REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

West Virginia Northern Community College
Wheeling, West Virginia

March 4 – 6, 2013

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

EVALUATION TEAM

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Contents

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation visit of West Virginia Northern Community College (WVNCC or Northern) for continued accreditation and Federal Compliance. The visit also included a multi-campus review and review of an embedded substantive change request.

B. Institutional Context

West Virginia Northern Community College is a public, tri-campus, open-admissions, state-supported comprehensive community and technical college created by the West Virginia Board of Regents and established on July 1, 1972. The College was created to provide "post-secondary academic, occupational-technical, and general education programs of two years or less duration for high school graduates and adults".

The College is authorized to offer certificate and associate degrees by the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (WVCCTCE). Programs include Liberal Arts and Sciences, Career-Technical, Workforce Development, Transitional (developmental) Education, and Community and Continuing Education. Northern's main campus is located in Wheeling and additional campuses are located in Weirton and New Martinsville. The campuses are linked via an IP Video connection. The course delivery includes traditional classroom instruction as well as a variety of distance learning resources. The College's 9 certificates and 21 associate degree programs are enhanced by participation in more than 20 community partnerships and the support of active industry-based advisory committees.   The College has distinguished itself through creative, collaborative, and efficient delivery of quality educational programming and is gaining increasing support from its external constituencies.

The College's service area is comprised of six counties in the Northern Panhandle region of West Virginia: Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel and Tyler.   The area is predominantly rural with a total population of 158,086. It is an aging population with a median age of 40.5 years. West Virginia has also been identified as the State having the lowest percentage of persons under the age of 18 (20.9%). The region is predominately white with approximately 5% of Northern's students and employees self-reporting as non-white. This closely parallels the diversity of the service area. Because of the close proximity to Ohio (just across the river) and Pennsylvania (11 miles to the East of Wheeling) reciprocity and rate agreements are in place to provide reduced tuition rates to students across the Ohio River Valley. The population of these counties is much greater bringing the total population of the neighboring counties to almost 2 million. There are more than 15 higher education institutions in close proximity to Northern. While this provides many transfer opportunities for Northern's students it also provides significant competition among the institutions.

The region is experiencing declining population and a depressed economy primarily due to significant reductions in the steel industry. The population of the six-county service area has declined by 10,000 since the 2000 Census. The poverty rate of the region is also high, ranging from 13.6 to 18.7%. More than 80% of Northern's students received some sort of financial aid during the 2011-12 academic year. The College has been

responsive to the local communities and has worked closely with local industry to provide "just in time" training to address shifting employment needs such as training dealers for expanding casinos. Another potential opportunity is the development of the Marcellus Shale industry. The new mechatronics programs in Weirton and Wheeling will help to address emerging employment opportunities in electrical and mechanical maintenance. Health care is also a major employer in the region providing opportunities for the graduates of Northern's health care programs.

West Virginia Northern Community College has been accredited since the North Central Association transferred the accreditation of the Weirton and Wheeling campuses of West Liberty State College to WVNCC in 1972. Since that time the college has maintained a continued relationship with the Commission by completing all of the HLC's accreditation requirements which included five comprehensive self-studies and visits. The last comprehensive visit was held in 2003. As a result of that visit the College was granted continued accreditation for 10 years with a focus visit on Assessment of Student Learning scheduled for 2007. The focus visit showed that "evidence was sufficiently demonstrated. No Commission follow-up recommended." The next comprehensive visit was scheduled for March 2013.

C. Unique Aspects or Additions to the Visit

Specific additional evaluations conducted as a part of the visit included multi-campus visits to two additional campuses and an embedded change request to offer degrees and certificates through online delivery.

D. Additional Locations or Branch Campuses Visited

In addition to visiting the main campus of WVNCC in Wheeling, West Virginia, representatives of the Team visited the college's two branch campuses in New Martinsville and Weirton.

E. Distance Delivery Reviewed

The Distance Education (DE) offerings at West Virginia Northern Community College were reviewed through meetings with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Distance Learning Coordinator, the Distance Learning Committee, Distance Education faculty and students, Information Technology staff, and by review of associated documents.

Distance Education provides opportunities for students, the institution, other colleges, and those seeking learning for personal interest, to gain knowledge from experts in a subject regardless of physical location. According to college records, the initial distance education courses were offered in 1988 to deliver courses between the two campus locations. The institution made the decision to increase its online course offerings beginning in Fall 2007, and this decision has allowed the institution to increase engagement with students in the online community. At that time, an individual was hired to serve as instructional designer and distance education coordinator with the goal of increasing online course offerings. The number of online courses has increased dramatically from 39 in 2006-2007 to 168 in 2010-11, an increase of 431%. Headcount enrollment during the same period increased 418%. The Spring 2013 Course Schedule included 10 hybrid course sections, 50 online sections and 26 sections with a synchronous format using IPvideo or NEFSIS technology. Forty-eight of the sections

were delivered during this semester with a total enrollment of 508 students. The number of academic programs with 50% or more classes available by distance delivery was 16 (12 degrees and 4 certificates) or 55.2% of all programs.

Distance Education initiatives are distributed throughout the college. Financial support for growth in enrollment is found in an array of documents including planning documents such as Strategic, Budget, Retention, Assessment and Program Review. Planning for changes and expansion of the role of DE within the College includes the DE Coordinator, Division Chairs, Program Directors, DE Committee, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, faculty students and Cabinet.

The institution has entered into an affiliation with Quality Matters, which is a faculty-centered, peer review process in order to certify the quality of online and hybrid courses as well as teaching faculty. Currently, 18 faculty have completed the Quality Matters rubric training and there are three qualified peer reviewers within the institution. With the affiliation with Quality Matters, the institution shows commitment to quality of lifelong learning in addition to service to a broad community of learners extending beyond physical boundaries of the Ohio Valley.

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The College appeared to have a good understanding of the self-study process and set aside adequate time to conscientiously complete the task. Planning for the self-study process began during the 2009-2010 academic year. The information presented was a comprehensive assessment of the institution that identified strengths and areas for improvement as well as presenting evidence to illustrate how West Virginia Northern Community College has met the Commission's criteria for accreditation. Northern also intended for the self-study to link to the college's strategic planning and to its institutional effectiveness program. The process was an inclusive one that involved a large portion of the faculty, administrative and professional staff from throughout the College in the preparation of the report. In an effort to share the self-study process with the greater College community and encourage college-wide discussion of the findings, the steering committee developed a website to post committee work and ensure that the process was transparent. Most faculty and staff indicated during the campus forums that they had been involved in the self-study process, that they could apply the five criteria to their work unit, and that they believed the College would implement the recommendations of the visitation team.

Tri-chairs were appointed to lead the self-study process.   In addition, eight subcommittees were formed: one for each of the Criteria of Accreditation, a Change Request Committee, a Federal Compliance Committee, and a Resource Room Committee.   Leaders for the subcommittees were selected to represent the three campuses of the College, include individuals from the three primary sectors (faculty, staff and administration), and to include relevant areas of expertise and assure that the individuals possessed leadership skills.

The Self-Study report was organized around the five criteria. There was an introductory chapter that provided an overview of institutional history and context that included a

college profile, growth and change since 2003, an accreditation history, significant accomplishments, strengths and challenges from 2003, and an overview of the self-study process. Criterion chapters addressed each core component and also identified strengths, challenges and recommendations for future direction. It should be noted that the self-study was already in draft format following the previous version of the criteria for accreditation so the steering committee determined that there was insufficient time to re-format the report using January, 2013 criteria and core components. Thus the report was finalized with the old criteria and a detailed crosswalk was prepared to assist the visitation team in aligning the information that was presented in the report with the new criteria. While the crosswalk approach was probably necessary under the time constraints, it created a unique challenge for the team to assess the College's progress in addressing the new criteria.

The team was impressed by the appearance and content of the self-study. The document was attractive and informative. The use of diagrams and tables resulted in a visually pleasing document that was well-organized and thorough. The electronic links to evidence throughout the report helped the team to validate the evidence that was presented.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The writers of the Self-Study were honest and sincere in reflecting an authentic view of the college. They saw the completion of the Self-Study as an opportunity to tell the College's story. Their intent was to integrate the Self-Study into Northern's ongoing efforts for continuous improvement. The Self-Study documented significant changes from the last evaluation visit and clearly cited the college's self-perceived strengths, challenges and recommendations for future direction. Reports and documents available in the electronic resource room provided sufficient information for team consideration in its deliberations. The College believes that the Self-Study, along with the visiting team's report, will help to guide the implementation of the College's strategic plan.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The team considers the response of the organization to previously identified challenges to be adequate.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

Requirements were fulfilled.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information.

The Worksheet on Federal Compliance is included on page 50 as Appendix C-1 of this report.

Appendix C-2, Credits, Program Length and Clock Hours may be found on page 59.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

CRITERION ONE: MISSION. The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Core Component 1A: The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

Subcomponent 1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

Subcomponent 2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Subcomponent 3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- In 2010 a compression planning process was used by a committee composed of faculty, staff, and administration to determine whether the College's mission statement needed revision. Draft mission and vision statements were developed and circulated college-wide for input. Based upon the suggestions, the committee made revisions and forwarded the mission documents for consideration by the Board of Governors. Approval by the Board was granted in April 2011. The modified mission statement includes the phrase "achieve academic and career goals" to indicate a new focus on student success instead of the previous focus on access. The second sentence of the mission statement reflects a continued commitment to access, workforce, and the need to address facilities to meet the needs of a growing student body.

- The West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (WVCCTCE) was required by the legislature to develop a System Master Plan and Compact based upon the priorities designated by the legislature in Code for community and technical college education. The WVNCC planning process aligns with the outcomes of the "State Compact" in five target areas: student success, access, workforce and community development, strengthening the infrastructure (human, fiscal, physical and technology) and ensuring quality. While it is unusual to plan before addressing the revision of the mission and vision statement, the culture and expectations of the Compact required that the College process proceed in this manner. Interviews with campus-wide constituent groups and examination of planning and budgeting documents confirm the alignment between the Compact and the College and indicate support and commitment to the implementation of the mission.

- The College demonstrates its commitment to the students in the Northern Panhandle region of West Virginia through a wide array of programs designed to encourage access and foster student success. The Institutional Research Office in its Enrollment Profile clearly identifies the demographics of the service area and the subsequent

challenges due to a severely depressed economy, an aging population, declining enrollment and insufficient academic preparation to succeed in college level coursework. The mission statement includes the commitment to "empowering individuals to achieve academic and career goals….by providing an accessible, safe, diverse, and high-quality learning environment." Further, the mission statement speaks to the continued commitment of providing access, safety, and support attuned to the "educational, cultural, and civic needs" of the communities in the service area. Examples of pertinent programming include: financial literacy training to help reduce financial aid default rates, revisions to the developmental education (transition) programs to assist students in developing fundamental skills in the shortest possible time frame, expansion of distance learning opportunities to provide access to students in remote regions of the service area and student support services through the Title III grant to provide early intervention to improve student retention. These continued efforts to enhance the effectiveness of these programs and services were validated by students and staff as well as follow-up data provided by the Office of Institutional Research.

- The college mission and vision statements are revisited every five years to correspond with the strategic planning process. Review of planning and budget documents and interviews with key stakeholders including the Board, the faculty, the classified staff, and the administration indicate an understanding of the mission and the varied roles each group plays in its implementation. They believe that the mission is relevant and reflective of the communities served by the district. Most importantly, the campus community is optimistic about the future of the College in addressing those needs.

- The major themes of the college mission are student success, empowerment, workforce development, diversity, quality programs, community service, and safety. A review of the strategic priorities that drive the college's planning and budgeting indicates that these major themes from the mission are evident throughout the goals of the planning documents that are closely linked to the allocation of budget. For example, the first goal is to "create and foster a culture in which all employees assume responsibility of placing needs of learners first". The specific action items under this goal encompass student success, diversity of learning styles and quality programs and services. This alignment of planning and budgeting with the mission demonstrates that the mission guides the institution's operations.

Core Component 1B: The mission is articulated publicly.

Subcomponent 1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

Subcomponent 2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

Subcomponent 3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- Interviews with faculty, staff and administration confirmed that West Virginia Northern Community College revisits its mission statement every five years as an integral component of the strategic planning process. The College revised its mission and vision statements in 2010, and the Board of Governors approved both statements in April 2011. Review of the self-study survey, the website, the minutes of the strategic planning committee, the college catalog and student handbook validates the shift in the new mission from student access to student success.

- Mission and vision statements of 2011 demonstrate State and institutional priorities of student success, access, and workforce development. The planning process identified five college goals which aligned with the State Compact required of all community colleges in West Virginia. Those goals are student success, access, workforce development, infrastructure strengthening, and quality. All of these components are reflected in the mission statement— "…achieve academic and career goals leading to a competent workforce….it serves by offering an accessible, safe, diverse, and high-quality learning environment."

- The college committee overseeing the development of the mission and vision statements proposed that the statement should be more visible for both internal and external constituents. Further, the committee recommended that the revised mission statement be included in orientation packages, placed on various areas of the website as well as placed on electronic boards near prominent areas. Interviews with the faculty, staff, and administration along with observations in the various facilities, and resource documents showed that visibility of the mission and vision statements has improved, however implementation of recommendations from the self-study for more extensive efforts to display the mission statements will provide opportunities to further heighten awareness of the WVNCC mission.

- The nature and scope of the higher education programs and service are identified in the mission statement—"empowering individuals…..leading to a competent workforce which excels in the global economy." In addition, the mission statement addresses the constituents that are served in the mission statement, "responds to the educational, cultural, and civic needs of the communities it serves." Members of the community at all three campuses indicated their support for the important mission of the College and the critical role that it plays in advancing the economic vitality of the region.

Core Component 1C: The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

    Subcomponent 1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

    Subcomponent 2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- Mission and vision statements demonstrate that the institution values diversity of learners. The institutional research documents on demographics verify the older, rural, predominantly female, high poverty population it serves, and the challenges associated with student success. The vision statement refers to …"empowering students to take ownership of their education…as the college manages continued growth in conjunction with fiscal responsibility, engages and retains a diverse population of life-long learners…producing graduates in unprecedented numbers." Campus interviews and review of the mission and vision statements indicate alignment with the college community and Board valuing diversity and the challenges that it entails. In addition, the 2010 Census report, general education outcomes document, affirmative action plan, EEO audit materials, diversity programming information was reviewed and verifies that the College recognizes and acts on data for curriculum and student services programming.

- Northern offers a wide range of multicultural programming to promote cultural awareness for students and the community, but attendance has been disappointing. Even though minority population in the district is small, the College needs to explore ways to increase minority student enrollment, to recruit and hire more minorities for employment and to create more opportunities to expand diversity awareness.

- Understanding of diverse cultures and obtaining a global perspective are embedded within the curriculum. Cultural awareness programming in student services to supplement the classroom experience is evident, although attendance has been limited as indicated in the self-study document. Review of policies and procedures, course syllabi, equity grants and interviews with college constituents indicate that the mission statement is valued and visible in course outcomes.

- The College has received a Title III grant which focuses on the strengthening of developmental education for student success. The grant has allowed an increased programming effort in student services with expanded services for targeted at-risk groups. Further, academic services have been expanded to improve graduation and course completion rates. These services align with the overall student success initiative stated in the mission statement itself. Students are able to receive additional help in the success center staffed by Title III and non-Title III staff to ensure student success in the classroom. Student support services provide individual help to enhance retention and completion rates. Review of the Title III grant focus with interviews and research documents provide evidence that there is a range of services provided to students to ensure their success, both in and out of the classroom.

Core Component 1D: The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

Subcomponent 1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

Subcomponent 2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

Subcomponent 3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- An interview with the Chancellor of the West Virginia Community College and Technical Education System confirmed that Northern is positively perceived across the state. As one of West Virginia's original community colleges it has exemplary and unique programs, works very closely with its communities to meet their higher education needs, has been proactive and creative in addressing the widespread funding cuts and has demonstrated that it can be nimble and "rapidly implement new programs on a shoestring." These accomplishments illustrate why the Upper Ohio Valley communities value the College as an integral partner in economic development and revitalization of the region.

- Interest in meeting community needs is illustrated by workforce programs such as the implementation of mechatronics laboratories at the Wheeling and Weirton campuses and the creation of new facilities such as the Barnes and Noble partnership. The acknowledgement of Northern as an integral partner in downtown revitalization is evident in the review of current building projects, aesthetic campus enhancements, and the utilization and purchase of additional downtown facilities renovated to meet both the needs of the college and the community. The partnership focus is evident in the vision statement, and interviews with community members and the Board of Governors authenticate the important role that the college plays in the communities it serves.

- The mission statement indicates that "….The College responds to the educational, cultural, and civic needs of the communities it serves…" indicating a concern and focus on the public good. Further the vision statement states that there is "…a community of learners who model integrity, mutual respect, partnerships, and a commitment to excellence and community service." Reviewing the College's Foundation financials indicate that a Foundation corpus is developing for student scholarship support. In addition, the College excels in its partnerships in Middle College, downtown revitalization, and renovation of facilities to focus on the communities' needs in workforce development at its various sites.

- In order to ensure integrity relative to academic honesty and the development of proper document citing procedures within the academic environment, consideration could be given to the acquisition and use of a plagiarism evaluation system (i.e., TurnItIn.com or others), as well as to provide faculty an integrated grading rubric for curricular assignments.

- Northern demonstrates its commitment to community service as evidenced by the large number of service activities and the designation of the College as a multiyear recipient of the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. Along with service learning activities, some programs require community service projects as a part of the curricula. The College has a student organization called the Community Outreach Opportunities Program that provides volunteers to support a variety of community events. These local and statewide service activities are designed to engage students in meeting the needs of the broader communities.

- The Military Friendly School recognition honors the College's commitment to serve veterans and is presented to the top 15% of higher education institutions in the Nation.   The expanding services to veterans returning to higher education in the region and the college's focus on initiating and qualifying students for their veteran's benefits indicates a developing student services focus to serve this special population of students on the College's campuses.

- Conversations with community members confirmed that the College clearly engages external constituencies and responds to their needs.   Examples include the development of just-in-time workforce programs to prepare individuals for employment in table gaming and as gas rig workers, establishment of the Middle College, community service projects such as the Martin Luther King Day of Service and the CTC Food Drive Challenge and the formulation of partnerships such as the one between Northern, Wetzel County Chamber of Commerce and Regional Economic Development to offer "Red Hat" training to prospective workers in the coal mining industry. That said, following review of the institutional research reports available on the external community, the team concluded that the College would benefit from the design and focus of a more systematic process for gathering data and feedback from external college constituents to continue to improve services to the college community.

Team Determination on Criterion One:

X Criterion is met

Summary Statement on Criterion One:

In 2011 West Virginia Northern Community College revised its mission statement, and in subsequent Board action approved it. Team members met with members of the Board of Governors, administration, faculty, staff, students and community members; all endorsed the college's mission documents. The faculty and administration provided college-wide input and concurred that the mission remains relevant, and provides a focus for the future. Faculty and staff, and to a lesser degree students understand and articulate clearly the mission of the college and exemplify the essence of student success and college completion, adhere to the access mission, work in partnership with their communities and monitor student progress in their chosen fields of study.   Although West Virginia Northern Community College has mission documents and utilizes zero-based budget development, the methods by which mission drives budget is not transparent.

While engaging the students in various campus activities with cultural programming, evidence indicates that activities to expand diversity awareness are not robust, nor well-attended. It is essential that the college, through sound human resource policies and procedures, seek more diverse faculty and staff in its ranks. When diversity is more reflected in the employees of the college, diverse programming might be more successful.

With informal structures and processes dominant in the organization's culture, communication among administration, faculty, and staff members is challenging. The team heard in interviews and learned through survey results that there remains concern about

communication at all levels of the organization. A communication strategy might serve the institution well.   The mission is aligned with the mission of the state. All constituents interviewed are committed to the college's mission and are optimistic about the future of the college as demonstrated by results from team interviews and confirmed in the self-study.

CRITERION TWO: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct. The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Core Component 2A: The institution 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.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- A review of documents in the resource room indicates that annual fiscal audits are conducted. All institutional audits from an independent auditor have yielded no significant findings.   The WV Community and Technical College System (CTCS) periodically conducts Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) audits of all institutions. The last EEO audit was conducted in 2009 and there were no significant findings. In addition, the College has a number of rules (policies) to protect fiscal integrity and fair and ethical personnel practices.

- The College has a framework for implementing fair and ethical practices that is based upon Rules established by the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical Colleges. The State Ethics Act and Open Meetings Act guide the Board of Governors to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest and that activities of the Board are transparent. College employees are employees of the state so they are also bound by the Ethics Act. A review Board Rules and procedures established by the Board of Governors shows that the Board expects that all employees of the college will be held to high standards for integrity and ethical conduct.

- The College seeks to prevent conflict-of-interest issues with a no-nepotism policy. Further, employees are required to report external employment. External employment is reviewable by the administration on a case-by-case basis to ensure that conflicts of interests do not arise and to ensure that employees are providing the college with the time and expertise the job description requires.   These are examples of how the Board operates with integrity.

- The Board of Governors By-Laws state that Board members are in a fiduciary relationship with the College and should refrain from voting on issues in which they might benefit. The Board members who represent faculty, classified staff and students vote on all issues, including any pay raises for their particular representative area. This appears to be a conflict of interest. The Board is encouraged to review its current practice and make adjustments to eliminate the perceptions of conflict of interest.

- A review of Board Minutes indicates that specific voting records are not included. It is recommended that the Board include a voting record by member for each voting item. This documentation will contribute to Board transparency and also provide a means for constituent representatives to validate support for constituent concerns.

- Northern demonstrates its commitment to integrity in academic functions through its Rules related to Academic Freedom, Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct. A review of course syllabi shows that many faculty include statements about the consequences of plagiarism and cheating for students. Another example of academic integrity is the College's adoption of the NAFSAA ethics guidelines regarding financial aid.

Core Component 2B: The institution 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.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- A review of the catalog revealed that academic programs, program requirements and expected program outcomes are clearly explained in the catalog and on the college website. This information helps students to understand the purpose of the program they are considering and make better decisions about their choice of major. It also helps prospective employers learn what to expect from graduates of a particular program. The catalog also included a listing of faculty and staff qualifications. These are examples of how the institution presents itself clearly and completely to the constituents that it serves.

- The team noted that the Catalog and college website clearly indicate Northern's accreditation relationships, including use of the HLC "Mark of Affiliation." Also listed are program-specific Specialized Accreditation Agencies such as the American Culinary Federation, the National Association for Legal Professionals and the National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission. The College is accredited by 12 program-specific accrediting agencies.   These accreditation relationships demonstrate the college's commitment to quality in its program offerings and validate that industry established standards are program hallmarks.

- Northern publishes Campus Crime, Student Right to Know, and Gainful Employment information on the website, as required by law. In addition it posts general program requirements, financial responsibility requirements, loan default rates, satisfactory progress and attendance requirements, and information about contractual and consortial relationships to meet its Title IV reporting obligations.

- Conversations with the community relations dean and staff showed that the College has implemented practices concerning publications, press releases, advertising, and other communications to help ensure consistent and accurate information is dispersed to the public. All information is centralized in the Office of Community

Relations where it is reviewed for accuracy and conformity with college rules and procedures.

- Information about student fees is published in the College catalog, however, there is no listing of the specific fee amounts. The catalog refers to a link on the website but when team members checked the link it appeared to be broken. Interviews with students indicated that they do not understand the bills for their tuition and fees. Clarification of the bill would help students to know what they are paying for. The College should investigate ways to format student bills to make charges more easily understood while meeting State guidelines. They may also wish to consider making the tuition and fee information more accessible by including a listing and explanation of fees in the Course Schedule, the College catalog and on the website.

Core Component 2C: The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

Subcomponent 1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

Subcomponent 2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Subcomponent 3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

Subcomponent 4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- Review of Board minutes and conversations with the Board members confirmed that the deliberations of the Board are focused upon preserving and enhancing the institution. Further, the Board By-Laws state that "The members of the Board shall be in a fiduciary relationship to the institution and shall not directly or indirectly act adversely to the interest of the college." Board meeting schedule, agendas and minutes are posted on the College's website and promote an atmosphere of transparency.

- Interviews with the Board explained that the nine lay members of the Board of Governors are appointed by the Governor, but have staggered terms and no more than 5 may be from one political party so they are able to make decisions that are balanced in the public interest. In addition, the Board also includes elected representatives of the faculty, staff and students as voting members so interests of both internal and external constituencies are considered in Board deliberations. A review of the Board minutes verified that the WVNCC Board of Governors has consistently demonstrated that it operates independently and acts consistent with the College mission in what it believes is in the best interest of students and the community.

- When asked how the Board solicits input from its constituencies they listed the following strategies: open mike at every Board meeting, presentations by students and faculty at meetings, college leaders present reports and bring forward suggestions and concerns. The members also maintain visibility throughout the service area by serving on Boards and Commissions and demonstrating the accessibility is a priority. All constituency groups indicated that the Board is accessible and listens to their concerns.

- The Board responsibilities are specified in State Code and Board By-Laws and conversations with the Board members show that they understand that their role is policy making and financial stewardship. The WVNCC Board of Governors operates under the "governance by policy" model. The Board establishes the overall direction of the institution and enacts Rules to guide the organization under the leadership of the administration. The Board Rules are readily accessible on the College website.

- The Board expects faculty to provide leadership for academic matters as evidenced by Rules such as General Education and Program Review. The Faculty and Staff Councils and Committees website lists a broad array of committees where faculty participate in various aspects of the College's academic programming. Some these committees include Academic Appeals, Assessment, Curriculum, Distance Education, Enrollment Management and General Education. Faculty participation in these functions demonstrate that at WVNCC the faculty have oversight of the curriculum, assure the consistency in the level and quality of instruction and provide leadership for the assessment of student learning and program completion.

Core Component 2D: The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- The WVNCC Board Rule NC-3000 - Academic Freedom declares that faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. The Authority References for the Rule are the AAUP statement on academic freedom and the HEPC Title 133 Series 9, Section 2. The rule is posted on the College's web page among the Human Resources documents. Discussions with faculty and division chairs and a review of sample course syllabi confirmed that faculty determine course content working within the established course competencies.

- During the preparation of the self-study it was learned that the College does not currently have a policy regarding intellectual property rights. The Vice President for Academic Affairs reported that a Board Rule is currently being drafted. The College is encouraged to research the policies of similar institutions and a Rule to provide clarity regarding intellectual property rights.

- Interviews with students and faculty indicate that current College practices for internet filtering curtail the pursuit of academic research. Follow-up with Learning Resource Center staff indicated that filters may be adjusted to provide access to specific

reference materials through submission of a written request.   The LRC staff is encouraged to work with faculty to determine whether the current filters are appropriate and to review the procedures for removing the filters to see if modifications could mitigate the frustration.

Core Component 2E: The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Subcomponent 1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

Subcomponent 2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Subcomponent 3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- The College has implemented several rules that ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice is conducted by its faculty, staff and students. Those rules include Academic Freedom, Academic Integrity and Student Responsibilities, Harrassment and Discrimination and Student Code of Conduct. In addition to the Rules many faculty also provide information about academic integrity, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment, and Student Code of Conduct on their course syllabi. Employees are instructed and instruct others in responsible use of copyright material in various ways. The existence of the Rules and the support services provided demonstrate that the College provides effective oversight and services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice.

- Interviews with Library staff indicated that students are provided guidance regarding ethical use of information through bibliographic instruction offered through the LRC. Some courses such as English 101 and Speech 105 require that students participate in training on library research and proper citations for copyrighted materials. This guidance is provided at all campuses. The ethical use of information is also reinforced by the College's general education goal, "Employ or utilize information access and literacy skills."

- Board Rule 3001 – Academic Integrity and Student Responsibilities states that "students are responsible for their own academic work and behavior which supports a learning environment." WVNCC has adopted a "zero-tolerance" Student Code of Conduct Rule (NC-4009) that specifies the expectations for academic honesty and explains the consequences for infractions such as cheating and plagiarism. The team verified that this information is available to students on the College website, in the College Catalog and in the Student Handbook.

Team Determination on Criterion Two:

X Criterion is met

Summary Statement on Criterion Two:

The College has policies and procedures called "rules" which set the guidelines for institutional integrity. In recent years, College audits from an independent auditor have produced no significant findings. Further, rules governing the fiscal operation are evident and provide a baseline that allows the college to plan for the future. Examination of the conflict of interest Board of Governors policy indicates that the appropriate measures are in place to allow a member of the Governors to abstain from action should there be an appearance of conflicts of interest. Problematic are Board of Governors' members that have voted on salary increases from which they directly benefit. Minimally, the conflicts need to be addressed by ensuring abstentions in these matters.

The Board of Governors operates with integrity in its deliberations, ensuring that constituents are heard and their views are taken into consideration in decision-making. Rules direct the composition of the Board where no more than five members may be from one political party, allowing decisions to be relatively free from the political process. State Code, Board By-laws and Board minutes were reviewed and indicate that College issues are handled in a transparent manner.

Academic Integrity, Students Rights and Responsibilities, and Student Conduct are well-delineated and make it clear to students the expectations of behavior in and out of the classroom. Finally, the Team reviewed the College's marketing materials and determined that they are clear and accurately portray the programs and services offered.

CRITERION THREE: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support.
The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Core Component 3A: The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

Subcomponent 1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Subcomponent 2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- WVNCC offers programs in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Career-Technical, Workforce Development, Transitional Education, and Community and Continuing Education. Onsite interviews verified that all programs are reviewed on a regular cycle to assure they are current and include appropriate learning objectives. In addition, programs were reviewed in 2011-12 and adjusted as necessary to comply with a new State policy on maximum

credit hours and to align with commonly accepted higher education practices. To ensure continuous improvement between the evaluations in the 5-year cycle, an annual institutional assessment project is completed by each program whereby at least one program outcome is measured and reviewed in collaboration with the program Advisory Committee and/or other external entities.

- Based upon onsite interviews of division and faculty members, it was determined that for the past 15 years, the College has been committed to developing a culture of assessment throughout the institution. The College requires that all technical programs must have an external review to measure student performance and ensure that performance expectations are appropriate for the degree. The external review validates student performance in relation to the learning goals and documents consistency and inconsistencies across all modes of delivery and all locations. It also assures that program completers have the essential skills necessary for success in the local workforce. The program assessment consists of program reviews, institutional assessment projects, and external accreditation reviews or studies. External review for each of their eleven technical programs is performed on a schedule as designated by the accrediting agency, such as the American Association of Medical Assistants, the American Culinary Federation, and the National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission.

- The WVNCC Mission Statement states that the College will "empower individuals to achieve academic and career goals." According to documents reviewed onsite and discussions with faculty, the institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its degree and certification programs by articulating learning goals for courses in the Master Course Guides for each course and articulating program goals in the Catalog descriptions of the programs which are accessible online to current and potential students wishing to choose a career path, review degree requirements, or plan their coursework.

- As a part of the program continuous improvement loop and the assessment process, Master Course Guides (MCG) are reviewed and updated and the degree to which they are followed is documented and reported to the Assessment Committee, advisory committees, and the administration. According to the VPAA who holds the responsibility for oversight for the use of the MCG, all sections of a course are required to follow the MCG, regardless of location, modality, or the instructor. This expectation contributes to consistency of program quality and learning goals and communicates expected outcomes to students and external constituents.

Core Component 3B: The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

Subcomponent 1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

Subcomponent 2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and

develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

Subcomponent 3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Subcomponent 4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

Subcomponent 5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Team Determination: X Core Component is met

Evidence:

- WVNCC reflects its commitment to the holistic development of the student by identifying specific general education requirements for each degree program. The institution articulates its general education philosophy, goals and content in the College Catalog and has established general education requirements for every associate and certificate degree program. While these requirements align with State mandates, it was unclear the degree to which general education goals are assessed. The College could escalate its general education assessment to the next level by measuring its general education goals in the applicable general education courses and also in the context of technical courses and programs. This would fully integrate the general education assessment process across all courses and programs.

- Board Rule NC-3006 designates that "Certificate and associate degree programs must include a full complement of general education requirements that define what constitutes an educated person, including essential communication and computation skills." Associate of Arts degrees must have at least 45 general education credits, Associate of Science degrees must have at least 30 general education credits, and Associate of Applied Science degrees and Certificates must have 15 and 6 credits respectively. These expectations are consistent with commonly accepted practices in higher education.

- In 2008, the nine general education outcomes were modified into the six more current and applicable goals presently used. Best practices within higher education reflect responsiveness to the health of our society and of graduates comprising the future workforce not only regarding the impact on quality of life, but an actual economic impact related to reducing health care costs for employers. For these reasons, consideration might be given to adding a health and wellness component to the general education outcomes to better inform and facilitate healthy and fit lifestyles for future generations.

- As indicated in the Self Study and verified during the onsite visit through discussions with a variety of faculty and students, assessment of the general education goal regarding cultural and global perspective revealed that the goal is being achieved with 26 general education and 73 technical courses exposing students to cultural and/or global perspectives. This goal is addressed through specially designed co-curricular activities and events such as the global collaboration project with India and World Peace Day. However the majority of emphasis seems to be captured within programmatic course

content, such as incorporating throughout the instruction how the world economy impacts interest rates, how the business communications are different when dealing with a company from China than from Mexico, how the English language has derived from other languages, how the needs of other countries impact the agriculture markets within the United States, etc. Understanding of cultural and global perspectives will be an important competency for graduates to achieve the College's mission and become a part of "a competent workforce which excels in a global economy."

- As noted in the Self-Study and confirmed by onsite interviews, faculty and staff contribute to scholarship and discovery of knowledge through assessment activities and some faculty participate in other research activities involving teaching and learning. Several faculty members are actively involved in research projects associated with their respective academic discipline areas. Additionally, the staff at the Academic Success Center conducts workshops to assist students in improving study, writing, test-taking, and research skills. Research projects and research papers are imbedded into coursework throughout degree programs. Furthermore, the Institutional Effectiveness process includes activities such as planning, research, assessment, and the use of data and assessment results to support effective decision-making throughout the institution for a continuous improvement loop. The office conducts analytical studies to support both academic and institutional strategic planning, policy development, resource allocation, and assessment.

Core Component 3C: The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

Subcomponent 2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

Subcomponent 3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Subcomponent 4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Subcomponent 5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Subcomponent 6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Team Determination: **X** Evidence demonstrates that one or more Core Components require Commission follow-up.

Evidence:

- The Team confirmed that there is at least one full-time faculty member to provide curricular leadership and to establish student performance expectations for every program except for Mechatronics, Northern's newest program. The full-time and adjunct

faculty job descriptions and workload policy are outlined in the Board Rules. The Rules also specify the College's goal to have no more than 65% of the class sections offered during any semester taught by adjunct faculty. These practices allow for appropriate program oversight and adequate staffing to meet the instructional needs of the College.

- Conversations with administrators at Northern indicated a desire to provide more definitive expectations for faculty responsibilities. To meet this intent the faculty position descriptions could be revised to delineate expectations of faculty non-classroom roles including oversight of curriculum, assessment, and professional development. The faculty role in facilitation of student success could also be explained. Clearer job descriptions would provide a sound foundation for revision of faculty evaluation procedures to support enhanced accountability and the assurance that expectations for faculty responsibilities are met. The College may also wish to consider incorporating an evaluation rubric to enable a more structured, formal, and systematic approach to the evaluation process and continuous improvement efforts on an annual basis.

- A review of targeted personnel files revealed that appropriate documentation of faculty and staff credentials was not present and that some faculty did not have appropriate academic credentials for the classes that they were teaching in AY12-13. Twelve faculty files were selected from course assignments that have a tendency toward deviation from the expected credentials. The transcripts were reviewed and compared with current teaching assignments. The faculty included both on-campus full-time and adjunct faculty and dual credit faculty. Only four of the faculty met the College's stated academic requirements for faculty of a Master's degree or 18 graduate credits in the field. Of the eight faculty who did not meet the requirements, six had insufficient graduate coursework in the discipline and two did not have transcripts in their files so a determination could not be made. Of the three administrator files that were reviewed one file did not contain all transcripts to document the required academic credentials. It appears that the College is not adhering to the Commission's "Good Practices in Determining Qualified Faculty." Further, the College needs to evaluate its hiring and credentialing practices to ensure that future faculty and staff hires have credentials appropriate to their assigned position and that necessary official transcripts are on file. (Core Component 3C, sub-component 2 and Assumed Practice B.2.a.)

- The institution has a comprehensive system in place for the evaluation of teaching, which includes the students' perspective for both full-time and part-time faculty; however, a review of the processes indicated that student response rates remain low (34%). In order to facilitate an increased response rate from students' course and faculty evaluations which will provide a higher quality of data-driven decision-making, consideration could be given to developing a systematic continuous improvement plan on a semester-to-semester timeframe.

- The Board Rule on Faculty Professional Development states that the goal is "to enhance the professional level and teaching effectiveness of the faculty, including part-time faculty." Professional development activities are a recognized part of the full-time member's workload and a central objective in the faculty evaluation process. It serves as a component of the criteria for promotion and merit pay increases. Each full-time faculty member develops and submits an Faculty Professional Development Plan for approval by the VPAA. Interviews with faculty revealed an extensive list of on- and off- campus

activities available for professional development and a consensus that adequate resources are allocated to fund participation in these opportunities.

- Conversations with administrators indicated that in order to be accessible for student inquiry, all full-time faculty are required to maintain at least eight (8) office hours weekly and faculty teaching online are required to interact with students on a regular and timely basis. Best practices in higher education reflect the importance of this connection with learners to impact both learning and satisfaction levels.

- The Self Study and onsite discussions indicate that staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified upon hiring, receive training as needed, and are provided support for professional development. The Title III grant provided increased funds for professional development for student services staff and also for adjunct faculty who teach transitional education courses. To provide input into institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement, consideration could be given to conducting an annual Employee Satisfaction Survey. This would allow trend data to be accrued and a continuous improvement process employed student support services staff.

- Several new student support services positions were recently added as a result of the Title III grant. Conversations with Student Services and Academic Support staff indicated that staffing levels are appropriate at this time. As enrollment and other circumstances dictate, the institution may wish to consider implementation of an annual assessment regarding the adequacy of staffing for faculty and student services. This might be performed as a component of the strategic planning and budget development process.

Core Component 3D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

Subcomponent 1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Subcomponent 2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Subcomponent 3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Subcomponent 4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Subcomponent 5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Team Determination: X Core Component is met

Evidence:

- The institution provides a variety of support services for student learning. Academic Success Centers on each campus offer tutoring, peer mentoring, supplemental instruction, and student success workshops to support and enhance student learning. The College also provides a broad array of services to support and accommodate students with disabilities and the Office of Career Planning and Placement offers a variety of services to assist students in exploring career options and seeking employment. Supplemental Instruction (SI) is available to help students acquire the skills to solve problems, organize classroom materials, develop effective study strategies, and meet their own and faculty member's expectations. These student support services help to foster student success and contribute to the College's efforts to enhance student retention.

- Retention has become a major issue for WVNCC. While enrollments have increased in recent years, the declining population of the Upper Ohio Valley is a significant concern. Conversations with key personnel indicated that fall-to-fall retention rates of full- and part-time students were 57% and 28% respectively in 2010. Retention for distance education is slightly less. In response, the institution has developed a Retention Strategic Plan which identifies ten primary goals and related objectives to address over a three-year period. Some of the specific strategies to be applied include modification of policies and practices that negatively impact retention, implementation of additional services and training that will positively impact retention, and the development of a culture that values the significance of retention, success, and completion. Annual review of the retention and completion rates in comparison with benchmark data will determine the effectiveness of the intervention strategies.

- The institution has a solid transitional (developmental) education program that includes placement assessment, placement into transitional courses, and a variety of options to help students progress from transitional courses to college-level courses. Additionally, Academic Success Centers on each campus offer tutoring, peer mentoring, supplemental instruction, and student success workshops to support and enhance student learning. Recently the College was awarded a Title III grant to provide increased staffing, improved equipment, web-based math classes, and expanded services for students in transitional education, such as an Academic Advisor "Student Success" whose role is to serve as first-year advisor to students needing all transitional courses. The grant also afforded opportunities for adjunct faculty in transitional courses to be provided with professional development opportunities. These enhancements should help to increase the success of students in transitional education.

- As revealed in the Self-Study and verified onsite, the institution has the infrastructure and resources to support its programs, including technology resources, new facilities, well-equipped labs, and extensive clinical sites; however, impending budget cuts from the State will impact the College's ability to expand programming to support its continued growth. Consideration might be given to increasing the amount of external support for the institution through grant funding, philanthropic donations, capital campaigns, etc.

- The institution provides online library services, tutoring and technical support for online students. While the services were designed to support online learning, they also provide

enhanced access to services for face-to-face students. Because of the importance of computer/technology skills for citizenship in the 21st century, the College may wish to investigate and implement a strategy to assess the computer/technology skills of entering students and provide remediation as necessary. This would be especially important for ensuring the success of online students.

- The Team verified through campus interviews that faculty and counselors serve as academic advisors who help students assess their career and life goals, understand their test scores, create an educational plan, and select courses. At the Student Forum, students indicated that the student services available to them are very helpful, except for advising. Students indicated that they receive contradictory information from different advisors and that advising for transfer is sometimes inaccurate which results in the need to complete additional coursework at an unnecessary expense. The College is encouraged to monitor student satisfaction with advising and make changes as necessary. Completion of the electronic Advising Handbook is encouraged and ongoing training and professional development for advisors may be helpful.

- Each campus has a Library/Learning Resource Center (LRC) to support student learning and effective teaching. An interview with the Library Director and staff indicated their willingness to assist students with their reference and research needs, including looking for information in books, periodicals, online databases and the Internet. The Learning Resource Centers also offer instruction on evaluating the validity of resources, information about copyright laws, and bibliographic instruction so that students can appropriately document references for assignments in classes emphasizing research. Unfortunately, not many students request this assistance and it appears that few faculty encourage students to pursue these support services. During the preparation of the self-study it was discovered that the college does not have a policy on copyright. A copyright rule is currently under development.

- Onsite discussions with faculty, students and administration verified the need to develop a standardized, online course template to be utilized for all of the institutions' online courses. This will provide consistency across all course sections and assist in student navigation of online sections. The potential to establish this template using the BlackBoard format is available as priorities are made to implement the process.

- Based upon onsite interviews, the Team observed that there appears to be a high level of frustration among users of the instructional technology that supports distance education. The institution could strengthen its distance learning offerings by providing: 1) training for faculty in the use of BlackBoard and Internet Explorer, 2) training for the online faculty to better utilize the technologies that support the development of quality online courses, 3) assistance with online course design and pedagogy, and 4) 24/7 technical advice and support for students be successful in their online classes.

- Onsite meetings with campus constituencies indicate that there is an apparent need for the College to create a more comprehensive approach to institutional communication pertaining to distance education. There were numerous findings during the site visit that were indicative of a "disconnect" of information sharing, not only on a one-on-one basis, but across the institution as a whole. There is a perception that decisions are made without the inclusion of all applicable parties. It would behoove WVNCC to consider implementation of a more systematic line of communication regarding distance education

to assure that all constituencies and engaged in decision-making and share a common vision for distance learning initiatives.

- Team conversations with faculty, staff, and administration indicated that the institution may find it advantageous to establish a "homepage" for distance education that would provide pertinent information for students participating in online coursework. The page might include hardware and software needs, standardized syllabi, faculty welcome, ADA compliance information, online and on campus tutoring information, availability of library resources, and other information to facilitate student success in distance education coursework. Additionally, it may helpful to provide a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the website specifically focused on online course delivery opportunities for students.

- The institution provides a variety of support for student learning. While some faculty employ classroom strategies to support student retention, it appears that other faculty have not acknowledged their role in facilitating student success. Continual efforts to expand faculty participation in student retention efforts and to develop a systemic culture of effective intervention and practice should help to increase student persistence.

- One of the advantages of making the College's facilities available to its constituents is that this practice invariably brings groups to the campuses that might otherwise never visit and would not know about the College and its programs. For example, the Lunch and Learn programs, sponsored by a local law firm, bring a wide variety of individuals to the Wheeling campus. Similarly, the Lunch 'n' Lecture programs of the New Martinsville campus bring many people that are new to the campus.

Core Component 3E: The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

> **Subcomponent 1.** Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

> **Subcomponent 2.** The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- As evidenced in the self-study through onsite communications, the institution offers a variety of co-curricular opportunities for students to enrich their educational experience, including student organizations associated with programs, student government, Phi Theta Kappa, student activities, and community service projects. Through participation in these various student leadership activities, students may obtain first-hand knowledge and experiences applicable to lifelong learning and social responsibility.

- Some career-related student organizations participate in community activities and events that reinforce job skills learned in the classroom. Health care students from the Nursing, Medical Assisting, Respiratory Care and Surgical Technician programs annually

participate in a Health and Wellness Fair on the Wheeling Campus where they experience real-life situations and can apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to their career field. Culinary students take their skills to the community through participation in activities such as The Green Initiative, Friends of the College Dinner, and the sustainability garden.   Student involvement in co-curricular activities fosters a commitment to service and community engagement and demonstrates ways that "the College responds to the educational, cultural and civic needs of the communities it serves. . ."

Team Determination on Criterion Three:

X Criterion is met; Commission follow-up recommended.

1. Monitoring Report on Faculty and Staff Credentials and Documentation due three months from IAC action

2. Focus Visit two years from IAC Action

Summary Statement on Criterion Three:

The institution is deemed to meet Criterion Three as evidenced by the degree to which the revised institutional mission leads the teaching and learning process as well as the support provided to students and faculty and as evidenced by the effective procedures that are in place to ensure that quality teaching and learning occur. The Institution has developed and realizes a culture of assessment and has transformed itself from a "teaching" to a "learning" institution. The quality of instruction, resources, and support for students learning is solid and effective.

While the commitment to assessment and continuous improvement is evident at all levels as the Institution strives to provide high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered, consideration should be given to addressing the following challenges: 1) difficulty of gathering accurate job placement data for programs since much of the data collection relies on self-reported surveys; 2) low response rates for student evaluation of teaching surveys; 3) adequate staffing in faculty and support areas; 4) the need for more faculty members to actively participate in retention initiatives; 5) assessment processes completed by 100% of the areas; 6) assessment of General Education goals; 7) adding health and wellness to the general education goals; 8) a thorough review of faculty credentials and development of individualized plans for meeting job requirements; 9) requiring background checks on all fulltime or adjunct faculty; others identified specifically in this report.

Northern has been delivering courses using a variety of distance learning technologies since 1988. Even though it was delivering courses there were no complete programs delivered entirely through distance learning. With the recent change to the definition of distance education by the Higher Learning Commission the College, in consultation with their staff liaison, decided to submit their request for approval to deliver degrees and certificates via distance education in conjunction with the 2013 Self-Study and Comprehensive Review.

Consultation on Distance Education

West Virginia Northern Community College is well positioned to continue with online course and program development. Additional professional staff and technology investments to meet the increasing demand for faculty support and student success will be required. Dynamic learning in land-based classrooms has improved student success and needs parallel application in distance learning classes. Student expectations of richer and more engaging online learning experiences will demand that the College have a plan for continuous improvement. Continuous improvement requires that the College holds itself accountable for student success via the many measures applied to traditional classrooms, but with the recognition that the online experience is different for both the teacher and the student. Testing security is an omnipresent concern for online classes. WVNCC should work to stay abreast of developing technologies and practices that could serve as an effective countermeasure to unethical student practices.

Online learning courses will be a part of the departmental assessment strategy. The assessment committee may wish to consider the development of procedures to compare the performance of students enrolled in in-person, hybrid and online courses. The outcomes of this analysis would provide data for continuous improvement and also help to assure that students experience a quality instructional offering no matter what the mode of delivery. With that objective in mind you will want to development instruments that are also appropriate for online delivery. Here is a list of measures that may be helpful in comparing the different modes of delivery: completion rate, success rate, retention, A – F grade distribution, and pre-post testing of learning outcomes as well as comparison of mastery of learning outcomes. There are some additional measures that are specific to online courses: time logged into course, participation in online chat or threaded discussion, quality of postings, use of the online resources embedded in the course, etc.

To date it appears that assessment is primarily conducted at the class level for general education outcomes. This will need to be expanded to incorporate assessment strategies at the course level on a college-wide basis and the program level. There is still much work to do to develop a comprehensive mechanism to collect and analyze the results and to use the results to improve student learning. The implementation should also fully incorporate online instruction. The results of the assessment are not yet used to drive budget decisions and this will be important during the early stages of implementation of comprehensive online learning programs. It will also be important for the next comprehensive visit for continuing accreditation.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs provides oversight of distance education with the support of the Distance Education Coordinator. This approach may be adequate in the short term but may not account for the holistic support that is important to assure that all aspects of a quality eLearning program are addressed. As the number of online programs grow and become more complex it may be advisable to consider the creation of a more comprehensive oversight and leadership structure that focuses upon the unique needs of online learning and the shared challenges that online programs generate. The structure would assure that division chairs and program directors are involved in making curriculum decisions that take into account both online and on-ground offerings and utilize the data from assessment of student learning activities for the purpose of continued improvement of instruction. This oversight structure could also include a component with the responsibility and authority to make recommendations about future online degree offerings. The leadership structure will benefit from continuity and comprehensiveness, a focus on online delivery and management

and planning for the future. Input will be required from decision makers in instruction, student services, technology support, fiscal and human resources.

Continuity and comprehensiveness is important because the goal is the delivery of entire programs, not just courses. The program requirements include all aspects of program design, delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement. The program concept includes major courses as well as general education courses and the coordination between faculty in those two sectors of the college. It also requires that a complete array of student services be accessible to participants in the virtual learning environment. A set of scheduling parameters would be helpful and a series of operating procedures would support consistency and quality. In addition, there are numerous questions to be answered, especially for career and technical programs. Some examples of questions that have been used by other institutions are listed below:

- How will you decide what courses and programs to offer in the online format?
- What is the interrelationship between online and campus enrollments?
- For career and technical programs will enrollment be limited to a cohort of students or will any student be allowed to enroll in the courses?
- If any student may enroll in courses how will you assure that there is sufficient space for program cohort students who need to take the course in the specific sequence?
- Will a new cohort begin each term or will new cohorts begin annually or bi-annually?
- How will you manage cohort enrollment when students get out of synch with the cohort because they become ill, must sit out for a term or do not satisfactorily complete a required course prerequisite?
- What will be the requirements for minimum class size and how will you assure that the minimum size will continue to be met as attrition occurs throughout the planned program sequence?
- How will you address transitional education needs?
- What are the plans for providing laboratory and clinical experiences for students?
- How will assessment of student learning be conducted for classes that have a laboratory or hands-on component?
- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of online programming?

Another aspect of the leadership decision relates to the organizational structure for leadership of online instruction. There are essentially two approaches to creation of an organizational structure to support online learning at an institution that also delivers on-ground courses. The first is to have on-ground instructional leaders also administer the delivery of online offerings. This approach has some benefits because the total body of offerings can be managed together by a single leadership group. The holistic implications of added and deleted sections such as changes in faculty assignments and student enrollment patterns may be easier to monitor. Under this scenario faculty and administrators need to be aware of the requirements for online programming as well on-ground offerings. This approach may facilitate the implementation of technology strategies used for online instruction into on-ground courses because administrators oversee both programs and are exposed to the features and benefits of online strategies. The downside is that administrators are operating as generalists and because they supervise multiple delivery modes, they may not have the opportunity to develop specific expertise for innovation and advancement of distance learning.

The second approach is to create a separate department or division with responsibility for online offerings. Under this scenario the focus is on the delivery and the unique requirements for delivering online programs. Under this administrative structure it may be easier to develop a focus of expertise in online delivery. Coordination between online and on-ground programming is essential because changes in one sector can have a direct effect on the other, e.g., if additional online sections of a course are offered then enrollments in on-ground courses may suffer.

Either approach can work as long as the key components continue to be addressed: common learning outcomes for all classes regardless of where and how courses are delivered, oversight for curricular outcomes, assessment of student learning, engagement of student learners, and ready access to instructional and student services.

Miscellaneous suggestions for online learning:

- You may wish to consider developing a common format for your online course shells. Online students then become accustomed to the format and know where to find the features of their courses.

- Investigate opportunities for professional development through participation in webinars and conferences.

- Implementation of the goals and objectives of the strategic plan that relate to distance education are important "next steps" for the continuing improvement of the college's distance learning offerings. In addition to the components of the plan the college may wish to consider these additional items:

  1. Develop a formal procedure for determining which degrees will be offered via distance education
  2. Develop a sequence of courses for each online degree offering to assure that students are able to complete degree requirements in a timely manner
  3. Develop a comprehensive promotional and marketing plan online learning programs that addresses the multiple audiences served by online and technology-assisted learning
  4. Clarify the workload requirements for faculty – Is it possible for a full-time faculty to teach only distance learning courses?
  5. Continually assess the student and technical support needs of distance learning students
  6. Continue to review the professional development and technical support needs for distance learning faculty
  7. Investigate the interrelationships between online and on-ground enrollments
  8. Continue to assess the effectiveness of student learning in distance education courses; measure the same outcomes as on-ground modifying assessment strategies as necessary; also compare effectiveness of online and on-ground courses
  9. Expand assessment in distance learning to include college-wide course assessment, program assessment and institutional assessment
  10. Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the structure for leadership, supervision and oversight of online learning programs and their coordination with ground-based instructional programming.

Additional suggestion related to Criterion Three

- One suggestion to increase student participation in faculty evaluation might be to offer chances to win rewards (TV, DVD, iPod, etc.) for completing and submitting the teacher evaluation instrument.

CRITERION FOUR: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement. The institution 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.

Core Component 4A: The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

Subcomponent 1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

Subcomponent 2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

Subcomponent 3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Subcomponent 4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Subcomponent 5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Subcomponent 6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- A review of program reviews documents validated that the institution has a regular program review cycle to assure that the curriculum remains relevant and regularly assesses general education as part of its assessment process utilizing a systematic plan that involves faculty, staff, students, business and industry, and community leaders. At the time of the visit, 23 of 26 areas had submitted a full assessment cycle of their assessment and inclusion of general education components. To complete the assessment of 100% of the areas, it is important that the remaining three programs conduct and submit their respective program assessments.

- An interview with the Registrar confirmed that the College evaluates all credit that it transcripts and has a process it follows to evaluate experiential credit which is primarily applied as a part of the Board of Governors program. A transcript evaluation is conducted once an official transcript is received. General transfer agreements and the WV Core Coursework Transfer Agreement are used to guide most transcript evaluations but when transcripts from other colleges are received faculty assist in determining the equivalency of course outcomes. Transfer agreements are posted on the College website for easy access by students. The practices are aligned with the transfer credit practices of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

- The 2012-13 WVNCC Catalog includes the institutional policy that the College follows to assure the quality of transfer credit it accepts. This information is on pages 86 and 87. Posting the policy assists students who intend to transfer credit to the institution and provided transparency related to policy and procedure.

- Master Course Guides which are developed by the faculty identify the description, prerequisites, student learning outcomes and student performance objectives for each course. The Curriculum Committee approves all MCGs. Division Chairs or Program Directors ensure that the outcomes are equivalent wherever and however the section is taught. Interviews with the VPAA and Division Chairs verified that the institution's Early Entrance (Dual Credit) program is administered consistent with Institution guidelines and State policy (Series 19) to ensure that the quality of the courses is equivalent to collegiate courses.

- WVNCC has program-specific specialized accreditation with 12 Specialized Accreditation Agencies such as the American Health Information Management Association, the Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care and the College Reading and Learning Association. The College publishes the list of programs with specialized accreditation in the Catalog and on the institution's website. Maintaining a continued relationship with these accrediting agencies assures that the curriculum is of the highest quality and that industry standards are incorporated into the program requirements.

- The Office of Institutional Research (IR) confirmed that the College uses multiple measures to evaluate success of graduates. The College recognizes two distinct groups of graduates: those who enter the workforce immediately and those who transfer to a four-year institution or university to complete their education. The follow-up of these groups follows two different procedures. For students who enter the workforce, IR tracks the graduation rate, licensure statistics, and job placement data. For the students who transfer to four-year institutions or universities, IR attempts to track transfer rate and transfer success but this is difficult when the transfer institution is out of state or will not provide the data. The IR Office collects the data for both tracks, and the faculty reviews the data and develops revisions suggested by the data.

Core Component 4B: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Subcomponent 2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Team Determination: X Core Component is met

Evidence:

- Learning goals for courses are defined in Master Course Guides (MCGs) and program goals are published in catalog course descriptions. The guides define student outcomes expectations that become the basis for classroom, program and college assessment processes. According to the College's Assessment Plan the Assessment Committee strives to manage the process of multi-level assessment and use the information for continuous improvement of instruction.

- As a part of the program continuous improvement loop and the assessment process, Master Course Guides (MCG) are reviewed and updated and the degree to which they are followed is documented and reported to the Assessment Committee, advisory committees, and the administration. According to the VPAA who holds the responsibility for oversight for the use of the MCG, all sections of a course are required to follow the MCG, regardless of location, modality, or the instructor. This expectation contributes to consistency of program quality and learning goals and communicates expected outcomes to students and external constituents.

- The institution's assessment process provides documentation to demonstrate that information gained from assessment is used to improve student learning in all areas of the Institution; although, consideration could be given to increasing the frequency of some assessments. For example, annual program assessment would provide more timely input to the data-driven decision-making process of reviewing programs for relevancy.

- Assessment of student learning is faculty-driven and follows an established process for assessment of student learning in courses, programs, and general education. Although, pertaining to the area of general education, in order to establish a comparative analysis/benchmark to similar institutions of higher learning (nationally-normed), assessment of the students' ability to grasp and understand the Institution's general education learning outcomes may be made utilizing a mid-level assessment instrument such as CAAP or others.

Core Component 4C: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

Subcomponent 2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- The change in the institution's mission emphasizes student success instead of student access and demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates. A review of the Retention Plan specifies qualitative goals for retention, persistence and completion but it does not include benchmarks and quantitative goals for future performance. Another suggestion for improvement of the plan is to assign specific responsibility for the outcomes and designation the resource allocations that will be necessary to accomplish the goals.

- The institution has implemented a number of initiatives to enhance student success including hiring a director of academic student support, applying for and receiving a Title III grant focused on student retention and success, and reforming its transitional education courses. The State Compact, Institution Strategic Plan, and College Retention Plan delineate specific goals for student retention, persistence, and completion.

- The institution collects and analyzes data on retention, persistence, and completion with institutional data published in Compact reports and strategic plan updates, and program data submitted to program coordinators as part of the annual program review. The use of retention, persistence, and completion data to prepare the Title III grant application and changes made to transitional math are two examples that demonstrate that the institution uses this information to make improvements.

- Review of documents in the resource room verify that the institution's processes for collecting, analyzing, and reporting retention, persistence, and completion data are consistent with State, HLC, and IPEDS requirements and reflect good practice.

Team Determination on Criterion Four:

      X Criterion is met

Summary Statement on Criterion Four:

The institution 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. As reported in

the Self Study and verified during the onsite visit, evaluation and assessment procedures are in place and designed to ensure the quality of the educational programs, the teaching and learning related to educational programs, the various learning environments, and a wide array of support services provided to students and faculty. In addition, evidence of the success of their graduates is gathered as a part of the continuous improvement loop; although, the accuracy and reliability of some data has been questioned. Related suggestions have been made regarding investigation of strategies that will address this challenge. The institution is diligent in its efforts to gather and utilize data regarding retention, persistence, and completion rates within degree and certificate programs.

While the institution has implemented processes to assess all areas of the institution; consideration could be given to increasing the frequency of some assessments so as to provide more timely input for data-driven decision-making. Other specific recommendations were made that would address identified challenges; although, the Team Determination was that the Criterion Four was met.

Consultation on Student Retention, Persistence and Completion

The retention, persistence and completion agenda is being addressed in community colleges across the country, and West Virginia Northern Community College has identified and has made some progress in implementing changes to effectively address challenges in this area. Foremost, is the need for consistent data collection that will provide timely information for this agenda. Identify the key performance indicators in the student success agenda and determine who and what information will need to be collected annually and others that might be collected every other year or even every three years. A broad-based cross discipline team might be assembled to supplement the limited staffing in the IR office to assist with the agenda. This team might begin by defining the terms retention, persistence, and completion. If these terms are defined in a way that aligns with State definitions or VFA definitions, results might be produced that allow benchmarking with other institutions similar to WVNCC. Carefully identify those institutions that are similar to you for development of your list of benchmark institutions. Many colleges and universities are in the student success agenda and there are now some that have identifying promising practices. The CCSSE survey might be utilized to identify a baseline for the college, and allow the college to identify promising practices that might work at WVNCC.

Certainly part of the student success agenda is identifying best practices in developmental education-part of your Title III grant, and student progress to college readiness and success in entry level classes in broader disciplines. Some classes might be taken concurrently with above 100 level courses. Progress along a continuum toward degree completion should be monitored with examination of incentive systems for student course completion, progress in degree completion, and maximizing credentials along the way. IPEDS data will only show the progress of the first-time, full-time student who gain a degree over a three-year period, probably about 10%-15% of the total student body. Other cohorts might be formed that will capture the patterns of more of the student body. The examination of student services practices should be implemented to ensure that students are advised appropriately to allow maximum progress. Time and choice are the enemies of college completion; devise incentives for students to promote persistence and completion. The Board of Governors will need to be engaged in this work and will be tasked with college faculty and staff to develop college policies and procedures that clearly delineate what outcomes the College is seeking. Academic quality does not have to be compromised. Although challenging, providing systematic support both in and out of the classroom will begin to make a difference. As you

move into the new accreditation cycle and participate in the open pathway, a quality project focused on this agenda will allow the College to explore what works for your environment and for your students.

Following is a list of resources for student retention and engagement that may be helpful:

Access to Success (A2S) information that highlights best practices for improving college completion numbers http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/PolicyAndAdvocacy/PolicyPublications/Policy_Matters/College%20Completion%20October%202011.pdf

National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition
http://www.sc.edu/fye/

"Ten Steps to Better Student Engagement"
http://www.edutopia.org/project-learning-teaching-strategies

"Strengthening Student Engagement"
http://www.leadered.com/pdf/strengthen%20student%20engagement%20white%20paper.pdf

"Instructional Strategies to Increase Student Engagement"
http://www.pbis.vcu.edu

"Increasing Student Engagement"
http://wssu-cetl-tlc.blogspot.com/2009/04/increasing-student-engagement.html

"Building Student Engagement: 15 Strategies for the College Classroom"
http://www.osuokcprofdev.net/facultyfocusreports/tp_student-engagement.pdf

National Service Learning Clearinghouse
http://www.servicelearning.org/

Learning Communities National Resource Center
http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/lcfaq.htm

CRITERION FIVE: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. The institution'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.

Core Component 5A: The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Subcomponent 2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

Subcomponent 3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

Subcomponent 5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- The College has a strong financial resource base as evidenced by the increase in assets over 10 years, performance on financial ratios, and ample cash reserves, however, impending budget cuts for the next fiscal year and anticipated decreases in enrollment will impact the College's ability to maintain or expand programming. The primary reserve ratio, return on net assets, and the viability ratio are indicators of a solid financial position. At the time of the visit, the College had an annual budget of $14 million and reserves of $9 million. The CFO has anticipated the future economic situation and through careful planning, increased efficiency and conservative spending positioned the College well to compensate for the looming budget reduction. Interviews and examination of independent financial audits, IPEDs data, budget committee minutes, the website and the self-study survey provide evidence that the college is on firm financial ground, and short and long range plans for the future in ensuring continued capacity for sustaining educational programming and supporting and strengthening quality in the future.

- The facilities are exemplary, clean and well-maintained with few deferred maintenance concerns. The most recent master capital plan expired in 2012, but clearly there is increased recent activity in preparing two laboratories in Wheeling and Weirton to meet workforce development needs in the service district. The College should move ahead to prepare a master capital planning document for the future. In addition, the proposed Barnes and Noble bookstore and student life space enhancement in Wheeling provide continued evidence of enhancing facilities.

- The technological infrastructure provides adequate support for College operations. Interviews with the technology staff and with all constituent groups, the self-study survey, and minutes of the Institutional Technology Committee indicate that the College has technologies connecting the three campuses through the integration of data, voice, and video services. Interviews with faculty and classified staff and students indicate that there are issues from time to time with connectivity from the Weirton Campus to New Martinsville campus that has been disruptive to class delivery. The college would benefit from continuing to identify new technologies that will enhance technology services and allow beta testing for possible broader application across the campuses.

- Northern has a zero-based budgeting model and resource allocation process that involves campus constituencies. However, the methods by which the final product is derived suggest a need for more constituent involvement and transparency. The budget committee oversees the budget development process. The process solicits and receives suggestions for new personnel through the Human Resource office and submits the requests to the President for consideration. Materials are reviewed and the President refers the recommendations back to the budget committee along with recommendations

for any salary increases. All information is filtered through the Budget Committee who makes recommendations to the Board of Governors for approval; they review the data over two consecutive Board meetings along with tuition and fee recommendations to finalize the budget. Interviews with the administrative personnel, classified staff, and faculty indicate that all parties are satisfied with the process and their access to resources to do their jobs.

- The self-study indicates that "WVNCC adheres to the Commission's 'Good Practices in Determining Qualified Faculty' and prides itself that its faculty members are qualified instructors, as well as subject matter experts in their field." Interviews with division chairs and instructional leadership confirmed their understanding that Faculty members teaching in general education areas are required to have a master's degree or 18 graduate hours in the subject matter area and instructors in technical areas are required to have one degree higher than the level being taught or have significant work experience directly related to the field of study. The team could find no Rule or policy that specifies these faculty qualifications. The College is encouraged to incorporate the expectations for faculty credentials into the Employee Reference Manual to guide future faculty hires and the assignment of teaching loads.

- Performance on the State Report Card and the Institutional Strategic Plan demonstrate that institutional goals are realistic in light of resources. In September of every year the State Department of Finance sends out guidelines to community colleges regarding the timeline for budget submissions to the State. Interviews with constituents, review of budgets and committee minutes affirm that the institution exercises thoughtful due diligence in budget planning on the front end, and performance on the State Report Card ensures that the College is well-positioned for future challenges that they are likely to face in the future.

Core Component 5B: The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

Subcomponent 2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

Subcomponent 3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- The institution has policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance. Review of the organizational chart, Campus Communicator, the

minutes from the rule development committee, the Board By-Laws and all-college committees and council minutes show that all constituents have opportunities for engagement in institutional governance.

- While opportunities for input into institutional governance exist, improvement of communication could strengthen the College's decision-making processes. The team heard in interviews and learned through survey results that concerns remain about communication across all employee levels. The institution should continue to address ways to identify what kinds of communications do not seem to be getting to their intended audience and then develop additional means to address them.

- The Board of Governors is knowledgeable about the institution and their role as a board. It provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. The Board demonstrates fiscal oversight through approval of College budget and capital plans and academic oversight through program approval and approval of program reviews. Results of program reviews are examined and through the budgeting process are identified for funding in a strategic manner. Board of Governors minutes and interviews with constituents verified that proposed policies and practices are carefully debated and approved to ensure institutional vitality in the future. The Board is supportive of the President and his vision for the institution. The members were passionate about Northern's unique contributions to its communities and to the region.

- West Virginia Northern Community College has a governance structure and processes that may be characterized as primarily informal. Formal structures for shared decision-making could be strengthened to ensure a collaborative culture. In addition, some policy and understandings are developed locally in response to state directives for action taken by the Board of Governors. Items that require State approval are budgets, tuition and fees increases over 5%, new program approvals, program discontinuances and program reviews. Some governance rules are approved by the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability at the state level; some of these actions require companion rules at the local level.

- WVNCC has written policies and is diligent in adhering to local, state and federal laws. Written policies and procedures, referred to as "Rules" are clear and are available to all employees in policy documents available on the College's website. Review of the Rules Committee minutes, the Rules manual and interviews with all constituents validate that careful review and debate occurs before new rules are implemented or changes made to current rules.

Core Component 5C: The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

Subcomponent 1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

Subcomponent 2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

Subcomponent 3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

Subcomponent 4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current

capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

Subcomponent 5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- Strategic plans are developed on a 5-year cycle and aligned with State initiatives. The College's resource allocation is tied to strategic priorities. Focused on five goals of student success, access, workforce development, infrastructure needs of technology, fiscal, physical, and human resources, and quality, the College has developed with input from the faculty, staff and administration a targeted strategic plan for the near future. Tools to ensure that focus continues on College outcomes include the design of their dashboard and the monitoring of budget through reports to the Board of Governors throughout the year. Interviews confirmed that all constituents are involved and active in the planning process and review of the plan indicated the specific strategies, timelines, and leadership assignments for plan components.

- Progress on strategic plan goals and State Compact goals are monitored yearly and revised as appropriate. Plan focus areas are led by identified administrators to ensure that timelines, institutional research areas are reviewed and adjusted as necessary each year. Outcomes for each initiative are delineated, and the institutional research office designs and implements data reports as suggested. These procedures were verified by college councils, committee minutes and interviews with faculty, staff and administration.

- Institutional planning is based upon understanding of internal capacity and external environment. The planning process and context of State Compact initiatives is the framework from which the plan is derived. The College has evidence through interviews and minutes that there is an awareness of the internal capacity and external environment, although no official Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, or Threats (SWOT) were noted in the planning materials.

- The College publishes an annual report of progress toward meeting goals of the strategic plan and makes adjustments based upon results and changing trends. Evidence though minutes of all-college committees and councils indicate that the five strategic plan components are reviewed annually and adjusted as needed.

- The College's current master capital plan has expired. A new focus and plan will ensure that facilities and campus projects are well-planned for the future, yet meeting the needs of a changing external and internal environment. A comprehensive five-year plan (2007 to 2012) was reviewed with detailed documents, indicating sound planning for future initiatives. The next wave of capital planning has yet to be formally identified.

- Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization. Reflective in the mission statement itself are references to the College's look to the future. Demographic shifts are noted in research documents,

technology needs are identified in the budgetary process, and globalization efforts are identified in the mission statement and used for planning.

Core Component 5D: The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

    Subcomponent 1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

    Subcomponent 2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Team Determination: **X** Core Component is met

Evidence:

- Based upon reviews of student success data, the College applied for and received a Title III grant to develop student success initiatives. The grant focuses on student success, graduation and retention activities. Examples of grant activities are the development of a test preparation program for developmental math, writing, and reading, increased advising services, additional full-time math faculty to assist with test preparation, boot camp programs, and teaching of transitional math classes, and professional development for all staff. Student support services of counseling and tutoring were expanded as a result of the grant as well.

- The State Report Card and IPEDS Benchmark Reports are used as measures of institutional performance. Other key performance indicators may be necessary to ensure a comprehensive examination of data that will assist the college in making data-driven decisions. A clear delineation of where the data is located, how it can be applied, and how user-friendly it is should be noted. Interviews with constituents, review of minutes of committees and councils, and conversations with lead administrators indicate that a more deliberate, systematic commitment to institutional research would provide timely and informative reports to serve as a basis for development of a data-driven culture.

- While the college has made significant progress toward becoming more performance-based through its institutional research office, it is suggested that the analysis function of various data reports is limited or non-existent. Data reports are presented in a format that includes little analysis, making it imperative for each reader to come to their own conclusions. Ultimately this is time-consuming and results in difficulty making decisions based on a series of charts and graphs. The need for systematic data and analysis is evident. The College would benefit from clarification of key performance indicators in core functional areas of the campus community and the identification of a common data set for the development of benchmarks and the establishment of goals for continued improvement. Interviews with constituent groups, minutes of college committees and councils, and review of institutional research documents indicate that the development of more focused reports with full analysis to contribute to strengthening a performance-based culture and ensure that data-driven decisions are utilized. This is especially critical in times of scarce resources.

Team Determination on Criterion Five:

Criterion is met

Summary Statement on Criterion Five:

The College's strategic planning document reflects current initiatives within a timeframe, indicating who is responsible for the outcome. Further, the plan is aligned with state initiatives. An external and internal scan of the environment might be helpful in preparing future documents.

Students interviewed were positive about the college and their experiences with few exceptions, and felt that the faculty and staff were committed to their learning and success.

Foundation growth is evident over the past ten years, and it remains a challenge to create the margin of excellence that additional resources and partnerships will bring. The college is applauded for its partnerships with business and industry, as evidenced by the positive feedback from community members.

The combination of the current fund balances, the college reserves, some growing Foundation assets and the recent history of prudent fiscal management provide a sound resource base for the college.

The College should strengthen the institutional research area of the college by first identifying the most critical parts of the research agenda, then designing and implementing the data collection component, and carefully analyzing the results for institutional data-driven decision making.

Overall, the self-study documents, personnel interviews, documents in the resource room, and the addition and expansion of existing programs are indicative of an environment supportive of innovation and change in response to communities' needs.

Consultation on Institutional Effectiveness

The Team has recognized the progress of the office of institutional effectiveness and its desire to become more data-driven. The size of the staffing in the office will limit the data that can be realistically collected, so it is essential that the staff and the campus as a whole clearly identify the data that must be collected for outside agencies (IPEDS, State Reports, the Higher Learning Commission's new processes) and data that will be necessary to collect and use for internal decision-making. Starting with the mission statement itself, identify the key concepts and assign key performance indicators to each concept. Examine broadly the total outcomes with the key performance indicators that the college will needed to complete an annual agenda. Determine which KPIs might be collected on alternate years or every three years. The list of KPIs and other data should be widely circulated to all constituents of the college for their input to share what the college will produce. Determine what elements of the data might be produced by units outside of this office. This will create an understanding of what the office of institutional effectiveness will do and what they will not do. By charting the research agenda, a document can be produced to clarify where the responsibilities lie.

The college has secured software that will allow the beginnings of a data warehousing system. One of the key tasks of data reports is to provide an executive summary of the

performance indicators and other data to ensure that every reader who is utilizing the system does not have to reinterpret the data and draw their own conclusions. Place all of the analyzed reports on an internal portal fully accessible by faculty and staff and build the warehouse.   Access to programmers and customization of certain reports would allow certain component of the data reports to be "real time." Enrollment registrations might be an example of utilizing "real time" data to alert progress toward an enrollment goal.

Finally, the Team would like to encourage you to explore the resources available on the HLC website, AACC's Voluntary Framework of Accountability, and the Completion Arch document which will provide suggestions for key performance indicators. Using these data would allow the college to benchmark themselves with similar colleges and universities across the nation, as well as benchmark with other West Virginia colleges utilizing the institutional effectiveness systems. In this era of accountability, the institutional effectiveness function is a growing one, and there will be no shortage of topics to cover. The key to limited staffing and a growing office will be to carefully define what the office will do and what they will not do. Over time there will be data reports that can be created through templates designed in the IR office and which allow data to be pulled from others areas of the campus to use in decision-making.

V. TEAM RECOMMENDATION

West Virginia Northern Community College is an organization characterized by dramatic transformation. Building upon more than four decades of service to students as a comprehensive community college, WVNCC is reinventing itself to be a critical partner in the economic revival of the Northern Panhandle Region of West Virginia. From the heart of its mission the College strives "to provide higher education empowering individuals to achieve academic and career goals leading to a competent workforce which excels in a global economy". Highly valued by its constituents and stakeholders, the college forms and honors partnerships in ways that build stronger communities and provides services unavailable elsewhere. From human services to job training, WVNCC continues to serve the broader educational needs of its students with integrity. Through its successful educational programs, its service and outreach to members of the community, and its partnerships to foster economic and workforce development, the College is responsive to the unique needs of its citizens.

Northern's mission is appropriate for the communities that it serves. The College has responded with creative solutions to state mandates, a severely depressed economy and underprepared students. It has made positive strides in the implementation of assessment of student learning and makes the findings readily available to constituencies to guide continuous improvement. It is working toward development of a data-driven culture with support from Institutional Research and an expanding institutional effectiveness initiative that will be extremely important in light of impending budget reductions.

In spite of poverty rates that range from 13.6 to 18.7 percent, diminishing state revenues, and a declining population base, the College continues to deliver high quality instruction to meet the needs of its student population. In the current economic climate, enrollments are outpacing resources, forcing a pattern of constraint. And as the gap between the college's goals and revenues grows, the college faces difficult choices.   The college must develop greater efficiencies, coping strategies and processes aligned to accomplish its evolving mission. The college needs to carefully evaluate its capacity, and direct its existing resources to mission-critical ends, at the same time working to increase its resource base.

In addition to the financial concerns, Northern is encouraged to continue to pursue the following continuous improvement initiatives:

- Gathering feedback from external constituents – graduates, transfer institutions, employers
- Developing procedures to assess student computer literacy and preparedness to for success in a technological world
- Enhancing the effectiveness of internal communication
- Assessing the adequacy and documentation of faculty and staff credentials
- Revising the job descriptions for division chairs to incorporate oversight for curriculum and staffing

In summary, West Virginia Northern Community College is embarking on challenging times. Except for the concern about the appropriateness and documentation of faculty and staff qualifications, the Team has verified that the college continues to meet the five criteria for accreditation. The weight of evidence in community engagement, learning and teaching, instructional support and the commitment to student success fully justify this Team's recommendation for another ten years of continued accreditation. Based upon its past performance, its resilience in difficult situations, its talented staff and visionary leadership, its passionate faculty, and its immense community support, we believe that the College is poised to continue its tradition of "being a community of learners who model integrity, mutual respect, partnerships, and a commitment to excellence and community service" to assist students in achieving their educational dreams and the community in reconstructing its economic vitality.

A. Affiliation Status

1. **Recommendation:** No change

2. **Timing for Next Comprehensive Evaluation:** 2022-2023

3. **Rationale:**

   Based upon review of the self-study, the supporting materials and the campus visits the Team believes that West Virginia Northern Community College has demonstrated that it meets the Criteria and Core Components for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission.   Therefore, it is recommended that the next comprehensive visit be scheduled for 2022-2023.

4. **Criterion-related Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):**

   Monitoring: Monitoring Report and Focus Visit
   Topic: Faculty and Staff Qualifications (Core Component 3C, Sub-component 2 and Assumed Practice B.2.a.)

   Due Date: Monitoring Report three months following IAC action and
             Focus Visit two years following IAC action

Rationale and Expectations:

A review of targeted personnel files revealed that appropriate documentation of faculty and staff credentials was not present and that some faculty did not have appropriate academic credentials for the classes that they were teaching in AY2012-13. Twelve faculty files were selected from course assignments that have a tendency toward deviation from the expected credentials. The faculty files included on-campus full-time and adjunct faculty, as well as dual credit faculty, with an emphasis in transfer, business, nursing and dual credit faculty. The faculty transcript files were reviewed and compared with current teaching assignments. Only four of the faculty met the College's stated academic requirements. Of the eight faculty who did not meet the requirements, six had insufficient graduate coursework in the discipline and two did not have transcripts in their files. Based upon conversations with the instructional leadership team, the visitation team does not expect that this is an authentic representation of the College's academic credentials. However, it seems that there are some gaps in evaluation of credentials and documentation. It also appears that there is a need for further training of staff in evaluation of credentials and more accountability in monitoring the presence of transcripts and the ongoing changes to teaching assignments and credential requirements. It looks as if the College is not adhering to the Commission's "Good Practices in Determining Qualified Faculty." Of the three administrator files that were reviewed one file did not contain all transcripts to document the required academic credentials. Further, the College needs to evaluate its hiring and credentialing practices to ensure that future faculty and staff hires have credentials appropriate to their assigned position and that appropriate transcripts are on file.

For the monitoring report which is due three months after IAC action, the College will be expected to audit its personnel files to review the credentials of faculty and determine whether the credentials are appropriate for their teaching assignments. Any discrepancies from the College's policy should be documented and a plan developed to remediate the situation. The plan might include professional development to bolster weak credentials, reassignment or dismissal of those with inadequate academic credentials.

The audit of the personnel files should also document the presence of transcripts for all personnel whose position description requires specific academic preparation. In cases of missing information to Human Resources Office should establish a deadline to complete files that are lacking required elements.

The final component of the monitoring report is to be the development of a plan to ensure that the qualifications of future hires meet college and state system requirements and transcripts are present in personnel files of all individuals whose position has specific academic requirements. The plan should also include procedures for the assignment of future teaching loads to ensure that appropriately-qualified faculty are teaching all courses regardless of location or delivery mode. This should include professional development for division chairs and program directors of the evaluation of faculty credentials.

The purpose of the focus visit in two years is to conduct a physical examination of the personnel files and compare qualifications with instructional assignments. It is also to determine whether the concerns of the visitation team – no transcripts and

inadequate graduate coursework have been remedied. Finally, the visit will evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of the plan to assure and document appropriate credentials for faculty, staff and administrators.

Conditions:

If West Virginia Northern Community College and has not provided an adequate monitoring report and plan or the issue has not been resolved at the time of the focus visit, an evaluation team or Commission staff will recommend appropriate action.

5. **Federal Compliance Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):**

Monitoring: N/A

Rationale:

B. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

VI. EMBEDDED CHANGES IN AFFILIATION STATUS

Did the team review any of the following types of change in the course of its evaluation? Check Yes or No for each type of change.

( ) Yes   (X) No   Legal Status

( ) Yes   (X) No   Degree Level

( ) Yes   (X) No   Program Change

(X) Yes   ( ) No   Distance or Correspondence Education

( ) Yes   (X) No   Contractual or Consortial Arrangements

( ) Yes   (X) No   Mission or Student Body

( ) Yes   (X) No   Clock or Credit Hour

( ) Yes   (X) No   Additional Locations or Campuses

( ) Yes   (X) No   Access to Notification

( ) Yes   (X) No   Access to Expedited Desk Review

( ) Yes   (X) No   Teach-out Arrangement

( ) Yes   (X) No   Other Change

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

None

Appendix A
Interactions with Constituencies

Assessment Committee (12)
Board of Governors (7)
Chancellor of the West Virginia Community and Technical College System
Chief Human Resources Officer
Classified Staff at New Martinsville Campus (7)
Classified Staff at Weirton Campus (7)
Classified Staff at the Wheeling Campus (34)
College leadership for Criterion One functions (8)
College leadership for Criterion Two functions (6)
College leadership for Criterion Three and Four functions (17)
College leadership for Criterion Five functions (5)
Community Members at New Martinsville Campus (3)
Community Members at Weirton Campus (5)
Community Members at Wheeling Campus (16)
Curriculum Committee (6)
Dean, Community Relations
Dean, New Martinsville Campus
Dean, Weirton Campus
Director of Facilities
Director of Libraries
Distance Education Committee and Faculty (12)
Distance Education Coordinator
Division Chairs (4)
Executive Assistant to the President for Development
Faculty at New Martinsville Campus (7)
Faculty at Weirton Campus (8)
Faculty at Wheeling Campus (27)
Foundation Staff
Human Resources Work Group (3)
Institutional Research Director and Staff (4)
Information Technology Director and Staff (5)
Learning Resources Center Work Group – Wheeling (4)
President
President's Cabinet (8)
Self-Study Steering Committee (16)
Student Services Work Group (14)
Student Support Work Group (6)
Students at New Martinsville Campus (7)
Students at Weirton Campus (12)
Students at Wheeling Campus (19)
Vice President, Academic Affairs
Vice President, Administration/CFO
Vice President, Student Services
Vice President, Workforce and Economic Development
Workforce Work Group (4)

Appendix B
Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

2 + 2 Agreements
2002-03 Self Study for Comprehensive Visit
2003 HLC Team Report for Comprehensive Visit
2007 HLC Team Report for Focus Visit
2012 Fact Book
2012-13 Self Study for Comprehensive Visit
Academic Student Support Services Guide
Accelerated Learning Program English Pilot Study Proposal
Accelerated Transitional Math Proposal
Affirmative Action Plan 2010-12
Annual Crime Reports, 2008-2012
Annual Institutional Data System (AIDU), including A133 Audits
Assessment Plan, 2012
Board of Governors By-Laws
Board of Governors Minutes
Board of Governors Rules
Branch Campus Reports
CCSSE Reports
College Budget
Committee Minutes
Credit and Clock Hours Worksheet
Crosswalk between WVNCC and State Master Plan
Crosswalk to the New Criteria for Accreditation, West Virginia Northern Community College
    Self-Study
Community Education Schedules, Fall and Spring 2013
Community Self Study Survey
Course Syllabi
Distance Education Coordinator Job Description
Early Entrance Brochure
Facilities Master Plan
Faculty and Staff Councils and Committees
Faculty Document Center
Faculty Position Description and Responsibilities
Federal Compliance materials
Final Report to the West Virginia Select Committee on Outcomes-Based Funding Models in
    Higher Education – Jan. 8, 2013
General Education Goals
General Transfer Agreements
Grades First
http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/54/54029.html
http://techctr1.wvncc.edu/AcademicAssessmentReports/
http://workforcewv.org/lmi/cntyform2.cfm?SelectCnty=West%20Virginia
Institutional Snapshot, 2011-12
IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2010
Learning Community Pilot Study Proposal

LRC Annual Report 2011-12
LRC Computer Usage Guidelines
LRC Gate Counts
Marketing Materials
Master Course Guides
Personnel Files
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning 2006
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning 2012
Progress Report on Middle College 2009-2012
Quality Matters materials/rubric
Response to HLC regarding default rates – Nov. 9, 2012
Schedule of Classes – Fall, 2012 and Spring, 2013
Self-Study Steering Committee Notes and Agendas
Self-Study Surveys
Specialized Accreditation Reports
Staff Unit Assessments
Strategic Plan 2011-2016
Strategic Plan Progress Report
Substantive Change Request to Deliver Certificates and Degrees Online, 2013
Technology Plan
Title III Grant and Annual Report – 2/11/13
Three-Year Retention Strategic Plan – Fall, 2010
Web-based Math Foundation Grant Proposal
Weirton Daily Times – August 29, 2011
West Virginia Code 18.1.1 – Higher Education Governance
West Virginia Higher Education Report Cards 2002-2012
WV Core Coursework Transfer Agreement
WVNCC Adjunct Faculty Handbook, 2012-13
WVNCC Audited Financial Statement, 2010-11, 2011-12
WVNCC Catalog, 2012-13
WVNCC Master Plan – Meeting the Challenge
WVNCC Employee Reference Manual, March 2013 (draft)
WVNCC Organizational Chart
WVNCC Student Handbook, 2012-13
WVCTCS Master Plan
www.legis.state.wv.us
www.wvcommerce.org
www.wvctcs.org
www.wvhepc.org
www.wvncc.edu

Appendix C-1

Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

Institutional Records of Student Complaints

The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.

1. Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints as well as the history of complaints received and processed with a particular focus in that history on the past three or four years.

2. Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.

3. Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into its review and planning processes.

4. Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.

5. Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.

6. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

   (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

   (   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

   (   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

   (   ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

   Comments:

   Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

Publication of Transfer Policies

The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.

1. Review the institution's transfer policies.

2. Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its web site) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.

3. Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions and any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions.

4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

   (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

   (   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

   (   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

   (   ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

   Comments:

   Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

Practices for Verification of Student Identity

The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education and appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students and to protect their privacy.

1. Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams, and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.

2. Check that any fees related to verification and not included in tuition are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance courses (e.g., a proctoring fee paid by students on the day of the proctored exam).

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

   (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

Title IV Program Responsibilities

The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program.

This requirement has several components the institution and team must address:

- *General Program Requirements. The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*

- *Financial Responsibility Requirements. The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion Five if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)*

  Default Rates. The institution has provided the Commission with information about its three year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note for 2012 and thereafter institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact Commission staff.

- *Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures. The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*

- *Student Right to Know. The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and*

provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion One if the team determines that disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)

▪ ***Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance.*** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically in the course catalog or student handbook. Note that the Commission does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance but does anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.*

▪ ***Contractual Relationships.*** *The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Contractual Change Application on the Commission's web site for more information.)*

▪ ***Consortial Relationships.*** *The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Consortial Change Application on the Commission's web site for more information.)*

1. Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.

2. Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution's compliance or whether the institution's auditor in the A-133 has raised any issues about the institution's compliance as well as look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.

3. If an institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the federal compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.

4. If issues have been raised with the institution's compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution's ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity (*Core Component 2.A and 2.B*).

5. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

    (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: WVNCC was targeted by the HLC's non-financial indicators to have higher than average financial aid default rates. The College prepared a response to the HLC in November, 2012 outlining the steps that they have taken to reduce default rates and demonstrating a reduction in the number of students defaulting by 26.9% in the most recent year. The team believes that the College has been proactive in addressing the repayment issues and that while continued monitoring of the situation by the College will be important, and that due to the interventions, the default rates should continue to improve in the future.

Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

Required Information for Students and the Public

1. Verify that the institution publishes fair, accurate, and complete information on the following topics: the calendar, grading, admissions, academic program requirements, tuition and fees, and refund policies.

2. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

(X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.

1. Review the institution's disclosure about its accreditation status with the Commission to determine whether the information it provides is accurate and complete, appropriately formatted and contains the Commission's web address.

2. Review institutional disclosures about its relationship with other accrediting agencies for accuracy and for appropriate consumer information, particularly regarding the link between specialized/professional accreditation and the licensure necessary for employment in many professional or specialized areas.

3. Review the institution's catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, and information provided by the institution's advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate information to current and prospective students about its accreditation, placement or licensure, program requirements, etc.

4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

(X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

(   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

(   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

(   ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

Review of Student Outcome Data

1. Review the student outcome data the institution collects to determine whether it is appropriate and sufficient based on the kinds of academic programs it offers and the students it serves.

2. Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about academic programs and requirements and to determine its effectiveness in achieving its educational objectives.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

(X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

(   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

(   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

(   ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies

The institution has documented that it discloses accurately to the public and the Commission its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

Important note: If the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial, or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of the other agency in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report and provide its rationale for recommending Commission status in light of this action. In addition, the team must contact the staff liaison immediately if it learns that the institution is at risk of losing its degree authorization or lacks such authorization in any state in which the institution meets state presence requirements.

1. Review the information, particularly any information that indicates the institution is under sanction or show-cause or has had its status with any agency suspended, revoked, or terminated, as well as the reasons for such actions.

2. Determine whether this information provides any indication about the institution's capacity to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. Should the team learn that the institution is at risk of losing, or has lost, its degree or program authorization in any state in which it meets state presence requirements, it should contact the Commission staff liaison immediately.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

    (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

    (   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

    (   ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

    (   ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

    Comments:

    Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

___

Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment

The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments. The team has evaluated any comments received and completed any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments. **Note that if the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comment relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report.**

1. Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including sample announcements, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public and seek comments.

2. Evaluate the comments to determine whether the team needs to follow-up on any issues through its interviews and review of documentation during the visit process.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

    (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

    ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

    ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

    ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

    Comments: While no third party comments were received it appears that the College made an appropriate and timely effort to obtain feedback from its constituents.

    Additional monitoring, if any: N/A

___

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list materials reviewed here:

Annual Crime Reports 2008 – 2012
Annual Institutional Data Update (AIDU), including A-133 audits
Board of Governors Rules
Board Policy NC-4005
College Catalog 2012-13
Core Coursework Transfer Agreement
Curriculum Guides
EEO Audit 2009
Eligibility and Certification Renewal
Fact Book 2012
Financial Aid Webpage
Financial Audits 2009-2012

Institutional Research Webpage
Internal Policy and Procedures Manual
Marketing materials
Northern on the Web (NOW) – student access to student records via the student portal
Program Participation Agreement
Ratios Prepared by HEPC
Registrar Webpage
Reports to IPEDS, WV HEPC, WV CTCS
Response to HLC Regarding Default Rates – November 9, 2012
Schedule of Courses Spring 2011 – Fall 2013
Specialized Accreditation Reports
Student Activities Calendar Webpage
Student Handbook
Text Alert System
Transfer Webpage
Tuition and Fee Schedule Webpage
Tuition Refund Webpage
Worksheet for Use by Institutions on Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours
WV Code, Series 17
www.wvncc.edu
www.wvctcs.org
www.wvhepc.org

Appendix C-2

Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Program Length and Tuition, Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours

Part 1: Program Length and Tuition

Worksheet on Program Length and Tuition

A. Answer the Following Questions

Are the institution's degree program requirements within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

  ☒ Yes   ☐ No

  Comments:

Are the institution's tuition costs across programs within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

  ☒ Yes   ☐ No

  Comments:

B. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's program length and tuition practices?

  ☐ Yes   ☒ No

  Rationale:

  Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date: N/A

Part 2: Assignment of Credit Hours

Instructions

In assessing the appropriateness of the credit allocations provided by the institution the team should complete the following steps:

1. Review the Worksheet completed by the institution, which provides information about an institution's academic calendar and an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats, and the institution's policy and procedures for awarding credit hours. Note that such policies may be at the institution or department level and may be differentiated by such distinctions as undergraduate or graduate, by delivery format, etc.

2. Identify the institution's principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level. The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:

   - Associate's degrees = 60 hours

   - Bachelor's degrees = 120 hours

   - Master's or other degrees beyond the Bachelor's = at least 30 hours beyond the Bachelor's degree

   - Note that one quarter hour = .67 semester hour

   - Any exceptions to this requirement must be explained and justified.

3. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution.

   - At semester-based institutions courses will be typically be from two to four credit hours (or approximately five quarter hours) and extend approximately 14-16 weeks (or approximately 10 weeks for a quarter). The description in the catalog should indicate a course that is appropriately rigorous and has collegiate expectations for objectives and workload. Identify courses/disciplines that seem to depart markedly from these expectations.

   - Institutions may have courses that are in compressed format, self-paced, or otherwise alternatively structured. Credit assignments should be reasonable. (For example, as a full-time load for a traditional semester is typically 15 credits, it might be expected that the norm for a full-time load in a five-week term is 5 credits; therefore, a single five-week course awarding 10 credits would be subject to inquiry and justification.)

   - Teams should be sure to scan across disciplines, delivery mode, and types of academic activities.

   - Federal regulations allow for an institution to have two credit-hour awards: one award for Title IV purposes and following the above federal definition and one for the purpose of defining progression in and completion of an academic program at that institution. Commission procedure also permits this approach.

4. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course. Pay particular attention to alternatively-structured or other courses with particularly high credit hours for a course completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor.

5. **Sampling.** Teams will need to sample some number of degree programs based on the headcount at the institution and the range of programs it offers.

   - At a minimum, teams should anticipate sampling at least a few programs at each degree level.

   - For institutions with several different academic calendars or terms or with a wide range of academic programs, the team should expand the sample size appropriately to ensure that it is paying careful attention to alternative format and compressed and accelerated courses.

   - Where the institution offers the same course in more than one format, the team is advised to sample across the various formats to test for consistency.

   - For the programs the team sampled, the team should review syllabi and intended learning outcomes for several of the courses in the program, identify the contact hours for each course, and expectations for homework or work outside of instructional time.

   - The team should pay particular attention to alternatively-structured and other courses that have high credit hours and less frequently scheduled interaction between the students and the instructor.

   - Provide information on the samples in the appropriate space on the worksheet.

6. Consider the following questions:

   - Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?

   - Does that policy address the amount of instructional or contact time assigned and homework typically expected of a student with regard to credit hours earned?

   - For institutions with courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy also equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe allotted for the course?

   - Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

   - If so, is the institution's assignment of credit to courses reflective of its policy on the award of credit?

7. If the answers to the above questions lead the team to conclude that there may be a problem with the credit hours awarded the team should recommend the following:

- If the problem involves a poor or insufficiently-detailed institutional policy, the team should call for a revised policy as soon as possible by requiring a monitoring report within no more than one year that demonstrates the institution has a revised policy and evidence of implementation.

- If the team identifies an application problem and that problem is isolated to a few courses or single department or division or learning format, the team should call for follow-up activities (monitoring report or focused evaluation) to ensure that the problems are corrected within no more than one year.

- If the team identifies systematic non-compliance across the institution with regard to the award of credit, the team should notify Commission staff immediately and work with staff to design appropriate follow-up activities. The Commission shall understand systematic noncompliance to mean that the institution lacks any policies to determine the award of academic credit or that there is an inappropriate award of institutional credit not in conformity with the policies established by the institution or with commonly accepted practices in higher education across multiple programs or divisions or affecting significant numbers of students.

Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours

A. Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team

Associate in Arts		Credits	Contact Hrs/week/15 week term
BIO 110	Principles of Biology	4	3 lecture hours, 2 lab hours
ENG 102	College Composition I	3	3 lecture hours
HIST 100	World Cultures	3	3 lecture hours
MATH 279	Calculus I	5	5 lecture hours
MUS 105	Appreciation of Music	3	3 lecture hours
PHYS 105	General Physics II	4	3 lecture hours, 2 lab hours

Associate in Science			
CHEM 108	General Chemistry I	4	3 lecture hours, 2 lab hours
ECON 104	Principles of Macroeconomics	3	3 lecture hours
MAT 108	College Algebra with Applications	4	4 lecture hours
PHIL 200	Introduction to Philosophy	3	3 lecture hours
SPCH 105	Fundamentals of Speech Communications	3	3 lecture hours

Associate in Applied Science

Accounting – Business Studies			
ACC 122	Principles of Accounting I	3	3 lecture hours
BA 100	Introduction to Business	3	3 lecture hours
ACC 250	Accounting Capstone	3	3 lab hours

Early Childhood: Care and Education			
ART 256	Creative Expression in Fine Art	3	3 lecture hours
ECCE 214	Assessing Children & Designing Curriculum	3	3 lecture hours
HS 204	Field Placement (Internship)	5	2 lecture hours, 9 lab hours

Mechatronics			
MEC 120	Motors and Motor Controls	3	2 lecture hours, 3 lab hours
MEC 125	Introduction to Welding	3	2 lecture hours, 3 lab hours
MEC 130	Fluid Power Basics	3	2 lecture hours, 3 lab hours

Nursing
    NUR 107 **Nursing Skills**   3   3 lecture hours
    NUR 115 **Nursing Practicum I**   3   9 lab hours
    NUR 262 **Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing** 2   2 lecture hours

Respiratory Care Technology
    RCT 110 **Respiratory Care Sciences** 3   3 lecture hours
    RCT 136 **Clinical Practice III** 2   12 lab hours
    RCT 204 **Advanced Respiratory Care** 3   3 lecture hours

Certificate of Applied Technology
  Computer Information Technology – Cisco Networking
    CIT 117 **MS Applications** 3 3 lecture hours
    CIT 142 **Cisco I – Networking Fundamentals** 4 4 lecture hours, 1 lab hour
    CIT 184 **A+ Networking and Software** 3 3 lecture hours

  Medical Assisting: Administrative Medical Assistant
    AHS 110 **Medical Legal & Ethical Issues** 1 1 lecture hour
    MAS 120 **Intro Medical Records & Transcription** 2 2 lecture hours
    MAS 150 **Intro Medical Admin Procedures** 2 2 lecture hours

Transitional Education
    ENG 090 **Writing Skills** 3 3 lecture hours
    MATH 086 **Developmental Arithmetic Skills** 3 3 lecture hours
    READ 095 **College Reading** 4 4 lecture hours

B. Answer the Following Questions

  1) Institutional Policies on Credit Hours

Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?

  [X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

Does that policy relate the amount of instructional or contact time provided and homework typically expected of a student to the credit hours awarded for the classes offered in the delivery formats offered by the institution? (Note that an institution's policy must go beyond simply stating that it awards credit solely based on assessment of student learning and should also reference instructional time.)

  [X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

For institutions with non-traditional courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe and utilizing the activities allotted for the course?

[X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

[X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

2) **Application of Policies**

Are the course descriptions and syllabi in the sample academic programs reviewed by the team appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

[X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

Are the learning outcomes in the sample reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit?

[X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

If the institution offers any alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, were the course descriptions and syllabi for those courses appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of academic credit?

[X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

If the institution offers alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs

reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonably capable of being fulfilled by students in the time allocated to justify the allocation of credit?

X   Yes   ☐   No

Comments:

Is the institution's actual assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution reflective of its policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

X   Yes   ☐   No

Comments:

C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Review the responses provided in this section. If the team has responded "no" to any of the questions above, the team will need to assign Commission follow-up to assure that the institution comes into compliance with expectations regarding the assignment of credit hours.

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's credit hour policies and practices?

☐   Yes   X   No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

D. Identify and Explain Any Findings of Systematic Non-Compliance in One or More Educational Programs with Commission Policies Regarding the Credit Hour

N/A

Part 3: Clock Hours

Instructions

Complete this worksheet **only if** the institution offers any degree or certificate programs in clock hours OR that must be reported to the U.S. Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs. Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definitions per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. Clock-hour programs might include teacher education, nursing, or other programs in licensed fields.

For these programs Federal regulations require that they follow the federal formula listed below. If there are no deficiencies identified by the accrediting agency in the institution's overall policy for awarding semester or quarter credit, accrediting agency may provide permission for the institution to provide less instruction provided that the student's work outside class in addition to direct instruction meets the applicable quantitative clock hour requirements noted below.

Federal Formula for Minimum Number of Clock Hours of Instruction (34 CFR §668.8)

1 semester or trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction
1 quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction

Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution's requirement for student work outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour include at least 20 semester hours.

Worksheet on Clock Hours

A. Answer the Following Questions

Does the institution's credit to clock hour formula match the federal formula?

X   Yes   ☐   No

Comments:

If the credit to clock hour conversion numbers are less than the federal formula, indicate what specific requirements there are, if any, for student work outside of class?

Did the team determine that the institution's credit hour policies are reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that

if the team answers "No" to this question, it should recommend follow-up monitoring in section C below.)

[X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

Did the team determine in reviewing the assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution that it was reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

[X] Yes   [ ] No

Comments:

B. Does the team approve variations, if any, from the federal formula in the institution's credit to clock hour conversion?

[ ] Yes   [ ] No

(Note that the team may approve a lower conversion rate than the federal rate as noted above provided the team found no issues with the institution's policies or practices related to the credit hour and there is sufficient student work outside of class as noted in the instructions.)

C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's clock hour policies and practices?

[ ] Yes   [X] No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

Appendix D-1
Multi-Campus Visit to New Martinsville Campus

Name of Institution: West Virginia Northern Community College

Name/Address of Branch Campus: New Martinsville Campus, 141 Main Street New Martinsville, WV 26155

Phone: (304) 455-4684

Date and Duration of Visit: Tuesday, 3/5/2013

Reviewer(s): Kent Hawley

Campus Overview

The New Martinsville Regional Campus serves the College's southern area and is located approximately 95 miles south of Pittsburgh, 36 miles south of Wheeling and 50 miles north of Parkersburg. Responding to local community requests, the College began offering courses in New Martinsville in 1973, a year after West Virginia Northern was created. The campus was established in New Martinsville in 1975.

The New Martinsville Campus is centrally located in the downtown city complex, adjacent to the New Martinsville Municipal Building. It sits within the flood plain of the Ohio River but was built upon an earthen base that lifts it above flood levels. The academic facility was completed in 1990 and houses administrative and faculty offices; counseling and student services; the Learning Resource Center; 10 general use classrooms and two computer labs; IP video classroom; conference/workshop/seminar rooms; laboratories for business, nursing, and physical and biological sciences; lounges and the College Bookstore.

Programs offered on the New Martinsville Campus include the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees designed for transfer to a four year university, as well as, Associate in Applied Science degrees and Certificate Programs in human services, social work, business administration, accounting, criminal justice and computer information and technology. Core academic coursework in culinary arts, nursing, office technology, paralegal, radiologic technology, respiratory therapy, surgical technology and refrigeration, air conditioning and heating technology are completed in New Martinsville with clinical and specialized program coursework conducted on the Wheeling Campus. The Campus offers a varied Continuing and Community Education program designed to meet local interests and needs.

History, Planning, and Oversight

The college has maintained a presence in New Martinsville since 1973 and created a campus in 1975. The current campus was completed in 1990. Per the college's organizational chart, the campus dean reports to the Vice President of Academic Affairs; however, the position also

serves on the president's cabinet and is part of the overall leadership of the College. The New Martinsville Campus and its relationship to the college as a whole are spelled out in the strategic plan, including plans to improve instructional technology at that site.

The enrollment at the New Martinsville Campus is about 430 students, two-thirds of which have indicated they are seeking a degree. Total headcount has dipped approximately 30% over the last three years. Both college personnel and community members are concerned about this change in enrollment. Community members, faculty/staff, and students all cited the need for expanded bandwidth capabilities in order to provide a better educational experience, especially with regard to courses taught over IP video.

The community is highly involved in the New Martinsville Campus, and it is the center of many community activities. The people who participated in the community meeting indicated that the college works with city government and community groups to provide instruction, activities and forums for a wide variety of causes. They reinforced the idea that the college provides a valuable service to students who cannot make the drive to the Wheeling Campus. In short, they see the college as "part of the community family."

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

   X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

   ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Facilities and Technology

The New Martinsville Campus is a comprehensive and well-maintained facility. It contains a full library that is well used by both students and faculty. There is ample classroom and office space. The labs are fully equipped for the programs offered. There is ample parking, though the sidewalk to the overflow lot is incomplete. The New Martinsville Campus has lounges, a limited food service, and a small but full-service bookstore.

Technology within the classrooms is appropriate and state-of-the-art. Bandwidth limitations are of concern, especially concerning its use in classes that incorporate IP video. Enrollment considerations require that several courses be taught over IP video with instruction originating on the Wheeling Campus. Students cited frustration at recurring "dropped" connections during classes.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

   X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

   ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.
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Human Resources

The Campus Dean is involved in all hires, working in concert with the office of Human Resources. The Chief Human Resources Officer travels to New Martinsville when needed to facilitate interviews and the hiring process.

Professional development is typically provided through IP video, online, or by travel to the Wheeling Campus. Faculty indicated satisfaction with professional development opportunities.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

   X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

   ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Student and Faculty Resources and Support

The New Martinsville Campus is a "one-stop shop," providing assistance with admissions, advising, financial aid, tutoring, library, and developmental services. Title III funds help provide other support services. The campus is sufficiently staffed to serve the student base. Interviews with faculty, staff, and students revealed concerns about the availability of the campus dean, IT personnel, and advising. IT provides a technician on campus half time. Faculty and staff were concerned the advising position—which was in a state of transition—would be converted to half time at New Martinsville and half time at Wheeling. They also cited concerns that the campus dean—who has the support of the staff—is required to spend more of his time in Wheeling and less time in New Martinsville.

Faculty indicated they received ample support in terms of professional development, travel, resources, and supplies. All groups indicated a family atmosphere at New Martinsville in which the community, faculty, and staff pull together to support students and each other.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

   X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

   ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Educational Programs and Instructional Oversight

Students at New Martinsville have access to all information and publications concerning programs and curriculum as is available at the Wheeling Campus, including course listings, schedules, orientations, and catalogs. Faculty are supervised by their Division Chairs and sometimes must travel to the Wheeling Campus for trainings and division meetings.

Student interviews indicated that faculty and staff are helpful. In the words of one student, the faculty and staff "made the difference" in her continued education. Students said the library is used, tutoring is good, and everything is accessible. Some courses are rigorous, and courses and programs are limited.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

   X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

   ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Evaluation and Assessment

Assessment of student learning and general evaluations are handled by the division chairs and program coordinators who work with faculty on the New Martinsville Campus. Faculty members at the New Martinsville Campus indicated that identical processes of evaluation and assessment are used at all campuses.

Staff members at New Martinsville did not indicate any formalized assessment of services has been conducted. The staff pointed to its relationships with faculty and students and its willingness to help both groups as an indication that it is fulfilling its mission. It might be useful to implement a more formalized assessment of services at New Martinsville.

The New Martinsville Campus is included in the strategic plan. In light of declining enrollments, it is suggested that an evaluation of the programs offered and potential programs and trainings be conducted so enrollment can be maximized.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

    X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

    ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Continuous Improvement

Through interviews it was evident that all constituents—community members, faculty, staff, and students—find the New Martinsville Campus to be a valuable asset to the community and to their lives.
A review of the strategic plan and discussions with the campus dean indicate that the processes at the New Martinsville Campus are integrated into the overall functions of the college. Again, those processes should include a review of declining enrollment at New Martinsville and a plan to make the campus a continually viable and relevant part of the community and the WVNCC family.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

    X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

    ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Appendix D-2
Multi-Campus Visit to Weirton Campus

Name of Institution: West Virginia Northern Community College

Name/Address of Branch Campus: Weirton Campus, 150 Park Avenue, Weirton, WV 26062

Phone: 304-723-2210

Date and Duration of Visit: Tuesday, March 5th, 2013

Reviewer(s): Karen E. Rafinski, Ph.D.

Campus Overview

The north end of the Northern Panhandle, served by the Weirton Campus, is located between the Pittsburgh area of Pennsylvania and the Steubenville, Ohio, area with people relating to colleges, medical facilities, employment, and other services in both border cosmopolitan areas. A private university and a community college are located in Steubenville, directly across the river from Weirton. In order to better serve the region, an addition was made to the Weirton facility in 1999-2000, and, in response to emerging employment opportunities in electrical and mechanical maintenance and health care, another new 9,500 square foot addition was completed in January 2012. Located out of the downtown area, the Weirton Campus is in a convenient location near residential housing, businesses, and a private high school.

The Weirton Campus of West Virginia Northern Community College is located on a wooded site, and has a modern facility containing classrooms, chemistry and biology labs, state-of-the-art computer labs, nursing, respiratory care, and surgical tech labs, a telecom room, campus bookstore, and a modern library offering the latest in technology.

Programs offered on the Weirton campus include the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees designed for transfer to a four year university, as well as associate degrees in human services, social work, business administration, accounting, criminal justice, computer information technology, nursing, office technology, paralegal, respiratory care, and surgical technology. Other degrees available are automotive technology, automotive body repair, building construction, electronics, and welding through a joint program with the Rockefeller Career Center.

History, Planning, and Oversight

A campus presence has been in Weirton since the beginning of the college. The Weirton Campus Dean serves dual roles for West Virginia Northern Community College as Dean and as the Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development. As such he is part of the overall leadership of the college Cabinet, reporting directly to the college president.

The West Virginia Northern Community College strategic plan clearly identifies the role, relationships and resources of the Weirton Campus, and the interface it has with the main campus in Wheeling. Evidence of that history is that the College Board of Governors comes from the various counties the college serves indicating that governance is broad-based over the entire service district, and the self-study describes in detail the responsibilities of the Campus Dean of Weirton.

Enrollment at the Weirton Campus is approximately 600 students and has remained stable with approximately 20% of the overall college student headcount. Annually a college budget is determined with input from the Weirton Campus. Interviews with Weirton employees confirm that the budget reflects adequate resource allocation for campus operations and to ensure that unique needs of the campus are met.

Participants in the community meetings provided direct evidence that clearly delineated the importance of the Campus to the local communities it serves, supporting the educational purpose and communities of interest in the local area as mission and capacity allow.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

   X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

   ☐ The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Facilities and Technology

The Weirton Campus has modern facilities and has completed renovations in FY2000 and FY2013 to ensure effective space for programs in the Campus. Technology enhancements meet all needs and reflect state-of-the-art equipment, classrooms and well-maintained laboratories which promote a solid learning environment. It should also be noted that laboratory equipment is more recent than many of the labs on the main campus in similar programs.

Of particular importance, a new mechatronics laboratory has recently opened at the Weirton Campus furnished with $750,000 worth of equipment to support a new academic program that was implemented to meet the employment needs of local businesses. An identical laboratory and new facilities will be duplicated in downtown Wheeling to respond to area needs, and it is slated to open in April 2013.

Parking lots, bookstore, classrooms, and administrative and faculty offices with handicap access provide ample and appropriate space for campus operations. In addition, the campus offers food and snack services, study and meeting areas in the newly remodeled facility that should serve the college well into the future.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

   X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

   ☐ The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Human Resources

The Campus Dean is involved in all hires at the Weirton Campus, facilitated by the college's Chief Human Resources Officer at the main campus. The Chief Human Resources Officer travels to Weirton as necessary to facilitate interviews and the hiring process.

Weirton Campus faculty typically travel to the main campus in Wheeling for staff development opportunities or to access the training through connectivity via distance learning or conferencing. Interviews with faculty and staff indicated that the process was satisfactory and served them well.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

 X The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

 ☐ The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Student and Faculty Resources and Support

The Weirton Campus is sufficiently staffed with some support delivered from the main campus. The Campus provides adequate phones and computers for staff, faculty and students. Services for students include remedial services, tutoring, and access to SMARTHINKING, an online service enabling students to get assistance with the writing of papers. The services and support at the Weirton Campus received positive reviews by a cross-section of employee groups.

Financial aid, registration, student records and advising services are obtained from the main campus with a counselor available on-site on designated days with additional area support services, provided by Title III. Like on the main campus, job placement services are limited.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

 X The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

 ☐ The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Educational Programs and Instructional Oversight

Publications on educational programs are shared with the main campus, and materials are displayed and accessible to students for curriculum listings, course schedules, and orientations. Faculty are supervised directly by the Division Chairs from the main campus. Periodically, they are required to travel to the Wheeling Campus for division meetings and Faculty assembly meetings.

According to students interviewed, faculty are attentive to their concerns and provide accessibility to get their questions addressed.

Students indicated that there was difficulty from time to time with connectivity to the New Martinsville site with students "being dropped" from class participation. They also noted that they were required to drive to the Wheeling Campus for some classes, although their equipment and

supplies were of higher quality than the main campus, and questioned the necessity. More critically, they indicated that the purpose of their meeting on the main campus was to align the program information each campus received from faculty. The college may want to investigate strategies for instructional delivery that equalizes the travel requirements for students by having some of the joint learning experiences on the Weirton Campus.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

    X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

    ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Evaluation and Assessment

Assessment of Student Learning activities and expectations and the general evaluation process is handled by the Academic Chairs and Program Coordinators on the main campus with communication to faculty at the Weirton Campus. Faculty at the Weirton Campus indicated that the processes at both campuses are equivalent and evidence of campus assessment and practices were identical.

Staff members at Weirton did not indicate any formalized assessment of services has been conducted. This evaluation of the effectiveness of services will be extremely helpful if a reduction in services must be considered.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

    X   The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

    ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

Continuous Improvement

Review of the 2011–2016 Campus Strategic Plan and interviews of the Weirton Campus chief administrative officer, the Campus Dean, clearly shows that the goals and practices for the Campus are identified and articulated for strong independent processes to ensure continuous improvement is not something that operates at only the main campus.

It should be noted that the faculty, staff and administrators at the Weirton Campus express an "esprit de corps" and consider themselves fortunate to work at the Campus and serve the students who attend classes there.

Judgment of reviewer(s) (check one)

    X The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

    ☐   The evidence indicates that there are concerns related to the expectations of the category.

INSTITUTION and STATE: West Virginia Northern Community College, WV

TYPE OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*: Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*: Visit to include the review of distance delivery. Multi-campus visit (2 campuses).

DATES OF REVIEW: 3/4/13 - 3/6/13

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

DEGREES AWARDED: A

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS: Prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: The Commission's policies and definitions for distance and correspondence education recently underwent significant change. Some institutions are currently under review to ensure conformity with the revised policies. This entry will be updated in the coming months following completion of that review.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: The institution is approved to offer up to 100 percent of its programs by distance delivery

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Monitoring Report due November 30, 2013 on Faculty and Staff Qualifications

OTHER VISITS SCHEDULED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Focused Visit in Fall 2015 on Faculty and Staff Qualifications

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2002 - 2003

YEAR FOR NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2012 - 2013

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: West Virginia Northern Community College, WV **TYPE OF REVIEW** *(from ESS)***:** Continued Accreditation   _X__ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

		Program Distribution	**Recommended Change (+ or -)**
Programs leading to Undergraduate			
	Associate	21	
	Bachelors	0	
Programs leading to Graduate			
	Masters	0	
	Specialist	0	
	First Professional		
	Doctoral	0	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:		Present Activity:	**Recommended Change: (+ or -)**
	Campuses:	New Martinsville (New Martinsville Campus) ; Weirton (Weirton Campus)	
	Additional Locations:	None	

Out-of-State:		Present Wording:	**Recommended Change: (+ or -)**
	Campuses:	None	
	Additional Locations:	None	
	Course Locations:	None	

Out-of-USA:		Present Wording:	**Recommended Change: (+ or -)**
	Campuses:	None	
	Additional Locations:	None	
	Course Locations:	None	

Distance Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

Associate - 11.0201 Computer Programming/Programmer, General (Computer Information Technology, AAS) offered via Internet; Associate - 24.0101 Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies (Associate in Arts, AA) offered via Internet; Associate - 24.0199 Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other (Associate in Science, AS) offered via Internet; Associate - 43.0107 Criminal Justice/Police Science (Criminal Justice, AAS) offered via Internet; Associate - 44.0701 Social Work (Human Services, AAS) offered via Internet; Associate - 51.0707 Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician (Health Information Technology, AAS) offered via Internet; Associate - 52.0101 Business/Commerce, General (Business Studies, AAS) offered via Internet

Recommended Change:
     (+ or -)
Correspondence Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

None