Northland Pioneer College
Minutes of the Meeting of the Business Advisory Board
Room 112 Learning Center, Little Colorado Campus
March 1, 2006

Present: Jeanne Swarthout, Greg Gerard, Tom Nagle, Greg Hackler, Robin Cox, Michael Pahl, Ginger Pahl, Jessica Covey, Maxine Bazan, and Janet Hunter.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Janet Hunter. Introductions followed. Dr. Swarthout outlined the purpose and importance of the Business Advisory Board to NPC.

Discussion of Administrative Information Services Programs:

Ms. Hunter began with requests for input regarding a possible change of name for the department of Administrative Information Services. Ms. Hunter noted that the State Department of Education no longer uses the AIS designation for high school curricula. Those present agreed that the AIS name may not clearly indicate what the department offers. Several possible name changes were suggested, including Business Support Services, Administrative Services, Administrative Support Services, and Applied Business Technology. Ms. Hunter will research how other community colleges are handling the state designation changes. Suggestions and comments on the change of department name are requested.

The Board also discussed the need to streamline AIS programs and to review courses to ensure that they meet current student needs. Dr. Swarthout suggested that perhaps there are too many AIS degree and certificate areas. Board members present agreed that having too many certificates listed in the catalog may confuse students. Ms. Hunter will research the number of graduates in each certificate and degree area; those areas with few graduates will be considered for deletion or combination with another area.

Those present also discussed methods of increasing enrollment, especially for those areas where employer have needs. Mr. Gerard suggested that it would be beneficial to discover what keywords employers are looking for when reviewing resumes. This information may be readily available at such sites as Monster.com or Arizona One Stop Career Centers. Knowing what terminology employers are looking for will provide valuable input for revising department and degree names.

Dr. Swarthout requested input from the Board regarding current needs in the AIS area. Ms. Hunter noted an increased interest and enrollment of students in the area of medical insurance coding. Dr. Hackler and Ms. Cox agreed that there was great potential in coding areas, especially for those with knowledge of packaging claims. Ms. Bazan pointed out that the Hopi Hospital administration has contacted her regarding the possibility of NPC offering certification in coding. Requirements for meeting state certification test requirements will be researched by Ms. Hunter.

Dr. Hackler and Ms. Cox also suggested a course in HIPPA requirements as these have substantially increased the knowledge and labor involved in all phases of patient recordkeeping. Ms. Cox and Dr. Hackler indicated that every medical facility is required to have a HIPPA administrator who must pass a national test. Dr. Swarthout noted that the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) students may also benefit from such a course.

Please send any comments or input regarding the AIS department to Janet Hunter, Little Colorado Campus, or email @npc.edu

Discussion of Business Programs:

The Board discussed offering international components, perhaps initially as electives, to the business programs, as the world is becoming more and more global in scope. It was noted that, according to Manpower, the job category that is most difficult for employers to fill is in sales.

Mr. Nagle reminded the Board that NPC offers two business degrees; one degree transfers to all three state universities and the second is a vocational two-year degree.

Mr. Nagle also noted that NPC now offers about twenty business courses online. Ms. Hunter commented on the need for serving students this way, as many students take a sequence of online courses toward their degrees. Dr. Swarthout pointed out that, though we are close to having a complete degree online (as is required under the Title 3 Educational Grant), having an entire degree online will require a special North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) visit. Dr. Swarthout noted that it would be easier if that visit was simply rolled into the NCA visit already scheduled for 2009-10. Dr. Swarthout explained to the Board that if we have an entire degree available online, then we must also have all the other components that are available to ground students online. That includes student service components, such as advising, financial aid, and tutoring. Mr. Gerard also noted that the components must also be accessible to people with disabilities. While NPC is currently developing these items for online availability, the process is not yet complete.

Those present discussed marketing our courses and programs; all agreed that our programs (in all areas) need better marketing. Often students and potential students are just not aware of what NPC offers and when courses are offered. Ms. Covey noted that by paying for a small ad in the local papers, the Small Business Center was able to pull in many more students to their workshops.

Please send any comments or input regarding BUS programs to Tom Nagle, Little Colorado Campus, or email @npc.edu

Discussion of Computer Information Systems Programs:

CIS Chairperson Doug Seely was unable to attend the meeting, so Michael Pahl, CIS faculty, discussed CIS issues with the Board.   Mr. Pahl pointed out that NPC currently has no CIS programs that transfer to NAU or the other state universities. While NPC does have some offerings in graphic arts, an area in which NAU offers a degree (in Fine Arts), none of the NPC courses have been articulated. Mr. Pahl has information on a community college program that does transfer to NAU, and suggested that we develop a similar program that would transfer to NAU, an action which the members present supported. Mr. Pahl will share the information that he has gathered with Dr. Swarthout.

Mr. Pahl also described the three-year grant agreement that NPC, along with Mesa Community College, has with IBM to offer courses in software testing. IBM will be developing modules that NPC faculty will be teaching. While NPC currently does not have an area of emphasis in software testing, Dr. Swarthout noted that the language of the grant anticipates the development of a certificate associated with the courses.

Please send any comments or input regarding CIS programs to Doug Seely, St. Johns, or email seely@hotmail.com

Other Discussion Items:

Dr. Swarthout asked for input regarding the dissolution of the Computer Technology Program (CTP). Mrs. Pahl noted that the CPT 150 Computer Repair is required in many CIS areas of emphasis; however, the class could be changed to a CIS designation. Those who were familiar with the program agreed that the program should be dropped due to high costs and lack of enrollment.

Mr. Gerard invited everyone to attend the Job Fair at the Show Low Armory on April 13. It will provide a great opportunity for students to meet potential employers and for faculty to recruit students and talk with students regarding their concerns and desires regarding courses and programs.

Adjournment:
The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Hunter, Chair, AIS