program established the following student learning outcome to further emphasize the value it places on promoting good citizenship: students will "act responsibly as a member of a diverse community, and interact effectively in both local and global environments". Furthermore, the Liberal Arts Program degree requirements consist of general college-level educational courses that "engage students with community issues and civic responsibilities". Material covered and learning outcomes established for PI 201 "Introduction to Philosophy", for example, help students to struggle with elusive ethical dilemmas derived from such questions as "What is the right thing to do?".

Status

In 2010, NMC launched its Learning in Communities (Linc) program. LinC employs student mentors who support the instructional goals and outcomes of LinC courses and provide academic tutorial and social support to students enrolled in these courses.

At the institutional level, discussions about creating conducive environments for learning and student development have occurred with the development of the College's facilities master plan (FMP). In 2009, NMC acquired the assistance of an architectural firm to evaluate its current facilities and obtain feedback from key college constituencies to formulate proposals for the construction of new buildings and renovation of existing facilities to better serve the needs and projected growth of the college. The architectural team worked closely with the College management to identify space needs to generate its proposal. The entire process leading up to the development of the college's facility master plan was marked by significant input from staff and faculty from within individual departments and negotiations with the college's Management Team. One notable feature of design incorporated in this plan is to create, significantly enhance and centralize space on campus for the provision of student support services and student learning. Although funding remains an issue in implementing FMP, the resulting document will be used in soliciting financial support for its construction.

Standard II.B.3.c

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.3.c**
>
> The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function.

The College provides counseling and advising services which meets the varied needs of students. There is a vast array of counseling services available to students to assist with educational planning in meeting career and transfer goals. Additional consideration is provided to meet cultural, disability and personal health needs. For example, Counseling Programs and Services offers Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, domestic and sexual violence, and eating disorders counseling. There are several retention programs that provide additional support for students to succeed such as the First Year Experience and TRIO programs.

The overall goal for all programs is to provide an avenue for students to succeed. Counselors meet on a daily basis to keep up-to-date with the necessary information to successfully perform their duties.

Counseling programs provide individual and group counseling during the day and evening to assist students. Services are advertised in the general catalog, by a distribution of flyers, campus-wide activities, NMC's web site, and at new student orientation.

The Student Orientations for both prospective and continuing students provide information regarding various instructional programs and available support services that allow the student and academic advisor/counselor to work together in developing a student educational plan.

In order to promote the successful attainment of students' personal and educational goals, the College implements a monitored matriculation program. Students are informed of the matriculation process as it is described in the class schedule, college catalog, personal growth courses and new student orientation workshops. The matriculation process is accomplished by the College's counseling programs though the provision of:

- Individual and group academic, personal, and career counseling;
- Student orientation meetings;
- Transition workshops (special education);
- Student success series workshops;
- Skills building workshop;
- Student development classes.

A critical component of the counseling and advising function is referral to resources both on and off campus. Referral information is available to students through counseling appointments, workshops, student orientations, and campus publications including the Northern Marianas College website, the College catalog, and various program publications. On campus referrals are made to all student service areas in addition to academic departments and co-curricular programs.

Support services and retention programs such as Disability Support Services (DSS) , TRIO Programs, English Language Institute Lab (ELI), Career Services, College Access Challenge Project (CACP), as well as programs offered through the Counseling Department, provide support to students experiencing academic difficulties. Within the Counseling Department the following programs are designed and implemented:

International Student Services

International Student Services coordinates the application and registration process for international students and provides services to ensure a successful American educational experience at Northern Marianas College.

CNMI College Access Challenge Project

CNMI College Access Challenge Project outreach activities occur in high schools, middle schools, educational centers, community-based agencies, and private groups. Numerous campus constituencies perform outreach activities including summer components and a variety of academic departments. Recruiters include instructional and counseling faculty, student services staff, and students.

Disability Support Services (DSS)

The Disability Services Coordinator, who also functions as a Counselor and Academic Advisor, assists students in identifying and achieving educational goals; assesses students for Assistive Technology needs; determines "reasonable accommodations"; and coordinates services (on campus and in the community) for student support.

Students who have a documented disability which substantially limits one or more major life activities including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning or working are eligible for services. This may include DSS but are not limited to: assistive technology and/or devices (magnifiers, TTY, tape recorders, closed captioning, alternative keyboards, etc.); alternative testing services (quiet testing location, additional time, use of computers, scribes, and/or other testing modifications enlarged print, etc.); early/priority registration; sign language interpreters; note-taking; readers; and tutors.

Career Center

The Career Center provides career-related programs, services, and activities for students. These include the Kuder Career Planning, Internship program, Service Learning Program, National Admissions, career fair, job seeking and keeping skills workshops, and job placement and development.

Status

To ensure that the College supports student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function, several critical positions have recently been filled in Student Support Services:

- Tim Baker, Director, Counseling Programs and Services
- Neda Camacho, Outreach Counselor, Counseling Programs and Services
- Rose Pangelinan, Program Manager, Office of Student Activities and Leadership (OSAL)
- Matthew Pastula, Director, Library Programs & Services
- Michele Joab, Career Services Manager

Standard II.A.3.d

The College engages in a wide variety of efforts in order to foster meaningful appreciation of the richness and diversity. This commitment to diversity is illustrated by its centrality as set forth in NMC's Mission Statement, and Institutional Philosophy.

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.3.d**
>
> The institution designs and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity.

The Office of the Dean of Student Services supports an already diverse population and strengthens the interaction of the student body. Student Services sponsors numerous activities and student organizations while academic programs support through varied course offerings and activities sponsored by individual academic departments.

The various Student Service departments have initiated an excellent pattern of dialogue and cooperation among themselves, student groups and areas of instruction. The Office of the Dean of Student Services has a variety of regular meetings for the purposes of sharing information and improving services to students. Student Services makes important contributions to the programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity. Each year, Student Services has coordinated and/or participated in the following activities that support and strengthen NMC's diversity:

- NMC's Charter Day
- Start Smart Seminar
- Student Orientation
- International Cultural Week
- Developmental Disability Month
- Autism Society events
- Autism Month
- Transition Network
- Counselors' Conference

The following academic courses also reinforce NMC's commitment to diversity:

- Art (AR101 & 135)
- Music (MU106)
- Drama (DR120)
- Multicultural Foundations (ED282)
- Language (CM101/201, JA101/102/201, SP101/102, SL101/102)
- Intro to Exceptional Individuals (ED215)
- Intro to Sociology (SO 101)
- Current Issues in the CNMI (SO 297)

All students are required to take at least one Language course, one Fine Arts, and/or one Performing Arts course

The Office of Student Activities and Leadership (OSAL) helps students establish clubs and organizations that provide a rich and multi-cultural dimension to college life. Faculty and classified staff advisors serve on a voluntary basis and are approved by the Dean of Student Services each year.

NMC also sponsors many events each year to provide a forum for the appreciation of cultural diversity and global awareness. The following were events held during the 2009-2010 academic year:

- Charter Day
- Health Awareness Fair
- Annual Golf Tournament
- Marianas March Against Cancer
- 30th Anniversary Gala (upcoming)
- Alumni
- Info Sessions: Cash for College, Start Smart
- Recruitment Team: Flame Tree Festival

Status

The following clubs and organizations are active as of the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school year.

- Inter-Club Council
- Chamorro Cultural Club
- PROA Music Society
- Nursing Club
- Carolinian Cultural Club
- Phi Theta Kappa Club (PTK)
- Saipan Gospel Fellowship
- Micronesian Club
- Environmental and Natural Resources Organization (ENRO)
- Student Achieving for Excellence (SAFE)
- Upward Bound Student Association (UBSA)
- Northern Marianas Academy Club

Standard II.B.3.e

As a community college, NMC has an open admissions policy. It does not assess test results to determine eligibility for admission.   For that reason, it is the policy of NMC that no one shall be denied admission or readmission on the basis of race, gender, creed, color, religion, sexual preference, national origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, veteran's status, disability, or genetic information (GINA) other than qualifications for admission, academic performance and conduct in accord with local laws and regulations and College rules, policies, and procedures applicable to student conduct.

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.3.e**
>
> The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases.

The requirements of admission into NMC are the following:

- A paid NMC Admissions Application
- High School diploma or G.E.D. with month/year of graduation, or Transcript from the last postsecondary institution attended
- Completed Health Evaluation Form
- Copy of a valid identification document (i.e. passport, driver's license)
- Copy of a valid U.S. Visa (if applicable)
- Signed Directory Information Form

NMC may deny admission, readmission, or continuing enrollment of any individual who, in the judgment of NMC, presents a risk to the safety and welfare of the campus and persons thereon. In making such judgment, NMC may take into account the individual's history and experience relative to:

- Violence, destructive, or disruptive tendencies
- Student status on other NMC sites
- Any rehabilitative therapy for drugs or substance abuse the individual may have undergone or be undergoing

Denial of admission, suspension, probation, or expulsion from NMC is communicated to the individual in writing. To ensure the availability of fair due process, students may appeal a denial of admission through a Grievance Fairness Committee.

For general admission to NMC, applicants must be of the age of sixteen (16) with the exception of those who have completed all their high school requirements, students from high schools with an existing memorandum of agreement for admission into NMC, and those students who are officially admitted under a special federally funded program such as TRIO Upward Bound Program participants.

Furthermore, the College minimizes biases by recognizing the health condition needs of individuals and religious restrictions of individuals in its Admission policy. For instance, a person qualifies for a medical exemption from the requirement to show proof of immunization

when the person files a bona fide statement signed by a physician licensed to practice medicine within the United States or the CNMI verifying that the physical condition of the person seeking admission makes the required immunization unsafe and indicating the specific nature and probable duration of the condition. The exemption shall not extend beyond the period of the condition that contraindicates immunization.

Additionally, a person qualifies for a religious exemption when the person files a notarized affidavit on an approved form that immunization is contrary to the religious tenets and practices of the signer.

The College continues to review its institutional policies, procedures, Admissions Standard Operating Procedures to validate effectiveness i.e. Admissions procedures for International Students have been updated to ensure compliance with the requirements of the U.S. Immigration laws governing student and exchange visitor visa.

In addition to health condition and religious considerations, the College also acknowledges and minimizes cultural and linguistic biases through its recognition of language acquisition needs.

Through its English Language Institute (ELI), the College offers preparatory and developmental English courses for all learners who place at English reading and writing levels lower than the degree-program required College level English. As such, all English as a Second Language and English Language Learners benefit from the ELI by availing of its services. The College also acknowledges and reports the total number of years it takes a student to complete a degree or certificate program with consideration of their English Language level in the computation.

To promote the diversity of its community and to meet the language learning needs of its students; the College continues to offer language courses in English, Chamorro, Japanese, Spanish, and Sign Language. Each of these courses is offered at two levels, an introductory level and an advanced elementary level.

The College administers an English Placement Test and a Math Placement Test for all new students and on-going students who need to meet program level requirements and/or course prerequisites. Both placement test instruments use multiple measures to assess and determine student placement levels.

The English Placement Test has two parts, a series of three computerized Accuplacer English/ESL placement tests and an Essay Writing component. The Accuplacer English/ESL placement tests are part of a nationally standardized, computerized program that measures listening ability, reading comprehension, and grammar skills in several categories including narration, sentence relationships, and construction shifts. The College utilizes its department developed essay-writing test as a part of the English Placement Test to measure writing skills and to determine student placement levels in writing. The instructors work hard to choose essay topics for which most students have enough background knowledge to write a five-paragraph essay. Each student's essay is evaluated by three English Language instructors to ensure accuracy and minimize scorer bias.

The College's Language instructors continue to be the leads in the selection and assignment of essay topics to ensure that students have a familiarity and possess background knowledge of topics they must write about. These same instructors continue to review and score these essays to confirm accuracy while reducing the chances of bias from scorers.   The College continues to review and validate cut off score data from each administration of the test and the success rates of students in the determined placement level courses.

The Math Placement Test is a department-developed test that measures the skills and knowledge of test takers in the areas of basic math, beginning algebra, and intermediate algebra to determine a student's placement into a range of classes, from developmental to upper level math classes. The test was developed using specific math skills and process knowledge items that were aligned with the Math course SLOs and progression of SLOs to ensure that these were consistent with the prerequisite requirements of courses offered at the College.

The Math Placement Test assesses specific learning outcomes that are intended SLOs in the Non-Degree Math courses. The Math Placement Test is a paper-based test so test takers are allowed to go back to previous test items and answer missed questions or review uncertain answers to questions or items. In addition, the test does not require participants to possess technical computer skills to take the test. Math terms used in the Math Placement Test are Standard English words also used in the Math courses' textbooks. Math signs and symbols used are the same regardless of culture or language.

The College continues to collect and assess Math placement data to review and validate its correlation to student success rates in math classes.

OAR continues to monitor and review the Registration Survey results to determine possible changes to processes, or procedures to better serve our students.   The OAR also participates in the review of institutional policies for admission to ensure validity and consistency between policies and procedures and relative legislation and regulations that the institution and its students must comply with, specifically U.S. Immigration and SEVP/SEVIS regulations. Additionally, the OAR staff participates in campus-wide discussions that involve admissions processes.

The OAR shares the Registration survey results with the Academic Council, the Registration Committee, the Recruitment Committee, and other faculty, staff and students through dialogues at committee meetings, staff meetings and various governance body assemblies to engage all stakeholders in the process of improvement.

The College maintains focus on the learning needs of its students and will continue to align placement test instruments with its Student Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes, and pedagogical best practices. The College's Board of Regents, faculty and staff recognize through policy, procedures, program assessment, and continuous improvement actions indicated in this report, the diverse cultural, linguistic, and intellectual composition of its students and will continue to integrate research-based best practices and approaches to promote learning for all of its students.

Status

The Registration Surveys and Recruitment event surveys are administered to students every semester and at recruitment events to gather their input on the Admissions processes. These survey results are analyzed and discussed by Admission personnel, faculty and staff. Dialogue between these groups include action plans to improve admission services and occur regularly during Registration Committee meetings, Recruitment Committee meetings, and Office of Admissions and Registration (OAR) Staff meeting. The same surveys are administered each semester and results are measured between semesters, and with improvement actions taken to measure their effectiveness in addressing identified concerns.

The most recent evaluation of admissions practices for effectiveness is noted from the NMC Registration Survey–Longitudinal Analysis, Fall 2008-Spring 2011 preliminary data results. These results indicate an increase of over 5% between Spring 2011 and Fall 2010 on the number of respondents who believed the Admissions/Application Process was "excellent." The College has also noted a 10% increase on the number of respondents who rated the same item as "good" between the two semesters and a decline of over 15% on the number of survey respondents who rated this item "poor." The Admissions/Application Process also received an increase of over 30% in respondents who believed the process to be "excellent" in Spring 2011 semester when compared to the report's opening semester of Fall 2008.

A preliminary evaluation of the Accuplacer English/ESL Placement System's suitability as a replacement for the TOEFL was conducted in the Fall 2008 Semester. Results from this evaluation indicated that the Accuplacer Placement System had the potential to be an accurate placement tool for students at the College. A second evaluation of the System's suitability was conducted during the Fall 2009 Semester. Reliable cut off scores for course placement were calculated from the data. The Languages and Humanities Department aligned all English course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) with Accuplacer in November 2009. The Accuplacer English/ESL placement tests were used to place 33 students in the Fall 2010 Semester and 215 students in the Spring 2011 Semester. The Academic Council reviewed this data, as well as the correlation and alignment of English Course SLOs to the Accuplacer test items, and approved its application as the NMC English Placement Test on February 18, 2010.

The Accuplacer English/ESL placement test results provide information on student skills and specific English Language developmental needs immediately. Accuplacer English/ESL placement tests are internet based, computer adaptive placement instruments so changes do not occur in the format or the administration of the tests between participants.

Standard II.B.3.f

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.3.f**
>
> The institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provisions for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records.

NMC's Office of Admissions and Record (OAR) is the custodian of records for the institution. The Interim President, the Dean of Student Services, and Director of the Office of Admissions and Records hold the duty to ensure compliance by all College employees to FERPA regulations and Board of Regents policies that pertain to the maintenance, security, and release of student records.

NMC employs two methods of maintaining student records permanently, securely, and confidentially. Student records prior to 2003 are maintained in both electronic forms in the Champlain student database system and in hard copy forms that are stored securely in a file room adjacent to the Office of Admissions and Records. Student records from 2003 to the present are maintained in the currently utilized electronic PowerCampus database system and in hard copy forms that are stored in the Office of Admissions and Records. Both electronic database systems are backed-up every work day and monthly as well. All backed-up data is stored separately on a hard-drive. All records data are backed-up annually as well. Back-up files, live electronic files, and hard copy files are retained for a lifetime.

The removal of student hard copy files from the cabinet files in OAR is restricted to OAR staff and only for the purposes of providing student or advisor requested information, auditing, and updating of file information. All records removed must be logged out and logged back in as required by the Office of Admissions and Records file tracking sheets. Access to both the electronic files and hard copy files are also restricted to College employees with specific designation within their duties and responsibilities to work with student records.

Authorization for electronic access occurs through the creation of a unique user name by the Information Technology (IT) Department, a password by the employee, and only upon the employee's completion of a "user's training" that is conducted by both the IT Department and the Office of Admissions and Records. Employees, including limited term appointments and student work-studies of OAR are required to sign a Confidentiality of Records Agreement form that is made available at the OAR.

With the implementation PowerCampus in 2003, all students and employees of the Northern Marianas College are assigned a PowerCampus Identification Number (PC ID). The PC IDs are unique numbers that are used in lieu of the student Social Security Number that had been formerly used in the Champlain system. PC IDs are used for student services such as access to Library services and materials, student governance body activities (i.e. elections), and for access to computer and language laboratories.

NMC complies with the regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students are informed of their rights, the privacy of their records, and FERPA at the time of their application for admission. Additionally, the FERPA general statement is published on the Directory Information Form, which is provided to students every semester.

Every semester, all current and returning students are required to complete a Directory Information Release form which provides students with the option to either Release or Not Release institutionally identified directory information. During registration of every semester, students are provided with the same form for updating, should they opt to. The Information Release form is maintained in the students' hard copy file and the information is also recorded in each student's electronic file each semester.

All student requests for records must be accompanied with valid and verifiable photo identification. Students may also opt to authorize the release of their information to a second party; however, the authorization from the student must include the student's signature and valid and verifiable photo identifications of both the student and the authorized party.

Board of Regents (BOR) policies that address the issues of confidentiality of records, student rights, and procedures for the release of information are also in line with the FERPA. BOR Policy 3021 addresses the privacy rights of students, the prohibition of posting of grades by names or other means that will be personally identifiable to students, and student rights regarding their records. NMC Board Policy 5715.G.1 (amended 2002) addresses the maintenance and separation of student disciplinary actions from the student academic records. BOR Policy 8002.3 (adopted 2004) is an update of BOR Policy 3021 and additionally outlines Access to Student Records and Student Rights Regarding their Records. Furthermore, NMC Administrative Procedure 8002.4 (2005) outlines student educational rights and privacy and details regulations and procedures on Release of Information.

The current policies are published in the General Catalog and made available to students in the Counseling Office, the Library, the Office of Admissions and Records, the Dean of Student Services Office, the NMC website, and in the advisors' offices. Moreover, College policies pertaining to the maintenance, security, and release of student records are made available to all employees via the network server (N-Drive).

OAR's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outline the requirements and procedures for requesting student record information for faculty, staff, and students. The OAR SOPs also detail the procedures and requirements for the submission of Official Grade Rosters, grade memorandums, and change of grade forms for faculty and other academic department personnel.

Status

On September 23, 2010, the NMC Interim President created an ad hoc working group called the Student Records Policy and Procedures (SRPP) Task Force comprised of 7 individuals from the College's faculty and staff to "review existing College policies and procedures that pertain to the maintenance and handling of student records".

On December 03, 2010, the SRPP Task Force completed its review and to date, has submitted its recommendations of policy content changes, policy numbering changes, and the recommended procedures for each policy reviewed, namely the 8000.01 – Admissions and Enrollment, 8001.01

– Residency Classification, 8001.03 – Registration and Enrollment, 8002.03 – Access to Student Records, 8002.04 – Student Educational Rights and Privacy, 8002.10 – Changing Student Grades, 3017 – Changing Student Grades, and 3021 – Student Educational Rights and Privacy to the College Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Associated Students of the Northern Marianas College (ASNMC), Academic Council, and the management team. Furthermore, the SRPP Task Force received the College Council's endorsement on the recommended changes for these specific policies and approved the correlating procedures as recommended by the SRPP Task Force. At its March 11, 2011 meeting, the Board of Regents formally adopted these recommendations.

Within the periods of September 2010 and January 2011, the offices of Admissions and Records and Human Resources provided 10 FERPA and NMC Policies & Procedures trainings to current college faculty and staff, and have developed a systematic FERPA and NMC Policies & Procedures orientation and training process to ensure the orientation and training of all new NMC employees prior to the granting of access to any student records hard-copy file and student information database .

Additionally, the NMC Interim President appointed a Records Management Plan work group to assess and review the College's records management and maintenance needs and to develop a records management and retention policy that is relevant and inclusive of the needs of the college community, its students, and in compliance with relative federal regulations.

Standard II.B.4

All student support programs participate in program preview, a coordinated, systematic process for evaluating the effectiveness of the College's programs and services. Each program's assessment activities, including the process of collecting and analyzing institutional data, is coordinated at the

> **ACCJC Standard II.B.4**
>
> The institution evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

institutional level by the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC). PROAC guides each program through the process of program review by providing technical assistance and training to program authors and staff, setting institutional deadlines for key deliverables, establishing timelines for action, and facilitating dialogue within programs and across the institution to strengthen the quality of the institution and its programs.

The following student support programs participate in Program Review:
- Counseling Programs and Services
- Career Services, Testing Services
- Service Learning Program
- Student Employment
- Library Programs and Services
- Office of Student Activities and Leadership
- Office of Financial Aid
- Office of Admissions and Records,
- TRiO Upward Bound Program
- TRiO Educational Talent Search Program

Each cycle of Program Review begins with an annual assessment of a program's student learning outcomes (SLOs) and/or administrative unit outcomes (AUOs). SLOs are clear and concise statements of what students will be able to know, do, think or value as a result of a given educational experience. AUOs are statements that express what programs do with regard to the services it provides. Program's select a combination of at least three of its established SLOs and/or AUOs to assess throughout the academic year. The Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model (Appendix I.A-1—Sample Form 1), or the Form 1, is used as a framework for designing and reporting assessment of SLOs and/or AUOs at the program level.

Column 1 of Form 1 identifies the college mission as the foundation for which all established SLOs and/or AUOs must align with. Column 2 lists the SLOs and/or AUOs to be assessed throughout the Program Review cycle. Column 3 identifies and defines specific assessment tools that will measure each stated outcome, as well as criteria for success. Column 4 summarizes assessment findings and measures the extent to which the program had met its established success criteria for each of the stated outcomes. Column 5 discusses the use of results and evaluates the assessment process to identify action plans for improving certain aspects of the program or its approach to assessment.

Each element of Form 1 as reported by each program is entered and compiled in the college's TracDat system. A program's submission of Column 5 data in TracDat completes a program's assessment of its stated outcomes in each cycle. The data collected by TracDat is compiled and distributed to each program in TracDat's Unit Assessment Report to demonstrate work completed throughout the cycle and to assist program prepare and plan for assessment of SLOs and/or AUOs in subsequent cycles. The aggregate data compiled in TracDat of all outcomes measured across all college programs is reviewed at PROAC and shared at institutional planning summits to promote dialogue and assess the strength of linkages between individual program outcomes and the institution's priority initiatives.

The Unit Assessment Report document submitted by student support programs provide examples for how each program contributes to student learning and uses the evaluations of student learning outcomes as a basis for improvement. Counseling Programs & Services' (CPS), for example, measures its effectiveness in providing counseling and advising services by assessing the following SLO: "Students will demonstrate ability to articulate long term personal and educational goals." CPS deployed the Spring 2010 Student Advising Survey during the spring 2010 registration period to students assigned to counselors for academic advising and noted that 95% of students surveyed were able to articulate long-term personal and educational goals as measured by item 9 on the survey. In addition to demonstrating the achievement of this student learning outcome, the program recommended amending the survey to further improve the assessment of this outcome in future cycles of program review.

Federally funded programs with college-preparatory activities and services that serve identified needs for Pacific Islanders, low-income and first-generation students, adult learners, and students with disabilities demonstrate the achievement of student learning outcomes through assessment of their respective program's SLOs. The TRiO Upward Bound (UB) Program, for example, measures the rate at which its program participants pass all college courses. The UB provides

academic counseling, advising, skill-building workshops and tutorial services for its students to support achievement of this learning outcome. At the completion of Cycle 3 of Program Review, UB reported that 100% of all students enrolled during the summer passed their college courses with a "C" grade or better.

Each cycle of Program Review culminates in programs submitting a program review narrative, Form 2 (Appendix I.A-3—Sample Form 2), to PROAC. Form 2 is a summative narrative of each program for each cycle of Program Review. The key elements reported in Form 2 by each program include the following: The college and program mission statement, establishment of the program, program milestones, an evaluation of the impact of the previous cycle of Program Review on the program, program services, an analysis of data and evidence collected, human resources, physical resources, technological resources, a listing of agreements/partnerships with campus and external groups, a listing of a program advisory council (if applicable), a discussion of strategic and annual implementation planning, and recommendations to both the program and institution.

The aggregate of recommendations generated by each program is evaluated by PROAC for approval and published in the institution's annual Composite Report. The Composite Report is disseminated to college governance groups to promote dialogue and for use in establishing institutional priorities and allocating resources.
Throughout the cycle of Program Review, the process of collecting and analyzing data, and compiling and disseminating reports is characterized by intensive, program-level dialogue centered on continuous quality improvement. Throughout the cycle, an institution-wide dialogue persists at PROAC and among governance groups in a concerted effort to strengthen Program Review processes and tightly couple program-level assessment to resource allocation and the achievement of the PROA Strategic Goals and Priority Initiatives.

NMC administers the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) is an assessment tool developed by the Center for Community Colleges and Student Engagement (CCCSE), a national organization for survey research, focus group work, and related services for community and technical colleges interested in improving educational quality through strengthened student engagement and student success. The SENSE is designed to provide a clear picture of both student behaviors in the earliest weeks of college and the institutional practices that affect students during this critical time. The SENSE instrument includes items that elicit information from students about their first impressions of the college; intake processes such as admissions, registration, assessment, placement, orientation, and financial aid; how they spend their time as they begin college; how they assess their earliest relationships and interactions with instructors, advisors, and other students; what kinds of work they are challenged to do and; how the college supports their learning in the first few weeks.

Status

At the completion of cycle C of program review, student support programs reported assessing a total of 17 AUOs and 12 SLOs. 47% of all AUOs and 67% of all SLOs assessed met proposed success criteria for this cycle. A review of the qualitative data presented in each program's Unit

Assessment Report – Five Column Model document provides the program and institution with an analysis of the collection and use of data, including statements of weaknesses or challenges encountered by the program in meeting its success criterion . The range of factors that impact success among student services programs are attributed to the availability of resources and efforts to collect data. The Office of Student Activities and Leadership, for example, attributed its challenges in assessing its outcomes to the lack of a Program Manager to facilitate the implementation of the program's assessment initiatives. In response to this finding and the institution's commitment to supporting student engagement, leadership, and service activities, the college filled this position on February 28, 2011.

The 2010 Composite Report compiled a total of forty-five approved recommendations for improvement generated by student support programs as either recommendations for action by the institution or the program. Each recommendation is developed at the program level as a reflection of identified needs by the program and as ideas for how either the program or institution should take action to improve on one or more aspects of the provision of student support services. In its evaluation of the institution's registration process, for example, the Office of Admissions & Records (OAR) developed the following recommendation which was subsequently approved by PROAC and included in the 2010 Composite Report:

"Recommend to the Registration Committee that course registration be scheduled for students according to each students' academic standing (seniors and by total credits) to ensure a more efficient, and less congested registration experience for students."

An evaluation of OAR's Form 2 submission to PROAC demonstrates that the program's published data extracted from the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 Registration Survey results provide justification for this recommendation. This recommendation was subsequently adopted by the Registration Committee in addition to a series of actions implemented by this committee to improve the registration process for the Spring 2011 term. The changes to NMC's registration procedures were announced on the college website, via student email accounts, as press releases to local media outlets, on posters pasted on campus buildings, during student orientation, and included in the Spring 2011 Class Schedule booklet.

NMC administered the SENSE survey for the first time among a sample of its new and returning students during the fourth and fifth weeks of the fall 2009 term. The results were made available to the college through an exclusive membership access portal on the SENSE website in March 2010. The SENSE NMC 2010 Key Findings booklet provides benchmark comparisons between Northern Marianas College, colleges of similar size, and the SENSE 2010 cohort. The booklet includes highlights of the aspects of highest and lowest student engagement at the college and selected results from five SENSE special-focus module items. The SENSE benchmarks focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement — and that are positively related to student learning and persistence from the time the student has first contact with the college through the end of the third week of class.

The six benchmarks are: early connections, high expectations and aspirations, clear academic plan and pathway, effective track to college readiness, engaged learning, and academic and social support network.

According to the SENSE NMC 2010 Key Findings, NMC's benchmark scores as compared to the SENSE 2010 cohort measured between 2.6 and 10.8 points above the mean for the following benchmarks: early connections, effective track to college readiness, and engaged learning. The college scored by as much as 3.9 points below the mean for the remainder benchmarks: high expectations & aspirations, clear academic plans & pathway, and academic & social support network.

Of particular interest to the college are items on the survey that reflect the largest differences in frequency scores between NMC and the 2010 SENSE cohort. The following items on the survey, for example, represent aspects for which the college scored the lowest in student engagement:

- Item 18d: Able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient to me
- Item 18o: I knew how to get in touch with my instructor outside of class
- Item 19l: (Frequency) Used an electronic tool to communicate with an instructor about coursework during the first three weeks of your first SEMESTER/QUARTER.
- Item 19q: (Frequency) Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class during the first three weeks of your first SEMESTER/QUARTER.
- Item 20d2: (Frequency) Used face-to-face tutoring.

The college continues to take action to improve its services attributed to these aspects of student engagement as part of a larger effort to support student success. For example, the college partnered with Google, Inc. to provide email services to its students in response to student and faculty complaints with the old system. The Information Technology (IT) department partnered with the Division of Student Services to provide individual students with an orientation to the use of the new email platform and processes for establishing individual email accounts. By the end of the spring 2011 registration period, more than half of all students enrolled met individually with IT staff to establish an email account. The college actively encourages its faculty and staff to communicate with students through these email accounts. Likewise, students are encouraged to utilize their email accounts to communicate with their instructors and view important announcements on campus activities and events, academic matters, schedule changes, and financial aid.

Standard III.A

The Human Resources Office (HRO) follows Board of Regents (BOR) Human Resource Policies and Procedures 4000 set series to recruit and hire qualified personnel who have the required education, training and experience to effectively support student learning programs and services through institutional program review. The Human Resources Office (HRO) works closely with administrators, department chairs, department heads, and directors who determine minimum qualifications for positions within their respective divisions or departments.

> **ACCJC Standard III.A**
> **Human Resources**
>
> The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered, and to improve institutional effectiveness. Personnel are treated equitably, are evaluated regularly and systematically, and are provided opportunities for professional development. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse backgrounds by making positive efforts to encourage such diversity. Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

The recruitment process at NMC follows these basic steps:

1. Annual budget requests for needed positions are presented to the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) for review and deliberation. After discussion and deliberation, personnel budget requests are submitted to the College Council and BOR for approval and adoption. Personnel budgets are contingent on the availability of funds appropriated by both the local government or grants obtained from federal sources.

2. Job vacancies for approved and funded positions are widely and publicly announced through the college web site, E-mail, print advertisements in local newspapers such as Marianas Variety, Saipan Tribune, the Office of Personnel Management, private agencies i.e. Gold's Gym, and off-island media i.e. HigherEd Jobs.com. These job vacancy announcements specify required minimum education and experience to recruit qualified applicants.

3. Employment applications are screened by HRO to confirm if the applicant met the required minimum education and experience of the job vacancy announcement using the Qualification Evaluation Worksheet (QEW). Applicants with degrees from non-U.S. accredited institutions are certified using credential evaluators who are members of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to validate its equivalency to that of a U.S. accredited institution.

4. Application packages of qualified candidates are then provided to each member of the interview committee. The interview committees consist of administrators, staff and/or faculty who represent the various divisions in the College. However, faculty members play a role in the selection of new instructors. Each of the interview committee members is asked to submit interview questions, which are then reviewed by HRO to comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) standards and are approved by the entire interview committee.

5. Qualified applicants are asked the same set of questions pertaining to the job vacancy announcement, and each interview committee member scores each candidate on the Candidate Interview Evaluation Sheet. The candidate with the highest total score is recommended for hiring, followed by the second and third highest scorers as alternate candidates. The top three recommendations are then forwarded to the Dean or Director to collaborate with the President for final selection and approval.

The College follows BOR policies and procedures on fairness and equity and diversity in its employment procedures.

Status

In the past year, the Board of Regents has updated polices that help NMC meet Standard III.A. These policy actions are listed in Table III.A-1 below

Table III.A-1 Recent Human Resource Policy Actions by NMC Board of Regents.

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
Part II.A Personnel Files	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which directs and guides HR in keeping and maintaining personnel files.
Part III.B Vacancy Announcements	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which puts in place how the vacancy announcements processed and the content of the VA.
Part III.C Eligibility for Employment	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which enables the college to hire qualified employees.
Part III.D	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, All recruitment, hiring, and selection of employees must be based on the requirements of the job, on the qualification of the applicants, and the needs of the college.
Part III.E Employment Contracts Staff and Faculty	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, All full-time employees of the College, other than limited-term appointees and adjunct faculty must enter into an initial two-year employment contract with the college. The college shall have three types of contracts for its employees: Ten month faculty (instructional faculty) / Twelve month faculty (all other faculty) / Twelve month staff contracts (for all other remaining employees of the college)
Part III.F Externally Funded Employees	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, The Board of Regents encourages the solicitation and application for grants that will enable the college to improve its programs, facilities, and general well-being. All individuals funded under such grants who are hired by the college and supervised by the college are employees of the college. These individuals will be employed on a staff and faculty employment contract.
Part IV.A Classification and Compensation	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, to establish and maintain a classification and compensation system that will allow the college to attract and retain qualified personnel effectively and to ensure that salaries are equitable and commensurate with the duties performed by each employee.
Part IV.B Establishing Salary Upon Appointment	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4015, Salary shall be fixed at the first step of the appropriate pay level upon initial appointment. Should a higher rate be deemed necessary to recruit, the salary may be fixed at any succeeding step but

		not beyond the eighth step for staff positions and the twelfth step for faculty positions. The salary for an employee hired for an ungraded position shall be at the rate established by the Board of Regents for that position.
Part V.A Types of Appointments	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4010 / 4062, Appointments in the Northern Marianas College are defined according to the following classes: Contractual Appointment / Limited-term Appointment / Acting Appointment / Intermittent Appointment / Other Appointments.
Part V.B Nepotism	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4040, For the purpose of this policy, nepotism is defined and bestowed in consideration of family relationship and not in consideration of merit. All applicants for employment with the college will inform the Human Resource Manager of any relative who is working for the college, and any relative who is a member of the Board of Regents.
Part V.C Orientation Program	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, The time and effort invested in a well planned and implemented orientation program will provide many positive returns to the college and its employees. By introduction the colleges mission, vision and goals explaining policies and procedures, and establishing work and behavioral expectations, and orientation program will help to reduce employees anxiety, develop positive attitudes, and create realistic job expectations.
Part V.F Annual Evaluation of Employees	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4212, Supervisors shall evaluate the performance of each of their assigned employees annually, at or near their anniversary date using established forms provided by the Human Resource Office.
Part VI.B Tuition Waiver	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4215 Series, The Board of Regents encourages employees of the college to enhance their professional capabilities by taking courses offered by the college. Employees requesting a tuition waiver must first apply for scholarship or federal grant assistance, if eligible for such assistance. A tuition waiver may be granted to full-time staff and faculty members who do not receive such assistance, upon written request to and approval from the president.
Part VI.J Professional Development Leave	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4315, Professional development leave may be granted for formal education or other activities of professional merit, based upon the needs and capabilities of the college. Compensation may be provided for such leaves, as determined by the implementing policy and based upon the availability of funding in the discretion of the president.
Part VII.I Political Activities	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4240, To vote for the candidates of their choice and to express their opinions on political matters. To be active members of the political party or organization of their choosing etc.
Part VII.R Media Relations Protocol	3/11/2011	New addition to HR policy. The president of the Northern Marianas College is the official spokesperson of the college. In the presidents absence the acting president of the director of the Office of Institutional Advancement shall serve as the official spokesperson. Other individuals, on a case-by-case basis, may be specifically and explicitly authorized by the president to officially speak on behalf of the college.

Part VII.T Program Review	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, As part of the colleges commitment to data-driven, evidence-based decision making for continuous quality improvement, all employees of the college shall participate in the program review process. This shall include, but is not limited to, participating in the development and monitoring of program mission and outcomes, collecting and interpreting program appropriate data and evidence, evaluating program effectiveness, developing action plans for improvement, and participating in activities led by the planning, program review outcomes and assessment committee (PROAC). Participation in the program review process shall be considered in each employees annual evaluation.
Part VIII.A Delegation of Authority	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4060, The president in cases of planned absence will designate an acting president. In a situation where the president is absent or is unable to make an appointment, the chair of the Board of Regents will designate an acting president. The president will assign acting officials to cover the absence of key staff and faculty.

III.A.1.a

NMC ensures that it employs personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience through a rigorous screening and hiring process.

Employment applications are screened by HRO to confirm if the applicant met the required minimum education and experience of the job vacancy announcement using a Qualification Evaluation Worksheet (QEW). Applicants with degrees from non-U.S. accredited institutions are certified using credential evaluators who

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.1**
>
> The institution assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services.
>
> **ACCJC Standard III.A.1.a**
>
> The institution assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services.

are members of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to validate its equivalency to that of a U.S. accredited institution.

Application packages of qualified candidates are then provided to each member of the interview committee. The interview committees consist of administrators, staff and/or faculty who represent the various divisions in the College. Each of the interview committee members is asked to submit interview questions, which are then reviewed by HRO to comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) standards and are approved by the entire interview committee.

Each qualified applicant is asked the same set of questions pertaining to the job vacancy announcement, and each interview committee member scores each candidate on a Candidate Interview Evaluation Sheet. The candidate with the highest total score is recommended for hiring, followed by the second and third highest scorers as alternate candidates. The top three

recommendations are then forwarded to the Dean or Director to collaborate with the President for final selection.

The Human Resources Office (HRO) follows Board of Regents (BOR) Human Resource Policies and Procedures to recruit and hire qualified personnel who have the required education, training and experience to effectively support student learning programs and services. Administrators, department chairs, department heads, and directors work closely with their deans and the Human Resource Office (HRO) in identifying the positions necessary to meet the department's needs and the mission of the College. Instructional and non-instructional faculty are generally required to possess masters degrees in their respective subject areas.

The college ensures that the faculty members selected have knowledge of their subject matter through various steps:
- completed employment application packets submitted to the Human Resources Office
- employment interviews
- professional awards gained by faculty on their subject matter.

NMC is an equal opportunity employer and an HR employee participates in all interviews as an EEO representative. The HRO adheres to federal employment standards and expectations i.e. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in its recruitment procedures.

III.A.1.b

The institution uses evaluation tools established through BOR Policies and Procedures 3033 concerning Evaluation of Instructional Faculty and BOR Human Resource Policy and Procedure 4212 that concern Annual Evaluation of Employees.

The college decides on appropriate institutional responsibilities for personnel

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.1.b**
>
> The institution assures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. The institution establishes written criteria for evaluating all personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in institutional responsibilities and other activities appropriate to their expertise. Evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Actions taken following evaluations are formal, timely, and documented.

participation through the assignment and participation in governance bodies and acknowledgement of duties and responsibilities in program review. Participation is judged through annual evaluation of the employee institutional responsibilities such as program review.

All college personnel are systematically evaluated annually and recorded in a database that HRO maintains. Evaluation tools, such as the Instructional Faculty Evaluation, are given to the immediate supervisor of an employee 60 days before contract expiration. An employee is rated as Excellent (E), Satisfactory (S), Needs Improvement (N), or Unsatisfactory (U) on areas that relate to the employee's general performance of assigned employment duties in five general areas: Instruction, Service to Students, Service to College and Community, Professionalism and Personal Growth, and Participation in Program Review. Supervisor and employees list and discuss recommendations for professional development or improvement in job performance.

Institutional effectiveness is a systematic and ongoing process of planning, evaluation, and improvement. Through systematic annual evaluations of personnel, personnel evaluations help develop the improvement of programs and services, administrative learning outcomes (ALO), and student learning outcomes (SLO).

The annual performance evaluation tools used by immediate supervisors to evaluate personnel contain criteria and expectations that measure the effectiveness of personnel in performing their duties, participation in program review, and create a professional development plan.

Status

To improve evaluation of instructional faculty, the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Assembly have created a Faculty Evaluation Subcommittee to review the current evaluation system and suggest changes as needed. A revised faculty evaluation system is scheduled to be implemented in the Fall of 2011.

III.A.1c

By its mission, the institution as a whole is directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.1.c**
>
> Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes.

outcomes. The institution currently has a five year strategic plan entitled the PROA Strategic Plan 2008-2012 that identifies "promoting student learning and success" as a strategic goal of the college. The institution offers degree programs, certificate programs, and developmental programs that either have complete sets of program learning outcomes (PLOs) or complete sets of student learning outcomes (SLOs) that are reviewed on a regular basis through program review and course assessment.

Teachers, tutors, and others are directly responsible in producing student learning outcomes in courses offered at the institution. Teachers, tutors, and others must promote student learning and success through instruction that is in aligned with the College's mission and its program review process that link instruction to the mission.

Faculty regularly and actively engage in discussions in department meetings or in governance bodies such as Academic Council about successes and challenges with student learning at the course and program level. Student learning is measured through annual program assessment, program review, and course assessment.

Status

In 2010, NMC launched its Learning in Communities (Linc) program. LinC employs student mentors who support the instructional goals and outcomes of LinC courses and provide academic tutorial and social support to students enrolled in these courses. LinC is linking faculty and staff between and across departments to enhance effectiveness in fulfilling learning outcomes.

The Faculty Senate and the Faculty Assembly are also developing a New Employee Mentorship program to guide and support new faculty during their first term of instruction.

III.A.1.d

NMC upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel by BOR Human Resource Policy and Administrative Procedure 4069 concerning Ethics & Faculty Conditions of Employment Prologue concerning professional ethics. Unethical behavior is dealt through the enforcement of BOR Human Resource Policy and Administrative Procedure 4352 concerning Suspension and Termination of employment.

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.1.d**
>
> The institution upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel.

The College fosters ethical behavior in its employees through compliance with its written code of professional ethics for all its personnel as stated in BOR Human Resource Policy and Administrative Procedure 4069 concerning Ethics & Faculty Conditions of Employment Prologue concerning professional ethics. Through employment contracts, all employees must adhere to all BOR Policies and Procedures which include the ethics policy.

The College has a written code of professional ethics for all its personnel as stated in BOR Human Resource Policy and Administrative Procedure 4069 & Faculty Conditions of employment.

III.A.2

NMC employs full-time employees composed of administration, instructional and non-instructional faculty, and administrative staff. In addition to full-time employees, NMC recruits adjunct instructors that are certified for instruction.

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.2**
>
> The institution maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution. The institution has a sufficient number of staff and administrators with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support the institution's mission and purposes.

NMC has an Interim President whose full-time responsibility is to the institution until the Board of Regents selects a candidate who will become the president in full capacity. NMC also has
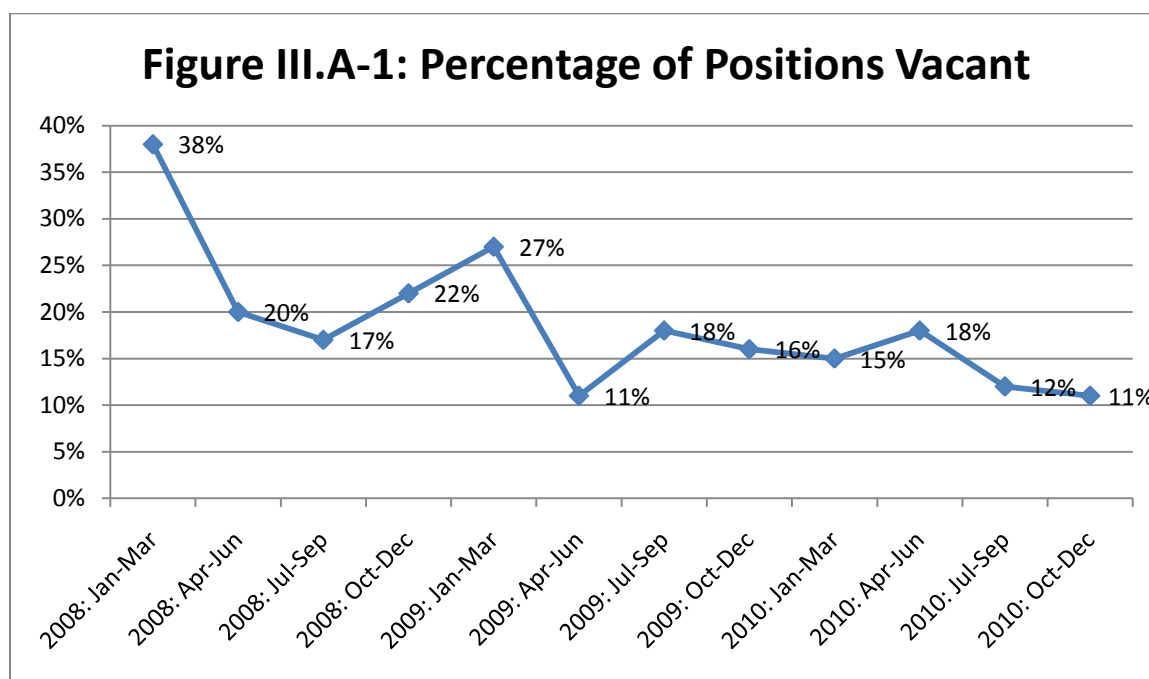
administrative positions which include one Dean of Academic Programs and Services, one Dean of Student Services, one acting Dean of Community Programs and Services, one Director of Institutional Effectiveness, one Director of Institutional Advancement, one acting Director of Information Technology, and one acting Chief Financial Officer. Except for the Dean of Community Programs and Services, the recruitment process is continuous to permanently fill these acting positions. The Interim President, Deans, and Directors oversee qualified faculty and staff who provide sufficient administrative services for the mission and purpose of the college.

Through Planning Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC), Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) and College Council, the College determines the appropriate staffing levels for each program and service.

Status

The College's program review system and shared governance structure effectively integrate human resource planning with overall institutional planning. Recommendations derived through program review are prioritized and these priority initiatives guide resource allocation at the institution. The Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) worked with the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) to review program review results in order to identify additional personnel to add to the FY 2011 budget request submitted to the Governor.

NMC has been successful at filling vacancies for faculty, staff, and administrators. As Figure III.A-1 reveals, the percentage of vacancies held in comparison to number of qualified employees hired has steadily declined since 2008, ensuring that most positions are filled.

Figure III.A-1: Percentage of Positions Vacant

III.A.3

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.3**
>
> The institution systematically develops personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. Such policies and procedures are equitably and consistently administered.

Board of Regents Policy and Procedure 1001 Board Operations: Role of the Board of Regents and Members concerning the Powers, Purposes, and Duties of the Board empowers the Board of Regents to develop personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. It is the responsibility of the institution's administration to "perform and be held responsible for the effective administration and supervision of the college's programs".

Through shared governance between the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and College Council, the Human Resource policies and procedures are reviewed and developed for Board approval. The Board of Regents (BOR) Human Resource Policies and Procedures are available electronically to all college personnel on the college network drive (N-Drive) within a public folder. Employees are encouraged to visit the Human Resource Office if they are unable to access the BOR Human Resource Policies and Procedures.

New employees are made aware of these policies and procedures and how to access them during orientation with the Human Resource Office. New employees must sign an acknowledgment form to confirm he or she is able to access the Human Resource policies and procedures.

III.A.3.a

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.3.a**
>
> The institution establishes and adheres to written policies ensuring fairness in all employment procedures.

The Northern Marianas College follows established Board of Regents Human Resources Policies and Procedures that make certain that fairness is kept in all employment procedures and promotes equity, fairness, and diversity in employment opportunities and commitment to hiring persons of diverse backgrounds.

III.A.3.b

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.3.b**
>
> The institution makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Each employee has access to his/her personnel records in accordance with law.

The institution keeps all personnel records within the Human Resources Office (HRO). The College has provided support to HRO in the security and confidentiality of personnel records by enclosing an open area of the Human Resource Office with a service window. Personnel files are kept in a secured locked area within the HR Office. Employees can access and review their personnel records after signing a login book maintained by HRO. The Human

Resources Office follows all applicable federal laws such as FERPA in the access of personnel records by employees.

The Human Resource Office is open Monday thru Friday during business hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Employees can access and review their personnel records after signing a login book maintained by HRO. Employees are allowed copies of documents in their respective personnel files only.

Status

Recently, NMC safeguarded the security and confidentiality of personnel records by enclosing an open area of the Human Resource Office with a service window. Personnel files are kept in a secured locked area within the HR Office. Employees can access and review their personnel records after signing a login book maintained by HRO.

III.A.4

ACCJC Standard III.A.4

The institution demonstrates through policies and practices an appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity.

The institution demonstrates an understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity by following its current Board of Regents policies that address issues of equity and diversity within the college. Furthermore, such policies and practices promote understanding of equity and diversity issues through procedures, programs and services, or events that allow an HR representative to monitor the recruitment and interview process of vacant positions. The institution knows these policies and practices are effective through continued application of college policies or meetings by college groups such as the Interclub council by students or NMC Coffee Connection by NMC employees.

Besides established college policies and procedures such as BOR Human Resource Policies and Procedures 4072 concerning Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action promotes equity, fairness, and diversity in employment opportunities and commitment to hiring persons of diverse backgrounds, NMC has various programs and services or events that foster an appreciation for diversity. Examples of such programs and services or events are the College Access Challenge Program (CACP), International Education Week, NMC Charter Day, or the Associated Students of the Northern Marianas College (ASNMC) which facilitates an appreciation for diversity within NMC through events such as NMC Welcome Week or Interclub Council meetings.

III.A.4.a

The institution creates and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel through encouraging or requiring participation. Evidence of such support can be found in current established college policies and procedures such as BOR Human Resource Policies and Procedures 4072 concerning Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action promotes equity, fairness, and diversity in employment opportunities and commitment to hiring persons of diverse backgrounds, NMC has various programs and services or events that foster an appreciation for diversity. Examples of such programs and services or events are the College Access Challenge Program (CACP), International Education Week, NMC Charter Day, or the Associated Students of the Northern Marianas College (ASNMC) which facilitates an appreciation for diversity within NMC through events i.e. NMC Welcome Week or Interclub Council meetings.

The institution determines the kinds of support its personnel needs through the employment annual evaluation professional development plan, professional development days planning initiated by the Dean of Academic Programs and Services, and needs assessment through annual program assessment and program review. NMC also designs programs and services that provide for the range of diverse personnel through planning sessions and meetings conducted at respective programs or services.

The institution has an array of programs and services sponsored by various departments such as its Counseling Office or Human Resources Office to support its personnel. Through required college events such as professional development activities, college assemblies, or a college social event called the NMC Coffee Connection, personnel are provided the support to develop professionally as well as personally.

These programs are effective as the number in attendance reflect interest in topics from the Attendance Sheets for professional development days or photos of the NMC Coffee Connection event.

The institution tracks and analyzes its employment equity record by participating with the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) that provides data on the institution's race and ethnicity composition. Furthermore, the institution uses an excel sheet that tracks employee data such as salary and ethnicity. The institution uses this data to help promote employment equity in developing interview committee compositions or determining salary equity with employees. Employment equity is tracked and analyzed through the number of employment grievances filed by employees. The institution uses this information to determine if improvements in policies and procedures or more training and support for employees and supervisors are needed.

III.A.4.b.

NMC regularly assesses its equity and diversity, consistent with its mission, through annual program assessment and biannual

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.4.b**
>
> The institution regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission.

program review processes. At the program level, departments utilize these processes to periodically evaluate its personnel and staffing. At the institutional level, information and data is aggregated and discussed at the College's governance and representative bodies.

III.A.4.c

NMC subscribes to, advocates, and demonstrates integrity in the treatment of its administration, faculty, staff, and students

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.4.c**
>
> The institution subscribes to, advocates, and demonstrates integrity in the treatment of its administration, faculty, staff, and students.

through the application of established board policies, procedures, and governance bodies. Through these means stakeholders are able to encourage integrity and equity by being represented in the decision-making process of College matters through meeting minutes in governance bodies such as College Council or Board of Regents.

III.A.5.a

The institution plans professional development activities for all personnel at the beginning of and during Fall and Spring Semesters of every year. NMC's Management Team assists the Office of the President in planning and preparing each term's Professional Development Days (PDDs) to continuously meet the needs of its personnel.

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.5**
>
> The institution provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on identified teaching and learning needs
>
> **ACCJC Standard III.A.5.a**
>
> The institution plans professional development activities to meet the needs of its personnel.

Ongoing professional development on and off-island is also offered throughout the year on a wide range of topics and issues. Employees can also avail of tuition assistance for enrolling in appropriate courses at the College. The Community Development Institute also offers continuing education opportunities for NMC employees, including the Framingham University Masters in International Education program.

III.A.5.b

The institution disseminates an evaluation tool after professional development sessions are

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.5.b**
>
> With the assistance of the participants, the institution systematically evaluates professional development programs and uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

completed to gather feedback from employees about the execution of the professional development topic. The results are used to improve materials, presenters, and overall topic of discussion. Furthermore, these results help the institution retain and continue professional development programs that are both required and of interest to all personnel.

For example, evaluations from 2008 and 2009 profession development days led NMC to offer additional training on program review and accreditation. These trainings were embedded into the Fall 2009 PDDs, the Spring 2010 PDDs, and the Fall 2010 PDDs.

The institution supports professional development programs in topics for all personnel that include but are not limited to FERPA, College Registration Assessment, Program Review, Equal Employment Opportunity, Sexual Harassment, Supervisory Training, and Learning Technologies. Evidence of such support can be found in E-mail announcements and employee attendance sheets to these professional development programs.

In compliance with BOR Policies and Procedures 3033 concerning Evaluation of Instructional Faculty, and BOR Human Resource Policy and Procedure 4212 concerning Annual Evaluation of Employees, NMC's programs use annual program assessment, biannual program review, course assessment, and evaluation mechanisms to identify teaching and learning needs of its faculty and other personnel.

III.A.6

> **ACCJC Standard III.A.6**
>
> Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of human resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

Through Planning Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC), Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) and College Council, the College determines the appropriate staffing levels for each program and service. The College employs full-time employees composing of administration, instructional and non-instructional faculty, and administrative staff.

Annual budget requests for needed positions are presented to the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) for review and deliberation. After discussion and deliberation, personnel budget requests are submitted to the College Council and BOR for approval and adoption. Personnel budgets are contingent on the availability of funds appropriated by both the local government or grants obtained from federal sources.

Status

The College's program review system and shared governance structure effectively integrate human resource planning with overall institutional planning. Recommendations derived through program review are prioritized and these priority initiatives guide resource allocation at the institution. For example, PROAC worked with BAFC to review program review results in order to identify additional personnel to add to the FY 2011 budget request submitted to the Governor.

Standard III.D

Funding for Northern Marianas College (NMC or College) comes from multiple sources: legislative government appropriations, student tuition and fees, federal grants, direct contributions, contributions to NMC's Foundation, and miscellaneous revenue such as from facility rentals and community and professional development workshops and courses.

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.**
> Financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. Financial resources planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Table III.D-1 NMC Revenues by Source: FY2006-FY2010

Operating Revenue ($)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
U.S. Federal Grants	5,724,628	5,992,859	6,393,751	6,702,752	7,854,990
Student Tuition & Fees (net of scholarship discounts and allowances)	1,043,474	1,069,752	1,763,563	1,629,829	2,067,753
Private Gifts, Grants, Donations	73,194	49,187	156,276	40,278	121,069
Other	1,181,863	1,194,419	1,194,372	1,224,946	314,275
Total Operating Revenue ($)	8,023,159	8,306,217	9,507,962	9,597,805	10,358,087

Non-operating Revenue ($)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CNMI Appropriations	7,078,228	5,056,682	5,618,211	5,657,018	4,442,023
Net Investment Income	56,339	241,535			74,703
Change in Fair Value of Investments	168,816	270,115	(693,577)	302,851	470,442
Other				103,375	
Total Non-operating Revenue ($)	7,303,383	5,568,332	4,924,634	6,063,244	4,987,168
TOTAL ($)	15,326,542	13,874,549	14,432,596	15,661,049	15,345,255

Notes:
- FY10 figures are preliminary.
- The FY 2006-FY 2009 figures were taken directly from the Single Audit report. In FY06 and FY07, the report shows 1) Investment Income, net of expenses, and 2) Change in fair value of investments. For FY08 and FY09, the report shows 1) Net increase (decrease) in fair value of investments, and 2) Other revenues. Notes to the financial statements and the management discussion and analysis and gave no explanation for the different presentation and, therefore, the amounts are as listed in the reports.
- In FY 2007 NMC was not held exempt from work-hour reductions enacted by the CNMI legislature. Note that in the last three fiscal years, the College has been exempted from such cuts even as the Commonwealth's budget situation worsened.
- The category of "Other" in Operating Revenue includes contributions from the NMC Foundation and revenues such as those from sales and services of educational departments and auxiliary services.
- The $103,375 listed as "Other" in Non-operating Revenue in FY 2009 represents a one-time special appropriation by the CNMI government.

Although the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is in the midst of an economic downturn, the Northern Marianas College (NMC or College) continues to see increases in student enrollment. Therefore, while NMC's legislatively appropriated funds decrease, the College's direct revenue from student tuition and fees increases.

The College's annual Consolidated Budget is a combination of its Tuition and Fees Budget and its legislative Appropriations Budget. The Tuition and Fees Budget is used to fund the general operations of the College, including the payment for adjunct instructors; while the Appropriations Budget is used to fund the salaries and benefits of FTE (Full Time Equivalent) employees as well as for utility payments (electrical, water, and sewer services).

FY 2011 Tuition and Fees Budget	$3,100,000
FY 2011 Appropriations Budget	$4,464,464
Total	$7,564,464

The College has responded to the decrease in legislative funding by relying on its mission as a guide to prioritizing funding. Several priority positions were identified and are currently funded through NMC's State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF).

Table III.D-3 FY 2011 SFSF Funded Positions

	Position	Department
1	Director of Special Projects	Office of the President
2	Program Manager	Office of the President
3	Distance Learning Coordinator	Information Technology
4	Instructor, Languages & Humanities	Language & Humanities
5	Program Manager III (Systems Administrator)	Information Technology
6	Program Manager	Office of Institutional Effectiveness
7	Administrative Manager IV	Business Department
8	Media Specialist (Distance Learning Coordinator)	Information Technology
9	Media Specialist (Distance Learning Coordinator)	Information Technology
10	Data Entry Clerk	Office of Admission & Records
11	Data Entry Clerk	Office of Admission & Records
12	Data Entry Clerk	Office of Admission & Records
13	Data Entry Clerk	Office of Admission & Records
14	Administrative Assistant	Human Resources Office
15	Administrative Assistant	Procurement & Property Management Office

In addition, seven full-time positions have been restructured to provide direct services to the federally funded College Access Challenge Program (CACP), thereby reducing the amount of funding required by local fund sources; the current CACP funding cycle runs through 2014.

Table III.D-4 Example of Restructured Funding of Full-Time Positions

	Position	CACP ($)	Operations ($)	Total ($)
1	Director, Counseling Programs and Services	24,678	24,678	49,356
2	Counselor, Disability Services Coordinator	24,678	24,678	49,356
3	Counselor III	21,095	21,095	42,190
4	Program Manager	9,323	27,970	37,293
5	Enrollment Manager	18,647	18,647	37,294
6	Financial Aid Director	12,339	37,017	49,356
7	Marketing/Recruitment Coordinator	11,819	11,819	23,638
	Total	**122,579**	**165,904**	**288,483**

In 1995, Public Law 9-53, also known as the Higher Education Act of 1995, was enacted that established a greater guaranteed funding base than that provided by Article XV, Section 2(c) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Section 7 of Public Law 9-53 amended 3 CMC § 1331(a). The amendment is as follows:

> Section 7. <u>Amendment.</u> 3 CMC Section 1331(a) is amended to read as follows:
> "(a) Aside from such additional sums as may be appropriated annually by the Legislature for its financial support, the College shall be guaranteed an annual budget of not less than $6,000,000.00 or one percent of the general revenues of the Commonwealth, whichever is greater. This annual financial support shall be used for the operations and service delivery of the College. The budgetary appropriation may not be reprogrammed for other purposes, and any unencumbered fund balance at the end of a fiscal year shall be available for reappropriation."

The College supports educational improvements through its budgeting processes, which allow the College to shift resources to support educational improvement initiatives as appropriate. The College also relies upon and pursues sources of funding that are separate from those provided by legislative appropriations or collected through student tuition and fees. These funds include federal grants and donations to both the institution and the NMC Foundation.

The College qualifies for and avails itself of approximately $7 million in annual federal funding from several grants and major programs including Adult Basic Education and the Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service.

Table III.D-5 Fiscal Year 2010 Grant Expenditures (unaudited)

Federal Grantor Agency	Amount ($)
U.S. Department of Education - Student Financial Assistance	2,681,010
U.S. Department of Education - Other	2,531,611
U.S. Department of Agriculture	1,847,837
U.S. Department of the Interior	225,000
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	544,725
U.S. Department of Commerce	24,808
TOTAL	**7,854,990**

In 1997, the Board of Regents established the NMC Foundation a non-profit (501c3) organization charged with acquiring, managing, and disbursing funds from alternative sources to support the advancement of NMC's educational programs and services. In addition to providing institutional financial support, the NMC Foundation also provides two-year scholarships to students.

Together, these funding sources help ensure that the College's financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services.

The College relies on its mission, strategic plan, program review results, and annual institutional priorities to guide the budgeting process; all funding requests require information and data from program review. Prioritization begins at the program and department levels by completing program review functions as dictated through the College's program review forms one and two. The Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) guides the College's program review process and assists in identifying and setting priorities at the program, departmental, and institutional levels. These priorities are compiled in the Composite Report, which, in turn, is used by the Budget and Finance Committee during the budgeting process.

The College operates with financial responsibility and strives to continuously improve its resource allocation processes. Discussions to develop a comprehensive government relations strategy have begun; the strategy will be further developed at the College's Strategic Planning Summit in May 2011.

Standard III. D. 1

The College relies upon its mission and institutional goals as the foundation for all financial planning. Financial planning begins at the program and

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.1**
>
> The institution relies upon its mission and goals as the foundation for financial planning

department levels during the planning and program review process; program review informs planning and resource allocation at all levels. Through standard program review formats, each program and department communicates its support of the College's mission. Each program and department also has its own mission statement, which is tied to the College's mission.

The College's mission is set forth in the CNMI Constitution and can only be changed by a constitutional amendment. The mission of the Northern Marianas College, as set forth in Article XV, Section 2(c) of the Commonwealth Constitution, is as follows:

> Commonwealth Constitution Article XV, Section 2(c):
> "b) The mission of the college shall be to provide the best quality and meaningful postsecondary and adult educational opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the individual and for the Commonwealth as a whole. The college shall be responsible for providing education in the areas of adult and continuing education, postsecondary and adult vocational education and professional development for the people of the Commonwealth."

The institutional/strategic goals of the Northern Marianas College are laid out in its 2008-2012 Strategic Plan.

Standard III. D. 1. a

In December 2008, the College adopted its *Institutional Excellence Guide*, which provides an overview of the shared governance process at the College, as

ACCJC Standard III.D.1.a
Financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning.

well as the process by which institutional planning, assessment, and financial planning are linked. Financial planning at NMC is guided by the College's mission, Strategic Plan (PROA-SP), annual institutional priorities, and results of program review (Composite Report). The allocation of resources involves linking, prioritizing, and funding program review results, planning, and fiscal year priorities. The process is currently under review by the College's relevant shared governance bodies. Revisions are expected to be implemented in time to complete the FY2012 budget development cycle.

The planning process for allocation of financial resources typically begins with an Annual Budget Call for individual offices and departments to prepare their respective budgets in accordance with guidelines and criteria as specified in the budget call memorandum.

The respective deans and directors are responsible for developing program budgets. The Budget and Finance Committee is tasked with providing oversight to the budget preparation process by holding open hearings for each submission. Budget justifications are expected to be consistent with program review results, Institutional Priorities, and the Operational Plan of the PROA-SP.

An Example of the Link between the Planning Process and Budget Decisions: Back-Up Power Source

A concrete example of the successful integration of planning, program review, and resource allocation is the recently completed Back-Up Power project.

Composite Reports of previous Program Review cycles, including the October 2010 report have consistently mentioned the need for alternative power sources because of the unreliability of our local power company. This need was recognized in 2009 when the College prepared its application/proposal for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) program of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). $220,000 was requested to connect more of the College's educational facilities to our existing back-up generator. A cost analysis conducted in 2010 revealed that a second generator could be purchased and installed for the budget allocated for the project. The request to amend the project was approved by the grantor agency, the U.S. Department of Education.

On March 7, 2011 the project was completed and the new generator is on-line. A total of six additional buildings are now connected to NMC's enhanced back-up power system. Building W which houses our student computer labs and Building V which houses our Business Department were specifically mentioned in Composite Report recommendations. These buildings were prioritized in the planned list of buildings that were to be served by the new generator.

This accomplishment is directly related to Goal 4 of the College's PROA Strategic Plan: Accelerate the upgrade of physical and technology infrastructure.

Federal financial resources were allocated to fulfill recommendations generated by the program review process and address a component of a Strategic Plan goal.

The Budget and Finance Committee makes budget recommendations to the College Council, which then acts to amend or accept the recommendations. The final draft budgets are forwarded to the President for review and submission to the Board of Regents for modification or adoption. This cycle is performed on an annual basis.

The College remains proactive in seeking the best link between planning and program review and resource allocation. In a regular meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee on February 24, 2011, the Chair of the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) presented a model of linking program review with resource allocation that was used by Drake University to successfully achieve an annual cost savings of four million dollars; the presentation included introducing a similar model that could be implemented at NMC.

Standard III. D. 1. b:

Northern Marianas College assures that institutional planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements by providing those who are

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.1.b**
>
> Institutional planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.

involved in institutional planning with accurate and timely information about available funds, including the annual budget showing ongoing and anticipated fiscal commitments. This goal is achieved through the work of three shared governance bodies: the College Council, the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee, and the Budget and Finance Committee. At a broader level, there is involvement by the President, division heads, and the Board of Regents. In addition to financial reporting at the governance and Board levels, individual program and department expenditure authorities are provided with monthly budget updates.

Planning takes place at multiple levels throughout the College, such as program, department, division, administration; though on an institutional level, the College Council and the Management Team guide the planning process. The Chief Financial and Administrative Officer is the Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee and is a member of both the College Council and the Management Team and is responsible for acting as a liaison between these bodies and the Finance and Budget Offices. Financial updates, including the annual budget showing ongoing and anticipated fiscal commitments, are given to the Management Team, shared governance bodies, and the Board of Regents.

Financial updates on all funding sources of the College are provided to the Board of Regents as part of the President's report, which is a standing agenda item for every regular quarterly Board meeting. In addition, the Budget Officer provides expenditure reports to all expenditure authorities on a monthly basis and upon request from authorized personnel. These reports inform the expenditure authorities—for example, program, department, and division heads, on current encumbrances, budget balances, and any reprogramming adjustments that may be needed.

Table III.D-5 Example Expenditure Report: Social Sciences & Fine Arts

Account Code	Account Title	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Encumbrance	YTD Actual & Encumbrance	YTD Budget Variance - Revised
SOCIAL SCIENCES & FINE ARTS						
51000	PERSONNEL	95,124.00	65,897.48	0.00	65,897.48	29,226.52
53000	SUPPLIES	4,013.00	3,724.84	164.99	3,889.83	123.17
54000	CONTRACTUAL	14,850.00	11,850.00	0.00	11,850.00	3,000.00
55000	CONSTRUCTION	985.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	485.00
57000	OTHER	1,722.00	527.03	0.00	527.03	1,194.97
	TOTAL	116,694.00	82,499.35	164.99	82,664.34	34,029.66

Annual funding priorities called Institutional Priorities are set forth at the beginning of each annual budget development cycle. The priorities are developed in consultation with the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee and are based on the PROA-SP and the results of program review. Institutional Priorities have served as part of the foundation for annual budget development since 2008.

In a special meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee on February 22, 2011, the following Institutional Priorities were adopted to help guide the Fiscal Year 2012 budget development cycle:

- Strengthen student services and assess their effectiveness in meeting defined outcomes. *(Strategic Goal 1)*
- Improve the literacy and analytical problem-solving skills of students. *(Strategic Goal 1)*
- Build basic skills for personal enrichment and prepare individuals for rewarding careers. *(Strategic Goal 2)*
- Implement campus-wide customer service principles. *(Strategic Goal 3)*
- Develop and implement a preventive maintenance plan. *(Strategic Goal 4)*
- Enrich workforce skills by providing quality training and learning opportunities. *(Strategic Goal 2)*
- Renovate existing and construct new teaching and learning facilities at the current Saipan campus that are compliant with energy efficient standards and educational facilities best practices. *(Strategic Goal 4)*
- Implement a comprehensive information technology system. *(Strategic Goal 4)*
- Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention program. *(Strategic Goal 1)*
- Develop a Fund Development Plan in collaboration with the NMC Foundation. *(Strategic Goal 3)*

The College maintains an effective process by which institutional planners are informed of financial resource availability and expenditure requirements. Direct communication occurs through constituent representation in governance bodies, and information is widely disseminated throughout the College at all levels.

Standard III.D.1.c

When making short-range financial plans, the College considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. This is evidenced by the College's use of its five-year, long-term PROA Strategic Plan (PROA-SP) as the basis for comprehensive planning for all aspects of

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.1.c**
>
> When making short range financial plans, the institution considers its long range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies and plans for payment of liabilities and future obligations.

the institution. Institutional Priorities that are derived from the PROA-SP are developed annually to help guide the budget development process.

The Budget and Finance Committee, in its meeting on February 10, 2011, created a standing sub-committee to develop and examine long-term financial stability measures. The sub-committee meets weekly and has submitted a preliminary list of recommendations to the Budget and Finance Committee:

In a review hearing on February 9, 2011, on case number 06-0367 CV NMI Retirement Fund vs. CNMI Government, the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands granted the NMI Retirement Fund's request that NMC's outstanding retirement contributions and related penalties be transferred as a liability to the CNMI Government. The official documented court order is forthcoming.

The projected cost of utilities, maintenance, employee benefits, etc. are budgeted annually. As the CNMI is currently facing a sharp economic downturn state appropriated funding for utilities is expected to decrease. NMC is addressing this anticipated shortfall by implementing utility cost-saving measures and by adequately budgeting for utilities in the Tuition and Fees Budget.

Standard III.D.1.d

The College clearly defines and follows its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development with all constituencies having appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budgets. The *NMC Institutional Effectiveness Guide* provides an overview of the link between planning and budgeting.

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.1.d**
>
> The institution clearly defines and follows its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development with all constituencies having appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budgets.

> By incorporating the shared governance structure into the planning, assessment, and budgeting processes, the College is facilitating an inclusive and well-informed dialogue centered around the continuous improvement of student learning, teaching, and institutional effectiveness.
>
> It shall be the shared responsibility of the College Council and the administration to convene an annual planning summit. The summit shall serve as a forum for reporting the progress made on the institution's strategic plan, communicating changes made to the operational plan, and for soliciting input from the community.
>
> The administration must solicit and consider input from the College community and represented constituencies before decisions that have a direct impact on academic policy, academic curriculum, academic procedure, suspension or closure of programs, budget request and resource allocations, strategic educational master plan, capital projects, and others, are made.
>
> Committee members and constituency representatives are responsible for keeping the people they represent informed.
>
> The College Council is the umbrella organization for all other bodies of the College and also serves as the coordinating body for receiving and sharing information from and among the constituencies and the President.

Planning takes place at various levels throughout the institution, including at shared governance bodies such as the College Council and its standing Planning, Program Review Outcomes Assessment Committee. Both groups hold weekly meetings that draw participation from student, staff, faculty, and management representatives; the meetings are open to all members of the campus community. Budget development is facilitated by the by the Budget Office in

collaboration with the College Council's standing Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC). This method provides appropriate opportunities for broad participation through direct or representative participation on the BAFC and through open budget hearing processes. The Budget and Finance Committee holds weekly meetings that are open to the campus community. Recommendations for financial allocation done by the shared governance process and actions are documented in committee minutes.

Standard III.D.2

The College strives to assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of financial resources through the financial management system, which has appropriate control mechanisms. The College widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making, for example,

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.2**
>
> To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of financial resources, the financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making.

regular budget-to-actual spending reports to program and department heads, financial reporting at Board meetings. The integrity of the institution's finances are demonstrated by the issuance of an unqualified opinion on the audit of its financial statements for Fiscal Years 2007, 2008, and 2009 by the independent auditing firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLC.

The financial management system maintains strict control mechanisms. All expenditures must receive appropriate departmental and institutional approval in which all funding is verified and documented. All purchase orders, travel authorizations, and contracts require the approval and signature of all appropriate program and division heads with ultimate approval by the president. After approval of expenditures at the departmental level, the fund certification process includes reviewing all purchase documents to ensure that the proper account, for example, the fund account, general ledger account, department codes, etc.; signature authority; and supporting documentation are provided. Direct communication between departments and the Finance Office ensures the resolution of administrative problems and inquiries related to payment of vendors. Operations on Tinian and Rota are also closely monitored; all expenditures including travel authorizations and payroll are processed through the NMC Finance Office on Saipan.

The College's computerized accounting system provides up-to-date, real-time reporting. Financial statements and status reports are prepared on a monthly and quarterly basis as required to ensure compliance with local and federal regulations. The Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO) provides quarterly updates to the Board of Regents. The CFAO also presents financial status updates to Management Team, the Budget and Finance Committee, and College Council. The Budget Office provides reports on budget-to-actual spending to expenditure authorities on a monthly basis and as requested.

As the College engages in continuous improvement efforts, its financial and budget related processes are currently undergoing revisions. Appropriate revisions to the *Finance Office Guide* and the *Budget Manual* are expected to be finalized by June 2011.

Standard III.D.2.a

The development of program and
department budgets begin at the
departmental level to create budget
requests that appropriately support student
learning and are tied explicitly to the
PROA Strategic Plan or the results of
program review. Departments then

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.2.a**
>
> Financial documents, including the budget and
> independent audit, reflect appropriate allocation and
> use of financial resources to support student learning
> programs and services. Institutional responses to
> external audit findings are comprehensive, timely, and
> communicated appropriately.

participate in open budget hearings conducted by the Budget and Finance Committee. The
College continues to operate within its Board of Regents approved annual budgets.

The College participates in annual audits in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. NMC has
clearly demonstrated financial integrity and stability as evidenced in the audit reports for Fiscal
Years 2009, 2008, and 2007, by receiving an "unqualified opinion" by the independent
accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLC. This is especially significant because NMC had
previously received qualified opinions on the audit of its financial statements since the mid-
1990s. Corrective actions to audit findings are documented and pursued. The College is currently
engaged in negotiations with its grantor agencies to resolve findings and questioned costs.

Standard III.D.2.b

The College ensures that appropriate
financial information is widely
disseminated throughout the institution.

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.2.b**
>
> Appropriate financial information is provided
> throughout the institution.

Copies of the annual audit reports are provided to members of the Board of Regents, the
President, and the CFAO. Copies are also available through the Office of the President or
through the website of the CNMI Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) at www.opacnmi.com.

Financial updates on all funding sources of the College are provided to the Board of Regents as
part of the President's report, which is a standing agenda item for every regular quarterly Board
meeting. In addition, the Budget Officer provides expenditure reports to all expenditure
authorities on a monthly basis and upon request from program and department expenditure
authorities. These reports inform the expenditure authorities on current encumbrances, budget
balances, and any reprogramming adjustments that may be needed. The CFAO, Budget Officer,
and other relevant finance and budget personnel make presentations to various groups on campus
as requested.

The Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) now meets on a weekly basis, which allows for
frequent review and discussion of the College's finances: budget-to-actual spending, future
funding needs, etc.

Standard III.D.2.c

The College's ending balance of unrestricted net assets and unrestricted cash and cash equivalents for the immediate past three years has been:

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.2.c**
>
> The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, strategies for appropriate risk management, and realistic plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.

Table III.D-2 NMC Ending Balances FY2008-2010

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Unrestricted Net Assets	$2,565,583	$3,724,483	$4,841,827
Cash and cash equivalents	$2,754,476	$2,863,224	$3,347,416

Note: FY 2010 figures are preliminary

As a corporation of the CNMI Government, the College is self-insured. To assure the institution's financial stability, Board of Regents Policy 2000 requires that the College plan for financial uncertainties by maintaining a reserve fund at all times.

As a corporation of the CNMI Government, the College is self-insured. To assure the institution's financial stability, Board of Regents Policy 2000 requires that the College plan for financial uncertainties by maintaining a reserve fund at all times.

Board of Regents Policy 2000:

> Prudent financial planning dictates that the financial planning process includes anticipation of financial uncertainties and reasonable reserves to address such. Along these lines, it is the policy of the Board of Regents that a "Reserve Fund" be established. The purpose of this reserve fund is to address, as needed, financial emergencies that could not have been anticipated and planned for through the normal budgeting process. Initial funding for the "Reserve Fund" shall be from the anticipated revenues generated in financial year 2005 (October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005). It is further the Policy of the Board that on an annual (financial year) basis 5% of the total Tuition and Fees (Operations) budget shall be deposited into the Reserve Fund[.]

Funding for the College comes from multiple sources: state-level government appropriations, student tuition and fees, federal grants, direct contributions, contributions to NMC's Foundation, and miscellaneous revenue such as from facility rentals and community and professional development workshops and courses.

CNMI appropriations are provided to the College on a bi-weekly draw-down basis, for example, as expended each payroll period. When funds are not transferred in a timely manner, the institution relies upon its operations (tuition and fees) revenues to temporarily cover the liabilities charged to appropriations.

The College has had to take appropriate actions to address the unforeseen suspension of its appropriated Vocational Education funding. Due to the current financial state of the Commonwealth and the recent change from local to federal control of immigration, the Legislature suspended the financial earmarking of the College's appropriated Vocational Education funds for the current fiscal year. The College responded by shifting personnel who are usually funded under the Vocational Education fund source to NMC's general appropriations fund and has been working diligently to shift funding from its State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF). The College submitted its fiscal year 2012 appropriations budget request to the CNMI Office of Management and Budget on February 28, 2011. The College administration and Board is pursuing strategies to ensure adequate funding is appropriated to the College in fiscal year 2012 as SFSF funding will no longer be available.

Standard III.D.2.d:

The institution practices effective oversight of finances as is demonstrated in the audit reports for Fiscal Years 2009, 2008, and 2007, which all received an "unqualified opinion" by the independent accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLC.

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.2.d**
>
> The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets.

The Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO) provides the overall management of the College's finances. The CFAO serves as the president's primary financial advisor and acts as a financial liaison to all stakeholders: internal groups such as the governance councils and external groups such as the CNMI Legislature.

The CFAO and the staff and management of the Finance and Budget Offices, along with federal program managers and the staff and management of the Financial Aid Office, provide effective oversight the institution's overall finances by adhering to College policies and procedures and local and federal regulations.

As the College engages in continuous improvement efforts, its financial and budget related processes are currently undergoing revisions. Appropriate revisions to the Finance Office Guide and the Budget Manual are expected to be finalized by June 2011.

Each department maintains records regarding purchases and funding specific to their department. Independent auditors from Deloitte & Touche, as well as grantor agencies for federal programs review these records and provide feedback. If costs are questioned, the department reviews its documentation and diligently responds to show that the costs were necessary and essential. In response to audit findings on major federal award programs, the College has implemented corrective action plans that address noted audit findings. In addition, federal programs work

closely with their respective grantor agencies to resolve audit findings as part of their annual funding renewal.

Standard III.D.2.e

All financial resources are used with integrity and in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the institution. The institution continues to operate within its Board of Regents approved budgets, which rely on the College's mission, goals (PROA Strategic Plan), and program review results as a foundation.

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.2.e**
>
> All financial resources, including those from auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.

All funds of the College are reviewed and audited annually by an independent auditing firm. Deloitte & Touche, LLC is currently contracted to conduct the College's annual audit. Regular quarterly and annual reports are provided to grantor agencies as required by each program.

Standard III.D.2.f

The foundation for all financial resource allocation, including that for contractual agreements, is the College's mission, goals (PROA Strategic Plan), and program review results. Contractual agreements at the institution, including those for goods, services, or grants management, are executed according to

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.2.f**
>
> Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution.

applicable regulations, for example, institutional policies, grant provisions, Commonwealth law, etc. Current contractual agreements exist for the management of federal grants, with NMC serving as both grantee and sub-grantor; procurement of goods and services; and consultancy services for both adjunct instruction and professional services to assist the institution with specific projects and tasks. All contracts are approved by the president and are reviewed for legal sufficiency by the institution's legal counsel and contain provisions to amend or terminate the contract in the event that the institution's needs change or the contractor does not meet NMC's required standards of quality.

Standard III.D.2. g

Budgeting and resource allocation decisions are combined into NMC's budgets, which consist of CNMI government appropriations, tuition and fees and miscellaneous revenues, and federal funds. The respective deans and

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.2.g**
>
> The institution systematically assesses the effective use of financial resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

directors are responsible for developing program budgets. The Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) is tasked with providing oversight to the budget preparation process by holding

departmental hearings for each submission. Throughout the budgeting process, BAFC works with the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee and College Council to ensure that budget submissions and decisions are consistent with program review results, annual Institutional Priorities, and the PROA Strategic Plan. Such alignment ensures that resource allocation supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of the College's programs and services.

Standard III.D.3

The College assesses the effective use of financial resources and uses the results as the basis for improvement. The College accomplishes this through systematic program review and dialogue in the participatory

> **ACCJC Standard III.D.3**
>
> The institution systematically assess the effective use of financial resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement

governance committees, i.e., College Council and its standing Budget and Finance Committee. The current model of resource allocation that was adopted in the Institutional Effectiveness Guide in 2008, has placed the College's mission, goals, and program review results as the driving force behind the allocation of resources. In this way, funding is driven by those who are directly delivering instruction and services to students.

The College has identified recommendations within the scope of this standard and recommends: the following planning agenda:

- Establishing methods to strengthen the link between planning and program review and resource allocation. The Budget and Finance Committee and the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee are currently examining this issue for the purposes of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the budgeting process and to plan for future budget cuts.
- More aggressive action toward 1) resolving audit findings and 2) preventing future findings. The institution has had high turnover in recent years in the position of Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO) which has impacted the institution's audit resolution efforts. The institution has begun steps to hire a highly qualified individual to fill this important role under a permanent status. Audit resolution efforts continue even without a permanent CFAO, however, continuity in this position will provide greater support to such efforts.

Standard IV.B

The Board of Regents is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of Northern Marianas College and the successful completion of its mission, as outlined under Section 2(a) of Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which states:

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B**
> **Board and Administrative Organization**
>
> In addition to the leadership of individuals and constituencies, institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution. Multi-college districts/systems clearly define the organizational roles of the district/system and the colleges.

> The legislature shall establish by law a Northern Marianas College that shall be headed by a president. The president of the college shall be appointed by a representative board of regents. The board of regents shall be appointed to staggered terms by the governor and shall have autonomy in the administration of its affairs and shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The composition of the board of regents and other matters pertaining to its operations and duties shall be provided by law.

The general duties and authority of the Board of Regents are re-enforced by 3 CMC § 1304(b), which directs that "the Northern Marianas College is established as a nonprofit public corporation under the general control and direction of a board designated as the Board of Regents of the Northern Marianas College…" Commonwealth Code also specifically empowers the Board of Regents in 3 CMC § 1316 to perform a number of duties, including:

> (a) To hold in trust for the Commonwealth the property and assets of the college, and to have the authority to negotiate loan guarantees and, with the approval of the Commonwealth Development Authority, issue bonds.
> (b) To set the goals and general directions of the college, and to approve policies in pursuit of such goals and directions.
> (e) To adopt, amend and repeal policies governing the conduct of its business and the performance of the powers and duties grant to or imposed upon it by law or the Constitution. . .
> (g) To acquire for use by the college any property, whether real, personal or mixed, whether tangible or intangible, or any interest therein, and to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the same for the good of the college; . .
> (i) To establish and to oversee the activities of a Northern Marianas College Foundation as a private, nonprofit, tax exempt public corporation for the support of the college, . . .
> (j) To act as the state board of higher education for the Commonwealth for purposes of federal law.
> (l) In consultation with the Governor, to approve the budget of the college and to have the budget submitted to the legislature . . .
> (s) To enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its business and on such terms as it may deem appropriate with any agency or instrumentality of the United States, or with any state, Commonwealth, territory, or possession, or with any political subdivision thereof, or with any person, firm, association, or corporation.
> (t) To determine the character of and the necessity for its obligations and expenditures, and the manner in which they shall be incurred, allowed and paid, subject to provisions of law applicable to the college.
> (v) To establish procurement policies for the college, and to expend funds appropriated by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the college by any other entity.
> (w) To take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the powers conferred upon it by law and the Commonwealth Constitution.
> (x) To submit an annual budget for the operation and administration of the college to the Governor ...

These cited provisions stipulate—in both the Commonwealth Constitution and statutory Commonwealth law—that the Board of Regents is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution as well as the successful outcome of its educational mission and the use of its financial resources to meet its mission. The Board of Regents has both a broad mandate under Section 2(a), Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution and 3 CMC § 1304(b), and is specifically empowered to control the college's affairs, including its financial matters, under 3 CMC § 1316.

As quoted above, Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution grants the Board of Regents "autonomy in its affairs." The Board performs its duties as an independent entity. The Board is required to have a diverse composition in its membership: Specifically, 3 CMC § 1311 requires that: "at least one member shall be a resident of Tinian, one member shall be a resident of Rota, at least one member shall be of Carolinian descent, and at least one member shall be a woman," and thus reflects a variety of public and constituent interests.

Not only is the Board an independent policy making body under Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, but the Board also reflects constituent and public interest in its activities and decisions through diverse membership and open-meeting requirements. This openness is embodied in 3 CMC § 1315, which stipulates that "all meetings of the board shall be open to the public, except when personal matters affecting the privacy of an individual or other confidential matters are considered."

Northern Marianas College is a single entity and does not have a district or system structure, although it currently supports non-degree services at its sites on Tinian and Rota.

The Board of Regents has sufficient constitutional and statutory support for its autonomy. Despite the fact that the Commonwealth Constitution and Commonwealth Codes states unambiguously that the Board of Regents are granted "autonomy in its affairs," a handful of elected officials occasionally feel compelled to advocate for their individualized goals to the extent that they would seek to influence the operations of the College. A white paper issued jointly in 2006 by the Pacific Post-secondary Education Council (PPEC) and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) entitled, *Enhancing and Sustaining Higher Education Quality in the Pacific: Challenges Facing Institutions Seeking to Acquire and Maintain WASC-Accreditation* enumerated eight region-wide circumstances. Among those eight was "Inappropriate local government control or interference." Within the last year, both the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education* have featured numerous stories of such pressures even on mainland publicly-supported institutions. The challenge is now more widespread than ever.

As the Commission has noted in its reports and action letters, facing such challenges requires a strong, cohesive and professionally-trained Board whose members can assert their constitutional and statutory authority to preserve the College's autonomy and protect it from undue influence by members of government. At the same time, the Board must be capable of educating the public and the government about the role of the College in the larger community, including its

contributions to the community that justify its autonomy of operations. The Board also has a fundamental responsibility to safeguard the accreditation of the College.

The Board has worked tirelessly over the last year to restore its relationship with ACCJC, as well as to put in place policies and to guide it in carrying out its responsibilities. The Board has recognized the need for its own development and has pursued that development through ongoing training activities. The Board has also put in place an evaluation system for holding itself accountable for these tasks. The composite picture of Board practice is markedly stronger than at any point in the College's history.

Standard IV.B.1

NMC Board of Regents

The Board of Regents is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of Northern Marianas College and the successful completion of its mission, as outlined under Section 2(a) of Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which states:

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1**
>
> The institution has a governing board that is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrator for the college or the district/system.

> The legislature shall establish by law a Northern Marianas College that shall be headed by a president. The president of the college shall be appointed by a representative board of regents.   The board of regents shall be appointed to staggered terms by the governor and shall have autonomy in the administration of its affairs and shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The composition of the board of regents and other matters pertaining to its operations and duties shall be provided by law. (1985)

The general duties and authority of the Board of Regents are re-enforced by 3 CMC § 1304(b), which directs that "the Northern Marianas College is established as a nonprofit public corporation under the general control and direction of a board designated as the Board of Regents of the Northern Marianas College…" Commonwealth Code also specifically empowers the Board of Regents in 3 CMC § 1316 to perform a number of duties, including:

> (a) To hold in trust for the Commonwealth the property and assets of the college, and to have the authority to negotiate loan guarantees and, with the approval of the Commonwealth Development Authority, issue bonds.
> (b) To set the goals and general directions of the college, and to approve policies in pursuit of such goals and directions.
> (e) To adopt, amend and repeal policies governing the conduct of its business and the performance of the powers and duties grant to or imposed upon it by law or the Constitution. . . .
> (g) To acquire for use by the college any property, whether real, personal or mixed, whether tangible or intangible, or any interest therein, and to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the same for the good of the college; . . .
> (i) To establish and to oversee the activities of a Northern Marianas College Foundation as a private, nonprofit, tax exempt public corporation for the support of the college, ...
> (j) To act as the state board of higher education for the Commonwealth for purposes of federal law.

(l) In consultation with the Governor, to approve the budget of the college and to have the budget submitted to the legislature . . . .
(s) To enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its business and on such terms as it may deem appropriate with any agency or instrumentality of the United States, or with any state, Commonwealth, territory, or possession, or with any political subdivision thereof, or with any person, firm, association, or corporation.
(t) To determine the character of and the necessity for its obligations and expenditures, and the manner in which they shall be incurred, allowed and paid, subject to provisions of law applicable to the college.
(v) To establish procurement policies for the college, and to expend funds appropriated by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the college by any other entity.
(w) To take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the powers conferred upon it by law and the Commonwealth Constitution.
(x) To submit an annual budget for the operation and administration of the college to the Governor . . . .

These provisions in both the Commonwealth Constitution and statutory Commonwealth law stipulate that the Board of Regents is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution as well as the successful outcome of its educational mission and the use of its financial resources to meet its mission. The Board of Regents has both a broad mandate under Section 2(a), Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution and 3 CMC § 1304(b), and is specifically empowered to control the college's affairs, including its financial matters, under 3 CMC § 1316.

Furthermore, as stated above, under Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, the Board of Regents is granted "autonomy in its affairs," and, thus, performs its duties as an independent entity. The Board is required to have a diverse composition in its membership: Specifically, 3 CMC § 1311 requires that: "at least one member shall be a resident of Tinian, one member shall be a resident of Rota, at least one member shall be of Carolinian descent, and at least one member shall be a woman," and thus reflects a variety of public and constituent interests. Also, under 3 CMC § 1315, "all meetings of the board shall be open to the public, except when personal matters affecting the privacy of an individual or other confidential matters are considered." As such, not only is the Board an independent policy making body under Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, but also it is also capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in Board activities and decisions because of its diverse membership and open meeting requirements.

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents recognizes the major constituencies of the College, namely the administration, the faculty, the support staff, and the students, as participants in the governance of the institution. Each of these constituencies has a role in the formulation of the mission and goals of the institution and in the development of policies governing it. (BOR Institutional Governance Policy 1026)

Appropriate policy and accompanying administrative procedures are developed specifying the governance role of each of these four components of the College community in terms of policy formulation; decision-making and planning at multiple levels; and problem identification, analysis, and resolution. (BOR Institutional Governance Policy 1026)

The Board ensures the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services through Board of Regents Policy 1025, which articulates a broad institutional effectiveness program. The policy states, "to enable such effectiveness and quality, institutional research, planning, evaluation, and other activities shall be conducted in a collaborative manner with input from all appropriate sectors of the College and the community it serves on the islands of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian." This expectation for monitoring and upholding institutional effectiveness is reinforced by the Board's self-evaluation process, which is described in Board of Regents Policy 1024, "Board of Regents Self-Evaluation."

Institutional research activities are conducted to support the college's institutional planning and assessment processes (Board of Regents Policy 1025). Collection, processing, and reporting of pertinent information are the primary functions of institutional research. Research efforts focus not only on internal information such as student and program data, but also on external matters such as trends in the community and other institutions of higher learning.

Especially since 2010, the NMC Board has actively addressed policy issues that support institutional integrity and effectiveness and respond to Commission concerns. Table IV.B.1.1 below details this activity.

Table IV.B.1-1 Recent NMC Board Policy Actions

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
Limits of Authority (Revision of BOR Policy #1022)	12/23/2010	To expand the existing policy #1002, which limits Board authority by delegating all administrative duties to the NMC president?
Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct	12/23/2010	To detail progressive disciplinary procedures to be implemented when Board members have violated the Code of Ethics.
BOR Policy Development and Review	12/23/2010	To set forth how policies shall be reviewed on a periodic basis. It also specifies the steps involved in the adoption of new policies and the revision of existing ones.
Board Member Training and Development	12/23/2010	To set forth the training and development requirements that each individual Board member must undergo upon becoming a part of the Board of Regents.
Procurement Policies and Procedures	2/10/2011	The Board of Regents adopted a comprehensive set of procurement policies that revises, updates, and replaces the prior set. This adoption of the new set takes into account audit recommendations.
B.O.R. Policy # 8001 (Admissions and Enrollment)	3/11/11	Clearly identify 8 categories of admission; additional requirements for international students; articulate Conditional Acceptance for admission to the College. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy # 8001.1 (Residency Classification)	3/11/11	To define "one year" as "12 consecutive months" and remove policy statement that allows non-resident students to qualify for resident status upon three consecutive years of enrollment to three consecutive years residence in the CNMI. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy #8001.3 (Registration and Enrollment)	3/11/11	Add the following sections articulated in catalog and performed in practice, but omitted from B.O.R. Policy – Changes of Personal Data, Prerequisite Requirements, Overlapping Classes, Repeating of Courses, Add/Drop/Withdrawal, Medical Withdrawal, and Withdrawal for Active

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
		Military Duty. Added the following sections: Late Registration and Census Date & Deadline. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.3 (Access to Student Records)	3/11/11	Modified to include FERPA 2010 updates, Employee Access to Student Records, and Disclosure to Parents. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.4 (Student Educational Rights and Privacy)	3/11/11	Policy includes a reference to the institution's Records Management Plan and adds the following sections: Deceased Student Information, Directory Information Release, Exceptions, and a Record and Approval of Disclosures. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #3017 (Changing Student Grades)	3/11/11	Policy outlines a time frame for students and the institution to act on an appeal of a grade. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy #3021 (Privacy Rights of Students)	3/11/11	This policy is housed in the Educational Programs Series and makes reference to the institution's Records Management Plan and provides clarification on the restrictions of Grade Postings and any other personally identifiable student ID. Also includes student's right to "Opt Out" of release of Directory Information. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.1 (Changing Student Grades)	3/11/11	This Policy was deleted. It was discovered that B.O.R. Policy #3017 contained identical information.
B.O.R. Renumbering of Policies	3/11/11	To remove the decimal numeric system, specifically for B.O.R. policies in the Student Development Series. Also calls for renumbering to remove decimal references in other policies of the B.O.R.
Part II.A Personnel Files	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which directs and guides HR in keeping and maintaining personnel files.
Part III.B Vacancy Announcements	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which puts in place how the vacancy announcements processed and the content of the VA.
Part III.C Eligibility for Employment	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which enables the college to hire qualified employees. **Compliance with Accreditation Standard III.A**
Part III.D	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, All recruitment, hiring, and selection of employees must be based on the requirements of the job, on the qualification of the applicants, and the needs of the college.
Part III.E Employment Contracts Staff and Faculty	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, All full-time employees of the College, other than limited-term appointees and adjunct faculty must enter into an initial two-year employment contract with the college. The college shall have three types of contracts for its employees: Ten month faculty (instructional faculty) / Twelve month faculty (all other faculty) / Twelve month staff contracts (for all other remaining employees of the college) **Compliance with Accreditation Standard III.A**
Part III.F Externally Funded Employees	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, The Board of Regents encourages the solicitation and application for grants that will enable the college to improve its programs, facilities, and general well-being. All individuals funded under such grants who are hired by the college and supervised by the college are employees of the college. These individuals will be employed on a staff and faculty employment contract.
Part IV.A Classification and Compensation	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, to establish and maintain a classification and compensation system that will allow the college to attract and retain qualified personnel effectively and to ensure that salaries are equitable and commensurate with the duties performed by each employee.
Part IV.B Establishing Salary Upon	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4015, Salary shall be fixed at the first step of the appropriate pay level upon initial appointment. Should a higher rate

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
Appointment		be deemed necessary to recruit, the salary may be fixed at any succeeding step but not beyond the eighth step for staff positions and the twelfth step for faculty positions. The salary for an employee hired for an ungraded position shall be at the rate established by the Board of Regents for that position.
Part V.A Types of Appointments	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4010 / 4062, Appointments in the Northern Marianas College are defined according to the following classes: Contractual Appointment / Limited-term Appointment / Acting Appointment / Intermittent Appointment / Other Appointments.
Part V.B Nepotism	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4040, For the purpose of this policy, nepotism is defined and bestowed in consideration of family relationship and not in consideration of merit. All applicants for employment with the college will inform the Human Resource Manager of any relative who is working for the college, and any relative who is a member of the Board of Regents.
Part V.C Orientation Program	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, The time and effort invested in a well planned and implemented orientation program will provide many positive returns to the college and its employees. By introduction the colleges mission, vision and goals explaining policies and procedures, and establishing work and behavioral expectations, and orientation program will help to reduce employees anxiety, develop positive attitudes, and create realistic job expectations.
Part V.F Annual Evaluation of Employees	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4212, Supervisors shall evaluate the performance of each of their assigned employees annually, at or near their anniversary date using established forms provided by the Human Resource Office. **Compliance with all Accreditation Standards.**
Part VI.B Tuition Waiver	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4215 Series, The Board of Regents encourages employees of the college to enhance their professional capabilities by taking courses offered by the college. Employees requesting a tuition waiver must first apply for scholarship or federal grant assistance, if eligible for such assistance. A tuition waiver may be granted to full-time staff and faculty members who do not receive such assistance, upon written request to and approval from the president.
Part VI.J Professional Development Leave	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4315, Professional development leave may be granted for formal education or other activities of professional merit, based upon the needs and capabilities of the college. Compensation may be provided for such leaves, as determined by the implementing policy and based upon the availability of funding in the discretion of the president.
Part VII.I Political Activities	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4240, To vote for the candidates of their choice and to express their opinions on political matters. To be active members of the political party or organization of their choosing etc.
Part VII.R Media Relations Protocol	3/11/2011	New addition to HR policy. The president of the Northern Marianas College is the official spokesperson of the college. In the president's absence the acting president or the director of the Office of Institutional Advancement shall serve as the official spokesperson. Other individuals, on a case-by-case basis, may be specifically and explicitly authorized by the president to officially speak on behalf of the college. **Compliance with Accreditation IV.B**
Part VII.T Program Review	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, As part of the College's commitment to data-driven, evidence-based decision making for continuous quality improvement, all employees of the college shall participate in the program review process. This shall include, but is not limited to, participating in the development and monitoring of program mission and

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
		outcomes, collecting and interpreting program appropriate data and evidence, evaluating program effectiveness, developing action plans for improvement, and participating in activities led by the planning, program review outcomes and assessment committee (PROAC). Participation in the program review process shall be considered in each employee's annual evaluation. **Compliance with all accreditation standards.**
Part VIII.A Delegation of Authority	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4060, The president in cases of planned absence will designate an acting president. In a situation where the president is absent or is unable to make an appointment, the chair of the Board of Regents will designate an acting president. The president will assign acting officials to cover the absence of key staff and faculty. **Compliance with Accreditation III.A**

The College is committed to a planning system that addresses the current and long-range needs and challenges of the College community and the Commonwealth. The purpose of institutional planning at Northern Marianas College is to:

1. Define the mission, goals, and objectives for the College as a body and for the various units and activities of the institution;
2. Establish priorities for programs, services, and activities;
3. Identify the need for human, physical, and financial resources; and
4. Allow for activities to be carried out in a planned and organized manner.

The planning process encompasses all aspects of the institution including instructional programs, student services, learning resources, and facilities.

Evaluation is a means to assess institutional and program quality and effectiveness. Accordingly, the primary purpose of institutional assessment is to evaluate the functions and outcomes of institutional programs and services to determine if they meet established goals and objectives. Evaluation efforts at the College focus on instructional programs, student services, learning resources, and other areas deemed necessary to meet the needs of the institution and community.

The Northern Marianas College has a comprehensive set of policies that govern college activities. They include: Board Operations, Educational Programs, Facilities Management, Finance and Procurement, Human Resources, Student Development Policies and Procedures. A number of the policies are currently being revised and reviewed by the Human Resources Office, which has systematically reviewed, revised, streamlined, and included new policies within its department during 2010. Finalized policies were reviewed and approved by the relevant college governance body, college council, and the faculty and staff senate. Vj g'Dqctf "qh'Tgi gpwu

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Board of Regents Policy 1002 pertaining to the Board's limits of authority was revised by the Board of Regents on December 23, 2010. The new expanded policy states:

> The Board of Regents, as a unit, has been entrusted with setting the policy direction of the Northern Marianas College. It employs the College president, establishes the goals by which educational goals are accomplished, assures fiscal health and stability, monitors institutional performance, and leads as a thoughtful, educated team.
>
> No individual Board member has individual authority in regard to the College except as part of that unit. Individually, Board members may not commit the college or Regents to any policy, act or expenditure. No individual Board member can do business with the College, nor should any Board member have an interest in any contract with the College. No individual Board member represents any factional segment of the community, but is rather a part of the body, which represents and acts for the community as a whole.
>
> Furthermore, no individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility neither with respect to the College, nor as an individual command the services of any college employee.
>
> The Board shall delegate authority to the president as the Board's executive officer and confine Board action to policy determination, planning, performance evaluation, and maintaining the fiscal stability of the College. Problems and issues that arise shall be referred to the president to be handled through the proper administrative channels or be placed on the Board agenda for discussion. In this regard, rather than working directly with staff, it is imperative of Board members to take their concerns directly to the president.
>
> No member of the Board shall become an employee of the College while serving on the Board except as specifically provided by CNMI law.

The Board of Regents on December 23, 2010 also adopted "Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct" policy detailing the progressive discipline procedures to be implemented if Board members engage in unethical conduct. (Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct Policy)

Additionally, the Board of Regents adopted three new policies on December 23, 2010:

- Board Member Training and Development. This policy sets forth the training and development requirements that each individual Board member must undergo upon becoming a part of the Board of Regents. Subsequent trainings have been implemented relative to the proper role of the regents, Board leadership and practice, and accreditation.
- The NMC Board Member's Code of Conduct, which states: "The Board is committed to effective decision-making and, once a decision has been made, speaking with one voice." Procedures and guidelines for implementing the Code of Conduct are delineated in the Training and Development policy.
- BOR Policy Development and Review. This policy governs the Board of Regents role in establishing policies for the college. The policy specifically states how policies should be developed and how often they will be reviewed. Prior Board policy 1012 was vague as to Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Policies and Bylaws, **"**Policy proposals and suggested amendments to or revisions of existing policies shall normally be submitted to all members of the Board by the president in writing prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting in which such proposed policies, amendments, or revisions thereof shall be read and discussed; **t**he formal adoption of policies shall be by majority vote of all members present at which a quorum is present of the Board and the action shall be recorded in the

minutes of the Board. Only those written statements so adopted and so recorded shall be regarded as official policy." Clarification of the timeline for development and review of Board of Regents policies was necessary, henceforth, the new policy development and review was adopted.

NMC Chief Executive Officer

At the time of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' evaluation team's visit on October 20-22, 2010, the interim president was continuing to serve as the college's chief executive officer. In accordance with the written policy adopted by the Board of Regents on December 23, 2010, Resolution 2010-03 (Second Amendment), a presidential Search Committee was formed to hire a permanent president. The presidential Search Committee had a diverse composition that included members from the private and public sectors as well as the president of the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College. To begin the selection process, the Board of Regents retained the services of the Association of Community College Trustees to complete an initial screening of applications. The Association of Community College Trustees screened thirty-one applicants and referred seven to the presidential Search Committee. The presidential Search Committee in turn interviewed the five finalists. Of these five, they submitted three to the Board of Regents. Vj g

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Commonwealth Code delineates the qualifications and compensation for the president of the College stating, "All candidates for the position of president of the Northern Marianas College shall possess at least a graduate degree from an accredited university in the United States or its territories and such other qualifications as the board shall determine. The president of the college shall receive an annual salary as determined by the Board." (Commonwealth Code 3CMC, Section 1322)

The Board delegates to the president the responsibility to develop and maintain an institution that fulfills the college's mission and achieves the goals and priority initiatives of the Northern Marianas College PROA Strategic Plan 2008-2012. The president recommends policies to the Board, and is authorized by the Board to exercise broad discretionary powers in pursuit of the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the college. The duties of the president specified in Board of Regents Policy 1009, and within 3 CMC 1323 requires that:

> The president is the chief executive officer of the Northern Marianas College, and in this capacity is charged with full administrative responsibility for the College. The Board of Regents judiciously recognizes and supports the president as the major line of communication between the Board and the internal and external College community. In this capacity as the Board's Liaison, the president informs the Board of such communications, and is guided by the policies, general directions, and financial guidelines established by the Board.
>
> The president's fundamental responsibility is to develop and maintain an institution that fulfills the mission and achieves the goals of the Northern Marianas College in accordance with the Mission Statement set forth in Article XV, Section 2 of the CNMI Constitution and in accordance with the Postsecondary

Education Act of 1984, as amended. This implies a commitment to the philosophy of a comprehensive community college and an understanding that the president's energies must be directed towards the realization of such.

The president is an educational leader of the Commonwealth, and as such represents the College in the community. The president recommends policies to the Board, and is authorized by the Board to exercise broad discretionary powers according to the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the College.

The president's further specific duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Being responsible for the organization and administration of the College and for the coordination of its entire instructional program;
- Providing direction and leadership in the development and implementation of a research, planning, and evaluation system to assure institutional effectiveness and that the results of such activity will be used for institutional improvement and the establishment of priorities;
- Ensuring that various entities of the College have a substantive and clearly-defined role in institutional governance;
- Developing an effective program of staff evaluation and improvement;
- Preparing a budget in line with the needs of the College, and approving expenditure of funds appropriated to the College by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the College by any other entity;
- Guiding capital improvement activities and ensuring safe and adequate facilities and grounds in order to maintain a quality learning environment;
- Representing the College to the community and maintaining an adequate public information service;
- Maintaining open and adequate channels of communication with the internal and external College community;
- Entering into contracts, cooperative agreements, and such other transactions as may be helpful to conduct the business of the College;
- Appointing, reassigning and terminating staff and faculty consistent with applicable Human Resources rules and regulations;
- Accepting gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other contributions on behalf of the Board and depositing the same in a College Trust Fund for the exclusive use and expenditure of the College, as approved by the Board;
- Formulating reports required by local and federal agencies;
- Approving regulations and activities of groups and organization functioning within the College;
- Subject to prior review and approval of the Board, establishing departments and other divisions of the College, approving their programs and courses of studies, and disestablishing the same as the president may deem most appropriate to carry out the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the College.

The Board of Regents maintains that in order to assess how well the college is progressing toward its goals and objectives, the Board needs regular and comprehensive information. The

president is directed to develop procedures for gathering and presenting data needed by the Board for a periodic review and evaluation. (Board of Regents Policy 1016). The Board's appraisal and evaluation activities shall include but are not limited to the following under Board of Regents Policy 1016:

- Evaluation
    1. Periodic review of the Board's operation and performance.
    2. Review of continuing financial operations through receipt and study of periodic financial and audit reports.
    3. Study of regular reports and presentations on College operations with particular emphasis on aspects of the instructional program.
    4. Assessment of the effectiveness of the College's instructional programs in relation to the College's instructional goals.
    5. Appraisal of performance of personnel in relation to established performance criteria.
    6. Annual appraisal of the performance of the president.
- Continuing review of the College's policies, regulations and bylaws to ensure accurate reflection of the concerns of the community for the educational system, and to encourage soundly based improvement in the College programs and services.

The Board of Regents will appraise the performance of the president of the college annually (Board of Regents Policy 1017 Periodic Review and Evaluation of the president). While the responsibility for this annual appraisal lies with the Board, they will, on occasion, choose to invite input by the leadership of the major constituent groups of the college. Input from the general College community may also be invited on a periodic basis. Board of Regents Policy 1017 serves as an outline of the basic framework and timeline for the annual appraisal process:

- Goals for the ensuing year are developed by the president in consultation with the Board and are a direct result of Board and president suggestions.
- By July 15 of each year the Board finalizes the president's goals.
- In April/May of years in which broad input is requested the Board will arrange individual meetings with constituent group leadership (Faculty, Staff, Students, and Community) to invite written input as to the completion of that year's goals and objectives, as well as to receive suggestions for subsequent year's goals and objectives.
- In May/June of each year the president shall prepare a written self-evaluation on the status of that year's goals and objectives. Included with this report are suggested future goals.

In June of each year the Board and the president will meet in closed session to review the self-evaluation and to share a synopsis of the information gathered from the College community (Board of Regents Policy 1017). The Board will prepare a written "Statement of Evaluation for the year 20__-20__" for inclusion in the president's personnel file as soon after this Closed Session as practical. At the June closed session the Board will also finalize the next year's goals and objectives, and take action on any modifications to the president's contract. Action by the Board will follow all appropriate portions of the Commonwealth's Open Government Act.

"The Board of Regents is the legal owner and final authority for Northern Marianas College, whose assets and operations it holds in trust." (Board of Regents Policy and Procedures 1024) "The Board of Regents ensures that the College is well oriented and managed. As such, the Board shall assess its own performance regularly. This self-assessment will assist the Board in identifying which of its functions are being addressed satisfactorily and which may need improvement." (Board of Regents Policy 1024)

IV.B.1.a

The Board of Regents of Northern Marianas College is an autonomous, independent policy-making body as outlined under Section 2(a) of Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which states:

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.a**
>
> The governing board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in board activities and decisions. Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole. It advocated for and defends the institutions and protects it from undue influence or pressure.

> . . . . The board of regents shall be appointed to staggered terms by the governor and shall have autonomy in the administration of its affairs and shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The composition of the board of regents and other matters pertaining to its operations and duties shall be provided by law.

The general duties and authority of the Board of Regents are re-enforced by 3 CMC § 1304(b), which directs that "the Northern Marianas College is established as a nonprofit public corporation under the general control and direction of a board designated as the Board of Regents of the Northern Marianas College…" Commonwealth Code also specifically empowers the Board of Regents in 3 CMC § 1316 to perform a number of duties, including:

> (a) To hold in trust for the Commonwealth the property and assets of the college, and to have the authority to negotiate loan guarantees and, with the approval of the Commonwealth Development Authority, issue bonds.
> (b) To set the goals and general directions of the college, and to approve policies in pursuit of such goals and directions.
> (e) To adopt, amend and repeal policies governing the conduct of its business and the performance of the powers and duties grant to or imposed upon it by law or the Constitution. . . .
> (g) To acquire for use by the college any property, whether real, personal or mixed, whether tangible or intangible, or any interest therein, and to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the same for the good of the college; . . .
> (i) To establish and to oversee the activities of a Northern Marianas College Foundation as a private, nonprofit, tax exempt public corporation for the support of the college, ...
> (j) To act as the state board of higher education for the Commonwealth for purposes of federal law.
> (l) In consultation with the Governor, to approve the budget of the college and to have the budget submitted to the legislature . . . .
> (s) To enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its business and on such terms as it may deem appropriate with any agency or instrumentality of the United States, or with any state, Commonwealth, territory, or possession, or with any political subdivision thereof, or with any person, firm, association, or corporation.
> (t) To determine the character of and the necessity for its obligations and expenditures, and the manner in which they shall be incurred, allowed and paid, subject to provisions of law applicable to the college.

(v) To establish procurement policies for the college, and to expend funds appropriated by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the college by any other entity.

(w) To take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the powers conferred upon it by law and the Commonwealth Constitution.

(x) To submit an annual budget for the operation and administration of the college to the Governor . . . .

From these provisions in both the Commonwealth Constitution and statutory Commonwealth law, it is clear that the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents is an autonomous, independent policy-making body. The Board of Regents has both a broad mandate under Section 2(a), Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution and 3 CMC § 1304(b), and is specifically empowered to control the college's affairs, including its financial matters, under 3 CMC § 1316.

The Board is required to have a diverse composition in its membership: Specifically, 3 CMC § 1311 requires that: "at least one member shall be a resident of Tinian, one member shall be a resident of Rota, at least one member shall be of Carolinian descent, and at least one member shall be a woman," and thus reflects a variety of public and constituent interests. Also, under 3 CMC § 1315, "all meetings of the board shall be open to the public, except when personal matters affecting the privacy of an individual or other confidential matters are considered." As such, not only is the Board an independent policy making body under Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, but also it is also capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in its activities and decisions because of its diverse membership and open meeting requirements.

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents members have no employment, family, or personal financial interest in the institution. This is prohibited by Board of Regents Policy 1022, which states, "the Board of Regents must file an annual statement of financial interest in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Commonwealth Code of Ethics (Code Act of 1992, as amended.)   To further strengthen the Conflict of Interest Policy, the Board of Regents on December 23, 2011, adopted a "NMC Board Member's Code of Conduct" policy which states:

> The Board is committed to effective decision-making and, once a decision has been made, speaking with one voice. Toward this end board members will:
>
> - Speak from Board of Regents and community interest.
> - Speak from themselves ("my own thinking on this is that.") rather than for a group of members
> - Express additional or alternative point of view and invite others to do so too.
> - Refrain from "lobbying" other board members outside or board meetings that might have effect of creating factions and limiting free open discussion.
> - On important issues, be balanced in one's effort to understand others and to make oneself understood.
> - Once made, support, indeed defend, and board decisions, even if one's view is a minority one.
> - Not disclose or discuss differences of opinion on the board outside of board meetings, especially with staff, volunteers, or community members. (For this reason information on who votes for and against any particular motion will not be recorded in meeting minutes unless a board member requests it.)
> - Respect the confidentiality of information on sensitive issues, especially in personnel matters.

- Refrain from speaking for the college unless authorized to do so.
- Disclose ones involvement with other organizations, businesses, or individuals where such a relationship might be viewed as a conflict of interest (See Conflict of Interest Policy 1022).
- Refrain from giving direction, as an individual board member, to the president or any NMC employee.
- Not undermine the president's authority by seeking information informally and directly from employees for the purpose of evaluating the president's performance (See Periodic Review and Evaluation of the president Policy 1017).

The Board of Regents follows these conflict of interest policies to ensure that no conflicts of interests interfere with the academic and fiscal integrity of the College.

IV.B.1.b

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents has consistently established policies that conform to its constitutionally mandated mission to ensure the quality, integrity and improvement of students learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. As stated in Section 2 (b), Amendment 38, Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution.

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.b**
>
> The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them.

> The mission of Northern Marianas College shall be to provide the best quality and meaningful post secondary and adult educational opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the individual and for the Commonwealth as a whole. The College shall be responsible for providing education in the areas of adult and continuing education, post secondary and adult vocational education and professional development for the people of the Commonwealth.

This mission, along with the College's institutional philosophy, educational philosophy, and vision statements are posted on the College Web site, www.nmcnet.edu.

To ensure that the mission of the College is carried out in a manner that assures the quality, integrity and improvement of student learning programs, the Board has adopted a comprehensive set of policies that govern academic programs and services. These policies govern academic responsibility, academic freedom, course and instructor evaluation, and professional ethics. Similarly, another set of policies adopted by the Board governs student development activities (recently updated). These policies include admissions and enrollment, student regulations, career services, academic advisement, and counseling.

To ensure that its policies remain consistent with the institutional mission and to continue to assure a high quality of student programs and services, the Board of Regents recently adopted guidelines that set forth how policies shall be reviewed on a periodic basis. It also specifies the steps involved in the adoption of new policies and the revision of existing ones (Board of Regents Policy Development and Review).

The Board of Regents allocates the resources necessary to support these policies by approving a budget annually that is informed by the results of program review processes and institutional priorities.

The Board's commitment to ensuring the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and securing the resources to support them is emphasized in the PROA 2008-2012 Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the Board in 2008. This five-year plan identifies four main goals, two of which include promoting student learning and success and optimizing financial and human resources. Already, the College has scheduled a campus-wide planning summit (May 18, 2011) for the preparation of a new strategic plan, which will become effective after 2012.

IV.B.1.c

The Board of Regents is ultimately responsible for the educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity of Northern Marianas College. The authority of the Board of Regents stems from Section 2(a) of Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which states that "the board of regents shall be appointed to staggered terms by

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.c**
>
> The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.

the governor and shall have autonomy in the administration of its affairs and shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marina Islands." Furthermore, statutory law re-enforces the general authority of the Board of Regents. Under 3 CMC § 1304(b), "[t]he Northern Marianas College is established as a nonprofit public corporation under the general control and direction of a board designated as the Board of Regents of the Northern Marianas College . . . ." Commonwealth Code also specifically empowers the Board of Regents in 3 CMC § 1316 to perform a number of duties, including:

> (a) To hold in trust for the Commonwealth the property and assets of the college, and to have the authority to negotiate loan guarantees and, with the approval of the Commonwealth Development Authority, issue bonds.
> (b) To set the goals and general directions of the college, and to approve policies in pursuit of such goals and directions.
> . . .
> (e) To adopt, amend and repeal policies governing the conduct of its business and the performance of the powers and duties grant to or imposed upon it by law or the Constitution. . . .
> . . .
> (g) To acquire for use by the college any property, whether real, personal or mixed, whether tangible or intangible, or any interest therein, and to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the same for the good of the college; . . .
> . . .
> (i) To establish and to oversee the activities of a Northern Marianas College Foundation as a private, nonprofit, tax exempt public corporation for the support of the college, ...
> (j) To act as the state board of education for the Commonwealth for purposes of federal law.
> (l) In consultation with the Governor, to approve the budget of the college and to have the budget submitted to the legislature . . . .
> . . .
> (s) To enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its business and on such terms as it may deem appropriate with any agency or instrumentality of the United States, or with any state, Commonwealth,

territory, or possession, or with any political subdivision thereof, or with any person, firm, association, or corporation.

(t) To determine the character of and the necessity for its obligations and expenditures, and the manner in which they shall be incurred, allowed and paid, subject to provisions of law applicable to the college.

. . .

(v) To establish procurement policies for the college, and to expend funds appropriated by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the college by any other entity.

(w) To take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the powers conferred upon it by law and the Commonwealth Constitution.

(x) To submit an annual budget for the operation and administration of the college to the Governor

. . . .

Two Stories of How the Current NMC Board of Regents Acted as a Buffer and a Bridge

Fighting for Funding

The Board of Regents, together with the Interim President, diligently and consistently lobbied the Governor, the House of Representatives, and the Senate to justify government funding for the College and to defend against any potentially drastic cuts to the College's budget. Regents and the Interim President have represented the College at numerous budget sessions, including a Senate budget session held on Tinian on September 3, 2010. **As a result, despite the government shutdown that occurred late last year, Senate Bill 17-26 and the Governor's Executive Order 2010—11 both exempted the College from the government shutdown.** Furthermore, the College has been exempted from government austerity measures, including one that reduces government employees' work hours to 64 (from 80) per week.

Preserving Institutional Autonomy

Members of the Board of Regents, together with the Interim President, have met with legislative leaders to prevent legislation that would be detrimental to the College from being passed into law. For instance, Regent met with members of the Senate on January 24, 2011 and on February 8, 2011 and on campus to discuss pending legislation that affected the College. As a result of those meetings, the members of the Senate Committee on Education recognized that certain legislation introduced may infringe upon the College's autonomy. In this process, board members were able to explain the ways that autonomy is crucial the College's ability to achieve its mission and to sustain its relationship with its accrediting Commission. That this interaction bore fruit is evidenced by a Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs' February 11, 2011 report, which states, in part, "[t]herefore, this Committee has taken into consideration the Legislature's indirect actions that might infringe on the autonomy of the College. Therefore, this Committee emphasizes that it is of high importance that the Legislature or the Governor's office do not infringe or jeopardize the autonomy of the Northern Marianas College."

In addition to the Commonwealth Constitution and Commonwealth Code, the Commonwealth Supreme Court has also made clear that Northern Marianas College is an autonomous agency, which further supports the authority of the Board of Regents. In *N. Marianas Coll. v. Civil Serv. Comm'n II*, the Commonwealth Supreme Court explicitly ruled that "NMC is a fully autonomous agency under the CNMI Constitution." 2007 MP 8 ¶ 16.

As the provisions in both the Commonwealth Constitution and Commonwealth law, as well as the Commonwealth Supreme Court's ruling in *N. Marianas Coll. v. Civil Serv. Comm'n II*, make clear, the Board of Regents is the final authority for educational, legal, and financial matters affecting Northern Marianas College. The Board has a broad mandate under Section 2(a), Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution and 3 CMC § 1304(b), is specifically empowered to control the College's affairs, including its financial matters, under 3 CMC § 1316, and the College's (and hence the Board's) autonomy has been confirmed by Commonwealth case law. As such, the Board of Regents holds ultimate responsibility for Northern Marianas College's educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.

IV.B.1.d

The Board of Regents has codified its size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures in the Board of Regents Policies and Procedures. Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1001-1030 details the composition and operations of the Board of Regents and are readily available on the Northern Marianas College Web site at http://www.nmcnet.edu/ under "Our College" / "Board of Regents" / "BOR Policies."

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.d**
>
> The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.

Under Commonwealth law, the "Board of Regents . . . [is] composed of seven voting members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the senate." 3 CMC § 1311. Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1001 recognizes and reiterates this statutory requirement, and Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1003-1004 and 1030 provide for the addition of non-voting honorary faculty, student, and staff regents. As such, the size and structure of the Board of Regents is very clearly described in the Board of Regents Policies and Procedures. Also under Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1001, the Board's duties and responsibilities are set forth as follows:

A. Statutory limits of the duties and powers of the Board of Regents are contained in the Post-secondary Act of 1984, as amended, 3 CMC § 1311 et seq. and in Article XV, Section 2 of the Constitution.
B. The Board will:
   1. Appoint the president of the College who shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the College and of the Board;
   2. Confirm all senior executives of the College; (a) senior executive appointments shall be confirmed by the Board of Regents, and (b) although Board confirmation shall not be required for Dean or Director appointments, the Board shall participate in the personal interview process for such appointments and shall designate a Board member for such participation.

3. Approve all contracts $25,000 and above issued by the College;
4. Approve annual budgets and expenditures of the College;
5. Delegate to the president all powers necessary for the development and implementation of procedures required to carry out Board policies, and judiciously review and act upon such matters as shall be recommended by the president;
6. Periodically evaluate the president's overall and specific performance;
7. Periodically evaluate its performance as a Board;
8. Periodically review the organizational structure of the College, its financial management, and its overall operation;
9. Fulfill all duties stipulated by the Post-secondary Education Act of 1984, as amended, 3 CMC § 1311 et seq.;
10. Exercise, as an exclusive right, all other powers provided for non-profit corporations that are necessary and proper for the efficient and effective direction and maintenance of the College consistent with Article XV, Section 2, of the CNMI Constitution and with the CNMI Post-secondary Education Act of 1984, as amended.

The Board of Regents' duties, responsibilities and operating procedures are further described in Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1012, which states that:

> [p]olicy proposals and suggested amendments to or revisions of existing policies shall normally be submitted to all members of the board by the president in writing prior to a regularly scheduled board meeting in which such proposed policies, amendments, or revisions thereof shall be read and discussed.

> The formal adoption of polices shall be by majority vote of all members present at which a quorum is present of the board and the action shall be recorded in the minutes of the board. Only those written statements so adopted and so recorded shall be regarded as official policy.

Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1005 directs that "[a]t the organizational meetings in even-numbered years the Board will elect a Chair and a Treasurer from among its members, . . . At the organizational meetings in odd-numbered years the Board will elect a Vice Chair." Other provisions in the Board of Regents Policies and Procedures describe other duties, responsibilities, and operating procedures such as the role of the Board chair (Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1006), meetings (Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1015), and public and closed sessions (Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1015.2).

As such, the Board of Regents Policies and Procedures, the applicable portions of which are easily accessible on the Northern Marianas College Web site, clearly specify the Board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.

IV.B.1.e

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents acts in a manner consistent with its policies and has a mechanism in place to evaluate the policies on a regular basis and to revise them whenever appropriate.

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.e**
>
> The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.

In accordance with Board Policies and Procedures 1002, which was recently expanded, the Board acts as a unit. The policy states, "No

individual Board member has individual authority in regard to the college except as part of that unit. Individually, Board members may not commit the college or Regents to any policy, act or expenditure."

Board decisions are made in open, public meetings that are advertised in advance in the local newspaper and the NMC Web site and through an email sent to all NMC employees. The publication of such meetings conforms to the applicable provisions of the Open Government Act, 1 CMC Subsection 9901. Board of Regents' minutes and resolutions, illustrate the members' conformance with Board policies.

To heighten Board awareness of Board policies and therefore lessen any likelihood that a Board member will violate any given policy, the Board of Regents recently adopted a "Board Member Training and Development" policy, which sets forth the training and development requirements that each individual Board member must undergo upon becoming a part of the Board of Regents.

The policy also requires all regents to undergo a formal orientation that is conducted by the president and the Chair of the Board. The newest member of the Board was provided an orientation several days after he began service on the Board.

To further discourage any violations of policy, the Board of Regents recently adopted a "Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct" policy, which details progressive discipline procedures to be implemented when Board members have violated the code of ethics or any other existing policy.

The Board assures that all policies are reviewed on a periodic basis. The newly-adopted "Board of Regents Policy Development and Review" policy requires the Board to review select policies every two years or when needed. Furthermore, the policy dictates that the "chair of the Board of Regents shall appoint a Board Policy Review Committee, which shall consist of at least two members of the Board of Regents and two Northern Marianas College employees designated by the president" (Board of Regents Policy Development and Review).

The policy further states that prior to their adoption, all policies must undergo review and evaluation by the College's governing bodies, and groups shall be given an opportunity to review the draft policies and provide input.

To review its practices, the Board conducts an annual self-evaluation whereby it reviews its performance in the following categories: 1) relationship with the president; 2) relationship to the instructional program; 3) staff and personnel relationships; 4) relationship to the financial management of the school; and 5) community relationships. The last Board evaluation was conducted in June 2010. (BOR Policy 1024 – Board of Regents Self Evaluation)

IV.B.1.f

The Board of Regents is cognizant of the importance of a sustainable Board development program and the need to formally orientate new members of the Board. To underscore this, the Board adopted the "Board Member Training and

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.f**
>
> The governing board has a program for board development and new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.

Development" policy on December 23, 2010. The policy states, in part, "[t]o be effective, all members of the Board of Regents must engage in training on the proper role and conduct of regents, on general governing Board relations and practices, on college policy, and on accreditation standards and accrediting commission policy."

Among several requirements, the policy requires Board members to be trained on Board policies and other issues concerning the College. It also requires the provision of a comprehensive manual that contains the College's mission statement, goals, objectives, strategic plan, Board operations policies, financial reports, and other important documents. The manual has been produced by the Office of Institutional Advancement and provided to the newest Board member, as well as all other Regents.

As a requirement of the policy, Regents will also have to undergo a formal orientation process. The newest Regent, Mr. Juan Lizama, was provided this formal orientation by the then Chairperson of the Board and the Interim president. During the orientation, Regent Lizama also signed the "Code of Conduct Agreement," wherein he agrees to abide by certain terms, including "speaking from broad Board of Regents and community interests" and "refrain from undermining the president's authority."

The Board of Regents has also engaged in training on a number of topics and issues, including the proper role of Regents, board leadership and FERPA as part of its continuing development program. The Regents also keep themselves informed of accreditation requirements, standards, and processes by participating numerous training sessions organized by the college and external partners.

The Board of Regents also has a mechanism in place for providing for the continuity of Board membership and staggered terms of office. Under 3 CMC § 1312, "[m]embers of the board [of Regents] shall serve staggered terms of four years." Furthermore, under 3 CMC § 1313, "[a]ny vacancy caused by resignation, removal, death or otherwise shall, within 90 days of the vacancy, be filled for the period of [the] unexpired term . . . ." As such, Commonwealth law provides for continuity and staggered terms in the Board of Regents.

IV.B.1.g

The Board of Regents has a very specific and well-defined policy for its own self-evaluation. The Board of Regents has undergone a self-evaluation every year for the past two years. Procedures for self

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.g**
>
> The governing board's self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies or bylaws.

evaluation are set forth in Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1024, which directs as follows:

BOARD OF REGENTS SELF EVALUATION

The Board of Regents is the legal owner and final authority for Northern Marianas College, whose assets and operations it holds in trust. The Board of Regents shall ensure that the College is well oriented and managed. As such, the Board shall assess its own performance regularly. This self-assessment will assist the Board in identifying which of its functions are being addressed satisfactorily and which may need improvement.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

I. The Board of Regents will annually devote time for self-evaluation. The self-evaluation will help in identifying specific issues, such as the Board's rules and responsibilities, which can help build better communication and understanding among Board members. It will also help in appreciating each other's values and strengths that will lead to a stronger, more cohesive working team.

II. Evaluation Participants. All Board members will complete evaluation instruments and be involved in the evaluation discussions. Board members may consider comments from College officials who sit at the Board table or who attend meetings regularly as part of their leadership or management roles.

III. Evaluation Session. The Board shall decide whether the evaluation session will take place at a regular business meeting, workshop, or retreat.

IV. Evaluation Outcomes. A comprehensive statement summarizing the discussion and incorporating proposals for the future will be very helpful in guiding the Board's future performance and planning.

V. Board Self Appraisal (The response to each category is 1 to 5, Lowest to Highest, with required substantive comment for each item.)

  A. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENT
  1. Establishes written policies for the guidance of the president in the operation of the College.
  2. Provides the president with a clear statement of the expectation of performance and personal qualities against which she or he will be periodically measured.
  3. Reaches decisions only on the basis of study of all available background data and consideration of the recommendation of the president.
  4. Provides a climate of mutual respect and trust offering commendation whenever earned, and constructive criticism when necessary.
  5. Takes the initiative in maintaining a professional salary for the president comparable with salaries paid for similar responsibility in and out of the profession.

  B. RELATIONSHIP TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
  1. Weighs all decisions in terms of what is best for the students.
  2. Understands the instructional program and the general restrictions imposed on it by law and other agencies.
  3. Realistically faces the ability of the state and community to support quality education for its citizens.
  4. Resists the efforts of special-interest groups to influence the instructional program if the effect would be detrimental to the students.
  5. Encourages the participation of the professional staff, and in certain instances the public, in the development of curricula.
  6. Provides a policy outlining the College's educational objectives against which the instructional program can be evaluated.

    7.   Keeps abreast of new developments in course content and teaching techniques through attendance and participation in board association conferences and meetings of other educational groups and by reading of selected books and periodicals.

C.   STAFF AND PERSONNEL RELATIONSHIPS

    1.   Develops sound personnel policies, involving the faculty and staff when appropriate.

    2.   Authorizes the employment or dismissal of staff members only upon the recommendation of the president.

    3.   Makes provision for the complaints of employees to be heard, and after full study, if staff dissatisfaction is found to exist, takes action to correct the situation through appropriate administrative channels.

    4.   Is receptive to suggestions for improvement of the College originating with the staff and approved by the president

    5.   Encourages professional growth and increased competency through:

        a.   Attendance at educational meetings

        b.   Training on the job

        c.   Salary increments, which recognize training and experience beyond minimum qualifications for a given position.

    6.   Makes the staff aware of the esteem in which it is held.

    7.   Provides a written policy protecting the academic freedom of faculty.

D.   RELATIONSHIP TO THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

    1.   Balances the income and expenditures of the College with the quality of education that should be provided and the ability of the community to support such a program.

    2.   Takes the leadership in suggesting and securing community support for additional financing when necessary.

    3.   Establishes written policies which will ensure efficient administration of purchasing, accounting and other applicable procedures.

    4.   Authorizes individual budgetary allotments and special non budgeted expenditures only after considering the total needs of the College.

    5.   Makes provision for long range planning for acquisition of sites, facilities, and maintenance.

E.   COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

    1.   Encourages the public's attendance at board meetings.

    2.   Actively fosters cooperation with various news media for the dissemination of information regarding the College.

    3.   Ensures a continuous planned program of public information regarding the College.

    4.   Participates actively in community affairs.

    5.   Channels all concerns, complaints and criticisms of the College through the president for study and reports back to the board if action is required.

    6.   Protects the president from unjust criticism and the efforts of vocal special interest groups.

    7.   Reflects board policy in individual answers to public questions and in public statements.

    8.   Encourages citizen participation in an advisory capacity in the solution of specific problems.

    9.   Is aware of community attitudes and special interest groups, which seek to influence the College's program.

    10. See Also Board Operations Administrative Procedure (Board of Regent Self Appraisal), CEO Evaluation Checklist, & CEO Evaluation)

As Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1024 sets forth, the Board of Regents has a clearly defined mechanism for self-evaluation. Furthermore, as the above text also makes clear, this process is extremely comprehensive and is very likely to yield an effective review of the Board's performance.

IV.B.1.h

Members of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents hold themselves to high standards of conduct and ethical behavior. Their actions, performance, and behavior are guided by Board of Regents Policy 1019, the Code of Ethics of the Board. The first part of this policy specifies the expectations of each Board member with regard to his or her responsibility as a Regent.

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.h**
>
> The governing board has a code of ethics that includes a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code.

One of the provisions of the Code of Ethics policy states that Board members "[s]trive to provide the most effective community college board service of which they are capable and to sustain a spirit of teamwork." Evidence of this spirit of teamwork to advance the College's mission include the Board members' taking extensive time out of their personal and professional commitments to participate in numerous hours of Board training, meetings with stakeholders and meetings with government leaders. They have also spent much time poring over government financial instruments, and official regular and special Board meetings. In fact, according to the interim president, the divisiveness that had existed among the Board members when she was appointed to her current post has been muted by a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that continues to contribute to the overall positive atmosphere at the College. Disagreements still occur, but the Regents are listening to one another.

Another provision of the Code of Ethics policy directs Board members to "[r]emember at all times that as an individual a board member has no legal authority outside the meetings of the Board." According to the interim president, all Board members have been diligent about referring any College issues raised by community members or college employees to her.

The Code of Ethics policy is augmented by the "Board of Regents Code of Conduct" which is outlined in The Board Member Training and Development policy (adopted December 23, 2010). The policy requires that Board members sign a "Code of Conduct" agreement upon acceptance of the position to serve as a member of the NMC Board of Regents."

The Board of Regents Code of Conduct encourages regents to consider speaking from the breadth of stakeholder interest, invite others to express their opinion on issues germane to the discussion, and discourages regents from disclosing or discussing "differences of opinion on the board outside of board meeting" and requires regents to "refrain from lobbying other board members outside of board meeting" to prevent "creating factions and limiting free and open discussions."

The second part of the Code of Ethics policy, "Part B. Censure," governs how violations against the Code of Ethics will be treated. The Board of Regents also recently adopted the "Disciplinary Action

for Board Member Conduct" policy that lays out progressive steps to be taken against any Board member violating a Board policy. (adopted December 23, 2010). These steps include warning, reprimand, censure, and removal from office.

IV.B.1.i

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents is informed about and is involved in the accreditation process. To keep itself informed of accreditation requirements,

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.i**
>
> The governing board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process.

standards, and processes, the Board of Regents has engaged in many training sessions, which cover topics including the proper role of regents, board leadership and practice, and accreditation eligibility requirements. The table below summarizes the recent history of Board training.

Table IV.B-x. Recent History of Training Activity by NMC Board Members

Date	Activity	Topic	Organizer
02/19/10	Training Session	Accreditation 101	ALO
02/26/10	Training Workshop	Self Study Workshop	ACCJC
06/14/10	Training Session	Boardsmanship and Accreditation	PPEC
08/04/10	Training Conference	New Trustee Governance Leadership Institute (Washington DC)	ACCT
09/08/10	Lunch Training Session	Role of Governing Board	ALO
09/29/10	Training Workshop	FERPA	president's Office
10/13/10	Lunch Training Session	ACCJC (Site Visit Prep)	ALO
01/05/11	Lunch Training Session	Governing Board and Institutional Quality & Effectiveness	ALO
02/25/11	Lunch Training Session	Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and Standards	ALO
03/04/11	Lunch Training Session	CNMI Constitution, Commonwealth Code, and Standard IV	LinC Director
03/10/11	Accreditation Standards Team Briefings	Standard 1.A, Standard, 2.A, Standard 2.B, Standard 3.A	president's Office
03/11/11	Accreditation Standards Team Briefings	Standard 1.B, Standard 3.D, Standard 4.B	president's Office

On February 19, 2010, the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer conducted a training session with the Board entitled "Accreditation 101". The Pacific Postsecondary Education Council boardsmanship training (June 14-18, 2010, Honolulu, HI) provided an in-depth study of the proper role of board members at a community college. The New Trustee Governance Leadership Institute sponsored by the Association of Community College Trustees followed soon after the Pacific Post-Secondary Education Council training. The chairperson of the Board also

participated in the self-study workshop hosted by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges in Guam.

The lessons and insights gained at the Pacific Post-Secondary Education Council and Association of Community College Trustees trainings are being reinforced by a series of Board of Regents lunch training sessions, including a session held September 8, 2010 that focused on the role of the governing board at a community college and the nature of board leadership within the context of the college's mission. The most recent session, conducted on February 25, 2011, focused on accreditation eligibility requirements and was facilitated by the Accreditation Liaison Officer.

To ensure that regents remain involved in the accreditation processes, the Board recently passed on December 23, 2010, policy on "Board Member Training and Development" that sets forth certain requirements that each individual Board member must undergo upon becoming a regent. The policy states that "To be effective, all members of the Board of Regents must engage in training on the proper role and conduct of regents, on general governing Board relations and practices, on College policy, and on accreditation standards and accrediting commission policy."

Accreditation matters are routine item on every BOR meeting agenda. Much of the discussion on accreditation matters focus on the College's institutional self-study reports to ACCJC
The BOR works with the Office of the President on reviewing and adopting strategic planning. The BOR approved the final PROA-SP on September 25, 2008. The BOR continues to work with the president in identifying resources for the PROA-SP and updating the PROA-SP as needed. (BOR Minutes, Visioning Process minutes/notes)

The BOR conducted a self-evaluation in the summer of 2010 as part of the College's institutional self-evaluation and accreditation processes. The BOR also approves the annual budget and lobbies for additional funding to support the continuous quality improvement of the College. (BOR minutes, minutes/notes from meetings with elected leaders, BOR 2010 Self-Evaluation Results, summary/overview of BOR-approved NMC budgets from 2009, 2010, and 2011)

Board actions, including planning and resource allocation, indicate a commitment to improvements planned as part of ongoing institutional self-evaluation and accreditation processes. The Board of Regents conducted a self-evaluation in the summer of 2010 as part of the College's institutional self-evaluation and accreditation processes. The Board's self-evaluation process incorporates accreditation standards into the criteria the Board uses to assess its performance. (BOR Self Evaluation 2010)

Board actions reflect its commitment to supporting and improving student-learning outcomes as reflected in the accreditation standards and expectations for institutional improvement. For instance, the Board of Regents discussed and approved several key resources and tools that support improvements in student learning outcomes such as the English Learning Lab; the Learning in Communities (LinC) initiative; ARRA/SFSF funding for instructional programs; new assessments such as ReadingPlus, Accuplacer, Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), Survey of Entering Student Engagement SENSE), and Community

College Learning Assessment (CCLA); Student Learning Outcomes Comprehensive Implementation Program (SLOCIP); and the Institutional Excellence Guide.

The Board of Regents is fully informed about institutional reports to the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges as well as Commission recommendations to the institution. An accreditation update, in which the president provides members of the Board a summary of accreditation-related news and announcements, is a standing agenda item for Board meetings. The president also regularly transmits accreditation related documents, including all action letters from the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges, to the Board by email. These action letters, as well as all institutional reports to the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges, team visit reports, and other important accreditation documents are readily accessible on the Northern Marianas College Web site, www.nmcnet.edu.

IV.B.1.j

The Board of Regents is specifically charged with selecting a president for the college. This responsibility is stated unambiguously in Section 2(a) of Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which directs that: "[t]he president of the college shall be appointed by a representative board of regents." On December 23, 2010, the Board of Regents passed Resolution 2010-03 (Second Amendment) on December 23, 2010, which sets forth clear written procedures for how the new president will be selected. This resolution reads:

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.j**
>
> The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district/system chief administrator (most often known as the chancellor) in a multi-college district/system or the college chief administrator (most often known as the president) in the case of a single college. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to him/her to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds him/her accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively. In multi-college districts/systems, the governing board establishes a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges.

> **WHEREAS**, in filling the vacancy of the president of the Northern Marianas College, the Board of Regents finds that it is necessary to ensure that the guidelines that govern the hiring process are inclusive, dignified, fair, transparent, and consistent with applicable Board policies and federal and local laws; and

> **WHEREAS**, the Board of Regents also finds that while the selection and hiring of a new president must occur in the most transparent manner, it is also imperative that the Board take into consideration that certain information must remain confidential to protect the privacy of the applicants and the integrity of the selection process.

> **NOW THEREFORE**, be it resolved that pursuant to the Board of Regents mission to hire the most qualified and effective president for the Northern Marianas College, the following procedures are hereby adopted to guide the selection process:

>> When a vacancy of the president occurs, the Board of Regents shall appoint a Search Committee whose responsibility shall be to screen and interview applicants who have been recruited and vetted by the Association of Community College Trustees (hereinafter referred to as "ACCT"), a national nonprofit educational association that represents more

than 6,500 trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges. The ACCT has helped over 350 searches for Chief Executive Officers and presidents.

The Search Committee, after interviewing the applicants referred by ACCT, shall recommend to the Board of Regents at least two but no more than three applicants who best meet the advertised criteria;

The Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) members representing the College and the general CNMI community and a Board of Regents member as the Chair of the committee who may not vote except on a tie. Other than the member of the Board of Regents, every other committee member shall have a vote within the Committee.

The Support Committee to the Search Committee is to be provided by staff of NMC's Human Resources Office.

The presidential search process should be open and transparent, inclusive, dignified, careful and methodical. While the process is open to public scrutiny, names and applications of applicants will remain confidential until the final recommendations report is forwarded to the Board.

The minimum education and experience that applicants must have include:

Masters degree from a U.S. accredited university plus five (5) years of executive level management experience in an institution of higher education or other relevant organization, or a combination of at least five (5) years of executive level management including post-secondary education teaching experience; experience working in a multicultural environment; experience in accreditation processes, personnel management, budget development and presentation, strategic planning and institutional assessment, fundraising, mediation, and team building; and knowledge of federal programs and grants application to higher education.

1. The Human Resources Office will establish advertising parameters, such as advertising in local and/or mainland US as needed. The advertisements will supplement and be in addition to any advertising placed by ACCT. The public advertising of the job announcement will occur and the Committee will prepare interview questions and submit them to the Human Resources Office for review by EEO.

2. If necessary, the second public advertising of the job announcement will occur.

3. Once the ACCT has referred the names of the pool of candidates to the Search Committee, the Committee members will review the reports of each candidate and conduct the interviews as follows:

If the applicant is on-island, a personal interview will be conducted; if the applicant is off-island, a telephone conference interview will be conducted; The Support Committee will coordinate all logistics for the interviews; Off-island interviews may be arranged as directed by the Committee.

4. The Search Committee will forward to the Board of Regents its recommendations and files of recommended applicants. The Board of Regents, upon receiving the recommendations of the Search Committee, shall interview all candidates recommended using a standard set of questions prepared by the Board of Regents in advance.

The Board of Regents shall either select one of the candidates advanced by the Search Committee or reject all such candidates and ask the Search Committee to submit additional names meeting the qualifications or continue the position announcement until

> filled by submitting new names meeting the qualifications to the Board. The Board of Regents, upon receiving any or all additional names, may interview the remaining or the new applicants.

This resolution reflects the statutory requirements for the president set forth in 3 CMC § 1322 that "[a]ll candidates for the position of president of the Northern Marianas College shall possess at least a graduate degree from an accredited university in the United States or its territories and such other qualifications as the board may determine" and sets forth a clear written process for the Board of Regents to choose the president of the college.

The Board of Regents also has a clear policy for conducting a review of the president's performance, which Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1017 sets forth:

PERIODIC REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT

The Board of Regents will appraise the performance of the president of the College annually. While the responsibility for this annual appraisal lies solely with the Board, they will, on occasion, choose to invite input by the leadership of the major constituent groups of the College. Input from the general College community may also be invited on a periodic basis. The following shall serve as an outline of the basic framework and timeline for the annual appraisal process.

1. Goals for the ensuing year are developed by the president in consultation with the Board and are a direct result of Board and president suggestions.
2. By July 15 of each year the president's goals are finalized by the Board.
3. In April/May of years in which broad input is requested the Board will arrange individual meetings with constituent group leadership (Faculty, Staff, Students, and Community) to invite written input as to the completion of that year's goals and objectives, as well as to receive suggestions for subsequent year's goals and objectives.
4. In May/June of each year the president shall prepare a written self-evaluation on the status of that year's goals and objectives. Included with this report are suggested future goals.

In June of each year the Board and the president will meet in Closed Session to review the self-evaluation and to share a synopsis of the information gathered from the College community. The Board will prepare a written "Statement of Evaluation for the year 20__-20__" for inclusion in the president's personnel file as soon after this Closed Session as practical. At the June Closed Session the Board will also finalize the next year's goals and objectives, and take action on any modifications to the president's contract. Action by the Board will follow all appropriate [provisions of the] Commonwealth's Open Government Act.

As Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1017 makes clear, the Board of Regents has set forth a clearly defined mechanism for evaluating the chief administrator's performance implementing institutional policies and achieving institutional goals.

The Board of Regents delegates full administrative authority for the college to the chief administrator and must do so under Commonwealth law. Under 3 CMC § 1321, "[t]he board [of Regents] shall appoint a president to serve as the chief executive officer of the college and board." Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1009(I) states that "[t]he president is the chief executive officer of the Northern Marianas College, and in this capacity is charged with full

administrative responsibility for the College", and Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1002 directs that:

> no individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the College, nor as an individual command the services of any college employee.
>
> The Board shall delegate authority to the president as the Board's executive officer and confine Board action to policy determination, planning, performance evaluation, and maintaining the fiscal stability of the College. Problems and issues that arise shall be referred to the president to be handled through the proper administrative channels or be placed on the Board agenda for discussion. In this regard, rather than working directly with staff, it is imperative for Board members to take their concerns directly to the president.

Furthermore, Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1013 places administrative control even more firmly in the hands of the president by requiring that:

> [t]he Board [of Regents] does not adopt administrative procedures unless specifically required to do so by law, or unless requested to do so by the president. . . . The Board reserves the right to review and direct revisions of administrative procedures should they, in the Board's judgment, be inconsistent with the policies adopted by the Board.

As such, it is clear from both Commonwealth law and Board of Regents Policies and Procedures that the Board of Regents has delegated administrative power over the college to the president. Furthermore, this delegation has been emphasized to all members of the Board of Regents during new regent orientation and Board of Regents training events.

The interim president has observed that the numerous training and orientation sessions provided to the Board of Regents have led to a marked improvement in the Board focusing on policy and not on administrative matters. There has also been improvement in communication between the president and the Board of Regents.

Finally, there are ample opportunities for the Board of Regents to hold the president accountable for his or her actions. As described above, the Board of Regents has a clear policy for conducting a review of the chief administrator's performance under Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1017 and the president may be held accountable for his or her performance as a result of this review. Furthermore, the president reports to the Regents at Board meetings, as reflected in the meeting minutes, and other occasions. The College is developing a template for the president to use when making regular reports to the Board. The Board of Regents may also hold the president accountable for his or her performance as a result of these reports.

As illustrated above, at Northern Marianas College, the Board of Regents selects the president, evaluates the president, delegates all administrative authority at the college to the president, and holds him or her accountable for his or her actions and performance.

IV.B.2. & IV.B.2.a

In his/her leadership role, the president shares in the planning, organizing, budgeting, personnel selection and assessment of institutional effectiveness through the college governance structure. This includes the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the Academic Council, College Council, Associated Students the Northern Marianas College, members of the Management Team inclusive of all the Deans and the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) which is chaired by the Chief

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.2 & IV.B.2.a**
>
> **IV.B.2.** The president has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution he/she leads. He/she provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.
>
> **IV.B.2.a.** The president plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. He/she delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.

Financial and Administrative Officer. Each entity of the college is given the opportunity to formulate and manage its own budget (as evidenced in all BAFC meeting minutes). Proposals are reviewed by Budget and Finance Committee, College Council, forwarded to the president for review, and then transmitted to the Board of Regents for its final approval (further evidenced in all Board meeting minutes).

Board of Regents Policy 1009 delineates other duties and responsibilities of the president, which include:

A. Being responsible for the organization and administration of the College and for the coordination of its entire instructional program;
B. Providing direction and leadership in the development and implementation of a research, planning, and evaluation system to assure institutional effectiveness and that the results of such activity will be used for institutional improvement and the establishment of priorities;
C. Ensuring that various entities of the College have a substantive and clearly-defined role in institutional governance;
D. Overseeing institutional adherence to the Standards of the Accrediting Commission so as to assure continuing accreditation of the College;
E. Recommending to the Board new and revised policies and establishing administrative procedures for
   1. Board operations
   2. Finance and procurement
   3. Educational programs
   4. Human resources
   5. Student services
   6. Administrative services
F. Developing an effective program of staff evaluation and improvement;
G. Preparing a budget in line with the needs of the College, and approving expenditure of funds appropriated to the College by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the College by any other entity;
H. Guiding capital improvement activities and ensuring safe and adequate facilities and grounds in order to maintain a quality learning environment;
I. Representing the College to the community and maintaining an adequate public information service;
J. Maintaining open and adequate channels of communication with the internal and external College community;
K. Entering into contracts, cooperative agreements, and such other transactions as may be helpful to conduct the business of the College;

L. Appointing, reassigning and terminating staff and faculty consistent with applicable Human Resources rules and regulations;
M. Accepting gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other contributions on behalf of the Board and depositing the same in a College Trust Fund for the exclusive use and expenditure of the College, as approved by the Board;
N. Formulating reports required by local and federal agencies;
O. Approving regulations and activities of groups and organization functioning within the College; and
P. Subject to prior review and approval of the Board, establishing departments and other divisions of the College, approving their programs and courses of studies, and disestablishing the same as the president may deem most appropriate to carry out the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the College.

The president adheres to Board of Regents Policy 1009 by planning, overseeing and evaluating an administrative structure, which includes: Board operations, finance and procurement, educational programs, human resources, student services and administrative services.

The current Northern Marianas College structure and staffing includes the Dean of Academic Programs and Services, Dean of Community Programs and Services, the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, the Dean of Student Services, the Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Director of the Offices of Institutional Advancement and the Director of the Office of Information Technology.

The size of the administrative structure is appropriate to meet the needs of the Northern Marianas College with a current student population of approximately 1,200.

IV.B.2.b

The president guides institutional improvement of the College's teaching and learning environment by cultivating a collaborative atmosphere that helps to guide and inform the institution's values, goals, plans, and priorities. This environment is framed by participatory governance structure that includes students, staff, and faculty.

This is especially evidenced by the process by which the College had formulated its PROA 2008-2012 Strategic Plan. This plan, which identified the

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ACCJC Standard IV.B.2.b

The president guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by the following:
1) establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;
2) ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions;
3) ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes; and
4) establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts.

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primary goals that the College would pursue, is a product of a series of visioning and strategic planning sessions held in the Spring and Summer of 2008 that included input and discussion by staff, faculty, and students. A draft of the strategic plan had been transmitted to College Council, which is the recognized shared governance body that serves as the primary advisory body to the president on issues related to ongoing operations of the College. The plan was then transmitted to the president and ultimately, the NMC Board of Regents.

The participatory process by which the president guides institutional goal setting can also be evidence most recently by organization of the 2010 Planning Summit, which was held on October 1, 2010 at the Fiesta Resort on Saipan. Again, broad input was sought from students, staff, and faculty for the development of a plan that would identify specific objectives and timeline for goals that contributed toward the PROA Strategic Plan.

The president ensures that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research through the efforts of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the department primarily responsible for gathering, evaluating, and monitoring institutional data. The OIE supports the data and research needs of all other departments on campus and leads the campus's planning, program review, and evaluation activities. For instance, staff members from the OIE led survey efforts to measure students' responses to questions regarding classroom instruction.

To make certain that OIE staff members are kept up to date on latest research methods and practices, they regularly participate in training activities to elevate their skills in collecting, processing, and reporting pertinent data. For example, OIE staff members have participated in training activities hosted by the ACCJC and PPEC.

To ensure that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes, the president oversees a comprehensive program review process. That process is detailed in the *NMC Institutional Excellence Guide*. Most recently, the College used the data obtained from the third cycle of program review to identify institutional priorities, which were then used to guide and inform the College's 2012 budget request to the Commonwealth Legislature. The College is now in its fourth cycle of program review, which is led by the Planning, Program Review, and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC).

To keep the NMC's Operational Plan (Ops Plan) current, and to improve its link to program review, at the 2010 Planning Summit, the entire College community engaged in dialogue about how to link each program's outcomes (SLOs, PLOs, and AUOs) to the 28 priority initiatives articulated in the PROA-SP. This approach to the Ops Plan directly links the PROA Strategic Plan 2008--2012 (PROA-SP) to every program, ensuring fidelity to the goals and priority initiatives in the plans.

With the links between programs' outcomes and the PROA-SP's priority initiatives established, the College continues to monitor achievement of those outcomes via TracDat, which organizes annual program assessment into the Nichols and Nichols (2000) five column model (APPENDIX—SAMPLE FORM 1) format for annual program assessment. At the conclusion of the current cycle of program review, when programs report in TracDat progress on achieving their respective program outcomes, the College will measure the extent to which it is achieving and implementing the goals and priority initiatives of the PROA-SP.

IV.B.2.c

As the chief administrative officer of Northern Marianas College, the president is charged with implementing statutes, regulations, and governing Board policies at the institution as well as to ensure that institutional practices are consistent with the college's

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.2.c**
>
> The president assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies.

mission and policies. These powers and duties are explicitly set forth in the Board of Regents Policies and Procedures. Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1009(I) state that:

> [t]he Board of Regents judiciously recognizes and supports the president as the major line of communication between the Board and the internal and external College community. In this capacity as the Board's Liaison, the president informs the Board of such communications, and is guided by the policies, general directions, and financial guidelines established by the Board.

Not only does this policy specifically require the president to follow policies, instructions, and financial directives of the Board of Regents, but Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1009(III) also reiterates this requirement by stating that "[t]he president . . . is authorized by the Board to exercise broad discretionary powers according to the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the College." Thus, the president carries out the policies of the Board and is obligated to ensure that internal practices are consistent with them. Furthermore, as outlined in Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1009(IV), other duties of the president also reaffirm these requirements and include:

A.   Being responsible for the organization and administration of the College and for the coordination of its entire instructional program;

B.   Providing direction and leadership in the development and implementation of a research, planning, and evaluation system to assure institutional effectiveness and that the results of such activity will be used for institutional improvement and the establishment of priorities;

C.   Ensuring that various entities of the College have a substantive and clearly-defined role in institutional governance;

D.   Overseeing institutional adherence to the Standards of the Accrediting Commission so as to assure continuing accreditation of the College;

E.   Recommending to the Board new and revised policies and establishing administrative procedures for
    1.   Board operations
    2.   Finance and procurement
    3.   Educational programs
    4.   Human resources
    5.   Student services
    6.   Administrative services

F.   Developing an effective program of staff evaluation and improvement;

G.   Preparing a budget in line with the needs of the College, and approving expenditure of funds appropriated to the College by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the College by any other entity;

H.   Guiding capital improvement activities and ensuring safe and adequate facilities and grounds in order to maintain a quality learning environment;

I.   Representing the College to the community and maintaining an adequate public information service;

J.   Maintaining open and adequate channels of communication with the internal and external College community;

K.   Entering into contracts, cooperative agreements, and such other transactions as may be helpful to conduct the business of the College;

L.   Appointing, reassigning and terminating staff and faculty consistent with applicable Human Resources rules and regulations;

M.   Accepting gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other contributions on behalf of the Board and depositing the same in a College Trust Fund for the exclusive use and expenditure of the College, as approved by the Board;

N.   Formulating reports required by local and federal agencies;

O.   Approving regulations and activities of groups and organization functioning within the College; and

P.   Subject to prior review and approval of the Board, establishing departments and other divisions of the College, approving their programs and courses of studies, and disestablishing the same as the president may deem most appropriate to carry out the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the College.

The broad based powers and requirements of the president under Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1009(I) and 1009(III), as well as these powers and obligations set forth under Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1009(IV), authorize and require the president to ensure that the college's statutes, regulations and policies are implemented and that the college's practices are consistent with them and its educational mission.

IV.B.2.d

In addition to reviewing and approving all purchase orders, the president effectively controls budget and all expenditures by overseeing the shared

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.2.d**
>
> The president effectively controls budget and expenditures.

governance mechanism designed to monitor and regulate the college's financial activities. At the heart of this financial governance mechanism is the Budget and Finance Committee, which is a standing committee of the College Council. The Budget and Finance Committee is responsible for reviewing, approving and advising the president on all financial matters. It is charged with aligning institutional priorities with the allocation of resources; reviewing and adjusting the budget in accordance with present circumstances and future projections; and for producing financial reports.

Major financial decisions, like allocating limited funds among the various departments at the College, begin at the Budget and Finance Committee. In preparing the annual operations budget, the Committee leads a budget call and conducts hearings where departmental representatives justify their budget requests using the results of their program review. The Budget and Finance Committee then compiles the budget and submits it to College Council, the program advisory body to the NMC president. Upon its approval, the College Council will send the budget to the president, who make the final call on the budget before it is transmitted to the Board for its review. Without the president's endorsement, the budget would be sent back to the Budget and Finance Committee for further review and adjustments. In that sense, the president effectively controls budget and all expenditures.

The president's authority over the College's budget and expenditures is further underscored by BOR Policy 1009 (Duties of the president), which directs the president to prepare "a budget in

line with the needs of the College, and approving expenditure of funds appropriated to the College by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the College by any other entity." (Board of Regents Policy 1009 - Duties of the president).

This is also supported by the Administrative Procedure for fiscal responsibility which states that "[t]he Comptroller, Budget Officer, and Procurement Officer, under the direction of the president, shall establish standards and procedures where necessary to accomplish this policy of the Board."

Regular financial updates are provided to the Board of Regents as part of the president's report, which is a standing agenda item for every regular Board meeting. In addition, the Budget Officer provides expenditure reports to all expenditure authorities on a monthly basis, and upon request from authorized personnel. These reports inform the expenditure authorities on current encumbrances, budget balances, and any reprogramming adjustments that may be needed.

IV.B.2.e

The interim president works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution. By actively participating in community organizations, he/she helps advance the

> **ACCJC Standard IV.B.2.e**
>
> The president works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.

image and the reach of the college through leadership and involvement. The interim president serves as board president of the Ayuda Network, a local nonprofit organization engaged in diverse social services activities such as alliances with other non-profit organizations, i.e. the Commonwealth Diabetes Coalition, Parent Information & Resource Center, Parents-As-Teachers program, Family Violence Task Force/Domestic Violence Intervention Center, and Connecting Families, Inc. The interim president also served as the chairperson of the first Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Energy Steering Committee, which has been charged with creating a long-term, comprehensive, strategic energy plan for the Commonwealth and serves as a member of the Northern Marianas College Foundation, which is the fundraising arm of the college. Through her membership, she engages potential donors and corporate supporters from the community as acquires financial support for the College. (Ayuda Network Human and Social Services Directory).

She is also a featured speaker at many college-sponsored activities and events, and as such, enhances Northern Marianas image to stakeholder, for example, being the featured speaker at all of the College's Start Smart Seminars, a college-preparatory workshop attended by all Commonwealth public high school seniors. (Northern Marianas College Start Smart agenda).

Working with the Office of Institutional Advancement, the president regularly shares college news, announcements, and accreditation updates with key stakeholders through media interviews, official press releases, and weekly e-newsletters. (Northern Marianas College Web site).

Recommendation #1: The governing board should exercise its authority to govern the college and protect the college from undue influence by the Commonwealth government including the government's ability to line item dictate the college's budget. The governing board should act autonomously to govern the college free from indirect interference by Commonwealth governor or members of the Legislature; this will defend the college from vagaries of changes in political powers.

Northern Marianas College (NMC) is governed by a duly authorized Board of Regents. The Board of Regents consists of seven members who are appointed directly by the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The Board of Regents is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of Northern Marianas College and the successful completion of its mission. This responsibility is outlined under Section 2(a) of Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which states:

> The legislature shall establish by law a Northern Marianas College that shall be headed by a president. The president of the college shall be appointed by a representative board of regents. The board of regents shall be appointed to staggered terms by the governor and shall have autonomy in the administration of its affairs and shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marina Islands. The composition of the board of regents and other matters pertaining to its operations and duties shall be provided by law.

Under statute, the general duties and authority of the Board of Regents are reinforced by 3 CMC § 1304(b), which directs that "the Northern Marianas College is established as a nonprofit public corporation under the general control and direction of a board designated as the Board of Regents of the Northern Marianas College . . ." Commonwealth Code also specifically empowers the Board of Regents in 3 CMC § 1316 to perform a number of duties, including:

> (a) To hold in trust for the Commonwealth the property and assets of the college, and to have the authority to negotiate loan guarantees and, with the approval of the Commonwealth Development Authority, issue bonds.
> (b) To set the goals and general directions of the college, and to approve policies in pursuit of such goals and directions.
> . ..
> (e) To adopt, amend and repeal policies governing the conduct of its business and the performance of the powers and duties grant to or imposed upon it by law or the Constitution.
> . . .
> (g) To acquire for use by the college any property, whether real, personal or mixed, whether tangible or intangible, or any interest therein, and to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the same for the good of the college; . . .
> (i) To establish and to oversee the activities of a Northern Marianas College Foundation as a private, nonprofit, tax exempt public corporation for the support of the college, . . .
> (j) To act as the state board of higher education for the Commonwealth for purposes of federal law.
> (s) To enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its business and on such terms as it may deem appropriate with any agency or instrumentality of the United States, or with any state, Commonwealth, territory, or possession, or with any political subdivision thereof, or with any person, firm, association, or corporation.

(t) To determine the character of and the necessity for its obligations and expenditures, and the manner in which they shall be incurred, allowed and paid, subject to provisions of law applicable to the college.
. . .
(v) To establish procurement policies for the college, and to expend funds appropriated by the federal or commonwealth government or donated to the college by any other entity.
(w) To take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the powers conferred upon it by law and the Commonwealth Constitution.

The recorded impression that the Governor of CNMI had implemented line-item vetoes cutting that eliminated specific NMC positions was *inaccurate*. Those line items reflected a pro forma characterization of funding cuts. None of the positions listed in that characterization was actually cut as the Board approved a budget whose priorities were determined by the institution itself. The positions that were supposedly cut, but actually filled, appear below.

Positions Listed in the Governor's Line Item Veto and Later Filled by NMC

Position

Department Chair, Science Math Health and Athletics

Director, Counseling Programs and Services

Director, Office of Admissions and Records

International Student Coordinator/Counselor

Enrollment Manager

Accountant Technician/Cashier

Marketing/Recruitment Coordinator

Furthermore, the results of the PROAC process summarized in the *Composite Reports* for the last three years reveal that most of the recommendations in those reports have been met or are in the process of being met. These reports are available in the WASC Room and indicate that the Board has sustained the programs of the College during most difficult circumstances. These efforts, in combination with a steady increase in Board development activities and self-evaluation, can promise long-term effectiveness in carrying out this crucial Board role.

The board is composed of diverse representatives from the public and thus reflects the public and stakeholders interest. As stated in 3 CMC §1311, "At least one member shall be a resident of Tinian, one member shall be a resident of Rota, at least one member shall be of Carolinian descent, and at least one member shall be a woman."

Board meetings are open to allow the public an opportunity to attend and address their concerns. (Board of Regents Policy 1015) The governing board is fully aware that they not have any conflict of interest. The Board of Regents members have no employment, family, or personal financial interest in the institution. This is further addressed by Board of Regents Policy 1022 (Conflict of Interest Code).

To strengthen the conflict of interest policy, the Board of Regents adopted a Board Member's Training and Development Policy on December 23, 2011. This policy includes the Board Member's Code of Conduct. The governing board follows these related conflict of interest policies to ensure that no conflict interferes with the academic and fiscal integrity of the college.

The Commonwealth Constitution identifies that Northern Marianas College as an autonomous agency. As stated in Article XV Section 2(a), the college"[s]hall have autonomy in the administration of its affairs." The Board of Regents and the interim president continue to communicate with the legislature regarding its political interference. The institution will conduct an orientation for newly elected legislators on the mission, goals and purpose of the college. During the annual orientation of the legislators the college will provide each with an NMC Manual for their reference. Providing the orientation and manual will provide the legislators information to better understand the goals, objectives and needs of the college.

The Board of Regents has had numerous communications with the Governor emphasizing the urgency to fill the two vacant positions. The Governor recently appointed Juan Lizama as a regent for the College in December 20, 2011. Regent Lizama went through the orientation process and received the Board of Regents manual as mandated by the Board Member Training and Development Policy. The governing board continues to work to ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the college.

The governing board acts independently to consider the stakeholders of the college (i.e. administration, faculty, staff, and students) as participants in the governance of the institution. Policy-making decisions go through governing bodies at the college, seeking input from the college community. The board continues to work to ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the college and to shield it from political interference.

Two Stories of How the Current NMC Board of Regents Acted as a Buffer and a Bridge

Fighting for Funding

The Board of Regents, together with the Interim President, diligently and consistently lobbied the Governor, the CNMI House of Representatives, and the CNMI Senate to justify government funding for the College and to defend against any potentially drastic cuts to the College's budget. Regents and the Interim President have represented the College at numerous budget sessions, including a Senate budget session held on Tinian on September 3, 2010. **As a result, despite the government shutdown that occurred late last year, Senate Bill 17-26 and the Executive Order 2010—11 both exempted the College from the government shutdown.** Furthermore, the College has been exempted from government austerity measures, including one measure that reduces government employees' work hours to 64 (from 80) per week.

Preserving Institutional Autonomy

Members of the Board of Regents, together with the interim president, have met with legislative leaders to prevent legislation that would be detrimental to the College from being passed into

law. For instance, Regents met with members of the Senate on January 24, 2011 and on February 8, 2011 and on campus to discuss pending legislation that affected the College. As a result of those meetings, the members of the Senate Committee on Education recognized that certain legislation introduced could infringe upon the College's autonomy. In this process, board members were able to explain the ways that autonomy is crucial the College's ability to achieve its mission and to sustain its relationship with its accrediting Commission. That this interaction bore fruit is evidenced by a Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs' February 11, 2011 report, which states, in part, "[t]herefore, this Committee has taken into consideration the Legislature's indirect actions that might infringe on the autonomy of the College. Therefore, this Committee emphasizes that it is of high importance that the Legislature or the Governor's office do not infringe or jeopardize the autonomy of the Northern Marianas College."

The College believes that it has complied with Recommendation #1.

Recommendation #2: To meet the Eligibility Requirement, the team recommends that the college ensure that Commission policies are followed at all times and that the institution respond to Commission requests truthfully and accurately.

Northern Marianas College is committed to abiding by the Standards, Policies, and Procedures established by WASC. The October, 2010 Visiting Team observed that a broadly and collaboratively developed Show Cause Report "was chief among the concerns for this Eligibility Requirement." The Team also observed that in its judgment Eligibility Requirement 2 had been met. The Commission's ongoing concern suggests that it wishes to observe sustained effort in this regard. NMC has taken pains to institutionalize that effort and make it a shared value of all constituencies in the College. One illustration of that effort is the broad and in-depth participation in preparing this report. As noted in the Statement on Preparation of this Report, more than 53 members of the campus community participated in this effort, including 13 members of the Accreditation Reaffirmation Team (ART). In fact, the Standards Teams within ART will continue to meet weekly even after this report has been submitted until it has assessed the College's performance against *all* the accreditation standards and sub-standards, including those not covered by the January 31, 2011 Action Letter.

The Team also confirmed that the College had engaged faculty, staff, administrators, and the Board of Regents in a number of training sessions related to accreditation, but that some areas "still reflect a shallow understanding of the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards." Even though the Visiting Team indicated that Recommendation 2 had been met, the College has taken seriously its compliance with ER 21 and has responded to the caution of the "shallow understanding" observation by continuing a program of professional development and educational opportunities for regents, administrators, faculty, staff and students.

When any institution receives the sanction of "Show Cause," that sanction signifies a breach of trust between the institution and its accrediting Commission. In addition, that sanction would normally indicate a breach of trust among the constituencies of the institution itself. That dynamic gets magnified when those constituencies exhibit passionate concern for the institution combined with an imperfect understanding of the role of accreditation in assuring the quality and integrity of its mission. In its show cause visits, subsequent reports and action letters, ACCJC has observed noted all of the above conditions. And for all of those conditions, rebuilding trust is an iterative process that occurs over time, with each step forward based on preceding steps.
As noted in the Show Cause Visit Report of October 20-22, 2010, NMC had already taken significant steps to bring itself into compliance with ER 21. In fact that report determined that NMC met ER 21, with a caveat that it was concerned about the breadth and depth of understanding on campus about the accreditation process. The College has assertively continued to address that concern and, in doing so, to restore trust in accreditation as a process that supports institutional integrity and effectiveness.

The institution has extremely been forthcoming in communicating changes in its accreditation status by making timely announcements of Commission actions in the media and on its Web site. In fact, there is a portion of the home page of the College Web site dedicated to informing the community about the College's accreditation efforts. The College also created a Q&A flyer and poster disseminated to students to answer some basic questions about the show cause status. The

Q&A was also published in the local newspaper to aid the general community's understanding of show cause.

The broad and intensive dialogue and education on accreditation matters has been promoted at the College among faculty, staff, administrators, and regents, through workshops, trainings, and professional development interaction. These activities stem from a conscious and deliberate attempt to eliminate misconceptions about the accreditation process and to promote more honest and accurate discussions. The results of these activities have contributed to a culture of "accreditation awareness" evident at all levels of the institution. Recent examples of these activities include the following:

Activity	Date	Description
Board of Regents workshop	Jan 5, 2011	Accountability & Institutional Effectiveness. A 90-minute workshop delivered by the ALO and followed by questions.
Board of Regents workshop	February 25, 2011	The Board's Role in Accreditation. A 90-minute workshop delivered by the ALO that included pre-test and post-test exercises, with results to be used in planning subsequent Board workshops.
Institution-wide e-mail	February 1, 2011	The ALO forwarded to every NMC employee a copy of ACCJC's publication *Twelve Common Questions and Answers about Regional Accreditation*.
Board of Regents review of show cause report efforts	March 10-11, 2011	All standards teams met with the Board over two days and reported on their work on respective standards and how NMC meets those standards.

The Board of Regents has established a Training and Development Committee, with a charge to "develop a work plan and establish a procedure for assessing Board members' knowledge (gained through training sessions and activities) throughout their term." That step, combined with the decision of the Accreditation Reaffirmation Team to expand and continue its work, reflect a commitment to sustained effort in this arena.

The College believes that it has demonstrated compliance with Recommendation #2

Recommendation #3: To meet the Eligibility Requirement and Standard, the team recommends that the college integrate financial planning with institutional planning and ensure that fiscal resources are adequate to support student learning programs and institutional effectiveness so that financial stability is maintained. (ER 17, Standard III.D.1.a)

Funding for Northern Marianas College (NMC or College) comes from multiple sources: legislative government appropriations, student tuition and fees, federal grants, direct contributions, contributions to the NMC Foundation, and miscellaneous revenue from such sources asfacility rentals and community and professional development workshops and courses.

For Fiscal Year 2011, the College worked aggressively within the economic and political climate to secure appropriations funding that exceeds the constitutionally mandated one-percent of expenditures minimum guarantee. This effort was especially significant given the austerity measures the CNMI government has applied because of the severe economic downturn, including a 16-hour work reduction every two weeks and unpaid holidays. The College has secured legislative appropriations funding for FY 2011, and enrollment in FY 2011 has increased by 25% compared to FY 2010. Securing revenue from these various sources has resulted in an adequate funding base for the current fiscal year.

Public institutions across the U.S. and the Pacific region face an extended period of reduced or uncertain funding from their respective legislative bodies. Even large states such as New York, Pennsylvania, California and Illinois face severe budget shortfalls that promise significantly lower levels of state support for higher education. NMC's ability to balance revenues from varied sources from year to year must become part of a longer-term strategy rather than just a yearly necessity. Fortunately, the College has begun those steps.

- The College continues its discussions with members of the legislature to secure the guaranteed $6,000,000 funding base established by Public Law 9-53. Until this funding base is assured, the College must assertively engage with the annual legislative budget hearings because the constitutional mandate that the College receive one-percent of the Commonwealth's general revenues is insufficient for its operations (1% of the FY 2011 general revenues would equal just $1,491,710).
- The Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) has established a standing sub-committee that is developing funding strategies designed to ensure long-term financial stability. The sub-committee meets weekly and has submitted a preliminary list of recommendations to BAFC. Updates of these recommendations appear in the WASC Room.
- The College qualifies for and avails of almost $7 million in annual federal funding from several grants and major programs including Adult Basic Education and Cooperative Research Education and Extension Service.
- In 1997, the Board of Regents established the NMC Foundation, a non-profit organization charged with acquiring, managing, and disbursing funds from alternative sources to support the advancement of NMC's educational programs and services. In addition to providing institutional financial support, the NMC Foundation also provides two-year scholarships to students. Together, these funding sources help ensure that the College's financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness.

Moving forward, the College will have to secure revenues from all these sources and from new sources. The College-wide Planning Summit scheduled for May of 2011 will provide for linking resource planning with planning for the academic and support programs.

Funding for Northern Marianas College (NMC or College) comes from multiple sources: legislative government appropriations, student tuition and fees, federal grants, direct contributions, contributions to the NMC Foundation, and miscellaneous revenue such as from facility rentals and community and professional development workshops and courses.

Table ER 17.1—NMC Revenue History by Sources: FY2006-FY2010

Operating Revenue ($)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
U.S. Federal Grants	5,724,628	5,992,859	6,393,751	6,702,752	7,854,990
Student Tuition & Fees (net of scholarship discounts and allowances)	1,043,474	1,069,752	1,763,563	1,629,829	2,067,753
Private Gifts, Grants, Donations	73,194	49,187	156,276	40,278	121,069
Other	1,181,863	1,194,419	1,194,372	1,224,946	314,275
Total Operating Revenue ($)	8,023,159	8,306,217	9,507,962	9,597,805	10,358,087

Non-operating Revenue ($)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CNMI Appropriations	7,078,228	5,056,682	5,618,211	5,657,018	4,442,023
Net Investment Income	56,339	241,535			74,703
Change in Fair Value of Investments	168,816	270,115	(693,577)	302,851	470,442
Other				103,375	
Total Non-operating Revenue ($)	7,303,383	5,568,332	4,924,634	6,063,244	4,987,168
TOTAL ($)	15,326,542	13,874,549	14,432,596	15,661,049	15,345,255

Notes:
- FY 10 figures are preliminary.
- The FY 2006-FY 2009 figures were taken directly from the Single Audit report. In FY 06 and FY 07, the report shows 1) Investment Income, net of expenses, and 2) Change in fair value of investments. For FY08 and FY09, the report shows 1) Net increase (decrease) in fair value of investments, and 2) Other revenues. Notes to the financial statements and the management discussion and analysis and gave no explanation for the different presentation and, therefore, the amounts are as listed in the reports.
- In FY 2007 NMC was not held exempt from work-hour reductions enacted by the CNMI legislature. Note that in the last three fiscal years, the College has been exempted from such cuts even as the Commonwealth's budget situation worsened.
- The category of "Other" in Operating Revenue includes contributions from the NMC Foundation and revenues such as those from sales and services of educational departments and auxiliary services.
- The $103,375 listed as "Other" in Non-operating Revenue in FY 2009 represents a one-time special appropriation by the CNMI government.

The amounts listed in the table above affirm that the College has managed to maintain a stable revenue base over a period of several fiscal years, despite the surrounding economic difficulty in the Commonwealth. The net results of that stable revenue base are reflected in the narratives of sustained improvements in institutional effectiveness evidenced throughout this report.

The College relies on its mission, strategic plan, program review results, and annual institutional priorities to guide the budgeting process; all funding requests require information and data from program review. Prioritization begins at the program and department levels by completing program review functions as dictated through the College's program review Form One and Form Two. The Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) guides the College's program review process and assists in identifying and setting priorities at the program, departmental, and institutional levels. These priorities are compiled in the Composite Report, which, in turn, is used by the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC) during the budgeting process.

The College operates with financial responsibility and strives to continuously improve upon its resource allocation processes. The College remains proactive in seeking the best link between planning and program review and resource allocation. In a regular meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee on February 24, 2011, the Chair of the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) presented a model of linking program review with resource allocation that was used by Drake University to successfully achieve an annual cost savings of $4M; the presentation included the introduction of a similar model that could be implemented at NMC. As a guide for future modifications to the planning and resource allocation process, the College's mission and program review results remain the foundation for financial planning.

In December 2008, the College adopted its *Institutional Excellence Guide*, which provides an overview of the shared governance process at the College, as well as the process by which institutional planning, assessment, and financial planning are linked. Financial planning at NMC is guided by the College's mission, Strategic Plan (PROA-SP), annual institutional priorities, and results of program review (Composite Report).

The allocation of resources involves linking, prioritizing, and funding program review results, planning, and fiscal year priorities. The process is currently under review by the College's relevant shared governance bodies. Revisions are expected to be implemented in time to complete the FY 2012 budget development cycle.

The planning process for allocation of financial resources typically begins with an Annual Budget Call for individual offices and departments to prepare their respective budgets in accordance with guidelines and criteria as specified in the budget call memorandum.

The respective deans and directors are responsible for developing program budgets. The Budget and Finance Committee is tasked with providing oversight to the budget preparation process by holding open hearings for each submission. Budget justifications are expected to be consistent with program review results, Institutional Priorities, and the Operational Plan of the PROA-SP.

An Example of the Link between the Planning Process and Budget Decisions: Back-Up Power Source

A concrete example of the successful integration of planning, program review, and resource allocation is the recently completed Back-Up Power project.

Composite Reports of previous Program Review cycles, including the October 2010 report have consistently mentioned the need for alternative power sources because of the unreliability of our local power company. This need was recognized in 2009 when the College prepared its application/proposal for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) program of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). $220,000 was requested to connect more of the College's educational facilities to our existing back-up generator. A cost analysis conducted in 2010 revealed that a second generator could be purchased and installed for the budget allocated for the project. The request to amend the project was approved by the grantor agency, the U.S. Department of Education.

On March 7, 2011 the project was completed and the new generator is on-line. A total of six additional buildings are now connected to NMC's enhanced back-up power system. Building W which houses our student computer labs and Building V which houses our Business Department were specifically mentioned in Composite Report recommendations. These buildings were prioritized in the planned list of buildings that were to be served by the new generator.

This accomplishment is directly related to Goal 4 of the College's PROA Strategic Plan: Accelerate the upgrade of physical and technology infrastructure.

Federal financial resources were allocated to fulfill recommendations generated by the program review process and address a component of a Strategic Plan goal.

The Budget and Finance Committee makes budget recommendations to the College Council, which then acts to amend or accept the recommendations. The final draft budgets are forwarded to the President for review and submission to the Board of Regents for modification or adoption. This cycle is performed on an annual basis.

The College believes that it has demonstrated compliance with Recommendation #3.

Recommendation #4: To meet the Eligibility Requirement and Standards, the team recommends that the college assure the financial integrity and responsible use of its financial resources and ensure that the financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision-making. The College must also correct noted audit findings. (ER 18, Standard III.D.2, III.D.2.a, III.D.2.d, III.D.2.e)

Northern Marianas College participates in annual audits in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. NMC has clearly demonstrated financial integrity and stability as evidenced in the audit reports for Fiscal Years 2009, 2008, and 2007, by receiving an "unqualified opinion" by the independent accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLC. This major positive milestone is due to the on-going effective implementation of internal controls and is especially significant as NMC had previously received qualified opinions on the audit of its financial statements since the mid-1990s. Copies of the annual audit reports are provided to members of the Board of Regents, the president, and the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer. Copies are also available through the Office of the President and through the Web site of the CNMI Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) at www.opacnmi.com.

The Commission observed that Northern Marianas College had passed through a period in which few aspects of its audit process were executed well. While audit reports may have been transmitted to Board members, the impact of audit results, and particularly the explanations of audit findings, the communications between auditors or granting agencies were poorly communicated to the Board of Regents. Nor was it clear that Board members had been sufficiently trained to recognize the fundamental importance of financial accountability to the accreditation process and to the integrity of its relations with the ACCJC. That situation has changed.

A summary of the recent audit history and the College's resolutions appears below.

Finding: *No. 2009-1*	**Response**
Criteria/Condition Receivables should be periodically assessed for validity and collectability. Additionally, the adequacy of the allowance for doubtful accounts should be assessed and collection efforts pursued. **Recommendation** We recommend that the College implement procedures to monitor and analyze receivables and address inefficiencies in its accounting systems.	As a result of this finding, Finance Office staff reviewed its analysis of doubtful accounts and determined that it has adequately reserved for any doubtful receivables. This report was provided to the auditors after the June 30 deadline of the audit. Although, these accomplishments were not reported to the October 2011 evaluation team, the requirements for this analysis are described in the draft *Finance Office Guide* and were implemented throughout FY 2010. The College is confident that this will not be a repeat finding for the FY 2010 audit.
Finding: *No. 2009-2* **Criteria/Condition** The College's Property Management and Accountability Manual requires that an annual physical inventory of fixed assets be taken. The fixed asset physical inventory records should be	**Response** The auditors' response is incorrect. Physical inventories of Tinian and Rota sites were conducted in 2009. Physical inventory guidelines of College property are addressed in the *PPMO Property Manual* not the *Policies and Procedures manual*. Section IV.B of the Property Manual that was

reconciled with the general ledger fixed asset balances. Additionally, all properties of the College should be identified by a property control number which shall be permanently affixed to each individual property in such a manner as to be readily observable.

Recommendation
We recommend that the College strengthen control procedures to ensure that a physical inventory is completed and is reconciled to fixed asset records. Further, we recommend that property, plant and equipment activities be recorded in the plant fund accounts.

Response
The College's last physical inventory was done in December 2008 for the Saipan Campus only. While the College has amended its Policies and Procedures to mirror the Federal expectations that physical inventories of fixed assets be conducted at least once every two years, such amended Policies and Procedures were not effective in FY2009.

approved on August 2000 states, that, "A physical inventory of property shall be taken and the results reconciled with the property records every two (2) years. Any differences between quantities determined by the physical inspection and those shown in the accounting records shall be investigated to determine the causes of the differences. The College shall, in connection with the inventory, verify the existence, current utilization, and continued need for the property." Although this was discussed with the auditors, this finding was not removed. A physical inventory of college property on all three islands, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota was started in February 2011. The College is in compliance with its policies and procedures.

Property records have been successfully migrated to the College's computerized inventory system, FAS Gov. These records have been updated and maintained throughout FY 2010 and the program has generated adjusting entries that are included in the FY 2010 trial balance. The College predicts that this finding will not be repeated in the FY 2010 audit report.

Finding: *No. 2009-3* **Criteria/Condition** Proper budgetary control provides for adequate monitoring and tracking of commitments related to open purchase orders and unfulfilled contracts. Amounts reserved for encumbrances should be reconciled and adjusted for balances that are no longer valid. **Recommendation** We recommend that the College ensure that all encumbrances be supported by encumbering documents and be reduced when actual expenses are incurred. Further, we recommend that long outstanding encumbrances and debit balances be examined to ensure validity.	**Response** As a result of this finding, FY 2009 encumbrances were reviewed and adjusted. The College recognizes, however, that open encumbrances have no direct bearing on the College's financial statements. The review and adjustment were conducted on a regularly scheduled basis throughout FY 2010 and the College expects that this finding will not be repeated in the FY 2010 audit report.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* a. For three items (Check Nos. 25197, 25195, 25559) the contract for professional services was not signed by the contractor or vendor.	**Response** Signed contracts were located for Check Nos. 25197 and 25195. At the time of this response, a signed contract for Check No. 25559 has not been located.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* b. For one item (Document No. PO-113671), amounting to $7,910, the purchase order was not approved prior to incurrence of expenses.	**Response** The actual cost of services provided, based on attendees, was not available until after the event occurred. The requesting department has been instructed that an estimated amount that will cover projected costs should be used for preparation of the PO. Unused amounts will be de-obligated.

Finding: *No. 2009-4* c. For one item (Document No. 09-002), amounting to $4,000, documentation of the determination that the service was not available in-house and of the vendor selection could not be provided.	**Response** Unable to locate documentation.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* d. For one item obtained through sole source procurement (Document No. C-3042), amounting to $8,600, there was no evidence that other available sources were considered prior to using sole source procurement.	**Response** The justification for the Sole Source procurement indicates that continuity is a reason for the selection of the company
Finding: *No. 2009-4* e. For one item obtained through sole source procurement relating to a construction project (Document No. C-090001), amounting to $53,352, documentation of efforts made to contact other available sources was not provided. Further, there was no documentation why competitive sealed bidding was not utilized.	**Response** The justification for the Expedited, Sole Source procurement documents efforts made to contact other sources. Competitive sealed bidding was not utilized because the company selected is the only company on-island that supplies the paving materials required for the project.
Finding: *No. 2009-4* f. For one item obtained through sole source procurement (Document No. C-3061), amounting to $10,000, justification of the procurement method used does not appear sufficient and reasonable.	**Response** The College agrees with this condition.

Finding: *No. 2009-4*
g.
For one item (Document No. C-3059 SEPT09), amounting to $7,500, with a total contract price of $25,000, the contract was not signed by the Board of Regents Chairperson. Further, the voucher for independent service contract was not signed by the Chief Finance and Administrative Officer to certify approval of payment.
	Response
	Section 11 – C, 3a of the Property Policy and Regulation Manual states:
	
	The acquisition of services for all College programs shall be subject to the following procedures:
	
	3. Subsequent to completion of the appropriate source selection process, the following procedure shall apply:
	    a. Professional Services
	
	 i. The program shall notify the Human Resources Office in writing of the consultant selected to provide the services.
	 ii. The Human Resources Office shall prepare a Contract for Professional Services for the selected contractor.
	iii. The contract shall be signed by the following individuals in order:
	
	    • Legal Counsel
	    • College official with expenditure authority of the program
	    • Director, Finance & Administrative Services
	    • President

	• Chairperson, Board of Regents Fiscal & Legislative Committee, if the contract amount exceeds $25,000.00 and upon Board of Regents approval • Contractor The questioned contract does not exceed $25,000; therefore the signature of the Board of Regents member is not required. The voucher for independent services contract requires only the expenditure authority's signature, the signature of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer is not required.
Finding: *No. 2009-5* **Criteria** The College's procurement regulations state that for independent contract services, programs should first determine whether their requirements may be met by available in-house resources or through other employment options authorized by College policy, prior to initiating the acquisition of services via procurement procedures. **Recommendation** We recommend that the College revisit its existing policies and regulations to ensure that a clarification is made on whether evidence of internal attempts should be in writing and be kept on file.	**Response** Existing policies and regulations are silent as to whether evidence of internal attempts should be in writing and be kept on file. In the past the Human Resources Office has e-mailed the entire campus announcing the need for services as a method of documenting the attempt to determine if the services could be provided in-house. At the same time NMC procurement regulations prevent employees from responding to these kinds of requests. The approved revised Procurement Policy/Regulations addresses this issue and clarifies some ambiguous areas and the Finance Office has developed a set of procedural guidelines that strengthen financial management performance.

Findings 2009-6 to 2009-14

To address audit findings (2009-6 to 2009-14) for federal programs noted in the audit of the College for the financial year ended September 30, 2009, the Interim President, the Director for the College's Cooperative Research Extension and Educational Services (CREES) program, and a consultant for the College met with officials from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Department of Education (USDOE) from December 13 through December 15, 2010. Resolution of these findings continues to be discussed with the relevant grantor agencies.

Note: The College received a Program Determination Letter dated November 10, 2009 from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The letter contained detailed discussions of OVAE's determinations for finding numbers 2006-8, 2006-10, 2006-12, and 2006-13. The PDL was issued nearly two and a half years after the audit report was completed. The determinations indicated which findings were resolved and and closed. The College responded to the PDL's request to provide evidence of corrective action within sixty days of receipt of the PDL in a letter dated January 11, 2010. No further correspondence from OVAE regarding these findings or requests for further action or evidence has been received. This indicates that these findings have been resolved.

The College received a letter dated February 10, 2011 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requesting detailed explanations and supporting documentation regarding NMC's position for Finding 2009-1 through Finding 2009-9 and Finding 2009-15 for final determination. The College response was to be provided to USDA by March 10, 2011. A consultant hired by NMC is working closely with this and other federal grantor agencies to resolve current and previous findings.

Corrective Actions to Address Federally Funded Program Audit Findings:

The Procurement and Property Management Office (PPMO) has reminded departments that purchases should be

delivered to the PPMO and if items are delivered directly to the department, the department should inform PPMO so proper documentation of receipt can be recorded. Purchase Orders are routinely stamped with a notification that purchased items should be delivered by the vendor to PPMO for recording of receipt.

An added control procedure that has been implemented is a compliance check prior to authorizing payment to a vendor. Upon receipt of an invoice or other payment request, a checklist of required documentation and recording is reviewed. Any items on the checklist that are not completed will delay release of payment until the requirement is satisfied.

The PPMO will resume its quarterly procurement policy and procedures training for expenditure authorities and support personnel by department. These training sessions had been suspended awaiting the approval of the revised policies and procedures. The requirements of the competitive sealed bidding/proposal section will be the initial focus of the training. Meetings have been held with program staff and management to discuss this finding.

Documentation for travel expenditures such as Travel Authorizations, trip reports, travel vouchers, boarding passes, must be submitted or the travel cost will not be charged to the program. A more careful review and reconciliation is being done avoid further occurrences. Travel Authorizations that do not meet the three quotation documentation requirement will not be approved.

Meetings have been held with program staff and management to discuss audit findings and corrective actions.

Finding 2009-15

See response to Finding 2009-2.

Based on its improved internal procedures and competent financial management staff, Northern Marianas College believes that it will not repeat the events during which audit findings were not properly explained or addressed. Moreover, audit results will be subject to more traditional review by the Board of Regents. Corrective actions will be routinely taken when necessary.

The College strives to assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of financial resources through the financial management system, which has appropriate control mechanisms. The College widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making, i.e., regular budget-to-actual spending reports to program and department heads, financial reporting at Board meetings. The integrity of the institution's finances are demonstrated by the issuance of an unqualified opinion on the audit of its financial statements for Fiscal Years 2007, 2008, and 2009 by the independent auditing firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLC.

The financial management system maintains strict control mechanisms. All expenditures must receive appropriate departmental and institutional approval in which all funding is verified and documented. All purchase orders, travel authorizations, and contracts require the approval and signature of all appropriate program and division heads with ultimate approval by the president. After approval of expenditures at the departmental level, the fund certification process includes reviewing all purchase documents to ensure that the proper account, i.e., fund account, general ledger account, department codes, etc.; signature authority; and supporting documentation are provided. Direct communication between departments and the Finance Office ensures the resolution of administrative problems and inquiries related to payment of vendors. Operations on

Tinian and Rota are also closely monitored; all expenditures including travel authorizations and payroll are processed through the NMC Finance Office on Saipan.

The College's computerized accounting system provides up-to-date, real-time reporting. Financial statements and status reports are prepared on a monthly and quarterly basis as required to ensure compliance with local and federal regulations. The Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO) provides quarterly updates to the Board of Regents. The CFAO also presents financial status updates to Management Team, the Budget and Finance Committee, and College Council. The Budget Office provides reports on budget-to-actual spending to expenditure authorities on a monthly basis and as requested.

As the College engages in continuous improvement efforts, its financial and budget related processes are currently undergoing revisions. Appropriate revisions to the *Finance Office Guide* and the *Budget Manual* are expected to be finalized by June 2011.

The development of program and department budgets begin at the departmental level to create budget requests that appropriately support student learning and are tied explicitly to the *PROA Strategic Plan* or the results of program review. Departments then participate in open budget hearings conducted by the Budget and Finance Committee. The College continues to operate within its Board of Regents approved annual budgets.

The College participates in annual audits in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. NMC has clearly demonstrated financial integrity and stability as evidenced in the audit reports for Fiscal Years 2009, 2008, and 2007, by receiving an "unqualified opinion" by the independent accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLC. This is especially significant because NMC had previously received qualified opinions on the audit of its financial statements since the mid-1990s. Corrective actions to audit findings are documented and pursued. The College is currently engaged in negotiations with its grantor agencies to resolve findings and questioned costs.

The institution practices effective oversight of finances as is demonstrated in the audit reports for Fiscal Years 2009, 2008, and 2007, which all received an "unqualified opinion" by the independent accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLC. The Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO) provides the overall management of the College's finances. The CFAO serves as the president's primary financial advisor and acts as a financial liaison to all stakeholders: internal groups such as the governance councils and external groups such as the CNMI Legislature.

The CFAO and the staff and management of the Finance Office and Budget Office, along with federal program managers and the staff and management of the Financial Aid Office, provide effective oversight the institution's overall finances by adhering to College policies and procedures and local and federal regulations.

As the College engages in continuous improvement efforts, its financial and budget related processes are currently undergoing revisions. Appropriate revisions to the Finance Office Guide and the Budget Manual are expected to be finalized by June 2011.

Each department maintains records regarding purchases and funding specific to their department. Independent auditors from Deloitte & Touche, as well as grantor agencies for federal programs review these records and provide feedback. If costs are questioned, the department reviews its documentation and diligently responds to show that the costs were necessary and essential. In response to audit findings on major federal award programs, the College has implemented corrective action plans that address noted audit findings. In addition, federal programs work closely with their respective grantor agencies to resolve audit findings as part of their annual funding renewal.

All financial resources are used with integrity and in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the institution. The institution continues to operate within its Board of Regents approved budgets, which rely on the College's mission, goals (PROA Strategic Plan), and program review results as a foundation.

The college believes it has demonstrated compliance with Recommendation # 4.

Recommendation #5: To meet the Eligibility Requirement and Standard, the team recommends that the governing board immediately initiate a search and hire a qualified chief executive officer (CEO) and ensure that the CEO has full-time responsibility to the institution and possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies.

At the time of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' evaluation team's visit on October 20-22, 2010, the interim president was continuing to serve as the college's chief executive officer. In accordance with the written policy adopted by the Board of Regents on December 23, 2010, Resolution 2010-03 (Second Amendment), a Presidential Search Committee was formed to hire a permanent president. The Presidential Search Committee had a diverse composition that included members from the private and public sectors as well as the president of the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College. To begin the selection process, the Board of Regents retained the services of the Association of Community College Trustees to complete an initial screening of applications. The Association of Community College Trustees screened thirty-one applicants and referred seven to the presidential Search Committee. The presidential Search Committee in turn interviewed the five finalists. Of these five, they submitted three names to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents interviewed the finalists and, at the time of the report, is evaluating their applications.

Commonwealth Code delineates the qualifications and compensation for the president of the College stating, "All candidates for the position of president of the Northern Marianas College shall possess at least a graduate degree from an accredited university in the United States or its territories and such other qualifications as the board shall determine. The president of the college shall receive an annual salary as determined by the Board." (Commonwealth Code 3CMC, Section 1322)

The Board delegates to the president the responsibility to develop and maintain an institution that fulfills the college's mission and achieves the goals and priority initiatives of the Northern Marianas College PROA Strategic Plan 2008-2012. The president recommends policies to the Board, and is authorized by the Board to exercise broad discretionary powers in pursuit of the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the college. The duties of the president specified in Board of Regents Policy 1009, and within 3 CMC 1323 requires that:

> The president is the chief executive officer of the Northern Marianas College and in this capacity is charged with full administrative responsibility for the College. The Board of Regents judiciously recognizes and supports the president as the major line of communication between the Board and the internal and external College community. In this capacity as the Board's Liaison, the president informs the Board of such communications, and is guided by the policies, general directions, and financial guidelines established by the Board.
>
> The president's fundamental responsibility is to develop and maintain an institution that fulfills the mission and achieves the goals of the Northern Marianas College in accordance with the Mission Statement set forth in Article XV, Section 2 of the CNMI Constitution and in accordance with the Postsecondary Education Act of 1984, as amended. This implies a commitment to the philosophy of a comprehensive community college and an understanding that the president's energies must be directed towards the realization of such.

The president is an educational leader of the Commonwealth, and as such represents the College in the community. The president recommends policies to the Board, and is authorized by the Board to exercise broad discretionary powers according to the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the College.

The president's further specific duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Being responsible for the organization and administration of the College and for the coordination of its entire instructional program;
- Providing direction and leadership in the development and implementation of a research, planning, and evaluation system to assure institutional effectiveness and that the results of such activity will be used for institutional improvement and the establishment of priorities;
- Ensuring that various entities of the College have a substantive and clearly-defined role in institutional governance;
- Developing an effective program of staff evaluation and improvement;
- Preparing a budget in line with the needs of the College, and approving expenditure of funds appropriated to the College by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the College by any other entity;
- Guiding capital improvement activities and ensuring safe and adequate facilities and grounds in order to maintain a quality learning environment;
- Representing the College to the community and maintaining an adequate public information service;
- Maintaining open and adequate channels of communication with the internal and external College community;
- Entering into contracts, cooperative agreements, and such other transactions as may be helpful to conduct the business of the College;
- Appointing, reassigning and terminating staff and faculty consistent with applicable Human Resources rules and regulations;
- Accepting gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other contributions on behalf of the Board and depositing the same in a College Trust Fund for the exclusive use and expenditure of the College, as approved by the Board;
- Formulating reports required by local and federal agencies;
- Approving regulations and activities of groups and organization functioning within the College;
- Subject to prior review and approval of the Board, establishing departments and other divisions of the College, approving their programs and courses of studies, and disestablishing the same as the president may deem most appropriate to carry out the policies, goals, and general directions established by the Board for the College.

When the search process is completed the College will have a qualified chief executive officer with the requisite authority to perform the functions of that office. That step will place the College in compliance with Recommendation #5.

Recommendation #6: To meet the Eligibility Requirement and Standards, the team recommends that the college ensure that the administrative staff of the college has the appropriate preparation and experience to provide administrative services; this includes the college chief executive. The governing board should delegate the authority to college administration to operate the college and hold the administration accountable for institutional effectiveness and for adhering to adopted policies and governance processes. (ER 5, Standards III.A.3.a, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2.a, IV.B.2.b, IV.B.2.c, IV.B.2.d, IV.B.2.e)

Most administrative positions have been filled by qualified full-time deans and directors. Among administrators with appropriate preparation and experience to provide administrative services is the Interim President, Lorraine T. Cabrera, who was appointed by the Board of Regents on January 12, 2010. She contributed nearly 18 years of service to the Northern Marianas College (NMC) and has served in several administrative capacities. Although the Interim President, she is still the State Director for the Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) and has held that post since 2005. Prior to that, she was the director for the Educational Talent Search (ETS) Program, an instructor with the Social Science department, an Honorary Regent of the Board and served two consecutive terms in the Staff Senate from 2004-2008.

Particularly since the statement "Equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered" has been removed from all Job Vacancy Announcements (JVAs), all applicants are now screened based on actual minimum qualifications by the Human Resource Office.

The work of Interim President and other college administrators has been enhanced by their participation in various professional development opportunities, including the following:
- Pacific Post-Secondary Education Council (PPEC) Training and Workshop: "Building Capacity for Regional Assessment: Tools and Lessons for Successful Accreditation Visits" (November 11—13, 2009, Tumon, GU)
- WASC Outcomes-Based Program Review Workshop (February 25-26, 2010, Long Beach, CA)
- ACCJC Self-Study Training Workshop (February 26-27, 2010, Tumon, GU)
- WASC Academic Resource Conference (ARC) (April 21-23, 2010, Long Beach, CA)
- WASC Level 1 Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment (September 23—24, 2010, Anaheim, CA)
- Strengthening Student Success Conference (October 6—8, 2010, Costa Mesa, CA)
- ACCJC Capacity Building for Educational Excellence through Program Review and Integrated Institutional Planning (February 28, 2011, Honolulu, HI)
- PPEC Capacity Building for Educational Excellence through Program Review and Integrated Institutional Planning: Case Studies for Accreditation Success (March 1—2, 2011, Honolulu, HI)

In accordance with the written policy adopted by the Board of Regents on December 23, 2010, Resolution 2010-03 (Second Amendment), a presidential Search Committee was formed to hire a permanent president. The presidential Search Committee had a diverse composition that included members from the private and public sectors as well as the president of the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College. To begin the selection process, the Board of Regents retained the services of the Association of Community College Trustees to complete an initial screening of

applications. The Association of Community College Trustees screened thirty-one applicants and referred seven to the presidential Search Committee. The presidential Search Committee in turn interviewed the five finalists. Of these five, they submitted three to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents interviewed the finalists and, at the time of this report, is evaluating all applications.

To ensure that the Board delegates the authority to the Interim President and Management Team to operate the College, the Board has adopted a policy on "Limits of Authority" which expands BOR Policy #1002, which limits Board authority by delegating all administrative duties to the NMC President. Regents have also engaged in training that has clarified the policy-making role of Regents in contrast to the administrative role of the President. Moreover, to hold the Board accountable to this delegation of authority, the Board adopted a policy for "Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct" which details progressive discipline procedures to be followed if and when a Regent violates the Board's Code of Ethics.

Recommendation #7: To fully meet the Standards, the team recommends that the college restore ongoing, collegial, self-reflecting dialogue about the continuous improvement of institutional processes. The college should provide evidence that planning is broad based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies. (Standards I.B.4, I.B.6)

Since February 11, the College Council has met every Friday in order to engage all NMC stakeholders in self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of institutional processes. Agendas and minutes from those meetings reflect a body that regularly discusses matters that have significant implications for the entire institution, including policy changes, budgeting, planning, program review, curriculum, instruction, and accreditation. For example, in the past two months, the Council has addressed the following:

- NMC's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget for submission to the Office of the Governor
- Proposed revisions to student records policies
- Proposed revisions to human resources policies
- Proposed revisions to NMC's shared governance structure
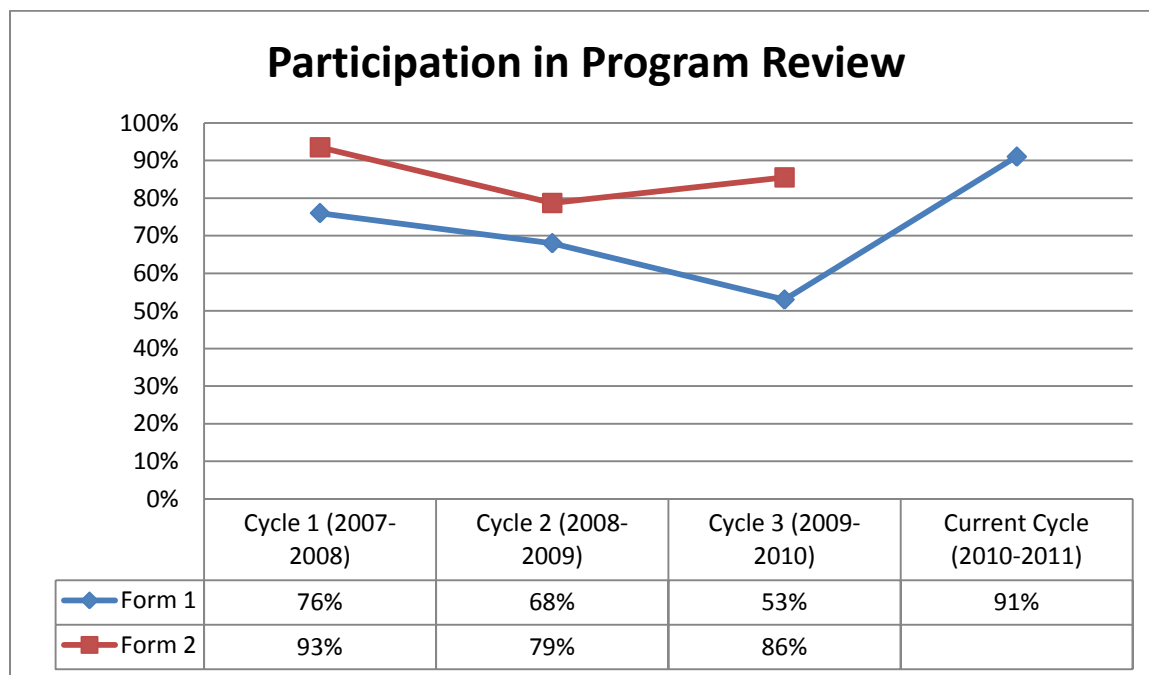- How to improve the link between program review, planning, and budgeting/resource allocation

Anticipating a possible reduction in funding from the central government and the expiration of funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), BAFC has been meeting regularly to discuss not only budget decisions for FY 2012, but also ideas for reducing expenditures and increasing revenue. In particular, BAFC has formed a subcommittee, the Long-Term Financial Stability Committee, which is charged with brainstorming and researching specific proposals for cutting costs and raising revenue.

In addition to overseeing NMC's program review processes, since Fall of 2010, the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) has engaged in a dialogue about how to improve the link between program review, planning, and budgeting and resource allocation (Appendix I.B-2—Linking Program Review, Budgeting, and Planning PowerPoint Presentation). Drawing from the program review experience at Drake University in 2000 and 2001, PROAC has assigned a subcommittee, the Form 2 Revision Committee, to revise NMC's program review reporting template, the Form 2, to focus on five criteria by which program review submissions will be evaluated by PROAC:

- Link to NMC's Mission and Strategic Plan
- Performance
- External/Internal Demand
- Cost Effectiveness
- Opportunities

By improving the link between program review, planning, and budgeting and resource allocation, PROAC intends to align these institutional processes to have a more clear, direct, and positive impact on student learning.

In the most recently completed cycle of program review, Cycle 3, participation in the process improved towards the end of the cycle. As Figure reveals, 35 out of 40 programs, or 85.5%, submitted complete program review (Form 2) documents. The figure also reveals the submission rates for annual program assessment (Form 1) in the current cycle are also improving. (Note that Form 2 submission rates for the current cycle are not available as Form 2s are due at the end of the cycle, in June.)

Participation in Program Review

	Cycle 1 (2007-2008)	Cycle 2 (2008-2009)	Cycle 3 (2009-2010)	Current Cycle (2010-2011)
Form 1	76%	68%	53%	91%
Form 2	93%	79%	86%	

The cycle also concluded with the 2010 Composite Report, which synthesized program review reports from all academic and non-academic programs at the college into a set of recommendations to programs and to the institution. Reflecting discussion within PROAC and from across the institution, the report also included 15 recommendations to improve the next cycle of program review, which PROAC and the institution have begun implementing. As the College entered its fourth cycle of program review in Academic Year 2010-2011, the program review calendar has shifted into two-year program review cycles, with academic programs and non-academic programs participating in full program review on alternating years.

PROAC has also added a question to the agenda of each of its meetings that invites each member to reflect on what impact the dialogue at each meeting has had on student learning. In addition to documenting the impact meeting dialogue has had on student learning, the question orients each member towards proactively thinking about how PROAC can have a positive impact on student learning.

Since the Fall of 2010, in addition to ongoing dialogue and decision-making about NMC's courses and curriculum, the Academic Council has engaged in dialogue about improving instructional quality by modifying course assessment and enhancing NMC's instructor evaluation process. In the Fall of 2010, the council decided to revise the College's course assessment processes into a more manageable staggered schedule.

Building on the resources and insights gained at the recent September 23—24, 2010 WASC Level I Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and members of Academic Council have also begun expanding the current evaluation practices at the College into a comprehensive instructor evaluation system that will integrate student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

In addition to weekly meetings, over the past year, the Faculty Senate has held a number of assemblies to discuss matters that affect the entire institution, including faculty evaluations, student records policies and procedures, accreditation, and human resource policies. Assemblies were held on the following dates:

- February 12, 2010
- August 27, 2010
- December 15, 2010 (joint assembly with Staff Assembly)
- January 21, 2011 (joint assembly with Staff Assembly)
- February 25, 2011

Minutes from these assemblies reflect a faculty engaged in dialogue about improving institutional processes. In particular, since Fall of 2010, the faculty have focused on updating and revising NMC's human resource policies and have brought their input and concerns before both the College Council and the Board of Regents.

As with the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate has held a number of assemblies to discuss matters that affect the entire institution, including student records policies and procedures, accreditation, and human resource policies. Assemblies were held on the following dates:

- December 15, 2010 (joint assembly with Faculty Assembly)
- January 21, 2011 (joint assembly with Faculty Assembly)
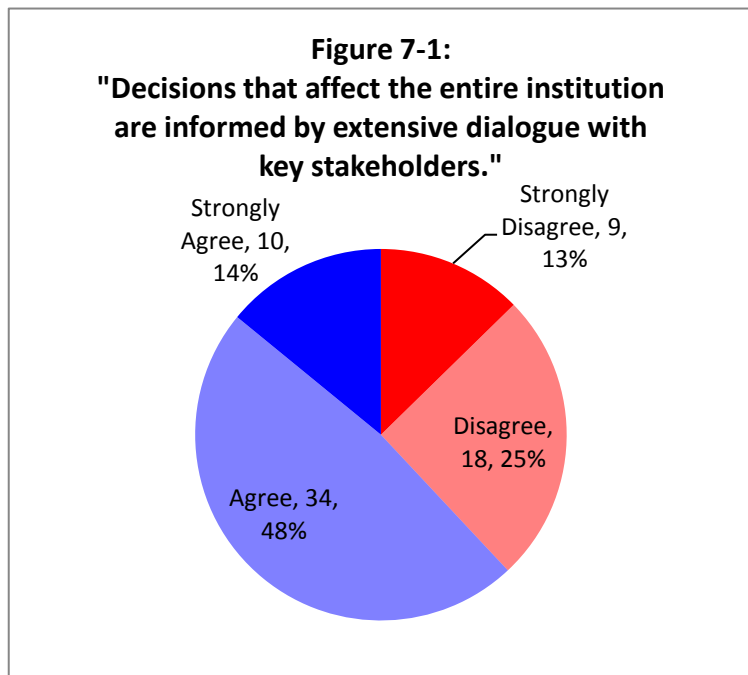- February 24, 2011

Minutes from these assemblies reflect a staff engaged in dialogue about improving institutional processes. Along with the Faculty Senate, these assemblies have focused on updating and revising NMC's human resource policies.

To gauge how effective NMC's governance model is at structuring self-reflective dialogue towards improving institutional processes, in February of this year, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted a campus-wide online survey, the Governance Evaluation Survey. The survey had respondents assess five dimensions of governance—democracy, openness and transparency, effectiveness, accountability, and mission—and rate each NMC governance and representative body according to those dimensions. Survey results suggest that NMC is effectively using its governance model to engage stakeholders in ongoing dialogue about institutional effectiveness.

As Figure 7-1 shows, in response to the statement, "Decisions that affect the entire institution are informed by extensive dialogue with key stakeholders," 44 respondents, or about 61%, either agreed or strongly agreed.

The Fall 2010 Professional Development Days, which were held from August 10 to August 12, involved the entire College community in discussions about how well NMC complies with eligibility requirements and meets the accreditation standards of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). That institution-wide

**Figure 7-1:
"Decisions that affect the entire institution are informed by extensive dialogue with key stakeholders."**

Strongly Agree, 10, 14%

Strongly Disagree, 9, 13%

Disagree, 18, 25%

Agree, 34, 48%

dialogue was continued at an Accreditation Workshop on March 4, 2011, which involved the College community in focused discussions on NMC's responses to questions posed in ACCJC's "Guide to Evaluating Institutions".

In addition to these accreditation sessions, NMC held a Planning Summit on October 1 that brought the College community together to review and discuss the proposed Operational Plan for Fiscal Year 2011. The summit proved to be an effective venue for promoting healthy dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.

Recommendation #8: To meet the Standard, the team recommends that the college ensure that faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professional views and that information is presented fairly and objectively. (Standard II.A.7.a)

NMC's policies and procedures regarding faculty compliance with Standard II.A.7.a are enforced when instructors consistently fail to distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views within his or her respective discipline. However, evidence of such disciplinary actions cannot be divulged due to confidentiality of personnel matters.

Over the past year, faculty have also engaged in several discussions to deepen their understanding of the expectation to distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in their respective disciplines and to present data and information fairly and objectively. A Faculty Assembly was held on August 27, 2010, in which the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and the Faculty Senate President led a discussion about College policies and procedures that require faculty to distinguish between personal conviction and professional views, particularly in the classroom. At the assembly, copies of BOR Policy 3004 regarding Academic Freedom and Responsibility were provided, which the assembly discussed. The Faculty Assembly also discussed additional means of assessing the degree to which instructor comply with the policy.

Over the past year in Academic Council, faculty have continued the discussion of how to effectively measure and evaluate how instructors present data and information fairly and objectively and to what extent faculty distinguish between their personal views and professional views accepted within their respective disciplines. Central to this discussion has been a move to improve instructor evaluations through a more comprehensive process that includes student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, peer evaluations, and course assessment data into instructor portfolios.

Academic Council, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness have also developed additional questions for student evaluations of courses and instructors that will assess instructors' objectivity and professionalism in presenting data fairly and distinguishing between their personal opinions and professionally accepted views in the classroom. These questions will be included in the new Student Evaluation Form, which will be used for the first time at the end of the Spring 2011 term. The Dean of Academic Programs and Services will work with Department Chairs to incorporate results from those student evaluations into comprehensive evaluations of faculty to improve their compliance with BOR Policy 3004. The Dean will also work with the Office of the President and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to aggregate institutional level data from student evaluations to assess and improve the institution's compliance with that policy.

A Faculty Assembly was also held on Friday, February 25, 2011, in which faculty continued the discussion of distinguishing between professionally accepted views within their respective disciplines and their own personal opinions, both in and out of the classroom. As part of the discussion, faculty expressed support for the addition of questions to the Student Evaluation Form that will help instructors, Department Chairs, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services, and the institution as a whole to accurately evaluate the objectivity and professionalism

of instructors in making the distinction between their personal convictions and professionally accepted views.

At the assembly, faculty also discussed the need to conduct a more immediate campus-wide student survey to gauge current student opinion on the issue. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness thus launched an online survey that ran for one week from March 3, 2011 to March 10, 2011(Appendix I.B-3—Governance Evaluation Survey Form). That survey posed the following questions to students, to which students would respond either "Never", "Rarely", "Sometimes", "Often", or "Always".
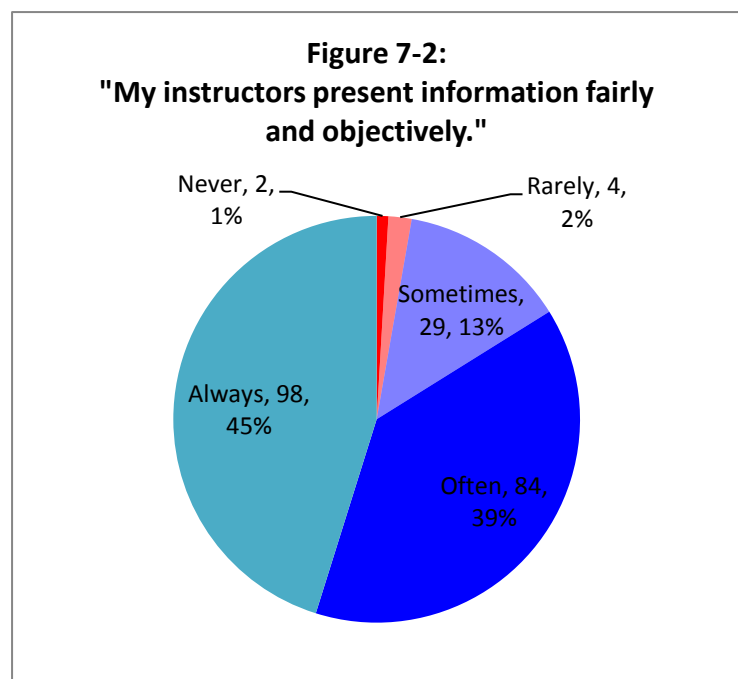
1. My instructors present information fairly and objectively.
2. My instructors spend class time on issues or topics related to the course.
3. My instructors respect and encourage the expression of differing viewpoints during class discussions.
4. My instructors present information from their perspectives.
5. My instructors spend class time discussing problems at the college.

Students were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments to clarify their responses.

A total of 300 respondents took the survey, which represents 25% of students enrolled for the Spring 2011 term. Figure 7-2 reflects how students responded to the first statement, "My instructors present information fairly and objectively."

These results reveal that a majority of students, 84%, believe that their instructors present information fairly and objectively often or always, while only a minority, 3%, believe that their instructor rarely or never present information fairly and objectively.

The Dean of Academic Programs and Services will embed these survey

**Figure 7-2:
"My instructors present information fairly and objectively."**

Never, 2, 1%

Rarely, 4, 2%

Sometimes, 29, 13%

Always, 98, 45%

Often, 84, 39%

questions into the new Student End of Term Course Evaluation at the end of the Spring 2011 term.   Results from these evaluations will be used to determine professional development needs for all faculty, as well as develop personal Professional Development Plans (PDPs) for individual instructors. Where necessary, the dean will take appropriate disciplinary action against faculty that fail to present data and information fairly and objectively.

Recommendation #9: To meet the Standard, the team recommends that the college maintain student records securely and confidentially and that it publish and follows established policies for release of student records. (Standard II.B.3.f)

The Office of Admission and Records (OAR) continues to be the institution's custodian of records. Student records are maintained and secured in two forms at NMC. Hard-copy files are secured in two places at the OAR; the records room which houses inactive student files and the OAR main office where all active files are kept. Access to the hard-copy records is restricted to OAR staff and is closely monitored when release to advisors is requested. OAR maintains log sheets of all requests and access to student records. Electronic student records are also created, updated, and maintained by the OAR. In collaboration with the Human Resource Office and the Power Campus administrator from IT/IS, multi-level access to the student information database is restricted to OAR staff while qualified access based on duties and areas of responsibilities are authorized for academic advisors and program administrative managers, Financial Aid Office staff, Finance Office staff, and the College's counselors.

The OAR consistently communicates information on student educational rights and privacy to students at recruitment events, upon submission of application for admission, at student orientations, and during registration with the Directory Information Release Form which must be filled out every fall semester. Moreover, the Student Educational Rights and Privacy and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) information is also provided on the College's website and in the general catalog.

The OAR works closely with the Human Resources Office (HRO) to provide training to all current College employees on the FERPA, the College's policies and procedures that govern the maintenance and security of student records, and the responsibilities of each employee to maintaining confidentiality of student records. Between the periods of September 2010 and January 2011, over 10 FERPA & NMC Policies & Procedures trainings have taken place campus-wide at NMC and were offered at various times to ensure all employees could attend.

The two offices have also developed systematic procedures for training all new employees through a New Employee Orientation that includes the same topics to ensure the absolute dissemination of information for all employees. In addition to these trainings, all employees, including limited term appointments and work study participants whose duties and responsibilities involve working with student records are required to receive instruction from OAR and the Power Campus database administrator on the proper use of and maintenance of student records in the Power Campus database.

 It is now a standard operating procedure of OAR to provide all employees who require access to student records, whether in hard-copy form or electronically through its student database or both, the FERPA & NMC Policies and Procedures on Student Records training, and Power Campus database training prior to granting access.

Additionally, NMC employees must sign the Confidentiality Agreement to indicate their understanding and acceptance of duty and responsibility to maintaining confidentiality of records during and after employment at NMC. Copies of the signed Confidentiality Agreement forms

are kept in employee personnel jackets at HRO with copies at OAR for tracking of training data. This form is being modified to support data collection on the type of access issued, changes in categories of access, date access is granted or terminated, and the supervising authority's responsibility to support training.

The Director of OAR, the Registrar, the Human Resource Office Manager, the Institutional Researcher, and the Power Campus database administrator meet once every week to review and discuss access rights issues, data collection efforts, and service improvement for the campus community. These offices continue to systematize and refine the categories of database accesses and also collaborate closely to monitor and update the database information and training for all users to ensure compliance to both FERPA and NMC policies and procedures.

The institutional policies and procedures which govern the maintenance and security of student records, including students' educational rights, access to records, and the procedures for each policy were reviewed by the Student Records Policies and Procedures (SRPP) Task Force from September to December 2010. The task force completed its duties and submitted its final recommendations on policy content changes, its recommendation to the renumbering of policies to afford "user friendliness," and its recommended correlating procedures for each policy to the governance bodies in December 2010. In March 2011, the College Council voted to endorse all the recommendations of the task force. At its March 4, 2011 meeting, the Board of Regents formally adopted these recommendations.

The OAR continues to update its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to ensure that student records are maintained and secure, and that procedures for requests and disclosures of records are clear and easy to understand. Also, the SOP establishes guidelines to authenticating admission and enrollment requirements, aligns practices and procedures with Institutional policies, and provides a detailed guide for all College employees.

The NMC Interim President has created a Records Management Plan work group to assess and review the College's records management and maintenance needs and to develop a Records Management Plan that is relevant and inclusive of the needs of the college community, its students, and in compliance with relative federal regulations.

Recommendation #10: To meet the Standard the team recommends that governing board engage training on the proper role and conduct of regents, general governing board relations and practice, college policy and Accreditation Standards and Commission Policy and adhere to its role in establishing policy and strategic-level decision-making; in accordance with its own policy.

The Board of Regents is cognizant of the importance of a sustainable Board development program and the need to formally orientate new members of the Board. To underscore this, the Board adopted the "Board Member Training and Development" policy on December 23, 2010. The policy states, in part, "[t]o be effective, all members of the Board of Regents must engage in training on the proper role and conduct of regents, on general governing Board relations and practices, on college policy, and on accreditation standards and accrediting commission policy."

Among several requirements, the policy requires Board members to be trained on Board policies and other issues concerning the College. It also requires the provision of a comprehensive manual that contains the College's mission statement, goals, objectives, strategic plan, Board operations policies, financial reports, and other important documents. The manual has been produced by the Office of Institutional Advancement and provided to the newest Board member, as well as all other Regents.

As a requirement of the policy, Regents will also have to undergo a formal orientation process. The newest Regent, Mr. Juan Lizama, was provided this formal orientation by the then Chairperson of the Board and the Interim president. During the orientation, Regent Lizama also signed the "Code of Conduct Agreement," wherein he agrees to abide by certain terms, including "speaking from broad Board of Regents and community interests" and "refrain from undermining the president's authority."

The Board of Regents has engaged in training on a number of topics and issues, including the proper role of regents, board leadership and FERPA. Board members also keep themselves informed of accreditation requirements, standards, and processes by participating in numerous training sessions organized by the College and external partners.

On February 19, 2010, the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer conducted a training session with the board entitled "Accreditation 101." The Pacific Postsecondary Education Council Boardsmanship training (June 14—18, 2010, Honolulu, HI) provided an in-depth study of the proper role of board members at a community college to the board. The New Trustee Governance Leadership Institute sponsored by the Association of Community College Trustees followed soon after this training. A member of the board also participated in the self-study workshop hosted by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges in Guam in February, 2010.

The lessons and insights gained at the Pacific Post-Secondary Education Council and the Association of Community College Trustee trainings have been reinforced by a series of Board of Regents lunch training sessions, including a session held September 8, 2010 that focused on the role of the governing board at a community college and the nature of board leadership within the context of the college's mission. The most recent session, conducted on February 25, 2011,

focused on accreditation eligibility requirements. The following lists the training activities the members of the Board of Regents have attended:

Date	Activity	Topic	Organizer
02/19/10	Training Session	Accreditation 101	ALO
02/26/10	Training Workshop	Self Study Workshop	ACCJC
06/14/10	Training Session	Boardsmanship and Accreditation	PPEC
08/04/10	Training Conference	New Trustee Governance Leadership Institute (Washington DC)	ACCT
09/08/10	Lunch Training Session	Role of Governing Board	ALO
09/29/10	Training Workshop	FERPA	president's Office
10/13/10	Lunch Training Session	ACCJC (Site Visit Prep)	ALO
01/05/11	Lunch Training Session	Governing Board and Institutional Quality & Effectiveness	ALO
02/25/11	Lunch Training Session	Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and Standards	ALO
03/04/11	Lunch Training Session	CNMI Constitution, Commonwealth Code, and Standard IV	LinC Director
03/10/11	Accreditation Standards Team Briefings	Standard 1.A, Standard, 2.A, Standard 2.B, Standard 3.A	president's Office
03/11/11	Accreditation Standards Team Briefings	Standard 1.B, Standard 3.D, Standard 4.B	president's Office

To ensure that regents continue to deepen their understanding of accreditation processes, the board recently passed a policy on "Board Member Training and Development" which sets forth certain requirements that each individual board member must undergo upon becoming a regent. The policy states, "to be effective, all members of the Board of Regents must engage in training on the proper role and conduct of regents, on general governing board relations and practices, on college policy, and on accreditation standards and accrediting commission policy."

The Board of Regents also has a mechanism in place for providing for the continuity of Board membership and staggered terms of office. Under 3 CMC § 1312, "[m]embers of the board [of Regents] shall serve staggered terms of four years." Furthermore, under 3 CMC § 1313, "[a]ny vacancy caused by resignation, removal, death or otherwise shall, within 90 days of the vacancy, be filled for the period of [the] unexpired term . . . ." As such, Commonwealth law provides for continuity and staggered terms in the Board of Regents.

The Board of Regents is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of Northern Marianas College and the successful completion of its mission, as outlined under Section 2(a) of Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which states:

> The legislature shall establish by law a Northern Marianas College that shall be headed by a president. The president of the college shall be appointed by a representative board of regents. The board of regents shall be appointed to staggered terms by the governor and shall have autonomy in the administration of its affairs and shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The composition of the board of regents and other matters pertaining to its operations and duties shall be provided by law. (1985)

The general duties and authority of the Board of Regents are re-enforced by 3 CMC § 1304(b), which directs that "the Northern Marianas College is established as a nonprofit public corporation under the general control and direction of a board designated as the Board of Regents of the Northern Marianas College…" Commonwealth Code also specifically empowers the Board of Regents in 3 CMC § 1316 to perform a number of duties, including:

> (a) To hold in trust for the Commonwealth the property and assets of the college, and to have the authority to negotiate loan guarantees and, with the approval of the Commonwealth Development Authority, issue bonds.
> (b) To set the goals and general directions of the college, and to approve policies in pursuit of such goals and directions.
> (e) To adopt, amend and repeal policies governing the conduct of its business and the performance of the powers and duties grant to or imposed upon it by law or the Constitution. . . .
> (g) To acquire for use by the college any property, whether real, personal or mixed, whether tangible or intangible, or any interest therein, and to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the same for the good of the college; . . .
> (i) To establish and to oversee the activities of a Northern Marianas College Foundation as a private, nonprofit, tax exempt public corporation for the support of the college, ...
> (j) To act as the state board of higher education for the Commonwealth for purposes of federal law.
> (l) In consultation with the Governor, to approve the budget of the college and to have the budget submitted to the legislature . . . .
> (s) To enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its business and on such terms as it may deem appropriate with any agency or instrumentality of the United States, or with any state, Commonwealth, territory, or possession, or with any political subdivision thereof, or with any person, firm, association, or corporation.
> (t) To determine the character of and the necessity for its obligations and expenditures, and the manner in which they shall be incurred, allowed and paid, subject to provisions of law applicable to the college.
> (v) To establish procurement policies for the college, and to expend funds appropriated by the federal or Commonwealth government or donated to the college by any other entity.
> (w) To take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the powers conferred upon it by law and the Commonwealth Constitution.
> (x) To submit an annual budget for the operation and administration of the college to the Governor . . . .

These provisions in both the Commonwealth Constitution and statutory Commonwealth law stipulate that the Board of Regents is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution as well as the successful outcome of its educational mission and the use of its financial resources to meet its mission. The Board of Regents has both a broad mandate under Section 2(a), Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution and 3 CMC § 1304(b), and is specifically empowered to control the college's affairs, including its financial matters, under 3 CMC § 1316.

Furthermore, as stated above, under Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, the Board of Regents is granted "autonomy in its affairs," and, thus, performs its duties as an independent

entity. The Board is required to have a diverse composition in its membership: Specifically, 3 CMC § 1311 requires that: "at least one member shall be a resident of Tinian, one member shall be a resident of Rota, at least one member shall be of Carolinian descent, and at least one member shall be a woman," and thus reflects a variety of public and constituent interests. Also, under 3 CMC § 1315, "all meetings of the board shall be open to the public, except when personal matters affecting the privacy of an individual or other confidential matters are considered." As such, not only is the Board an independent policy making body under Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, but also it is also capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in Board activities and decisions because of its diverse membership and open meeting requirements.

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents recognizes the major constituencies of the College, namely the administration, the faculty, the support staff, and the students, as participants in the governance of the institution. Each of these constituencies has a role in the formulation of the mission and goals of the institution and in the development of policies governing it. (BOR Institutional Governance Policy 1026)

Appropriate policy and accompanying administrative procedures are developed specifying the governance role of each of these four components of the College community in terms of policy formulation; decision-making and planning at multiple levels; and problem identification, analysis, and resolution. (BOR Institutional Governance Policy 1026)

The Board ensures the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services through Board of Regents Policy 1025, which articulates a broad institutional effectiveness program. The policy states, "to enable such effectiveness and quality, institutional research, planning, evaluation, and other activities shall be conducted in a collaborative manner with input from all appropriate sectors of the College and the community it serves on the islands of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian." This expectation for monitoring and upholding institutional effectiveness is reinforced by the Board's self-evaluation process, which is described in Board of Regents Policy 1024, "Board of Regents Self-Evaluation."

Institutional research activities are conducted to support the college's institutional planning and assessment processes (Board of Regents Policy 1025). Collection, processing, and reporting of pertinent information are the primary functions of institutional research. Research efforts focus not only on internal information such as student and program data, but also on external matters such as trends in the community and other institutions of higher learning.

Especially since 2010, the NMC Board has actively addressed policy issues that support institutional integrity and effectiveness and respond to Commission concerns. Table IV.B.1.1 below details this activity.

Table IV.B.1-1 Recent NMC Board Policy Actions

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
Limits of Authority (Revision of BOR	12/23/2010	To expand the existing policy #1002, which limits Board authority by delegating all administrative duties to the NMC president?

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
Policy #1022)		
Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct	12/23/2010	To detail progressive disciplinary procedures to be implemented when Board members have violated the Code of Ethics.
BOR Policy Development and Review	12/23/2010	To set forth how policies shall be reviewed on a periodic basis. It also specifies the steps involved in the adoption of new policies and the revision of existing ones.
Board Member Training and Development	12/23/2010	To set forth the training and development requirements that each individual Board member must undergo upon becoming a part of the Board of Regents.
Procurement Policies and Procedures	2/10/2011	The Board of Regents adopted a comprehensive set of procurement policies that revises, updates, and replaces the prior set. This adoption of the new set takes into account audit recommendations.
B.O.R. Policy # 8001 (Admissions and Enrollment)	3/11/11	Clearly identify 8 categories of admission; additional requirements for international students; articulate Conditional Acceptance for admission to the College. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy # 8001.1 (Residency Classification)	3/11/11	To define "one year" as "12 consecutive months" and remove policy statement that allows non-resident students to qualify for resident status upon three consecutive years of enrollment to three consecutive years residence in the CNMI. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy #8001.3 (Registration and Enrollment)	3/11/11	Add the following sections articulated in catalog and performed in practice, but omitted from B.O.R. Policy – Changes of Personal Data, Prerequisite Requirements, Overlapping Classes, Repeating of Courses, Add/Drop/Withdrawal, Medical Withdrawal, and Withdrawal for Active Military Duty. Added the following sections: Late Registration and Census Date & Deadline. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.3 (Access to Student Records)	3/11/11	Modified to include FERPA 2010 updates, Employee Access to Student Records, and Disclosure to Parents. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.4 (Student Educational Rights and Privacy)	3/11/11	Policy includes a reference to the institution's Records Management Plan and adds the following sections: Deceased Student Information, Directory Information Release, Exceptions, and a Record and Approval of Disclosures. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #3017 (Changing Student Grades)	3/11/11	Policy outlines a time frame for students and the institution to act on an appeal of a grade. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B**
B.O.R. Policy #3021 (Privacy Rights of Students)	3/11/11	This policy is housed in the Educational Programs Series and makes reference to the institution's Records Management Plan and provides clarification on the restrictions of Grade Postings and any other personally identifiable student ID. Also includes student's right to "Opt Out" of release of Directory Information. **Changes strengthen compliance with Accreditation Standard II.B.3.f**
B.O.R. Policy #8002.1 (Changing Student Grades)	3/11/11	This Policy was deleted. It was discovered that B.O.R. Policy #3017 contained identical information.
B.O.R. Renumbering of Policies	3/11/11	To remove the decimal numeric system, specifically for B.O.R. policies in the Student Development Series. Also calls for renumbering to remove decimal references in other policies of the B.O.R.
Part II.A Personnel Files	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which directs and guides HR in keeping and maintaining personnel files.

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
Part III.B Vacancy Announcements	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which puts in place how the vacancy announcements processed and the content of the VA.
Part III.C Eligibility for Employment	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, which enables the college to hire qualified employees. **Compliance with Accreditation Standard III.A**
Part III.D	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, All recruitment, hiring, and selection of employees must be based on the requirements of the job, on the qualification of the applicants, and the needs of the college.
Part III.E Employment Contracts Staff and Faculty	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, All full-time employees of the College, other than limited-term appointees and adjunct faculty must enter into an initial two-year employment contract with the college. The college shall have three types of contracts for its employees: Ten month faculty (instructional faculty) / Twelve month faculty (all other faculty) / Twelve month staff contracts (for all other remaining employees of the college) **Compliance with Accreditation Standard III.A**
Part III.F Externally Funded Employees	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, The Board of Regents encourages the solicitation and application for grants that will enable the college to improve its programs, facilities, and general well-being. All individuals funded under such grants who are hired by the college and supervised by the College are employees of the college. These individuals will be employed on a staff and faculty employment contract.
Part IV.A Classification and Compensation	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, to establish and maintain a classification and compensation system that will allow the college to attract and retain qualified personnel effectively and to ensure that salaries are equitable and commensurate with the duties performed by each employee.
Part IV.B Establishing Salary Upon Appointment	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4015, Salary shall be fixed at the first step of the appropriate pay level upon initial appointment. Should a higher rate be deemed necessary to recruit, the salary may be fixed at any succeeding step but not beyond the eighth step for staff positions and the twelfth step for faculty positions. The salary for an employee hired for an ungraded position shall be at the rate established by the Board of Regents for that position.
Part V.A Types of Appointments	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4010 / 4062, Appointments in the Northern Marianas College are defined according to the following classes: Contractual Appointment / Limited-term Appointment / Acting Appointment / Intermittent Appointment / Other Appointments.
Part V.B Nepotism	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4040, For the purpose of this policy, nepotism is defined and bestowed in consideration of family relationship and not in consideration of merit. All applicants for employment with the college will inform the Human Resource Manager of any relative who is working for the college, and any relative who is a member of the Board of Regents.
Part V.C Orientation Program	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, The time and effort invested in a well planned and implemented orientation program will provide many positive returns to the college and its employees. By introduction the colleges mission, vision and goals explaining policies and procedures, and establishing work and behavioral expectations, and orientation program will help to reduce employee's anxiety, develop positive attitudes, and create realistic job expectations.
Part V.F Annual Evaluation of Employees	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4212, Supervisors shall evaluate the performance of each of their assigned employees annually, at or near their anniversary date using established forms provided by the Human Resource Office. **Compliance with all Accreditation Standards.**
Part VI.B Tuition Waiver	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4215 Series, The Board of Regents encourages employees of the college to enhance their professional

Policy No./Name	Date	Purpose
		capabilities by taking courses offered by the college. Employees requesting a tuition waiver must first apply for scholarship or federal grant assistance, if eligible for such assistance. A tuition waiver may be granted to full-time staff and faculty members who do not receive such assistance, upon written request to and approval from the president.
Part VI.J Professional Development Leave	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4315, Professional development leave may be granted for formal education or other activities of professional merit, based upon the needs and capabilities of the college. Compensation may be provided for such leaves, as determined by the implementing policy and based upon the availability of funding in the discretion of the president.
Part VII.I Political Activities	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4240, To vote for the candidates of their choice and to express their opinions on political matters. To be active members of the political party or organization of their choosing etc.
Part VII.R Media Relations Protocol	3/11/2011	New addition to HR policy. The president of the Northern Marianas College is the official spokesperson of the college. In the president's absence the acting president or the director of the Office of Institutional Advancement shall serve as the official spokesperson. Other individuals, on a case-by-case basis, may be specifically and explicitly authorized by the president to officially speak on behalf of the college. **Compliance with Accreditation IV.B**
Part VII.T Program Review	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4000 Series, As part of the College's commitment to data-driven, evidence-based decision making for continuous quality improvement, all employees of the college shall participate in the program review process. This shall include, but is not limited to, participating in the development and monitoring of program mission and outcomes, collecting and interpreting program appropriate data and evidence, evaluating program effectiveness, developing action plans for improvement, and participating in activities led by the planning, program review outcomes and assessment committee (PROAC). Participation in the program review process shall be considered in each employee's annual evaluation. **Compliance with all accreditation standards.**
Part VIII.A Delegation of Authority	3/11/2011	To replace the existing policy #4060, The president in cases of planned absence will designate an acting president. In a situation where the president is absent or is unable to make an appointment, the chair of the Board of Regents will designate an acting president. The president will assign acting officials to cover the absence of key staff and faculty. **Compliance with Accreditation III.A**

The College is committed to a planning system that addresses the current and long-range needs and challenges of the College community and the Commonwealth. The purpose of institutional planning at Northern Marianas College is to:

1. Define the mission, goals, and objectives for the College as a body and for the various units and activities of the institution;
2. Establish priorities for programs, services, and activities;
3. Identify the need for human, physical, and financial resources; and
4. Allow for activities to be carried out in a planned and organized manner.

The planning process encompasses all aspects of the institution including instructional programs, student services, learning resources, and facilities.

Evaluation is a means to assess institutional and program quality and effectiveness. Accordingly, the primary purpose of institutional assessment is to evaluate the functions and outcomes of institutional programs and services to determine if they meet established goals and objectives. Evaluation efforts at the College focus on instructional programs, student services, learning resources, and other areas deemed necessary to meet the needs of the institution and community.

The Northern Marianas College has a comprehensive set of policies that govern college activities. They include: Board Operations, Educational Programs, Facilities Management, Finance and Procurement, Human Resources, Student Development Policies and Procedures. A number of the policies are currently being revised and reviewed by the Human Resources Office, which has systematically reviewed, revised, streamlined, and included new policies within its department during 2010. Finalized policies were reviewed and approved by the relevant college governance body, college council, and the faculty and staff senate. Upon approval by counsel the president will present the revised Human Resource policies to the Board of Regents for final approval and adoption.

Board of Regents Policy 1002 pertaining to the Board's limits of authority was revised by the Board of Regents on December 23, 2010. The new expanded policy states:

> The Board of Regents, as a unit, has been entrusted with setting the policy direction of the Northern Marianas College. It employs the College president, establishes the goals by which educational goals are accomplished, assures fiscal health and stability, monitors institutional performance, and leads as a thoughtful, educated team.
>
> No individual Board member has individual authority in regard to the College except as part of that unit. Individually, Board members may not commit the college or Regents to any policy, act or expenditure. No individual Board member can do business with the College, nor should any Board member have an interest in any contract with the College. No individual Board member represents any factional segment of the community, but is rather a part of the body, which represents and acts for the community as a whole.
>
> Furthermore, no individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility neither with respect to the College, nor as an individual command the services of any college employee.
>
> The Board shall delegate authority to the president as the Board's executive officer and confine Board action to policy determination, planning, performance evaluation, and maintaining the fiscal stability of the College. Problems and issues that arise shall be referred to the president to be handled through the proper administrative channels or be placed on the Board agenda for discussion. In this regard, rather than working directly with staff, it is imperative of Board members to take their concerns directly to the president.
>
> No member of the Board shall become an employee of the College while serving on the Board except as specifically provided by CNMI law.

The Board of Regents on December 23, 2010 also adopted "Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct" policy detailing the progressive discipline procedures to be implemented if

Board members engage in unethical conduct. (Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct Policy)

Additionally, the Board of Regents adopted three new policies on December 23, 2010:

- Board Member Training and Development. This policy sets forth the training and development requirements that each individual Board member must undergo upon becoming a part of the Board of Regents. Subsequent trainings have been implemented relative to the proper role of the regents, Board leadership and practice, and accreditation.
- The NMC Board Member's Code of Conduct, which states: "The Board is committed to effective decision-making and, once a decision has been made, speaking with one voice." Procedures and guidelines for implementing the Code of Conduct are delineated in the Training and Development policy.
- BOR Policy Development and Review. This policy governs the Board of Regents role in establishing policies for the college. The policy specifically states how policies should be developed and how often they will be reviewed. Prior Board policy 1012 was vague as to Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Policies and Bylaws, **"**Policy proposals and suggested amendments to or revisions of existing policies shall normally be submitted to all members of the Board by the president in writing prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting in which such proposed policies, amendments, or revisions thereof shall be read and discussed; **t**he formal adoption of policies shall be by majority vote of all members present at which a quorum is present of the Board and the action shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board. Only those written statements so adopted and so recorded shall be regarded as official policy." Clarification of the timeline for development and review of Board of Regents policies was necessary, henceforth, the new policy development and review was adopted.

- The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents has consistently established policies that conform to its constitutionally mandated mission to ensure the quality, integrity and improvement of students learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. As stated in Section 2 (b), Amendment 38, Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution.

  The mission of Northern Marianas College shall be to provide the best quality and meaningful post secondary and adult educational opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the individual and for the Commonwealth as a whole. The College shall be responsible for providing education in the areas of adult and continuing education, post secondary and adult vocational education and professional development for the people of the Commonwealth.

- This mission, along with the College's institutional philosophy, educational philosophy, and vision statements are posted on the College Web site, www.nmcnet.edu.

- To assure that the mission of the College is carried out in a manner that assures the quality, integrity and improvement of student learning programs, the Board has adopted a comprehensive set of policies that govern academic programs and services. These

policies govern academic responsibility, academic freedom, course and instructor evaluation, and professional ethics. Similarly, another set of policies adopted by the Board governs student development activities (recently updated). These policies include admissions and enrollment, student regulations, career services, academic advisement, and counseling.

- To ensure that its policies remain consistent with the institutional mission and to continue to assure a high quality of student programs and services, the Board of Regents recently adopted guidelines that set forth how policies shall be reviewed on a periodic basis. It also specifies the steps involved in the adoption of new policies and the revision of existing ones (Board of Regents Policy Development and Review).
- The Board of Regents allocates the resources necessary to support these policies by approving a budget annually that is informed by the results of program review processes and institutional priorities.

- The Board's commitment to ensuring the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and securing the resources to support them is emphasized in the PROA 2008-2012 Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the Board in 2008. This five-year plan identifies four main goals, two of which include promoting student learning and success and optimizing financial and human resources. Already, the College has scheduled a campus-wide planning summit (May 18, 2011) for the preparation of a new strategic plan, which will become effective after 2012.

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents acts in a manner consistent with its policies and has a mechanism in place to evaluate the policies on a regular basis and to revise them whenever appropriate.

In accordance with Board Policies and Procedures 1002, which was recently expanded, the Board acts as a unit. The policy states, "No individual Board member has individual authority in regard to the college except as part of that unit. Individually, Board members may not commit the college or Regents to any policy, act or expenditure."

Board decisions are made in open, public meetings that are advertised in advance in the local newspaper and the NMC Web site and through an email sent to all NMC employees. The publication of such meetings conforms to the applicable provisions of the Open Government Act, 1 CMC Subsection 9901. Board of Regents' minutes and resolutions illustrate the members' conformance with Board policies.

To heighten Board awareness of Board policies and therefore lessen any likelihood that a Board member will violate any given policy, the Board of Regents recently adopted a "Board Member Training and Development" policy, which sets forth the training and development requirements that each individual Board member must undergo upon becoming a part of the Board of Regents.

The policy also requires all regents to undergo a formal orientation that is conducted by the president and the Chair of the Board. The newest member of the Board was provided an orientation several days after he began service on the Board.

To further discourage any violations of policy, the Board of Regents recently adopted a "Disciplinary Action for Board Member Misconduct" policy, which details progressive discipline procedures to be implemented when Board members have violated the code of ethics or any other existing policy.

The Board assures that all policies are reviewed on a periodic basis. The newly-adopted "Board of Regents Policy Development and Review" policy requires the Board to review select policies every two years or when needed. Furthermore, the policy dictates that the "chair of the Board of Regents shall appoint a Board Policy Review Committee, which shall consist of at least two members of the Board of Regents and two Northern Marianas College employees designated by the president" (Board of Regents Policy Development and Review).

The policy further states that prior to their adoption, all policies must undergo review and evaluation by the College's governing bodies, and groups shall be given an opportunity to review the draft policies and provide input.

To review its practices, the Board conducts an annual self-evaluation whereby it reviews its performance in the following categories: 1) relationship with the president; 2) relationship to the instructional program; 3) staff and personnel relationships; 4) relationship to the financial management of the school; and 5) community relationships. The last Board evaluation was conducted in June 2010. (BOR Policy 1024 – Board of Regents Self Evaluation)

Members of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents hold themselves to high standards of conduct and ethical behavior. Their actions, performance, and behavior are guided by Board of Regents Policy 1019, the Code of Ethics of the Board. The first part of this policy specifies the expectations of each Board member with regard to his or her responsibility as a Regent.

One of the provisions of the Code of Ethics policy states that Board members "[s]trive to provide the most effective community college board service of which they are capable and to sustain a spirit of teamwork." Evidence of this spirit of teamwork to advance the College's mission include the Board members' taking extensive time out of their personal and professional commitments to participate in numerous hours of Board training, meetings with stakeholders and meetings with government leaders. They have also spent much time poring over government financial instruments, and official regular and special Board meetings. In fact, according to the interim president, the divisiveness that had existed among the Board members when she was appointed to her current post has been muted by a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that continues to contribute to the overall positive atmosphere at the College. Disagreements still occur, but the Regents are listening to one another.

Another provision of the Code of Ethics policy directs Board members to "[r]emember at all times that as an individual a board member has no legal authority outside the meetings of the Board." According to the interim president, all Board members have been diligent about referring any College issues raised by community members or college employees to her.

The Code of Ethics policy is augmented by the "Board of Regents Code of Conduct" which is outlined in The Board Member Training and Development policy (adopted December 23, 2010).

The policy requires that Board members sign a "Code of Conduct" agreement upon acceptance of the position to serve as a member of the NMC Board of Regents."

The Board of Regents Code of Conduct encourages regents to consider speaking from the breadth of stakeholder interest, invite others to express their opinion on issues germane to the discussion, and discourages regents from disclosing or discussing "differences of opinion on the board outside of board meeting" and requires regents to "refrain from lobbying other board members outside of board meeting" to prevent "creating factions and limiting free and open discussions."

The second part of the Code of Ethics policy, "Part B. Censure," governs how violations against the Code of Ethics will be treated. The Board of Regents also recently adopted the "Disciplinary Action for Board Member Conduct" policy that lays out progressive steps to be taken against any Board member violating a Board policy (adopted December 23, 2010). These steps include warning, reprimand, censure, and removal from office.

The Board of Regents is specifically charged with selecting a president for the college. This responsibility is stated unambiguously in Section 2(a) of Article XV of the Commonwealth Constitution, which directs that: "[t]he president of the college shall be appointed by a representative board of regents." On December 23, 2010, the Board of Regents passed Resolution 2010-03 (Second Amendment) on December 23, 2010, which sets forth clear written procedures for how the new president will be selected. This resolution reads:

> **WHEREAS**, in filling the vacancy of the president of the Northern Marianas College, the Board of Regents finds that it is necessary to ensure that the guidelines that govern the hiring process are inclusive, dignified, fair, transparent, and consistent with applicable Board policies and federal and local laws; and
>
> **WHEREAS**, the Board of Regents also finds that while the selection and hiring of a new president must occur in the most transparent manner, it is also imperative that the Board take into consideration that certain information must remain confidential to protect the privacy of the applicants and the integrity of the selection process.
>
> **NOW THEREFORE**, be it resolved that pursuant to the Board of Regents mission to hire the most qualified and effective president for the Northern Marianas College, the following procedures are hereby adopted to guide the selection process:
>
> > When a vacancy of the president occurs, the Board of Regents shall appoint a Search Committee whose responsibility shall be to screen and interview applicants who have been recruited and vetted by the Association of Community College Trustees (hereinafter referred to as "ACCT"), a national nonprofit educational association that represents more than 6,500 trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges. The ACCT has helped over 350 searches for Chief Executive Officers and presidents.
> >
> > The Search Committee, after interviewing the applicants referred by ACCT, shall recommend to the Board of Regents at least two but no more than three applicants who best meet the advertised criteria;
> >
> > The Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) members representing the College and the general CNMI community and a Board of Regents member as the Chair of the

committee who may not vote except on a tie. Other than the member of the Board of Regents, every other committee member shall have a vote within the Committee.

The Support Committee to the Search Committee is to be provided by staff of NMC's Human Resources Office.

The presidential search process should be open and transparent, inclusive, dignified, careful and methodical. While the process is open to public scrutiny, names and applications of applicants will remain confidential until the final recommendations report is forwarded to the Board.

The minimum education and experience that applicants must have include:

Masters degree from a U.S. accredited university plus five (5) years of executive level management experience in an institution of higher education or other relevant organization, or a combination of at least five (5) years of executive level management including post-secondary education teaching experience; experience working in a multicultural environment; experience in accreditation processes, personnel management, budget development and presentation, strategic planning and institutional assessment, fundraising, mediation, and team building; and knowledge of federal programs and grants application to higher education.

1. The Human Resources Office will establish advertising parameters, such as advertising in local and/or mainland US as needed. The advertisements will supplement and be in addition to any advertising placed by ACCT. The public advertising of the job announcement will occur and the Committee will prepare interview questions and submit them to the Human Resources Office for review by EEO.

2. If necessary, the second public advertising of the job announcement will occur.

3. Once the ACCT has referred the names of the pool of candidates to the Search Committee, the Committee members will review the reports of each candidate and conduct the interviews as follows:

If the applicant is on-island, a personal interview will be conducted; if the applicant is off-island, a telephone conference interview will be conducted; The Support Committee will coordinate all logistics for the interviews; Off-island interviews may be arranged as directed by the Committee.

4. The Search Committee will forward to the Board of Regents its recommendations and files of recommended applicants. The Board of Regents, upon receiving the recommendations of the Search Committee, shall interview all candidates recommended using a standard set of questions prepared by the Board of Regents in advance.

The Board of Regents shall either select one of the candidates advanced by the Search Committee or reject all such candidates and ask the Search Committee to submit additional names meeting the qualifications or continue the position announcement until filled by submitting new names meeting the qualifications to the Board. The Board of Regents, upon receiving any or all additional names, may interview the remaining or the new applicants.

This resolution reflects the statutory requirements for the president set forth in 3 CMC § 1322 that "[a]ll candidates for the position of president of the Northern Marianas College shall possess at least a graduate degree from an accredited university in the United States or its territories and

such other qualifications as the board may determine" and sets forth a clear written process for the Board of Regents to choose the president of the college.

The Board of Regents also has a clear policy for conducting a review of the president's performance, which Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1017 sets forth:

PERIODIC REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT

The Board of Regents will appraise the performance of the president of the College annually. While the responsibility for this annual appraisal lies solely with the Board, they will, on occasion, choose to invite input by the leadership of the major constituent groups of the College. Input from the general College community may also be invited on a periodic basis. The following shall serve as an outline of the basic framework and timeline for the annual appraisal process.

1. Goals for the ensuing year are developed by the president in consultation with the Board and are a direct result of Board and president suggestions.
2. By July 15 of each year the president's goals are finalized by the Board.
3. In April/May of years in which broad input is requested the Board will arrange individual meetings with constituent group leadership (Faculty, Staff, Students, and Community) to invite written input as to the completion of that year's goals and objectives, as well as to receive suggestions for subsequent year's goals and objectives.
4. In May/June of each year the president shall prepare a written self-evaluation on the status of that year's goals and objectives. Included with this report are suggested future goals.

In June of each year the Board and the president will meet in Closed Session to review the self-evaluation and to share a synopsis of the information gathered from the College community. The Board will prepare a written "Statement of Evaluation for the year 20__-20__" for inclusion in the president's personnel file as soon after this Closed Session as practical. At the June Closed Session the Board will also finalize the next year's goals and objectives, and take action on any modifications to the president's contract. Action by the Board will follow all appropriate [provisions of the] Commonwealth's Open Government Act.

As Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1017 makes clear, the Board of Regents has set forth a clearly defined mechanism for evaluating the chief administrator's performance implementing institutional policies and achieving institutional goals.

The Board of Regents delegates full administrative authority for the college to the chief administrator and must do so under Commonwealth law. Under 3 CMC § 1321, "[t]he board [of Regents] shall appoint a president to serve as the chief executive officer of the college and board." Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1009(I) states that "[t]he president is the chief executive officer of the Northern Marianas College, and in this capacity is charged with full administrative responsibility for the College", and Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1002 directs that:

no individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the College, nor as an individual command the services of any college employee.

> The Board shall delegate authority to the president as the Board's executive officer and confine Board action to policy determination, planning, performance evaluation, and maintaining the fiscal stability of the College. Problems and issues that arise shall be referred to the president to be handled through the proper administrative channels or be placed on the Board agenda for discussion. In this regard, rather than working directly with staff, it is imperative for Board members to take their concerns directly to the president.

Furthermore, Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1013 places administrative control even more firmly in the hands of the president by requiring that:

> [t]he Board [of Regents] does not adopt administrative procedures unless specifically required to do so by law, or unless requested to do so by the president. . . . The Board reserves the right to review and direct revisions of administrative procedures should they, in the Board's judgment, be inconsistent with the policies adopted by the Board.

As such, it is clear from both Commonwealth law and Board of Regents Policies and Procedures that the Board of Regents has delegated administrative power over the college to the president. Furthermore, this delegation has been emphasized to all members of the Board of Regents during new regent orientation and Board of Regents training events.

The interim president has observed that the numerous training and orientation sessions provided to the Board of Regents have led to a marked improvement in the Board focusing on policy and not on administrative matters. There has also been improvement in communication between the president and the Board of Regents.

Finally, there are ample opportunities for the Board of Regents to hold the president accountable for his or her actions. As described above, the Board of Regents has a clear policy for conducting a review of the chief administrator's performance under Board of Regents Policies and Procedures 1017 and the president may be held accountable for his or her performance as a result of this review. Furthermore, the president reports to the Regents at Board meetings, as reflected in the meeting minutes, and other occasions. The College is developing a template for the president to use when making regular reports to the Board. The Board of Regents may also hold the president accountable for his or her performance as a result of these reports.

As illustrated above, at Northern Marianas College, the Board of Regents has engaged in numerous trainings, selects the president, evaluates the president, delegates all administrative authority at the college to the president, and holds him or her accountable for his or her actions and performance. Given this information, the College believes it is in compliance with Recommendation #10.