

ASSURANCE SECTION

DRAFT REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

**Northland Pioneer College
Holbrook, Arizona
October 26-28, 2009**

FOR

**The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation at the associate's degree level.

B. Organizational Context

Northland Pioneer College is a comprehensive two-year institution located in Northeastern Arizona. Established in 1972, NPC is a NCA-HLC accredited public community college serving over 13,000 students annually in a wide range of courses and programs. The College is decentralized so that they can provide individual communities with learning opportunities to meet their needs and those of the residents in their area. NPC does not have a main campus but rather has four campuses and six centers. The campuses/centers are from 34 miles apart to a maximum of 250 miles apart.

The service area includes the tribal homelands of the Navajo, Hopi, and White Mountain Apache people. This area is one of most remote and least populated in Arizona with a population of approximately 181,000. The two counties that the college serves are the Apache and Navajo Counties; which are two of the poorest 100 counties in the country. This area is also culturally diverse with Native Americans comprising 46.4% of the population of Navajo County and 71.1% of Apache County.

Distance education is a key component to the success of the College. Through the use of various means of communication the college is able to offer small numbers of students at many sites opportunities to take courses leading to programs.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

None

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

- Little Colorado Campus-Winslow
- Painted Desert Campus-Holbrook
- Silver Creek Campus-Snowflake-Taylor
- White Mountain Campus-Show Low
- NPC District Office-Holbrook
- Hopi Center- Polacca Canyon

E. Distance Education Reviewed

The team discussed and visited classrooms utilizing distance education. The WAN system is enabling expanded audio and visual transmission capacity to classrooms in the district. The use of white boards integrated into video courses is one of the methods that have greatly enhanced the potential of learning opportunity for students. The use of distance education is integral to providing a quality education to students in remote settings.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

Meetings at the White Mountain Campus (Show Low, Arizona)
Students (46)
Community Representatives (21)
Faculty (20)
Staff (8)

Meetings at the Little Colorado Campus (Winslow, Arizona)

Students (8)
 Community Representatives (15)
 Faculty (12)
 Staff (10)

Meetings at Silver Creek Campus (Snowflake-Taylor, Arizona)

Students (22)
 Community Representatives (24)
 Performing Arts Center Staff (2)
 Faculty (5)
 Staff (12)

Meetings at the Painted Desert Campus (Holbrook, Arizona)

Students (28)
 Community Representatives (18)
 Faculty (14)
 Staff (13)

Principal, Holbrook High School

Mayor, Holbrook, Arizona

Sergeant, Arizona Department of Public Safety

Office Manager, Daystar Television Network

Retiree, County Government

Navajo County Recorder, Holbrook, Arizona

Navajo County Assessor, Holbrook, Arizona

Social Science Teacher, Holbrook Junior High School, Holbrook, Arizona

Special Education, Holbrook Junior & Senior High School, Holbrook, Arizona

Holbrook Junior High School & Holbrook City Council, Holbrook, Arizona

Education Specialist, Director of Education - Navajo Nation, Holbrook, Arizona

President Chamber of Commerce, Holbrook, Arizona

Apache County Higher Education Committee

NPC Apache County Coordinator

Utility Solar Engineering President

Systems Analyst/DBA/Web

I.S. Department Manager

Lead I.S. Technician

Academic Advisor/Library Technician

Director Enrollment Services

Director of Marketing

SBDC Academic Advisor

Faculty

SRP Coronado Generating Station Training Supervisor

SRP Coronado Station Manager

Career Services Employee

College President

Academic Advisor - Painted Desert Campus

SBDC Director

SBDC Holbrook Office Coordinator

Dean of Career and Technical Education and Nursing, Arts & Sciences

Community Education Coordinator

Instructional Council (23)

Enrollment Management Plan Committee Members

BIT Partnership Meeting (3)

Navajo County CC District Governing Board (3)

Vice President for Learning and Student Services
 Vice President for Administrative Services
 Director of Human Resources
 Head Librarian-Painted Desert Campus
 Director of Financial Aid
 Career Services Advisor/GED Chief Examiner (LCC)
 Campus Manager (LCC)
 Campus Monitor (LCC)
 Retention Specialist (LCC)
 Associate Librarian (LCC)
 Assessment of Student Knowledge Committee
 NPC Foundation Director and Board Members

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

Capital Budget Project Development Plan
 Career Services Flyers and Schedule of Events
 Carl Perkins Annual Reports
 Classified Staff Bylaws, Professional Development, Activity
 Constellation Survey
 Construction Technology Program Review
 Cosmetology Program Review
 Disability Resources & Access Support Services & Guidelines
 Eagle Briefs – Student Newsletter
 ECD Program Review
 Education Program Review
 Educational Assistant Program Review
 Emergency Medical Technician Program Review
 Employee Handbook - 2009-2010
 Faculty Association Bylaws
 Faculty Handbook
 Faculty Roster
 Fire Science Program Review
 Graduating Student Satisfaction Questionnaire
 Homegrown Healers Grant
 Learning Services Handbook
 Marketing Samples – PAC Schedule; CTE Brochures; Community Education Schedule;
 Class Schedules; Catalog CD; Viewbook; Commencement Booklet
 New Faculty Orientation Materials
 Northern Flight (Literary Magazine) - 1999-2000 & 2006-2009
 Northland Pioneer College Catalog
 Northland Pioneer College Foundation Scholarships
 Nursing Program Review
 Photography Technician Program Review
 Placement Handbook
 Power Plant Program Review
 Qualified Faculty by Department
 Report of Admission of Students Under 18
 Self Study
 Self Study Appendix
 Self Study Letter of Accreditation
 Self Study Report

Self Study Response
 Self Study Visit Report
 Small Business Development Center Annual Report Booklet
 Strategic Enrollment/Marketing Plan
 Strategic Plan - 2008 & 2009
 Student Government Constitution
 Student Services Satisfaction Survey
 U.S. Department of Education Funds Disbursed Through NPC

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The Strategic Planning and Accreditation Steering Committee was established in 2006 with the intention of combining both Strategic Planning and the Self-Study. Eight additional committees were formed to address each of the five criteria and also communications, data, and the resource room. All members of the college community had an opportunity to become part of the self-study process by participating on a team and/or reviewing the team report.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

NPC's Self-Study Report analyzed and evaluated the present state of the College. The visiting team found that Northland Pioneer College created a Self-Study Report that reflects all the hallmarks of effective self-study reports as stipulated in the Higher Learning Commission Handbook for Accreditation. The report was extremely reflective in accurately identifying strengths and weaknesses.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

During the 1999 visit to NPC, the visiting team identified five concerns. These were addressed in the Self-Study and the team spent time analyzing the concerns and talking with administration, staff and faculty about these issues.

The team found the following challenges have been met:

- The College has not moved aggressively enough to complete the Wide Area Network (WAN) and the Local Area Networks (LANS) to determine the appropriate computer operating system, and to provide e-mail and internet access for instruction and administration.
- Although the college is viewed positively in the community for its contributions, it has taken a narrow approach to its role in economic development.
- Team interviews with student suggest inconsistent quality in the delivery of instruction.
- At several sites, the practice of testing students in public areas without appropriate supervision may compromise instructional integrity.
- The college is not positioning itself to effectively meet its present and future personnel needs. This will be addressed in Criterion 2.

There was a progress report regarding the development of facilities and technology implementation submitted and accepted by HLC in 2003.

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

Requirements were fulfilled. No third-party comment was received.

III. EVALUATION OF FEDERAL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance. NPC offers programs of study leading to the following degrees: Associate of Arts; Associate of Science; Associate of Applied Science; Associates of Business; Associate of Arts in Elementary Education; Associate of General Studies; and Associate of General Studies in Early Childhood Education (four tracks: Early Childhood Management, Infant Toddler, Pre-School, and Special Needs Education Assistant). Two certificates include: Certificate of Applied Science and Certificate of Proficiency. In addition, NPC offers training and short courses as well as developmental programs and GED. The program length and number of credit hours found in these programs are within the range of those found at other similar institutions. There are two tuition rates: one for In-State and one for Out of State, and both are comparable to the lowest in the State of Arizona. For students taking more than three or more credits, there is a small media fee, and some courses have other fees ranging from \$10 to \$25. Credits posted on student transcripts are clearly labeled and conform to generally accepted practices,

B. Student Complaints

The team has reviewed and determined that NPC has documented a process for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints for the three years prior to the visit.

C. Transfer Policies

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance. NPC publishes its transfer policies in the NPC College Catalog. Further, NPC participates in the Course Applicability System which provides mechanisms for transfer between Arizona public universities and community colleges.

D. Verification of Student Identity

The team has reviewed that NPC verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education.

E. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities

The college has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program. The team has reviewed these materials and has found no cause for concern regarding the institution's administration or oversight of its Title IV responsibilities.

1. 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.

2. Financial Responsibility Requirements:

The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. The 2007 recertification to participate in the Title IV programs was designated as "Provisional" due to repeated instances of late submission of A-133 audits. NPC has addressed and resolved the tardiness of audit submissions and has addressed these issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.

3. Default Rates, Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information, Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies:

The institution has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The college does not participate in any federal student loan programs, including Stafford, Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP), PLUS, Perkins and Direct Loans, thus there is no default rate. The College has a Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy which is publicized in the catalog and on the web site. Attendance policies are enforced.

4. Contractual Relationships:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and NPC has no contractual relationships with non-accredited third party providers.

F. Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

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.

The team reviewed many marketing and advertising materials and found the information to be accurate and reliable. Items examined included the College catalog, view book, website class schedules, community education mailer, PAC events schedule, brochures for CTE programs, SBDC materials, mission statement bookmark, recruitment materials and various newspaper clippings.

E. Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards

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

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance. The College does not have specialized accreditation with any single agency the status of which covers one-third or more of either the institution's offering or its students other than HLC. However the college is subject to the standards and regulations of several external agencies:

- NPC's nursing program is approved by the Arizona State Board of Nursing and is currently in the process of applying for NLN accreditation.
- NPC's Paramedicine program is certified by the Arizona Department of Health Services.
- NPC's Therapeutic Massage program is credentialed through the Arizona State Board of Massage Therapy.
- NPC's Cosmetology program is licensed by the Arizona State Board of Cosmetology.
- NPC's Welding program is accredited through the American Welding Society.
- NPC's Education department provides courses for teacher certification requirements in Structured English Immersion (SEI) mandated and regulated by the Arizona Department of Education.

F. Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment

The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments; no third party comments were submitted.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

A. CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

- The College provides a welcoming environment to all; faculty, staff and students; who report feeling comfortable and are fairly treated. There is truly a sense of community that was apparent to the team. Both the faculty and the staff reported on the strength of the college administration, as well as a great feeling of trust and of being supported.
- A discussion with NPC employees along with the results from the HLC Constellation Survey indicate that the college has a clear, concise and expansive mission statement along with well-articulated supporting visions, values, and purposes. They also agree that the mission must shape the decisions that the college makes and the directions that it goes.
- NPC has long lasting relationships with area industries, including the SRP-CGS Power Plant. NPC has partnered with the plant to bring needed on-site training to current and potential employees. The Plant Manager and Training Supervisor met with the team and stated that through this partnership skilled craftsmen have developed standardized curriculum and effective training to ensure a supply of well trained employees for the future. It was further discussed that potential employees come from as far away as Phoenix for the training so that they may be employed by the power company in the future.
- The Small Business Development Center and BIT work closely together on related projects and goals to ensure efficient delivery of services to the communities.
- Review of NPC documents and conversations with financial aid office staff confirm that the college is committed to meeting applicable federal Title IV compliance regulations specifically related to financial aid audits. The realization that what occurred to put them in a provisional status will not occur again as processes are in place to alleviate the problem. A review of the NPC website and public documents demonstrate a consistency of information and messages being presented to NPC constituencies.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

- It appears that because of the budgetary constraints the personnel structure is a bit “thin” in areas and individuals are currently handling more than one job. Some open positions are not being filled, and the affects of the increased stress is beginning to be felt. The College needs to be cognizant of the extra burdens it is placing on many of its staff and articulate strategies to help protect the very positive work environment that currently exists.
- NPC’s administration and Board have developed a shared governance policy, but the faculty has not reacted to that proposal at this time. Until the faculty develops

ownership in this process shared governance at a documented formal level cannot occur. A discussion with faculty and administration revealed that collaboration exists at all levels; thus moving to a formalized shared governance model should not present challenges to the administration, Board or faculty.

- NPC's has had four Presidents since the last team visit. The turmoil that occupied the College and the Board appears to have stabilized. The College has done an excellent job of identifying strengths and areas for improvement. In the Self-Study, there is little discussion of the Board's role as it relates to the institution. Reviewing the role of a College Board as it relates to the involvement in the College would assist the college and the Board to make informed decisions.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up: (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended

B. CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

- In the process of developing the strategic plan along with the self study, the college effectively evaluated its strengths and weaknesses. This approach has enhanced planning and resource consciousness within the institution. Strategic planning, by definition, is multi-year and strategic goals rarely can be met in one year. As a result, the NPC leadership team emphasized their commitment to engaging in strategic planning annually, and from interviews at all levels, this commitment to continued planning and system improvement seems to alive at the college. As NPC moves into the future, the sound planning foundation in place will serve as a guide and a direction for innovation and student support.
- Conversations with the college personnel reveal an organization that is fully cognizant of their resource challenged institution. NPC has created a three year plan for quality improvement (Three-Year Plan for Quality Improvement in an Uncertain Fiscal Environment), which is expected to facilitate decision making in extremely difficult economic times. The college has established a committee that will begin addressing budget shortfalls, which will be communicated to the entire campus.

- The college is committed to maintaining a decentralized organizational structure, which enables each campus and center to operate autonomously while following district policies governing educational program development. Each of the communities in the college's vast service area is highly supportive and well served by this approach, as related by each of the four community member groups that talked with the team. In many instances, the Centers and Campuses serve as community support systems. In some areas, the only services provided include computer labs and libraries, especially those on the reservations.
- The college serves a most diverse population, and its planning documents and historical records, document its sensitivity to the unique needs and limitations of each constituency. The diversity of the communities makes environmental scanning and uniform community needs assessment difficult, as revealed in both the self-study and the supporting documents in the resource room. Nonetheless, community members consistently applauded the college's more personalized means of determining and meeting their educational needs.
- In its most recent iteration, the strategic plan demonstrates alignment with the college's statements of mission, purposes, values, and vision, as well as the core components of the Higher Learning Commission's criteria for accreditation. This indexing demonstrates awareness of the multivariate matrix within which the organization operates, an awareness confirmed by the team in numerous interviews. This planning strategy enables the college to effectively monitor progress within its planning cycle, and prepares the organization dynamically to address exigent concerns.
- Observations by the visiting team reveal that computer technology resources support student learning and effective teaching. NPC has been able to equip many of its classrooms with the latest in instructional technology (i.e. smart boards, interactive television (ITV) upgrades, and expanded bandwidth capacity). The latter provided for technology driven service solutions to student academic tutoring issues, specifically for students located at remote campuses and centers, to be addressed.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

- At present, NPC's institutional research functions are in an early formative state, and not ready to provide the level of analysis which would permit assessment of institutional effectiveness. While some descriptive data (e.g. enrollments by course, time of day, schedule format, etc) are available, these data are not regularly analyzed. Strategic data collection will depend on organizational determination and selection of critical indicators of effectiveness, coupled with operational definitions of desired outcome variables. The organization should involve all employee groups, in at least the initial phase of this effort, since all members of the college have a vested interest in the achievements to be measured. Ultimately, the organization will also have to decide how often to monitor each index of institutional effectiveness, how to assign responsibility for such monitoring, and how to report the outcome data to its various constituencies.

- Levels of planning at NPC are in place, but not fully implemented. Many initiatives designed to support and enhance student learning and community service are emerging, and committees are formed and functioning. However, the results of these planning efforts are still only visions of the future yet to be realized and supported by any significant data or research. The many elaborate plans and beginning discussions are not always interrelated clearly to demonstrate continuity across effort. Although not intentionally competitive, they may not be aligned well with the realities of available resources. The administration and board's plan to list those projects or operations that might need to be eliminated due to budgeting problems is commendable; however, it is imperative that there is college-wide *consensus* on what priorities will rise to the top. The next steps will challenge the commitment of the faculty and staff and will define the parameters for successful future assessment. At this point, the initiatives are simply too new to affirm their effectiveness at enhancing the capacity to fulfill the mission. It is imperative in these difficult economic times that planning to move the college occurs; rather than just cutting things out of the budget so that the college can survive.
- Interviews with faculty and staff and a review of resource room material provided evidence that the campus has recently developed a technology hardware rotation process, which will permit the on-going maintenance of the technology infrastructure. Faculty and students at the Little Colorado Campus expressed their desire for NPC's leadership team to focus on the technology infrastructure, particularly as it relates to distance education/ITV broadcasts. Faculty and students pointed out that, in far too many instances, ITV broadcast feeds were of poor video quality with total loss of the video feed sometimes taking place. NPC's leadership team is aware of these issues and emphasized on-going efforts to correct these problems through maintenance and upgrades to the technology infrastructure.
- As noted in conversations with the Steering Committee and with Center staff, NPC does not have a comprehensive orientation or college skill development option for students. The absence of these opportunities causes a lack of understanding on the part of students in terms of financial aid applications and college admission requirements. In terms of college skills, students may leave the protection of their small classes and instructional venues without the personal management skills to deal with budget, career planning, and so forth. Attention to ways to help students, especially first generation students, to become informed related to college funding opportunities and college culture in general will benefit the communities served.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up;

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up: (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

C. CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

- The processes for development and modification of courses and programs are well defined and functional. Interviews with faculty and administrators confirm that faculty, typically in collaboration, originate, review, and approve courses and programs of study. Moreover, regularly scheduled program reviews result in frequent modifications of courses and programs to maintain currency and improve student learning.
- Faculty are leading the movement to define student learning outcomes and measurement strategies for each course in the taxonomy. As new courses are developed, and as programs are reviewed and modified, the course objectives are updated. By interviews and review of documents, the team verified the effectiveness of this process. Consequently, courses offered by the college are generally perceived as current and effective in advancing the student's knowledge and skills
- The curriculum and selected programs are appropriate for the College and the region it serves. Conversations with campus groups and individuals confirm the need to focus in the future on the areas that relate to sustainability and renewable energy as well as other program opportunities. Workforce development is important for the future of the area, and career program curriculum consistency can benefit graduates as they enter the competitive area marketplace.
- NPC has been assessing student learning at the course level for many years, and faculty's review of those data has resulted in course modifications intended to improve student learning. In recent years, an appraisal of the overall assessment effort has led the college to join the Assessment Academy sponsored by the Higher Learning Commission. At the time of this visit, the team, by review of documents and interviews with faculty and administrators, is impressed with the progress the college Assessment Academy team and other leaders have made. Continuing progress in the current trajectory should be expected to advance the college to an assessment strategy which will encompass course and program levels. Coupled with other critical indicators, this momentum will eventuate in extending the scope of assessment to include institutional variables.
- The Enrollment Management Team's recommendations to expand tutoring for students have been implemented this fall. Faculty are now tutoring students directly in math through audio instruction using the SMART board and in chemistry and biology using the video delivery system. Fifty-five students are currently receiving additional instruction through this endeavor. The college intends to track these students success and continue to offer this service to students, if applicable.
- NPC provides solid evidence of its commitment to supporting student learning and effective teaching. NPC libraries have been established at each of its campuses and centers. The libraries serve as a central focal point for community educational activities. The library staff are very responsive in assisting faculty and

students to secure educational resources. Computer labs are easily accessible and have operational hours conducive to meeting student and community member needs.

- NPC is committed to effective teaching, and works to ensure that faculty have materials necessary to support successful student learning, including maintained facilities, modern technology, transportation to centers and campuses, and electronic resources. As reported by adjunct faculty interviews, they participate in orientation and professional development, and can earn credits to advance in status at the college. Professional development is encouraged and supported for all faculty, even in times of financial challenge. Full-time faculty seeks consistency in course content and objectives; however, faculty evaluation is inconsistent in several areas, especially with dual enrollment courses. The ability to insure consistency of curriculum and instruction across all areas is not evaluated or clearly documented.
- Recognizing the need to provide learning opportunities in all areas served throughout this wide region, NPC has made a significant commitment to technology in audio and video classroom instruction and online course delivery. To supplement this delivery, the college has a commitment to an onsite presence of faculty at distant centers and campuses to provide face-to-face instruction and support, and this strong commitment is a hallmark to quality student learning support. To sustain their decentralized delivery model, the college will need to continue to rely heavily on technological solutions and additional technical support for students, which clearly reflects the organizational commitment throughout the districts.
- NPC has a clear commitment to student success and has worked most recently to define and affirm placement test scores in reading, writing, and math. The work of the committee last year identified a clear connection with reading and math success, and the current initiative to look at general education course placement requirements demonstrates a focus on student success. As these individual efforts continue, the college focus on learner success will be realized and supported by research and data.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

None

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up: (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no commission follow-up recommended.

D. CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE. The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

- As noted in the self study and confirmed through interviews with faculty and staff, NPC supports economically disadvantaged students with tuition waivers to provide access and opportunity as well as to encourage learning. For example, the initiative to support recently jobless individuals by giving a semester of free tuition is noble and clearly community focused. Enrichment opportunities provided on campuses and at centers encourage community use of facilities and the expertise of staff and faculty. Many examples of opportunities for lifelong learning were cited and support this college value effectively.
- The general education distribution is present in virtually all courses offered by the college, and many go well beyond the minimum to instill students with a commitment to learning far more than their skill or trade competency, and even beyond the basic content objectives of the curriculum. Several examples were cited in Chapter Four of the self-study, and the faculty and administrative commitment to these values of inquiry and critical thinking were evident in individual and group discussions experienced through the team visit.
- NPC has comprehensive policies and procedures outlining computer usage, library usage, use of facilities, and plagiarism. Faculty, Student, and Employee Handbooks provide clear guidelines about ethical and behavioral expectations and provide procedures for resolving grievances and disputes. Meetings with employees and students confirm the effectiveness of these policies, and these discussions clearly noted the availability of these policies to all employees.
- NPC staff and administrators benefit from professional development opportunities through five initiatives/goals stipulated in the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan. These initiatives specify staff training in legal issues, technology and pedagogical strategies and techniques. The institution is strongly supportive of ongoing professional development activities for its faculty through the Faculty Professional Development Committee (FPDC). A review of FPDC records indicates that this organization awards funding based on the strength of applications received from full-time and certain adjunct faculty. Additionally, the NPC administration remains committed to supporting professional development. It has implemented a strategy allowing for a percentage reduction in the annual faculty development budget, which mirrors the percentage reduction from state allocations. NPC's administration feels that this action will ensure the sustaining of this important activity in periods of severe budget constraints. Because of the funding cuts that have occurred faculty are designing their own professional development opportunities to assist other faculty.
- NPC's Lifeline Program offers a one semester tuition and fee waiver to individuals who have lost their job within the last six months. The NPC Foundation offers an accompanying book scholarship to students receiving this waiver. This activity reflects the institutional value for learning and community support. From a variety of interviews, both employees and community members noted the value of the programs that help students have access to learning.

- As noted in interviews with adjunct faculty members, support is given to assist with curriculum consistency and classroom instructional techniques. Adjunct faculty are a valued part of the institution, and feel no distinction from their role compared to that of the full-time faculty. In many instances, adjunct faculty are the lead discipline experts, and have full support in their curriculum development and classroom experiences.
- The college involves advisory committees in its program review process, thus maintaining congruency between learning outcomes and employment-related skills. In addition, the team learned during meetings with members of the larger community that the college regularly seeks information about emerging community needs, and opportunities for the college to serve better the diverse communities in which it is embedded. Thus, the college provides its students with skills and abilities to be competent members of a diverse workforce.
- The NPC faculty expects and encourages students to accept responsibility for their learning, both during and after college. Syllabi reflect learning outcomes, including continuing individual learning, and the college mission statement is focused on lifelong learning. By review of documents and interviews, the team confirmed that students are well prepared for lifelong learning.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

- Program reviews demonstrate that the college responds to recommendations made by employers and members of advisory committees in maintaining the currency and relevance of its programs. In addition, the diversity of the student population assures that students are well prepared to live and work in a diverse society. Further, the level of technology used in instruction should be expected to produce graduates fluent in its use. However, the college is not yet able to complete the requisite assessments of program outcomes to define the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live in a global, diverse, and technological society.
- Although limited by financial resources, NPC has continued to sustain a decentralized service to a very large service area, and in many instances, faculty travel significant distances to provide face-to-face learning opportunities. Certainly the technology of television and audio delivery helps to reduce some of this travel; however, the use of online learning opportunities continues to be limited, and with less than enthusiastic faculty support. As quality evaluation systems are available, NPC should work to develop online programs as originally planned, and find ways to reduce the travel requirements of full-time faculty.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up: (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no commission follow-up required.

E. CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

- Advisory Board meeting minutes demonstrate the active involvement of community members and working professionals. The NPC Self Study documents numerous organizations, partnerships, and programs from which NPC seeks input and direction and for whom NPC has created special programs and services. Examples include dual enrollment, Early Childhood training at multiple centers, special tribal programs, and workforce training and nursing education sites at multiple locations.
- The Performing Arts Center provides quality cultural programming appropriate to the various constituencies and audiences of NPC's communities. *The Northern Flight* magazine highlights the creative efforts of NPC students.
- Through partnerships, creative scheduling, mobile faculty members, and multiple work assignments, NPC has demonstrated its commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities under the current "decentralized" structure.
- The College's role in the community is paramount to the communication available. In many of the areas the center/campus is the only place to utilize a computer and/or wireless access.
- The Small Business Development Center provides much needed educational offerings and one-on-one counseling to small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. Online courses are accessible to distance learners. The website and other publications highlight entrepreneurial success stories including a Dollar Store opening on the Navajo reservation. The SBDC is reacting to the changing nature of industries by providing training for emerging industry trends. An example is the Southwest Sustainable Forests Partnership. Community Education collaborates with community resources, such as the Extension Service, to provide timely and well received programming. Examples include Solar Greenhouse Design and Living Soil.
- Conversations with the Little Colorado Campus (LCC) cosmetology program officials and participants reveals that the program participants routinely offer free, personal assistance to community members undergoing treatment for cancer, as does the program at White Mountain Campus (WMC). The students and LCC/WMC staff assist these patients in the securing, styling and fitting of cosmetic wigs and hair pieces which helps to builds confidence and increases the self esteem of patients who have experienced hair loss due to chemo therapy treatment.
- Team members met, at all four campuses with community representatives and students who enthusiastically confirmed the importance of NPC's role in providing much needed educational and cultural programs throughout the service areas.

- 2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:**
None
- 3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:**
None
- 4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up: (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**
None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no further Commission follow-up required.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. Affiliation Status

Continued accreditation

B. Nature of Organization

- 1. Legal status: Public**
- 2. Degrees awarded: Associate**

C. Conditions of Affiliation

- 1. Stipulation on affiliation status**
None
- 2. Approval of degree sites**
None
- 2. Approval of distance education degree**
None
- 4. Reports required**
 - Progress Report**
None
 - Monitoring Report**
None
 - Contingency Report**
None
- 5. Other visits scheduled**
None

6. Organization change request

None

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action**On Notice****Due Date for Report****Rationale and Expectations****Areas That Must Be Addressed****Probation****Next Evaluation Visit Rationale****Areas That Must Be Addressed (requirements for removal of probation)****Denial or Withdrawal of Status****Rationale****E. Summary of Commission Review**

Timing for next Comprehensive Visit 2019-2020

Rationale for Recommendation

The team believes that Northland Pioneer College meets the five core components for the continued accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission. Because of that the team is recommending the next Comprehensive Visit occur in ten years. The team believes that Northland Pioneer College has the fiscal and human resources to allow it to continue its service to Northeastern Arizona. The commitment to servicing the area and particularly the individual communities is obvious and genuine. The financial uncertainty created by the current economy in Arizona and across the U.S. is a concern; NPC has a process in place to address these financial challenges. The many changes the college will face need to be addressed with sound planning process and careful assessment of student learning and outcomes. The team has confidence the college can address its challenges and become an even stronger learning institution.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

None