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| **Criterion One. Mission**  Northern’s mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution’s operations. | | |
| **Core Component** | **Evidence for Fulfillment of Criterion** | **Challenges/Areas for Improvement** |
| **Core Component -1.A**. Northern’s mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations. | * The revised mission and vision statements which reflect an increased focus on student success were developed through a collaborative process involving all constituent groups and approved by the Board in 2011. * The mission aligns with the State Compact and drives institutional strategic planning. * Initiatives promoting student success and retention, including the Title III grant, demonstrate that the mission pervades the institution. |  |
| **Core Component -1.B.** The mission is articulated publicly. | * The College mission and vision are published in numerous locations including the webpage, Catalog and Student Handbook. * Mission and vision statements of 2011 clearly demonstrate State and institutional priorities of student success, access, and workforce development. | * The mission statement should be made more visible for both internal and external constituencies. |
| **Core Component -1.C.** Northern understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. | * Mission and vision statements demonstrate that the institution values diversity of learners. * Northern offers a wide range of multicultural programming to promote cultural awareness for students and the community. * Understanding of diverse cultures and obtaining a global perspective are embedded within the curriculum. * The College offers a wide range of services for the diverse populations it serves including programs for students with disabilities, tutoring services, and support services for students receiving financial aid. | * Activities to promote cultural awareness are not well attended. * Although minority population in the district is small, the College needs to explore ways to increase minority student enrollment and to recruit more minorities for employment. |
| **Core Component -1.D.** Northern’s mission demonstrates commitment to the public good | * Emphasis in mission and vision statements on meeting community needs is illustrated by workforce programs and new facilities. * As a multiyear recipient of the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll and with the large number of service activities, Northern demonstrates its commitment to community service. * 3-time recipient of Military Friendly School award is indicative of College’s commitment to serve veterans. * The College clearly engages the external constituencies and responds to their needs as indicated by workforce programs, establishment of the Middle College, involvement with the community, partnerships, and community service. | * The College needs a more systematic way to gather data and feedback from external constituents. |

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| **Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**  Northern acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible. | | |
| **Core Component** | **Evidence for Fulfillment of Criterion** | **Challenges/Areas for Improvement** |
| **Core Component -2.A** Northern operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration,  faculty, and staff. | * All institutional audits from an independent auditor have yielded no significant findings and the College has a number of rules (policies) to protect fiscal integrity. * 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. |  |
| **Core Component -2.B.** Northern presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships. | * Academic programs and program requirements are clearly explained in the catalog and linked to website. * Costs are clearly presented on web, which also includes a tuition calculator on the homepage. * Accreditation relationships are clearly indicated in the Catalog and on the web, including use of the HLC “Mark of Affiliation.” * Northern publishes all pertinent student “Right-to-Know” information on the website. |  |
| **Core Component -2.C.** The governing board of Northern is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity. | * The nine lay members of the Board of Governors are appointed by the Governor, but they have staggered terms and no more than 5 may be from one party so they are able to be autonomous. * The Board 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. * Board minutes provide evidence that the Board deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution. * The Board responsibilities are delineated in State Code and Board By-Laws, and the Board delegates responsibility for day-to-day management of the institution to the administration. |  |
| **Core Component -2.D.** Northern is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. | * The College has a rule (policy) on Academic Freedom. | * The College does not have a policy regarding intellectual property rights. |
| **Core Component -2.E.** Northern ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge  responsibly. | * The College rules (policies) on Academic Integrity and Student Responsibilities and Student Conduct help ensure the integrity of scholarly practice. * Students are provided guidance regarding ethical use of information resources through bibliographic instruction offered through the LRC and in classes emphasizing research. * The College has a general education goal on information literacy to ensure that all students have experience acquiring and applying knowledge. | * There is a gap in assessment of information literacy as there are no metrics in place to measure performance. |

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| **Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support**  Northern provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered. | | |
| **Core Component** | **Evidence for Fulfillment of Criterion** | **Challenges/Areas for Improvement** |
| **Core Component -3.A.** Northern’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education. | * All programs are reviewed on a regular cycle to assure they are current; in addition, all programs were reviewed in 2011-12 to comply with a new State policy on maximum credit hours. * All technical programs must have an external instrument to measure student performance, which assures performance expectations are appropriate for the degree. * All sections of a course are required to follow the Master Course Guide for the course, regardless of location, modality, or the instructor ensuring consistency of program quality and learning goals. |  |
| **Core Component -3.B.** Northern demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs. | * Northern clearly 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. * The College regularly assesses general education as part of its assessment plan. * 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. |  |
| **Core Component -3.C.** Northern has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services. | * The faculty is appropriately credentialed with 73% of the full-time faculty holding at least a masters degree. * The faculty position description clearly delineates expectations of faculty non-classroom roles including oversight of curriculum, assessment, advising and professional development. All degree programs, with the exception of the new Mechatronics program, have at least one full-time faculty member associated with the program. * The College has a comprehensive evaluation system in place for both full-time and part-time faculty which includes the students’ perspective. * Northern has professional development expectations of faculty and supports professional development both through in-service activities and paid support for external activities. * Staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified upon hiring, receive training, and are supported in professional development. | * Improving the response rates on the surveys for student evaluation of teaching has proven to be difficult. * The College has a low number of staff compared to other institutions |

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| **Core Component -3.D.** Northern provides support for student learning and effective teaching. | * Northern provides extensive support for student learning including Academic Success Centers on each campus which offer tutoring, peer mentoring, supplemental instruction, and student success workshops, a broad array of services to support and accommodate students with disabilities, and services to assist students in exploring career options and seeking employment. * Each campus has a Library/Learning Resource Center to support student (and community) learning with computers, books, periodicals, and databases, and all resources may be accessed through the Library web page on the College website. * Northern provides support services to online students through the webpage, including library resources, tutoring. admissions, financial aid, textbook ordering, student records and business office services. * The College has a comprehensive transitional education program including mandatory placement testing, mandatory placement into transitional courses when scores dictate, and a variety of options to help students progress from transitional courses to college-level courses as rapidly as possible. * Northern has the infrastructure and resources to support its programs, including technology resources, new facilities, well equipped labs, and extensive clinical sites. | * Staffing levels and available funding do not permit services, such as the library, to be open during all times that students desire. * There is currently no assessment of students’ entry level skills in the use of computers and technology. |
| **Core Component -3.E.** Northern fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment. | * Northern 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 service projects. * The extensive list of community service activities is evidence of the College’s commitment to providing community service opportunities for students. |  |

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| **Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**  Northern demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement. | | |
| **Core Component** | **Evidence for Fulfillment of Criterion** | **Challenges/Areas for Improvement** |
| **Core Component -4.A.** Northern demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs. | * Northern has a regular program review process to assure program quality that includes a self-study, multiple inputs, advisory committee involvement, Board approval, and State Council approval. * The College’s Early Entrance (Dual Credit) program is administered consistent with College guidelines and State policy (Series 19) to ensure that the quality of the courses are equivalent to collegiate courses. * The College uses multiple measures to evaluate success of graduates including job placement rates, licensure test results, results from standardized measures used for Perkins-eligible programs, transfer rates, graduate follow-up surveys, and advisory committee feedback. | * It is difficult to achieve accurate job placement data for programs as much of the data collection relies on self-reported surveys. |
| **Core Component -4.B.** Northern demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing  assessment of student learning. | * Learning goals for courses and programs are clearly defined with course goals published in Master Course Guides for each course and program goals published in catalog descriptions of the courses. * Assessment of student learning is faculty driven and follows an established process for assessment of student learning in courses, programs and general education. * Northern has implemented processes to assess all areas of the College. * The College’s assessment process provides documentation to demonstrate that information gained from assessment is used to improve student learning and/or institutional performance. |  |
| **Core Component -4.C.** Northern demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs. | * Through the change in its mission to emphasize student success, the institution clearly demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates. * Northern 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, College Strategic Plan, and College Retention Plan delineate specific goals for student retention, persistence, and completion. * Northern 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 clear examples that demonstrate that the institution uses information gained in the process to make improvements. |  |

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| **Criterion 5. Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness**  Northern’s resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future. | | |
| **Core Component** | **Evidence for Fulfillment of Criterion** | **Challenges/Areas for Improvement** |
| **Core Component -5.A.** Northern’s resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future. | * 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. * The already sound physical infrastructure of the institution has been enhanced with new facilities in Weirton and Wheeling. * The technological infrastructure provides strong support for College operations as evidenced by a 3-4 year replacement cycle for computers, and recent enhancements including purchase of new IP video equipment, redesign of the webpage, and implementation of student and faculty/staff portals. * Northern has a well-developed budget and resource allocation process which involves the budget committee and assures allocations are linked to strategic priorities. * Performance on the State Report Card and the Institutional Strategic Plan demonstrate that institutional goals are realistic in light of resources. | * Impending budget cuts for the next fiscal year and decreases in enrollment will impact the College’s ability to expand programming. |
| **Core Component -5.B.** Northern’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission. | * Internal constituencies are involved in institutional governance through the committee structure, College Council, and constituency representation on the Board. * A well-defined rule (policy) making process involves constituencies and includes a comment period before submission to the Board. * The Board demonstrates fiscal oversight through approval of College budget and capital plans and academic oversight through program approval and approval of program reviews. | * Communication within the institution continues to be an area of concern. |
| **Core Component -5.C.** Northern engages in systematic and integrated planning. | * Strategic plans are developed on a 5-year cycle with the current strategic plan developed through a collaborative process in 2011. * Progress on strategic plan goals and State Compact goals are monitored yearly and revised as appropriate. * The College’s resource allocation is tied to strategic priorities. * Institutional planning is based upon sound understanding of internal capacity and external factors as evidenced by the institution’s proactive response to possible budget reductions, program development in response to Marcellus Shale development and facility expansion. |  |
| **Core Component -5.D.** Northern works systematically to improve its performance. | * Based upon reviews of student success data, the College applied for and received a Title III grant to develop student success initiatives. * The College publishes an annual report of progress toward meeting goals of the strategic plan and makes adjustments based upon results and changing trends. * State report card and IPEDS Benchmark Reports are used as measures of institutional performance. * Northern demonstrates that it learns from assessment activities across all areas of the College and makes improvements with numerous examples, including the “You Spoke, We Listened” campaign which informs students of changes that were made as a result of their input on surveys or other instruments. | * Systems for institutional effectiveness needs to be enhanced. |