

**Executive Summary of the HLC Team Report  
Using the New Criteria for Accreditation**

<b>Criterion One. Mission</b>		
Northern's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.		
<b>Core Component</b>	<b>Strengths Cited</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement/Recommendations</b>
<b>Core Component -1.A.</b> Northern's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constituent groups demonstrate commitment to mission</li> <li>• Themes from mission linked to strategic plan and budget</li> </ul>	
<b>Core Component -1.B.</b> The mission is articulated publicly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase visibility of the mission statement</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -1.C.</b> Northern understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide range of multicultural programming</li> <li>• Title III grant to focus on strengthening developmental education and student success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase recruitment of minority students and hiring of minority faculty and staff</li> <li>• Attendance at multicultural events is limited</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -1.D.</b> Northern's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works closely with communities to meet needs</li> <li>• Excels in partnerships</li> <li>• Demonstrates commitment to community service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider using a plagiarism evaluation system</li> </ul>
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All constituents are committed to the college mission and optimistic about the future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There remains concern about communication at all levels. A communication strategy might serve the institution well.</li> </ul>

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<b>Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct</b>		
Northern acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.		
<b>Core Component</b>	<b>Strengths Cited</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement/Recommendations</b>
<b>Core Component -2.A</b> Northern operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fiscal and EEO audits, and policies (rules) demonstrate institutional integrity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constituent members of BOG vote on issues such as pay increases which appears to be a conflict of interest. Board is encouraged to review practice.</li> <li>Board minutes should reflect voting record by member.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -2.B.</b> Northern presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College clearly presents programs, program requirements, campus crime data, student right-to-know information, gainful employment statistics and other information in catalog and on website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make tuition and fee information more clear and accessible.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -2.C.</b> The governing board of Northern is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BOG demonstrated that operates independently and consistent with the College mission in best interest of College.</li> </ul>	
<b>Core Component -2.D.</b> Northern is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to develop policies on intellectual property rights and copyright</li> <li>Internet filters could curtail academic research and procedures should be reviewed</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -2.E.</b> Northern ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College has implemented several rules to insure integrity of research and academic practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>

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<b>Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support</b>		
Northern provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.		
<b>Core Component</b>	<b>Strengths Cited</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement/Recommendations</b>
<b>Core Component -3.A.</b> Northern's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committed to developing culture of assessment throughout institution.</li> </ul>	
<b>Core Component -3.B.</b> Northern demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General education requirements consistent with commonly accepted practices in higher education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unclear about degree of general education assessment and College should escalate to next level.</li> <li>Consider adding health and wellness component to general education outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -3.C.</b> Northern has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate staffing to meet instructional needs.</li> <li>Adequate resources allocated to fund professional development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review faculty position descriptions to delineate expectations for no-classroom roles including student success and retention.</li> <li>Appropriate documentation of faculty and staff credentials was not present in sample reviewed.</li> <li>Increase response rate for student evaluation.</li> <li>Consider conducting annual employee satisfaction survey.</li> <li>Consider implementation of annual assessment regarding adequacy of staffing for faculty and student services.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Core Component -3.D.</b> Northern provides support for student learning and effective teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College provides variety of student support services for student learning.</li> <li>• Title III enhancements should help increase student success.</li> <li>• Institution has infrastructure and resources to support its programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase external support</li> <li>• Use benchmark data to determine effectiveness of retention strategies.</li> <li>• Consider strategy to assess computer/technologies of entering students.</li> <li>• Monitor student satisfaction of advising.</li> <li>• High level of frustration among users of instructional technology that supports distance education.</li> <li>• Improve internal communication regarding distance education.</li> <li>• Some faculty have not acknowledged role in facilitating student success</li> </ul>
<p><b>Core Component -3.E.</b> Northern fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides co-curricular opportunities to enrich educational experienced</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institution has developed a culture of assessment and has transformed itself from a “teaching” to a “learning” institution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider addressing following challenges: (1) gathering adequate job placement data; (2) low response rate for student evaluations; (3) adequate staffing; (4) faculty participation in retention initiatives; (5) assessment in 100% of areas; (6) assessment of general education goals; (7) health and wellness component of general education; (8) thorough review of faculty credentials; (9) background checks.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note:</b> Consultation of distance education provided including structure, assessment, student support, common format for online course shells, professional development, and areas which should be considered during implementation.</li> </ul>		

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<b>Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement</b>		
Northern demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.		
<b>Core Component</b>	<b>Strengths Cited</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement/Recommendations</b>
<b>Core Component -4.A.</b> Northern demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular program review, proper evaluation of all credit that it transcripts, master course guides, specialized accreditation of select programs, multiple measures to evaluate student success.</li> </ul>	
<b>Core Component -4.B.</b> Northern demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment is faculty driven</li> <li>• Assessment process documents information gained from assessment is used to improve student learning.</li> <li>• Course and program outcomes published</li> </ul>	
<b>Core Component -4.C.</b> Northern demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institution collects and analyzes data on retention, persistence and completion and uses information to make improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention plan specifies goals but does not include benchmarks for comparisons.</li> </ul>
<b>Note:</b> Provided some suggestions and list of resources related to improving student retention, persistence and completion.		

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<b>Criterion 5. Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness</b>		
Northern's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.		
<b>Core Component</b>	<b>Strengths Cited</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement/Recommendations</b>
<b>Core Component -5.A.</b> Northern's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong financial resource base</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connectivity issues between campuses with IP Video so College should continue to identify new technologies.</li> <li>Incorporate expectations for faculty credentials into Employee Reference Manual.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -5.B.</b> Northern's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All constituents have opportunities for engagement in institutional governance.</li> <li>BOG members were passionate about Northern's contributions to the communities it serves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities exist for input into institutional governance but improvement of communication could strengthen process.</li> <li>Formal structures for shared decision-making could be strengthened.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -5.C.</b> Northern engages in systematic and integrated planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All constituent groups are involved and active in the planning process.</li> <li>Progress on strategic plan goals and Compact goals are monitored yearly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current master capital plan has expired so a new plan should be developed.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Component -5.D.</b> Northern works systematically to improve its performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receipt of Title III grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More deliberate, systematic commitment to institutional research would serve as basis for development of a data-driven culture.</li> <li>Need for systematic data and analysis is evident.</li> </ul>
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applauded for partnerships with business and industry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External and internal scan of the environment would be helpful.</li> <li>Strengthen institutional research area.</li> </ul>
<b>Note:</b> Consultation on institutional effectiveness provided focusing on key performance indicators, data analysis, and benchmarking.		