Assurance Argument

Northwestern Michigan College

Review date: 10/20/2022

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

NMC Mission Statement

"We promote lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities."

NMC Vision Statement

"We aspire to be a global community where all learners unlock their full potential."

NMC Value Statements

Learning: We are life-long learners; learning is foundational to a thriving community and is at the center of all we do.

*Integrity***:** We act with the highest degree of ethics, personal responsibility, fairness, and openness ensuring that we match our actions with our words.

Collaboration: We embrace co-creative solutions and celebrate the joy of working together, empowering each other and nurturing community partnerships for the benefit of our learners.

Respect: We demonstrate mutual regard and appreciation for one another to assure a culture of trust.

Inclusion: We foster belonging and build organizational capacity that celebrates diversity and promotes equity.

Innovation: We are agile, imaginative, and forward-thinking, taking risks to meet future needs of the college and our communities.

Stewardship: We practice stewardship by investing responsibly in the human, physical, financial, and environmental resources entrusted to our care.

Excellence: We commit to the highest standards of quality and service, and to exceeding the expectations of our learning and communities through continuous improvement.

The current strategic plan identifies and emphasizes that the mission of Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) focuses on lifelong learning as the key to the transformation of all learners which in turn creates a significant and positive impact in a global community . The mission, vision and value statements were most recently reviewed in 2021 as it is routinely visited as part of a regular strategic planning process (2009, 2013, and 2017) and were approved by the Board of Trustees at a regular meeting in November 2021. The NMC's mission, vision, and value statements are regularly developed through broad-based participation of executive leadership, faculty, staff, governance councils, the Board of Trustees, the community, and external stakeholders. All are approved by the Board of Trustees (A-106.00). Each is asked to review the mission statement, providing feedback related to its relevance today, and to provide comments as to whether or not changes should be made. Adoption of the 2022 to 25 NMC Strategic Plan by the Board of Trustees at the January 2022 regular meeting constituted formal recognition of the stated mission.

1.A.1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

Most recently, NMC began the process of reviewing and updating the college's strategic plan. The strategic planning process at Northwestern Michigan College is a reiterative process that involves both internal and external stakeholders throughout the college's six-county service area. The planning process includes a review of the Mission, Vision, and Values statements.

The Mission, Vision, Values, Purposes, Strategic Directions, and Institutional Effectiveness Criteria (C-100.00; C-101.00; C-102.00; C-103.00; C-104.00) work together to clearly articulate that providing lifelong learning opportunities is NMC's primary purpose. The Purpose and Strategic Directions statements further clarify who we serve and how we serve them. The College reviews the Mission, Vision, Values, Purposes, Strategic Directions, and Institutional Effectiveness Criteria as part of the strategic planning process. Information gathered by listening to students, employees, the community and other stakeholders which may result in a need for change. NMC's Purposes, revised by the Board of Trustees, revised March 18, 2013 included "Bachelor degrees in select programs" when it was next revised on June 5, 2018, it added "as applicable", the only change to the policy (C-103.00). In regards to fulfilling the purpose, NMC awarded its first bachelor degrees in January 2014: Bachelor of Science in Maritime Technology. This change was a direct result of feedback from students, industry, and a change in State of Michigan law.

As mentioned previously, the 2021 iteration of the mission statement was adopted by the Board of Trustees in November 2021. Prior to 2021, the college mission and vision consisted of a mission and vision statement accompanied by eight value statements.The College initiated a strategic planning process using Campus Works as our consultants. Based on the advice of the consultants, the process included evaluating whether our Mission, Vision and Value statements were still appropriate or whether updating was needed. As a result of feedback from college stakeholders we made small modifications to the mission and crafted a much more concise and memorable vision statement. The values were evaluated and some were retained while others were added. The latter included *Inclusion*

which emphasized our commitment to creating a sense of belonging for our employees and students. Discussions leading up to the 2021 version of the plan focused on the need to simplify and clarify the mission, vision, and value statements.

The new value statements (C-102.00) adopted in 2021 focus on transformation and enrichment to unlock the full-potential of our learners: learning, integrity, collaboration, respect, inclusion, innovation, stewardship and excellence. Formal adoption of the mission, vision, and value statements were the result of a regular series of reviews and discussions that took place across the college and included students as well as community members.

The mission, vision, and value statements are published in "NMC Next: Our Community. Our College. Our Future." which is distributed throughout the college and accessible on our website. The mission statement is also printed on the back of employee business cards. The mission, vision and values statements are displayed in prominent on-campus locations.

1.A.2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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.

The student demographic at NMC has changed over time and reflects the demographics of the six-county service area. Similar to the region, the average age of the NMC student population has increased, in large part due to the decrease in the proportion of high school aged students. Course delivery modes have also shifted significantly mostly due to the state mandate to stay-at-home orders during the COVID pandemic. In fall 2019, 28% of students were enrolled in at least one online course, the 22nd percentile compared to community colleges nationwide (NCCBP, 2020). In fall 2020, immediately prior to the pandemic, 64% of students were enrolled in at least one distance education course (NCCBP, 2021). The college continues to prioritize online enrollment, supporting students in need of flexible scheduling, with a goal outlined in the Strategic Plan to increase the proportion of online courses by over five percent (Strategy One, Objective Two).

NMC provides educational opportunities for students to earn certificates and associate degrees in a variety of programs of study as well as bachelor degrees through the Great Lakes Maritime Academy and Great Lakes Water Studies Institute, including Michigan's first community college bachelor's degree. Partner universities grant baccalaureate, graduate and doctoral degrees through the University Center at NMC.

NMC currently offers 38 Academic certificates, 38 associate and 4 bachelor degree programs. Credit students are supported by services including personal counseling, academic advising, tutoring, financial aid, success coaching, and health services. The College also offers a variety of non-credit professional training opportunities for area workers and employers. Community members of all ages have the opportunity to partake in community education programs including youth programs in the College for Kids programming through Work & Career and Life Enrichment classes. New for 2022, Extended Education Services (EES) added several current and relevant international and national course topics such as a non-credit Global Certificate Program, Diversity Equity Inclusion 101, Intercultural Fluency, and Inequity and the Price We Pay courses.

In addition to supporting academic needs, NMC provides resources that build community, spark conversation, and inspire changes for students and community members. The Dennos Museum is a

college-supported center that brings major national cultural exhibits to Grand Traverse County such as *Resilience: African American Artists as Agents of Change*, *40 Chances: Finding Hope in a Hungry World*, and *Away From Home: American Indian Boarding School Stories.* During the 2020-21 academic year, NMC placed in the 88th percentile of annual attendance in cultural activities at the Dennos Museum (NCCBP, 2021). Upcoming cultural exhibits planned for 2022-23 include *The Annual Cape Dorset Print Collection* and *Teresa Dunn: US.* The Dennos offers guided tours for grades Pre-K through 12, as well as for scouts, college classes, and adult groups that encourage learners of all ages to make relevant and meaningful connections to their lives.

The six-county service area for NMC includes Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford counties in Michigan. NMC serves over 50,000 learners annually within the combined service area of approximately 5,700 square miles, or six percent of Michigan. The College uses a comprehensive economic modeling service to monitor population, employment, and industrial trends in the six county service area. Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI) offers NMC the ability to assess the educational needs at the local, state, and national level in relation to economic and workforce development.

To meet the diverse needs of our students, NMC offers multiple course delivery platforms including face-to-face courses for on-campus students and dual-enrolled high school students in the service area, and distance education courses using the Moodle learning management software platform.

One of the most significant NMC-funded investments for renovations and modernizations is the Innovation Center project. This educational resource is supported by NMC and is located in the heart of the campus. In 2019, NMC won state legislative approval of $7.4 million in capital outlay dollars to cover approximately one-half of its $14.4 million cost. The updated, two story facility is home of the NMC Library and the NMC Varsity Esports Program. It also houses the college's new Experiential Learning Institute, Educational Technology Offices, the WNMC college radio station and the Hawk Owl Cafe which is available for students, employees and community members.

1.A.3 The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

From its beginning in 1951, NMC's mission recognizes that the college serves as a vital

educational and cultural center for the local community, region, and state. NMC has become a source of education to a large degree and is a source of meaningful new knowledge, skills and experiences. This is captured in our mission statement, *We promote lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities*. NMC's mission identifies the nature, scope and intended constituents of its offerings and services by stating its vision to aspire to be *a global community where all learners unlock their full potential.*

Our portfolio of offerings include College for Kids, Extended Education non-credit courses, credit programs in liberal arts and sciences and occupational studies, organizational and customized training for business and industry, and Life Academy for age 50 and older). NMC offers 104 majors in occupational fields, including health sciences, computer information technology, and construction technology to name a few. The College also sponsors the International Affairs Forum, TEDx Conferences, and a host of other community learning opportunities. These programs, services, and enrollment profiles are all consistent with NMC's Mission.

NMC actively listens to the community through leadership by our elected Board of Trustees, by

gathering feedback from the community on the Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey, and through community participation on the Foundation Board and program advisory groups. Results help NMC discover which offerings community members value most as well as gauge community interest in programs and services for feasibility.

1.A.4 The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Academic advisors work closely with each student on campus to ensure they meet benchmarks and are making adequate progress towards degree completion. The Student Success Center (SSC) at NMC provides students with personalized academic support services that lead to students to reach their goals. The Student Success Center is staffed by full- and part-time staff, one full-time Student Success Specialist, four part-time test proctors, six part-time success coaches, and a full-time Student Success Coordinator. The center is accessible to all students and is open six days per week throughout the day and evening. NMC Tutoring Services includes the Tutoring, Math and Science Centers. Students may drop-in for assistance or may schedule a specific appointment for help with a particular subject. In addition to providing support for students in the center itself, tutors are available in-person and online. During the 2019-20 academic year, the SSC provided 5,121 in-person and virtual sessions across all services, serving 987 students. In 2020-21, the SSC offered 2,695 sessions, serving 464 students. In 2021-22, the SSC engaged in more outreach activities including an updated web page, social media page and mailings targeting at-risk student populations. The Center has identified learning gaps due to the increase in online offerings during the pandemic and as result, is including strategic action steps to collaborate with faculty to identify students in need of help earlier. The SSC Operational Plan tracks the progress of this goal.   In FY 2023, the plan identified that the goal was somewhat off-track due to challenge and as a result, modified the goal to include four focused action items.

NMC's vision is *We aspire to be a global community.* While enrolling students internationally and nationally, the majority of students are residents of our service region. The 2021-22 enrollment of the College was 4,131 total students with 3,350 reported as Caucasian (81%) and 781 who identify as a minority which is approximately 5% higher compared to the minority demographics of our region. African Americans (1%), Hispanic Americans (1%) and Native Americans (1%) make up the greatest portion of the minority population. These totals are reflected in the ethnic/racial makeup of our six-county region whose Caucasian population is 93%.

NMC attracts many students to begin their educational careers at two-year institutions and then transfer to four-year institutions. In fall 2021, the top four-year institutions that NMC students transfer to include Ferris State University (19%), Michigan State University (16%), and Grand Valley State University (15%). The aggregate of out-of-state four-year schools account for approximately 4%. Because a significant amount of students are not able to start at a four-year institution, it is important for community colleges to provide access for students to transfer to a four-year institution. As part of the 2022-25 Strategic Plan, NMC has identified the goal to increase access to four year college programs (Strategy 4; Objective 4).

1.A.5 The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

NMC publicly articulates its Mission, Vision, Values, Purposes, Strategic Directions, and

Institutional Effectiveness Criteria on its website. Framed copies displaying the vision, mission and core values are displayed throughout the campus. Metrics are provided on a website dashboard in order to track progress towards the goals that are included in the strategic plan. The print version of the Strategic Plan, "NMC Next: Our Community. Our College. Our Future.", was widely distributed to faculty, staff, board of trustees, and other key stakeholders. The mission is clearly articulated in the academic catalog. Student resident handbooks include the mission, vision, and value statements that were developed by the strategic planning committee.

Sources

- 012422-Board-Packet
- 112221-Board-Packet
- A-106.00
- C-100.00
- C-101.00
- C-102.00
- C-103.00
- C-104.00
- Demographic_Overview_6_Michigan_Counties
- Economic Overview 6 Michigan Counties
- Innovation Center
- NMC Action Plan
- NMC NextStrategicPlanBrochure
- Student Success Center
- Student Success Center FY23 A3
- Student_Employee_Service Area Demographics
- The Dennos Museum Center
- Transfer Goals
- Upcoming Exhibitions __ The Dennos Museum Center

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
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.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.B.1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

As a public college, NMC has the responsibility to recruit and provide an education to students across the nation, state and six-county service area. Balancing the economic needs of the surrounding area with our mission to provide lifelong learning opportunities to our communities, NMC offers credentials in a general education curriculum and occupational fields. As a non-profit educational institution, NMC does not generate profits for external stakeholders but rather is accountable to the community in which it serves.

1.B.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.

The Mission, Vision, Values, Purposes, Strategic directions, and Institutional Effectiveness Criteria (C-100.00; C-101.00; C-102.00; C-103.00; C-104.00) work together to clearly articulate that providing lifelong learning is NMC's primary purpose. The education focused mission, *"We promote lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities"*

guides our decision making across the college. The Purpose and Strategic Directions statements further clarify who we serve and how we serve them.

1.B.3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

The College reviews the Mission, Vision, Values, Purposes, Strategic Directions, and Institutional Effectiveness Criteria as part of the strategic planning process (planning schedule). Information gathered by listening to students, the community and other stakeholders, and through the NMC Economic Impact Study may indicate a need for change. In the summer of 2020, the college completed the West Hall 21st Century Innovation Center project to create a multi-story library and flexible learning space that serves our students as well as our community. The project received extensive campus and community input and won the support of state legislators. The center was renamed the Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center to honor the former president's decades of service

to students, the college and the community.

NMC's Dennos Museum Center directly supports educational activities including visual arts courses, the NMC Music program, the International Affairs Forum, and more. In addition to these activities, the museum regularly hosts its own concert series, artist lectures, and films through the Smithsonian Channel–all of which are open to the public and attract community members to campus. In 2020, the number of cultural activities made available at the museum ranked in the 96th percentile compared to a national sample of community colleges (NCCBP, 2020).

NMC actively listens to the community through leadership by our elected Board of Trustees, by gathering feedback from the community on the Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey, and through community participation on the Foundation Board and advisory boards. Results help us discover which NMC offerings community members value most as well as gauge community interest in programs and services for feasibility.

The NMC Foundation is guided by a 35+ member board of directors made up of donors, alumni, faculty, staff and other friends of the college. Many other stakeholders are engaged through various volunteer roles designed to provide feedback and connection to community needs to the foundation and college. The foundation office also maintains relationships with alumni through robust digital communications as well as an alumni and retiree advisory group. Surveys and informal focus groups inform programs and events hosted by the college.

Sources

- Advisory Board Feedback
- C-100.00
- C-101.00
- C-102.00
- C-103.00
- C-104.00
- CAAS-2018-Results
- Economic Impact Study _ Northwestern Michigan College
- Innovation Center
- NMC Foundation Board
- Planning Schedule SP
- The Dennos Museum Center
- West Hall renamed the Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C.1. The institution encourages curricular or co curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

NMC designs programs to meet the needs of our community as well as leverage regional resources. Three student stakeholder groups affect academic programming: prospective, current, and past. We build partnerships with secondary schools and career technical centers to facilitate student transition from high school to community college. NMC partners with colleges and universities at our NMC University Center, allowing students to continue their education without having to leave the area. Our alumni return in various capacities: adjunct faculty, advisory committee members, donors, volunteers. The relationships with our alumni also serve as a conduit for programming based on their business/industry ties within the community.

NMC offers a variety of academic programs designed to meet the needs of our community. We have students who may be full or part-time; seeking a certificate, degree, or some type of skill enhancement. We also offer programming for students intending to transfer.

One of NMC's value statements, Inclusion, to foster belonging and build organizational capacity that celebrates diversity and promotes equity, has been a driver in program planning and design. The College's upper Midwest location and regional demographics calls for extra attention to implementing strategies to increase the diversity of global and cultural experiences of our learners. International students were 0.6% of the Fall 2018 student population (n=3,726) and 0.4% for Fall 2019 (n=3,544). The College had set a target of increasing that number to 5% by Fall 2020; however, one of the impacts of the pandemic negatively impacted the plan of the College to partner with local high schools to bring students from China to the College and community. As the College recovers, plans are focused to develop a number of partnerships and programs bringing international students, faculty, and experiences to our campus as well as expanding opportunities for our students and faculty abroad.

Students can earn a Global Endorsement on their transcript through academic and experiential learning, activities and event participation, and preparing a final capstone presentation. Study abroad opportunities for students to experience different cultures are offered through the International Services and Service Learning Office. The International Services and Service Learning Office works closely with faculty to provide training, support, and resources in building global components into

courses and programs. The College is a member of the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education (MIIIE) and Community Colleges for International Development (CCID), both organizations offer a wealth of international educational resources.

As a result of one of the newly identified strategic goals (Strategy 1, Objective 5), students will engage in experiential learning opportunity activities to prepare them for life and work. These activities improve educational as well as other life outcomes. They are designed to develop the individual as a whole while also providing a deeper understanding of the discipline content. For example, beginning in 2013, business majors were encouraged to participate in service learning-focused activities including Thanksgiving food drives. The 2021 Food Pantry and Thanksgiving Meal Project resulted in more than 125 families receiving donated meals. NMC students are also involved in the Big Little Hero Race which supports NMC's College for Kids Scholarships for Big Brother Big Sisters within our local community. These are a few of the many curricular and cocurricular activities available to students.

Courses within Communications, Humanities, and Social Science that meet NMC's cultural perspectives and diversity requirement have students evaluating connections between worldviews, power structures, and experiences of multiple cultures historically or in contemporary contexts support helping students to engage as educated and informed citizens in a diverse society. In addition, NMC has adopted L. Dee Fink's framework of Significant Learning Outcomes for the design of all courses. As faculty develop outcomes for the Human Dimension they consider what students will learn about themselves and others and the personal and social implications of that learning. Human Dimension outcomes address social, cultural, and interpersonal awareness within the context of specific courses or program content.

1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.

The six-county service area is home to a significant Native American population. The College regularly celebrates Indigenous Peoples' Day in October of each year. In 2022, the College's Native American Student Organization held an Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration with members of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. The day is an opportunity to celebrate and honor Native American peoples and commemorate their histories and cultures, which predate Western colonization by centuries. For the last four years, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians has provided grant dollars to fund strategies for improving the success rates of NMC's Native American students. NMC offers a Native American history class and has been working with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to develop a year-long language course sequence in Anishinaabemowin. NMC also has a student success coach specifically to support our native student population.

The College regularly seeks to identify needs to demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations through internal surveys and community listening sessions as well as feedback from external stakeholders.

1.C.3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

The minority student population at NMC is small, averaging approximately 12% over the past several academic years, as is our regional minority demographic (7%). This creates a particular challenge for students to feel welcome, included, and safe. In 2020, expenditures per NMC FTE

Employee was ranked in the 96th percentile compared to a national sample of community colleges (NCCBP, 2020) demonstrating the College's commitment to explore ways to address these issues through program design and through the hiring and training of faculty and staff. In the summer of 2020, the College also initiated a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee to focus on diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.   An example of new programming and educational opportunities for students, employees and community members include activities made available through various events and activities. As a part of the 2022 NMC Embrace the Dream event, the College launched a 5-week equity challenge, in partnership with the United Way of Northwest Michigan. The purpose of the challenge was to provide a meaningful learning opportunity to deepen the understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and to support meaningful change in important areas of DEI in keeping with NMC's commitment to students, employees, and the community.

Respect for diversity of backgrounds, ideas and perspectives is embedded in the College's mission, vision and values statements, faculty and student handbooks, as well as in institutional and departmental mission statements and course syllabi. As part of the 2022-25 Strategic Plan, Strategy 3, the DEI strategic sub-committee is charged with cultivating an inclusive environment to foster a sense of belonging and deliver equitable opportunities for all students and employees.

To further support its role in a multicultural society, NMC recognized a need to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff. In 2018-19, the employee/population ratio was 0.75 which placed the College in the 54th percentile. Currently, NMC's minority employee/population ratio is 0.69 placing the college in the 52nd percentile among peers according to the 2021 NCCBP Report. Recognizing the need to prioritize diversity among faculty and staff in addition to the student population, NMC included a strategy in the 2022-25 Strategic Plan relating to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Strategy 3:

- Create a college DEI statement of definition and purpose; receive President's Council approval and share with the NMC Board of Trustees
- Implement staffing and resourcing for DEI efforts with the creation of at least a .5 FTE position by end of FY 2022
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Cultivate an inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and delivers equitable opportunities so all students and employees are able to thrive and succeed
- Address the barriers to entry and success of vulnerable student populations to improve application to enrollment statistics from 28% to 35% for BIPOC students and improve 12 month retention of all vulnerable populations by 3 percentage points by fall 2025
- Review and revise NMC systems, policies, and procedures for inclusive and equitable language and processes across college systems by Dec. 2025

Sources

- Big Little Hero Race
- C-102.00
- Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) Committee
- Embrace the Dream

- Food pantry Thanksgiving meal project
- Global Endorsement
- International Services
- NMC Action Plan
- Strategy 1 Objective 5 only
- Strategy 3 Diversity Equity Inclusion
- Transfer Students _ Northwestern Michigan College

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

Serving more than 50,000 learners annually, Northwestern Michigan College is integrally woven into the economic, social and cultural fabric of its region, providing leadership and support for key initiatives that shape our communities and prepare our learners for rich and meaningful lives. NMC is a story of transition and innovation. Since the last review, NMC engaged in the most comprehensive strategic plan in decades. As a result, NMC's mission was updated to state: to *deliver lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities*. The mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout NMC.

To fulfill this mission, demonstrating our commitment to the public good, NMC's focus is on developing and offering academic programs that meet the needs of our learners and employers. NMC transforms the lives of learners through the investment in the Innovation Center, a cutting-edge facility, and technologies that provide the learning environment they need to succeed in today's world, and implementing lifelong experiential learning opportunities to prepare them to be engaged citizens.

Despite facing the impact of the pandemic, the College decided to develop an unprecedented three-year strategic plan to serve our learners and communities. The comprehensive, transparent and inclusive process engaged students, employees, community members, business and education partners and donors, around the opportunities, needs and challenges in learning. After a year of development, the College implemented its NMC 2022-25 Strategic Plan that includes future focused education, strong support for student success and a collegewide commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging.

NMC is also deeply rooted in regional economic development and community engagement. Among many other efforts, NMC has developed collaborations that support local industries, particularly in the aviation, healthcare and culinary fields.

NMC provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within the mission and for the constituencies we serve. NMC engages with its surrounding communities through a wide array of programs and activities, from the International Affairs Forum (IAF) to student nurses volunteering at a local clinic, contributing to the community-wide effort making the NMC service area a statewide leader in COVID-19 vaccinations. NMC's commitment to diversity is reflected in many of these activities, such as the 2022 *Embrace the Dream* activities, including the *Voices* project, and a collaboration with the United Way of Northwest Michigan on the Five-Week Equity Challenge, activities which focused on issues related to racial inequity.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2.A.1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

As reported during the last review, NMC's Board of Trustees operates according to the Policy Governance Model (A-001.00) and multiple policies outlining board processes. Transparency and openness is exhibited through public access to Board of Trustee meetings, minutes and video recordings (A-104.00), annual financial audits, academic program accreditation status and costs. NMC recognizes that as a public institution, most information can be obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This public accountability encourages clarity in record-keeping and procedures and supports reporting transparency, consistency, and accuracy.

Fundamental policies align to NMC values set forth by the College.   Executive staff and Board of Trustees are required annually to affirm that they follow the College's conflict of interest policies:

- Conflict of Interest (Board of Trustees Process) A-102.01
- Conflict of Interest Staff Policy D-506.01
- Intellectual Property Rights D-506.02
- Faculty Code of Professional Ethics D-749.00

Since the last review, the College revised the Mission, Vision and Value statements. The Board of Trustees approved the revisions at a regular meeting in 2021:

- Mission C-100.00
- Vision C-101.00
- Values C-102.00

2.A.2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Finances

NMC ensures ethical practices by intentionally designing work processes so that duties involving

payroll processing and purchasing are handled by different people and require levels of review and approval. Procurement card guidelines define specific use and the steps taken to monitor such use. The purchasing policy (D-504.02) states the allowable limits on purchases by employee classification. The shared governance system (D-502.00) contributes to a check system for many College processes. Cases of criminal conduct were rare, but were addressed promptly when they occurred. A past incidence of alleged embezzlement led to immediate dismissal. It also prompted additional training for all purchase card holders.

External audits, such as the annual financial audit, review the College's practices in light of ethical guidelines. The College consistently receives a clean opinion with no findings. This is the highest opinion that an audit can receive.

During the 2016-17 academic year, NMC was put on notice for 7 different incidences of behavior that potentially fell under what is prohibited under Title IX (behavior that is harassing in nature based on one's sex or gender, gender or sex-based discrimination or violence that prevents a student from receiving their education). The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many of the dynamics of the 2020-2021 academic year at NMC, with one of the most significant impacts being the reduced number of students living and studying on our campuses. Housing students living on campus decreased by over 50% as compared to year's past, as COVID-19 conditions led the college to restrict housing capacity to mitigate the risk factors of contracting COVID-19. In addition to less students living in housing, the number of students studying on our campuses significantly decreased, with over 80% of our courses offered as online or livestream/zoom courses. As was the case for most institutions of higher education in the 2020-2021 academic year, student "traffic" on NMC's campuses was minimal. Given the reduced "traffic", no incidents were reported, investigated or resolved during the 2020-21 academic year. The Student Life Office Counselor did provide counseling and accommodations to three students per their request. Details of how those incidences were addressed can be found in the most recent 2020-21 Annual Title IX Report.

Specific staff members have oversight for creating contractual agreements with organizations that supply materials and services, subject to Board of Trustee or Presidential approval. The threshold for Board-level approval for vendor contracts is $35,000. If over $35,000, NMC's Board of Trustees evaluates the contract and the soundness of decision-making in the recommendation to engage a vendor. If below $35,000, contractual relationships are carried out as defined in the request for proposals and the College's purchasing policy (D-504.02) and procedures. Procedures are available to the campus on the intranet and are presented in Budget Manager's training (Budgeting Manual) from the Finance and Administration area.

The College addresses potential conflicts of interest or other ethical concerns through our partnership agreements, contracts, or Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's). All are managed by NMC's Business Office and comply with all federal guidelines as well as NMC's conflict of interest policy (D-506.01). MOU's are typically subject to legal counsel review as well to ensure they address all potential ethical concerns.

Academic

NMC's policies on academic honesty and integrity are documented in the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics (D-749.00) and in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (D-602.01, section 5: Academic Code of Conduct). The Educational Services Instructional Management Team (ESIMT) have determined that faculty members must include a statement on the syllabus stating policies related to academic code of conduct (Course Syllabus Essential Criteria). This syllabus

language is preloaded on all Moodle course shells.

Extended Education Services (EES) has developed checks and balances to manage potential conflicts of interest in those cases where community members, consultants, or small business owners may bring an idea for a community enrichment course with an embedded sales pitch. To address this potential problem:

- All instructors sign independent contractor contracts. These are managed by the Business Office and comply with all federal guidelines.
- EES Program Coordinators set clear expectations: the purpose of this course offering is to provide learning, to teach people something. It is not a sales pitch.

EES carefully monitors courses both through staff attending classes and through participant feedback to ensure instructors are adhering to those guidelines and that participants do not feel any pressure to purchase specific products or services.

Human Resources

Communicating standards to all employees begins with NMC's values which were most recently developed through a campus-wide strategic planning process in 2021. One value statement in particular asserts Integrity: "We act with the highest degree of ethics, personal responsibility, fairness, and openness ensuring that we match our actions with our words. " All new employees are oriented to NMC's values at the New Faculty and Staff Institute and also through the online orientation process.

Ethical standards are also communicated through Foundational Competencies which were developed through focus groups as part of an Action Project. These appear in job postings and job descriptions. Through the performance planning and assessment process, supervisors can incorporate the competencies into employee reviews.

All employees receive initial training on FERPA, Title IX, Sexual Harassment, and Alcohol and Drug policies and procedures as part of the on-boarding process. Annual refresher training is conducted on Title IX and alcohol and drug policies as required by federal guidelines. Additional FERPA training is provided on an as-needed basis (e.g. changes in laws, policies, or procedures).

NMC's hiring processes were developed based on federal and state guidelines and NMC policies. The College ensures these guidelines are followed through training for hiring managers and search teams, close monitoring of search team activities by the Recruitment Specialist, and the inclusion of Human Resource representatives in all final decision meetings. In addition, all search team materials and notes are collected, reviewed, and maintained consistent with NMC's document retention policy (D-506.04).

To further protect external access to personal identifying information or other sensitive information, NMC began requiring comprehensive online/network security training for all employees beginning in 2015. Our Systems and LAN Management department assesses long-term effectiveness of the training by sending mock phishing messages, determining additional training needs. Guidelines on the appropriate use of computer and network systems are outlined in a staff policy (D-506.06).

The College requires cash handling training (Cash Handling Procedures) related to ethical handling of money/payments for employees receiving money, Cash Handling 101. Additional required

training includes Annual Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security training for anyone who uses credit cards, Purchasing Card training for all assigned an NMC credit card and Budget Manager Training (Budgeting Manual) for all budget managers.

Compliance training completion is tracked through NMC talent management software. Reports are sent to supervisors to follow up with any employee that has not completed required training. In addition to training, the College uses the following processes to ensure standards are met:

- Leader observation. As leaders work with their teams, they are responsible to address any ethical concerns in a timely manner as outlined in NMC's Performance Improvement Plan process. Minor violations may result in feedback, coaching, and documentation; more serious violations may lead to immediate termination.
- Student feedback. Students can provide feedback regarding the unethical behavior of faculty, staff, or other students informally and through more formal channels such as course evaluations, NMC's Red Flag system and annual financial audits.

Sources

- A-001.00
- A-102.01
- A-104.00
- Annual Financial Audits Homepage
- Annual Title IX Report 2020-21
- BoT Homepage
- Budgeting_Manual_FY23
- C-100.00
- C-101.00
- C-102.00
- Cash Procedures
- D-502.00
- D-504.02
- D-506.01
- D-506.02
- D-506.04
- D-506.06
- D-602.01
- D-749.00
- Foundational Competencies
- Mission Vision Values
- Program Accreditations
- Syllabus Essential Criteria

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

2.B.1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

Information about each academic program's requirements, costs, and accreditation relationships is easily accessible on the NMC website and its online catalog. Program requirements are described and outlined in the catalog as well as on department websites and are provided to all new students at the required New Student Orientation. Additionally, prospective students, their family and the community can find a list of all faculty and staff members, their role, and their credentials in the Faculty and Staff section of the online catalog.

Employee contact information is available in the NMC's Employee Directory intranet page which allows students to search by name or office. Faculty and staff data include name, title/role, campus phone number, email, department and campus location. Information is updated nightly and maintained in Banner, the enterprise resource planning system, by Information Technology staff. Student directory data is maintained in Banner and is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which requires schools to exempt student directory information from disclosure.

Current students are able to access the Self-Service portal to view the online schedule of classes, register/add/drop classes, check billing information, apply for scholarships, order transcripts, etc. Through My Academic Plan (MAP), students can track courses in their plan to determine the time frame towards program completion.   Admission standards including application deadlines, types of admission (e.g., regularly, dual-enrolled) and information regarding transfer credits are accessible on the Admissions website. Admissions and Financial Services provide detailed costs of attendance on their webpages through access to the Tuition and Fees webpage or the Net Price Calculator for students to estimate net price and eligibility for financial aid.   The Academic and Career Advising Center provides students with assistance from the beginning of their journey through graduation, transfer, employment readiness, or whatever their goal may be.

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) provides public access to institutional effectiveness metrics: Learner Achievement, Graduate Outcomes and Postsecondary Credentials. ORPE makes additional and detailed data and information in addition effectiveness metrics available to internal stakeholders in both static tables and charts and most recently, in interactive data visualization dashboards. The dashboards allow users to drill down using filters such

as demographics in order to identify potential areas for improvement that normally would not have been as easily available prior to the dashboards.

The Public Relations, Marketing and Communications (PRMC), the official internal and external communication department of the College, creates and distributes numerous publications, including paper and electronic versions, such as the Nexus Magazine, an award-winning publication that highlights the College.   PRMC also distributes news releases and is responsible for the maintenance of social media accounts such as Facebook that reach various stakeholder groups. Since the last review, PRMC has increased its integrated marketing communications efforts with the addition of a new Marketing Director and Creative Director. The team works closely with admissions to meet the College's strategic enrollment goals through paid, earned, owned and shared media.

Councils, Committees and Teams are accessible on the intranet homepage, outlines the governance structure of the College and is available to provide an overview of the responsibilities, meeting minutes and current membership information.

The Faculty Code of Professional Ethics (D-749.00), Foundational Competencies for employees and the Student Rights and Responsibilities (D-602.00) provide the standards of excellence and set expectations for ethical conduct of faculty, employees and students. These documents are located on the NMC website.

NMC has been accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1961. All of the College's relationships and documents are available on the public website.

2.B.2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Aligned with NMC's mission, vision, values and general education philosophy (D-101.01), students are offered a variety of experiences to support their academic learning through student groups and co-curricular activities related to their academic program and areas of interest. There are many structured co-curricular learning opportunities designed to provide an enriched educational environment for NMC students. These learning opportunities engage faculty and students in scholarship and creative work through real-world situations. For example, the College offers programming in support of the NMC Global Endorsement, such as study abroad opportunities, as well as a variety of service learning and experiential learning projects throughout the curriculum. An example of a cross curricular service-learning project explores homelessness through the lens of sociology, social work, English, and business communications. The project culminates in community presentations that articulate the impact of homelessness. Students who participate in college-sanctioned service learning and global opportunities may receive documentation of these activities on their college transcripts.

Students can earn a Global Endorsement on their transcript through academic and experiential learning, activities and event participation, and preparing a final capstone presentation. NMC's International Services and Service Learning Office works closely with faculty to provide training, support, and resources in building global components into courses and programs. The College is a member of the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education (MIIIE) and Community Colleges for International Development (CCID), both organizations offer a wealth of international educational resources.

At the time of the last review, most co-curricular activities had a stated purpose, but several did not have clearly articulated learning outcomes or assessments. For those that do state learning outcomes, instructors or other program sponsors use assessment tools and methods suited to the context of the program. These included pre/post assessments, journal or other reflections submissions, post-event debriefs, or assessment of projects or presentations.

As reported during the last review, the College launched an Action Project on *Experiential Learning* (EL) in 2017 with the goal to expand the use of EL, reaching all NMC learners by this pedagogy. As a result of this project, the Experiential Learning Institute (ELI) was established. ELI is a valuable resource for instructors to use in their courses. Instructors are able to *Apply for EL Resources* and *Assess your course or activity*. Beginning in fall 2021, the ELI distributed a monthly EL@NMC Newsletter with Special Editions in the summer 2022.   The Co-Curricular Committee was also established as a sub-committee of ELI and is charged with expanding EL opportunities across NMC campuses and beyond. The committee consists of 14 faculty and staff representing a cross section of NMC. The sub-committee began by defining what co curricular means for the college and is now in the process of creating an assessment rubric to measure learning outcomes. Part of this process included two sub-committee members who attended the HLC workshop on *Assessment of Co-Curricular* outcomes in the Summer 2022. Co-Curricular activities are recognized as a vital part of the student learning process and are mentioned in several places in the 2022-25 NMC Strategic Plan, which includes a focus EL with a goal that every credential-seeking student will benefit from at least one EL opportunity by fall 2024. Beginning in the fall of 2022, ELI will ask all faculty to assess each of their courses to determine if their courses contained or supported EL. This effort will start an inventory of courses that provide EL experiences and is a first step in attaining the above Strategic Plan goal.

Sources

- Accreditation
- D-101.01
- D-602.00
- D-749.00
- EL@NMC Special Edition 3 - Summer 2022
- EL-Faculty-Self-Assessment-Rubric
- ELI Students
- EL-newsletter-November-2021
- Employment Readiness
- Experiential Learning Resource Application
- FOIA
- Foundational Competencies
- Global Endorsement
- Grad Track
- IE Metrics
- MAP
- Net Price Calculator
- New Student Orientation
- Nexus

- NMC Action Plan
- NMC Councils Committees and Teams
- Strategy 1 Objective 5
- Student Groups
- Transfer Advising
- Tuition and Fees
- Welcome to the Experiential Learning Institute

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

In NMC's shared governance model, the Board of Trustees delegates day-to-day management of the College to the President (B-100.00). Each regular monthly board meeting agenda typically includes reports on programs, teaching and learning, enrollment, finances, the Foundation, and legislative issues, as well as Board Chair and Presidential updates. This ensures the board is knowledgeable about NMC's current operations and emerging opportunities and challenges. Trustees are up to date on issues in the legislature as well other key pieces of information relative to community colleges. Regular communication between the College and the trustees at board meetings underscores transparency and an understanding of NMC's mission, vision and values.

The College begins to establish a relationship with trustees in the weeks leading up to the election when candidates are provided with an information packet from the president's office and invited to an informational session with the board chair, college president, and executive staff. New trustees participate in an orientation session, and the College schedules a board retreat shortly after the beginning of the new year with trustees, the president, and executive staff.

Trustees are supported and encouraged to attend professional development conferences through organizations such as the Association of Community Colleges Trustees and the Michigan Community College Association to better understand their roles within the College leadership structure as well as state and national issues pertaining to community colleges.

2.C.2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The board reviews progress on the strategic goals of the 2022-25 Strategic Plan during monthly meetings and as necessary. The plan is based on five key strategies which were identified through a comprehensive, year-long planning process including internal and external constituents. The board

approved the final plan during the December 2021 regular meeting. The trustee's roles and responsibilities (A-101.00; A-102.00) ensure the board is spending its time on the most important priorities to preserve and enhance the College. As an example of the board's focus on its priorities to preserve and enhance the College is its approval to not increase fees or tuition for the 2020-21 academic year in response to the pandemic. Non-traditional or working students make up a significant portion of the student population and were greatly impacted financially as stay-at-home orders limited their ability to earn paychecks. NMC was among eight out of 27 community colleges in Michigan that did not raise tuition and fees and ranked sixth in terms of the colleges with the lowest tuition and fees. Additionally, the board approved the elimination of the flexible learning online fee, resulting in a net savings for many students, depending on their online course load.

2.C.3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Board of Trustees meeting dates and times continue to be scheduled at the beginning of the calendar year, extending throughout the remainder of the year. The NMC community as well as the public are made aware of meetings and special sessions through various means. These include physical documents displayed in common areas on campus, both inside and outside of buildings as well as on the NMC website and through emails sent by the Public Relations, Marketing and Communications department. Current and archived board agendas, packets and meeting minutes are accessible on the NMC public website on the Board of Trustees webpage.

The board policies and processes are robust to change. As a result of the pandemic, meetings were held virtually through video conferencing software. The meetings continued to be available to the public and were interactive in that the public continued to be able to provide public input. When in-person meetings could safely resume, there was a board policy update in November 2021 providing that regular monthly meetings would be available in real time and that official video recordings would be made available within eight days after the meeting (A-104.00).

The Board receives input from community constituents at its public monthly meetings through public comment and from student groups who periodically present at Board meetings. For example, the Student Government Association (SGA) presents an annual report including the roles and activities of the SGA and accomplishments over the academic year. Individual board members engage the community in service or other organizations, with three who serve on the NMC Foundation Board. These activities ensure that the board considers multiple internal and external constituency interests in its decision-making. Since the last assurance review, the college president retired and both internal and external constituents were involved in selecting the next president. The board employed a search firm to assist in the process. College employees, students and community members were included in the board's decision-making process during the presidential search. Participants provided feedback regarding what they wanted in a new president through in-person forums and online surveys.

2.C.4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.

The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties by following Open Meetings Act guidelines embedded in Board Bylaws (A-100.00). The board establishes policy (A-105.01) and procedures with respect to fundraising. Fundraising is overseen by the NMC Foundation, a separate entity from the college. The board consists of seven members who are elected by the public in their respective

locality. If board members have a conflict of interest with a topic under discussion, they will recuse themselves from voting (A-102.01).

2.C.5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

The board oversees the College through monthly board meetings by reviewing and analyzing institutional reports and financial statements and by acting on policy changes and budgetary or property decisions consistent with their role and responsibilities. In NMC's shared governance model (D-502.00), the Board of Trustees delegates day-to-day management to the College President (B-100.00). The President's performance of these obligations is reviewed and evaluated by the Board of Trustees annually (B-102.00). The President delegates to members of the executive team the oversight of their respective areas. Day-to-day operational decisions are made at the departmental management level. Department leaders use unit operational goals on annual planning documents to guide decision-making, ensuring alignment with NMC's goals and directions.

Academic administrators depend on faculty to carry out daily operations of instructional programs while offering support and high-level oversight of academic matters. Each academic department is staffed with an Academic Chair who is responsible for recommending and ensuring faculty are observed, directing program development, working with advisory committee members, and assisting in scheduling full-time faculty and course sections. Faculty are responsible for the oversight of program curriculum and course content.

Curriculum Committee, a subcommittee of Faculty Council, is responsible for recommending, monitoring, and reviewing the academic curriculum including adoption of programs; adoption, modification, and deletion of courses; revision of degree requirements; curriculum standard or related issues brought to the Committee; and making recommendations to the VP for Educational Services.

Sources

- A-100.00
- A-101.00
- A-102.00
- A-102.01
- A-104.00
- A-105.01
- ACCT
- B-100.00
- B-102.00
- BoTHomepage
- D-502.00
- Michigan Community College Association
- NMC Action Plan
- NMC April visit_NMC revised 032119
- Timeline of Presidential Search
- Tuition Rate Comparisons by Residency

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

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

The integrity of research and scholarly practice and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning are supported by the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics outlined in (D-749.00).The Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article XXIV Academic Freedom, also affirms the college's commitment to academic freedom. In addition to the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics outlined in Policy D-749.00, the following policies further support ethical teaching and research practices.

Additional policies and procedures ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice. The Student Rights and Responsibilities Staff Policy (D-602.01) is available in the College catalog, website, and a link is provided in every syllabus and Moodle course shell. The process policy outlines prohibited behaviors.

Students are guided by faculty and library staff in the ethical use of information resources. Librarians instruct all students in freshman composition in Information Literacy using standards from the American College and Research Libraries. Library sessions address proper attribution and citations, and reference material for citations (by discipline) is located on the web in Research Guides (Citing Others' Work). The composition curriculum used in all sections of freshman composition provides information about plagiarism and use of resources. The Writing Center provides additional guidance. The goal of the information literacy curriculum is to have students leave NMC responsible, ethical users and purveyors of information.

Per policy, when a faculty member has reasonable evidence a student has cheated or plagiarized academic work, they may issue a written warning, reprimand, or impose course-level sanctions, depending on the severity of the incident. Faculty will also report the violation to the VP of Student Services and Technologies. If the violation is egregious, the student may be suspended or dismissed from the College (Sanctions, part e). Since implementing Maxient in 2013, the College has developed a more deliberate system for tracking incidents of student academic misconduct (Behavioral Incident Report Team Process), as well as student complaints (Process for Collecting, Analyzing and Acting on Complaints), and has encouraged both faculty and students to use this reporting system. Records can be analyzed for patterns of student behavior, difficulties with college policies, or other issues to address systemically. The VP for Student Services and Technologies maintains records of student academic misconduct and other behavioral incidents.

Per the Human Subject Research Policy (D-506.08), the Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) gathers and monitors research requests in order to ensure the rights, privacy, dignity and welfare of human subjects, involved in studies conducted on or by NMC students or employees (Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46). Requests for research involving human subjects are assessed with respect to:

- Sensitivity to community attitudes
- Safeguarding of research participant rights and welfare Institutional commitments and obligations
- Applicable law (risk management)
- Standards of professional conduct and practice

The Intellectual Property Rights for Courses and Course Materials Policy (D-506.02) for the Flexible Learning Option Program outlines standards when developing materials for related courses. The Collective Bargaining Agreement further clarifies Intellectual Property Rights for regular-appointed faculty. In the event a faculty member is found to have violated these standards, appropriate disciplinary action is taken based on the severity of the offense (Article VII). Human Resources maintains all records on faculty personnel issues.

Community colleges allow free speech and the constitution provides for it currently. The Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (D-602.00) reinforces that civility, diversity of opinion and freedom of expression are all valued as the necessary foundation of a healthy learning community. The Board Policy (D-700.01) provides that under both federal and state law, NMC employees may exercise their rights of free speech and association by participating in political activities on their own time and employing their own resources.

Sources

- Article XXIV
- Article_XX_Intellectual_Property_Rights
- ArticleVII_Due Process
- Citing Others' Work
- D-506.02
- D-506.08
- D-602.00
- D-602.01 part e
- D-700.01
- D-749.00
- Flexible Learning Options
- Protection of Human Subjects
- Research Guides

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

As discussed previously, the integrity of research and scholarly practice and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning are supported by the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics outlined in Staff Policy (D-749.00). The Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article XXIV Academic Freedom, also affirms the college's commitment to academic freedom. In the event a faculty member is found to have violated these standards, appropriate disciplinary action is taken based on the severity of the offense (Article VII) (2.D.). Additionally, the Conflict of Interest (D-506.01) and Board of Trustees Process Policy (A-102.01) protects the interests of the college from entering into transactions or arrangements that may benefit the private interests of employees and board members.

The main point of contact for the coordination of research compliance is the office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE). The college appoints the ORPE Executive Director to be responsible for adhering to the Belmont Report by ensuring rights, privacy, dignity and welfare of participants involved in studies on or by NMC students or employees (D-506.08). This not only serves as a protection of the rights and safety of research participants but it also preserves the academic freedom of those wishing to engage in research activities. In many cases, ORPE assists the researcher in the recruitment of participants by ensuring that informed consent is obtained, data collection is confidential and protected and any potential risks are weighed against the intended benefits. ORPE either approves, requests modifications or additional information or disapproves the activity. The college is not a research institution and when an application is received, it is typically for survey or evaluation research for students or employees to survey select campus populations. For example, an engineering class was involved in a project that included working with ORPE during the research process, including approval. The results of the class project that included the survey research findings was shared at a Board of Trustee meeting.

2.E.2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

Students are guided by faculty and library staff on the ethical use of information resources as well as instruction on plagiarism. Students taking a freshman composition course are instructed by librarians

in Information Literacy using standards from the American College and Research Libraries. Library sessions address proper attribution and citations, and reference material for citations (by discipline) is located on the web in Research Guides (Citing Others' Work). The composition curriculum used in all sections of freshman composition provides information about plagiarism and use of resources. The Writing Center provides additional guidance. The goal of the information literacy curriculum is to have students leave NMC responsible, ethical users and purveyors of information.

Faculty members guide students on assignments with academic integrity. Policies and procedures ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice and outline prohibited behaviors. The Student Rights and Responsibilities Staff Policy (D-602.01) is available in the College catalog, website, and a link is provided in every syllabus and Moodle course shell. The Center for Teaching and Learning makes an Academic Integrity FAQ sheet available to faculty to answer common questions. The Aero Park Professional Professional Testing Center provides a testing environment for proctored exams and certifications. The Student Success Testing Center also is an area available to students to take exams for current classes or have exams proctored from other institutions.

As mentioned in 2.D., the college ensures the integrity of research. Depending upon the scope of a proposed research study, students and employees may be required to complete Human Subjects Research training offered by the CITI program. Per policy, ORPE gathers and monitors research requests in order to ensure the rights, privacy, dignity and welfare of human subjects (as defined by Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects) involved in studies conducted on or by NMC students or employees (D-506.08). Requests for research involving human subjects are assessed with respect to: Sensitivity to community attitudes, safeguarding participant rights and welfare, institutional commitments and obligations, applicable law (risk management), standards of professional conduct and practice. Intellectual Property Rights (Article XX) for the Flexible Learning Option Program outlines standards when developing materials for Flexible Learning Options courses (D-506.02). The Collective Bargaining Agreement further clarifies Intellectual Property Rights for faculty.

2.E.3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

Per policy, when a faculty member has reasonable evidence a student has cheated or plagiarized academic work, he/she may provide a written warning, reprimand, or impose course-level sanctions, depending on the severity of the incident. Faculty will also report the violation to the VP of Student Services and Technologies. If the violation is egregious, the student may be suspended or dismissed from the College (D-602.01, 5.b.).

2.E.4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

The Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (D-602.01) is available in the College catalog, student handbook and website. A link is provided in every syllabus and Moodle course shell.

Since implementing Maxient in 2013, a student conduct software program, the College has developed a more deliberate system for tracking incidents of student academic misconduct through the Behavioral Incident Report Team Process (BIRT), as well as student complaints (Process for Collecting, Analyzing and Acting on Complaints), and has encouraged faculty to use this reporting system during new employee orientation and by the Educational Services Instructional Management Team. Complaints relating to academic misconduct are resolved according to the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (D-602.01). Case ratios and cases resulting in disciplinary actions can be

tracked and analyzed for patterns of student behavior, difficulties with college policies, or other issues to address systemically. Compared to other community colleges participating in the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP), NMC tends to receive fewer complaints and of those received, a high percentage (90% to 97%) result in disciplinary action indicating that NMC takes academic integrity very seriously.

Sources

- A-102.01
- Academic Integrity FAQ
- Aero Park
- Article XXIV
- Article_XX_Intellectual_Property_Rights
- ArticleVII_Due Process
- Behavioral Intervention Report Team (BIRT)
- Citing Other Work
- Complaint Ratio
- D-506.01
- D-506.02
- D-506.08
- D-602.00
- D-602.01
- D-749.00
- Disciplinary Actions
- NMC__Application_Human_Participant_Research
- Rearch Guides
- Student Success Center
- StudentSurveyProject

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

NMC acts with integrity across all levels of the College. The policy governance model provides the framework of the responsibilities for the Board of Trustees. An autonomous, elected governing board serves primarily as a policy board, ensuring integrity and protection from ethical and fiduciary conflicts of interest. Board policies further ensure integrity by defining governing style, responsibilities and conflicts of interest. Policies approved by the Board serve as guides to institutional operations to ensure integrity across the College. The Board holds public meetings and publishes agendas and minutes on the public website. The Board represents the public in determining and demanding appropriate organizational performance with its own unique responsibilities from those of faculty and staff. Board meetings are public and provide college and community members with opportunities to express concerns or ideas.

Policies, procedures and processes assure accountability in financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions. NMC has established policies, procedures and processes to support ethical and responsible behavior for the governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students. This includes policies regarding professional ethics, workplace expectations, harassment, non-discrimination and other issues. Human Resources assures the alignment of fair and equitable employment processes to state and federal laws. Professional development training on these topics is required of all employees on an annual basis. NMC is fiscally responsible and accountable through a transparent annual budget process, which is shared in public board meetings and confirmed by annual audits.

The NMC public website provides access to public documents that detail admission/degree requirements and processes, support programs, educational costs, faculty and staff qualifications, and accreditation relationships. Policies and procedures demonstrate NMC's commitment to freedom of expression and intellectual pursuits in teaching and learning. The NMC Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 7, ensures academic freedom in the classroom. Students are provided opportunities for expression through avenues such as the *White Pine Press*, student-run newspaper. Policies, procedures and processes are in place to ensure that faculty, staff, and students use and apply knowledge responsibly and ethically.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
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).

Argument

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.

All programs are reviewed annually using student success data as well as an advisory board and other external stakeholder feedback. Course learning outcomes are applied consistently, regardless of the delivery method, location, or level. Learning outcomes appropriate to NMC's degree-granting authority are annotated on syllabi, course outlines, and in general education policies.

New programs, program revisions, and new courses are approved by the Curriculum Committee to ensure that courses and programs offered are current and require appropriate levels of student performance. The Course Outline is approved by the Curriculum Committee (CC), reviewed annually by lead faculty, and used by all faculty in developing their section of the offering (course outline form).

In establishing degree requirements, NMC provides a common learning experience while providing students with choices that enhance their personal goals. This guiding principle and specific certificate and degree requirements are found in staff policies (D-105.00 through D-105.08; D-105.10; D-106.01). Degree requirements are also available on the website along with other academic information (degrees and certificates and sample link: AAS Degree Requirements).

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

In addition to degree requirements, the College has clearly stated program and course-level outcomes. Program-level outcomes are stated on the college website; course outcomes are consistently stated on all course syllabi (taken from the approved Course Outline). Curriculum maps, showing the linkage of courses to program learning outcomes, are available on program websites (sample links:

CIT Developer Program Outcomes; CIT180 Course Outline; CIT180 Course Syllabus).

3.A.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).

Course outcomes and general education outcomes are consistent across delivery modalities. When NMC assesses the general education outcomes, student work is requested similarly from face-to-face, online, and hybrid classes, as well as from multiple program areas at our multiple locations. Course evaluations are administered in all courses to assess instructor and course effectiveness.

Program rigor is assured through systematic course assessment and annual program review. Programmatic accreditation and review metrics include program outcome results focusing on skill attainment (licensure and certification), transfer or placement, and course- and program-level satisfaction (program review metrics and program review metrics descriptions). Data is analyzed using external and internal benchmarks (program review example). The same metrics and analysis are used regardless of program modality, and the College specifically reviews student success data in online courses. All online courses must be reviewed and approved. Faculty are given feedback on all aspects of their course by trained reviewers who share a review form with faculty. Faculty are given the opportunity to answer questions and provide feedback to reviewers. Once approved, courses are placed on a five-year review cycle (sample link CIT180 Online Course Design Review).

Sources

- 2022 Fall CIT180 Syllabus
- AAS Degree Requirements
- Academic Program Review Data
- Annual_Program_Review_Process
- CIT 180 Course Outline
- CIT180 Online Course Design Review
- cit-developer-program-outcomes
- Course Outline Form
- Course Quality - student satisfaction survey
- D-105.00 thru D-105.08
- D-105.10
- D-106.01
- Degrees and Certificates
- FY 23 A3 Science and Math
- NMC Board of Trustees and Staff Policies
- Online course success data-NCCBP report
- Program Review Metrics Descriptions
- Quality of Instruction - Student Satisfaction Survey
- Staff Policy D-105.00 - Degree Requirements
- Staff Policy D-105.01 - Degree Requirement Changes
- Teaching and Learning Cycle

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. 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.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

NMC's mission is to deliver lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities (C-100.00). To meet this mission, the College offers a wide range of associate degrees, certificates, and transfer education in liberal arts and sciences, and in occupational studies Additionally, NMC offers select baccalaureate programs and partners with the University Center at NMC to connect students to additional undergraduate and graduate programs. (University Center at NMC and NMC Degrees and Certificates). Since 2014, NMC has participated in the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) which strives to improve the transferability of core courses among Michigan public and private colleges and universities.

NMC is also engaged in career/occupational education, workforce development, and cultural and personal enrichment. This broad spectrum of offerings supports our learners in meeting their goal(s) to be college-, transfer-, and career-ready, and prepared for lifelong learning opportunities (C-103.00).

In establishing degree requirements, NMC provides a common learning experience while providing students with choices that enhance their personal goals. This guiding principle and specific certificate and degree requirements are found in staff policies (D-105.00 through D-105.08; D-105.10; D-106.01).

NMC's General Education Outcomes (GEOs) of Communication, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative Reasoning, support its mission, purposes, and philosophy of general education which is *to promote the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively in a changing world.*

General Education fosters intellectual curiosity, essential to lifelong learning (D-101.01). NMC's general education philosophy, outcomes, and assessment are published in the online college catalog (NMC General Education).

3.B.2. 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.

In addition to General Education Outcomes, the College has adopted L. Dee Fink's framework for identifying Significant Learning Outcomes in the design of all credit courses. Categories of outcomes include Knowledge, Application, Integration, Learning to Learn, Caring-Civic Learning, and Human Dimension. These are defined as critical skills for workers in the 21st Century, and the College believes all NMC courses should support these outcomes. NMC's common learning outcomes and General Education Outcomes (GEOs) support its mission, purposes, and philosophy of general education which is stated above and is published (D-101.01).

To strengthen the integration and alignment of the GEOs and outcomes into the curriculum, the College launched the Learning Outcomes Action Project Team (LOT), in 2014. Project goals included the alignment of learning outcomes, the development of a comprehensive assessment plan, action plans for continuous improvement, and professional development to support the effectiveness of learning outcomes and the assessment process. In 2017, the action project team transitioned to a standing committee, the Assessment Team (assessment team description; assessment roles and responsibilities).

Aligning common outcomes across NMC's academic offerings began with requiring that all Group I courses support at least one of the GEOs. Curriculum mapping was implemented to improve consistency, alignment, and documentation of processes and results. Course outlines were modified to identify GEOs and other student learning outcomes using the L.Dee Fink framework (CIT180 Course Outline example).

Initially, the Curriculum Committee, a subcommittee of the Faculty Council, was charged with determining and developing GEOs. Teams of faculty, working with other internal and external stakeholders, explored the traits that lifelong learners need and how students will achieve those outcomes throughout the college. They considered NMC's strategic directions and the input of stakeholders, advisory committees, and employers, and they benchmarked outcomes used by other post-secondary institutions and professional organizations (e.g. American Association of Colleges and The Foundation for Critical Thinking). The groups generated three outcomes: Communication, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative Reasoning based on NMC's mission, purposes, and philosophy of general education that reflect the skills, knowledge, and attitudes we believe all college-educated people must possess.

The Curriculum Committee also reviews and evaluates new GEOs using the same format (D-101.02). New GEOs are discussed at Curriculum Committee and are developed by faculty and stakeholders. They are then piloted and brought to Curriculum Committee for approval. If approved, they go before the Policy Committee for a public discussion. NMC is currently evaluating a new Social Responsibility GEO. The GEO was developed by faculty and stakeholders and is currently being piloted.

All GEOs identify four levels of achievement: proficient, sufficient, developing, and deficient which

are defined through rubrics. The GEOs are embedded in all degrees, and NMC aspires to ensure that all graduates will demonstrate a level of sufficiency or higher on each of the outcomes.   NMC articulates the purpose and content of GEOs on the NMC website and in the NMC catalog (D-101.01; NMC general education).

The College also identifies writing-intensive courses that support the Communications GEO. These courses use formal and informal writing to help students learn course content and offer instruction on developing formal writing assignments. Formal writing may be form-specific to a discipline, such as field or technical reports. Informal writing includes a broad range of activities such as journal writing, collaborative exercises, or verbal games with key concepts.

The Curriculum Committee (CC) is charged with reviewing degree requirements every five years and GEOs every two years. CC will review the proposals for GEO change(s) with special attention to the scope, rationale, content, possible consequences of the proposed change(s), and alternative methods of attaining the same result. CC then seeks input from the College community. Should CC determine to make changes in the outcomes, the draft is sent to Policy Council for review. CC and Policy Council hold a public hearing to gather input and make refinements as needed. The proposed new outcomes are then forwarded to the VP for Educational Services and then to the President for final approval. Full details of the process are outlined (D-101.02) and illustrated in Process for Reviewing Degree Requirements.

3.B.3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.

The College recently added a "cultural perspectives and diversity" course requirement as a part of the Associate of Science and Arts (ASA), Associate of General Studies (AGS), and the Bachelor of Science (BS). This requirement is articulated on the college website (cultural perspectives and diversity requirement). In these courses, students evaluate connections between worldviews, power structures, and experiences of multiple cultures historically or in contemporary contexts. This supports NMC's goal of helping students engage as educated and informed citizens in a diverse society.

The College also offers an opportunity for students to acquire a Global Endorsement on their transcripts by accumulating points using a mix of curricular and co-curricular experiences (global endorsement requirements and examples). NMC's International Services and Service Learning Office works closely with faculty to provide training, support, and resources in building global components into courses and programs (global endorsement overview, details, courses and FAQs).

The Extended Educational Services (EES) program provides non-credit, lifelong learning opportunities that include a wide range of multicultural and culturally diverse topics. These courses fall under several categories: Culture and Religion, Global Certificate, Global Issues, and Languages (EES sample courses).   Due to the short nature of these courses, they are counted as globally diverse events when applied to the global endorsement certificate.

3.B.4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

In developing course curricula, faculty consider degree requirements, GEOs, and program learning outcomes as they create course outlines. Outlines identify course learning outcomes, using the L. Dee

Fink framework, and they may include GEOs. Faculty design their courses with learning activities that give students opportunities to achieve these outcomes. For example, by engaging in case studies, simulations, research projects, and the development and presentation of portfolios, students can demonstrate critical thinking, effective communication, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge in their programs consistent with NMC's general education philosophy (D-101.01).

In 2016, the Experiential Learning Institute (ELI) at NMC was established to actively engage the learner through relevant hands-on experience, critical problem solving, and reflective practices. The Institute collaborates with both on-campus and community stakeholders by seeking creative partnerships, serving ongoing community needs, and preparing learners for future employment. Through experiential learning projects, students can demonstrate critical thinking, discovery of knowledge, effective communication with stakeholders and creative work. For example, a capstone project in the CIT department involved creating an e-commerce website for a local jewelry store. Experiential learning supports the Future Focused Education strategic initiative which encourages innovative instructional delivery models and hands-on educational experiences. It also supports the Student Engagement and Success strategic initiative which encourages experiences that foster learner success and employability (NMC strategic goals). Strategic goals directly support the College Vision, Mission and Core Values (NMC mission, vision and values).

Sources

- Assessment Team Charge
- Assessment_Roles_and_Responsibilities.docx
- C-100.00
- C-103.00
- CIT 180 Course Outline
- CIT280 Capstone e-commerce website
- cultural perspective and diversity requirement
- D-101.01
- D-101.02
- D-105.00 thru D-105.08
- D-105.10
- D-106.01
- Degrees and Certificates
- EES Multicultural and Diversity Courses
- Fink Significant Learning Categories
- GEO Descriptions
- GEO Rubrics
- Global Endorsement Overview, Details, Courses and FAQs
- International Education Week
- Michigan Transfer Agreement
- NMC Board of Trustees and Staff Policies
- NMC General Education
- NMC Strategic Goals
- NMC University Center
- NMC Vision Mission and Values
- nmc-global-endorsement-requirements-and-examples
- Process for reviewing degree requirements

- Writing Intensive Courses

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C.1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Increasing the diversity of faculty and staff is important in supporting the goal of ensuring students are prepared to live and work in a global society. Current EMSI and College demographic data show that while the percentage of minorities living in the college service area is low (7.4%), the percentage of minority NMC employees is even lower at 4.1%. The college's percentage of minority credit students is substantially higher at 12.3%.

The 2022-2025 strategic plan lists Inclusion designed to foster belonging, celebrate diversity and promote equity, as a core value of the College (NMC Mission, Vision and Values). One of the strategic initiatives of the College involves diversity, equity and inclusion. The goal is to create an inclusive environment with equitable opportunities so all students and employees thrive and succeed. An objective of the goal is to review and revise systems, policies and procedures for inclusive and equitable language (NMC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic goal and objectives).

Selection of faculty and staff is based on an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in comparison to the job requirements and description. Job postings and advertisements communicate requirements and provide potential candidates information to assess fit. Applicants for instructor positions can access requirements for all teaching assignments by following the link on the NMC Employment Opportunities web page.

The hiring process (D-759.00) involves a team of faculty within the division and outside of the

division. Each team member independently reviews all applicants' packets and assess strengths using a position-specific evaluation matrix. Together the team determines candidates for phone interviews.

Phone interviews assess candidates according to selection criteria, and a final subset of applicants is brought to campus for in-person interviews. In-person interviews address skill and foundational competencies, and organizational fit through interview questions, portfolio review, teaching demonstrations, presentations, or other skills evaluations.

There is a second interview with the academic chair and area vice president for faculty positions. For staff positions, teams occasionally schedule second interviews with the hiring manager and area executive. For some executive-level positions, open interviews with finalists allow all interested campus community members to assist in vetting.

After the interview process is completed, the search team recommends a finalist and acceptable alternatives for hire to the Northwestern Michigan College responsible executive. HR conducts background checks and requests official transcripts, while the hiring manager conducts employment reference checks. The executive approves and recommends a finalist to the President.

3.C.2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.

NMC ensures it has sufficient numbers of faculty members to serve students both in the classroom and in non-classroom roles by tracking enrollment patterns and bench-marking course loads and classroom efficiency. The Educational Services Instructional Management Team (ESIMT) assess enrollment trends to determine if there is sufficient qualified faculty to teach the projected number of courses; if not, academic chairs implement a recruitment strategy. The most recent student-to-faculty ratio is 14:1 and faculty teaching a course, regardless of delivery method, must meet the minimum qualifications outlined in the Instructor Qualifications to Teach NMC Courses catalog which can be accessed from the College website.

NMC's Faculty Load (Article 15, p 8-11 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement) sets the normal full-time load at 30-32 contact hours of instruction per year for a two-semester faculty member and 45-48 contact hours per year for a three semester faculty member (15-16 contacts per semester). This is consistent with the industry standard in Michigan and allows time for the non-classroom responsibilities of instructors. Faculty are provided release time for extensive non-classroom programs and activities such as serving as academic chair or CIE Director, leading a committee or project, or other work beyond typical non classroom responsibilities.

Workforce planning addresses new needs identified in the strategic plan and aligned planning processes, as well as, current or anticipated needs due to projected retirements, turnover, or enrollment changes. While current needs are dealt with as vacancies occur, new and anticipated needs are addressed during the annual planning and budgeting process to address competency needs, retirements/turnover, and enrollment data.

Feedback from the Northwestern Michigan College Portfolio Assessment, as well as, internal feedback underscored the need to move workforce planning from a predominantly reactive process to a more strategic one (NMC Final Appraisal 2018, p. 36-37). Several changes have been implemented: Adjusting hiring timing to allow cross-training with a retiring employee in key

positions. Ensuring replacement position requests are evaluated rather than automatically filled by building a review requirement into the position request process. Building workforce planning into the annual aligned planning and budgeting process. Both faculty and staff leaders consider enrollment trends, department goals, and other relevant data as they assess staffing needs (New/Replacement Hire Request Form).

Non-classroom roles of faculty are defined in Article 17 (pg 12) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. These activities include curriculum development, participation in committee meetings, advising students, professional communication, and completion of an annual assessment.

Adjustments to the curriculum that will impact the College catalog are made in the Fall Semester. This includes new programs and new courses (course proposal form and instructions). Changes in occupational programs are driven by industry and advisory board recommendations. Significant Learning Outcomes and General Education Outcomes (GEOs) are specified in Course outlines. . Modifications to existing course outlines are made at the beginning of Spring semester and are displayed on the College website. New course proposals must include a course outline which is submitted to the Curriculum Committee for approval.

Students are assessed using several methods which include: surveys, standardized critical thinking and quantitative reasoning tests and observation. Faculty receive results from assessment methods and use the results to make improvements in their curriculum and courses (Student Feedback example). All General Education Outcomes (GEOs) must be assessed. Faculty have the option of using the Test of Everyday Reasoning with Numeracy (TER-N) for Critical Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning or faculty-developed rubrics. Rubrics are also used to evaluate the Communication GEO. Results from the GEO assessment are used to make improvements in curriculum and courses (TER-N results report and spreadsheet). Faculty analyze assessment results in their annual review and outline plans for improvement in courses or curriculum (faculty annual review example).   The annual review addresses goals set by the faculty, in addition to reviewing and analyzing assessment results, student feedback and peer feedback as outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (Article 24A, Parts 3-4, pp. 16-18).

3.C.3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.

A catalog specific to hiring faculty lists each credit course offered at NMC along with specific requirements to teach that course. These requirements apply whether the instructor is full-time or adjunct and includes those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial credit programs. This catalog is accessible to the public through NMC's Employment Opportunities web page and internally on the HR Intranet page (Instructor Qualifications to Teach NMC Courses).

NMC Faculty credentials draw from the following three sources: the HLC, industry-specific requirements, and NISOD. The College used a set of constructs from the 1997 NISOD International Conference and criteria cited in Vandermast's "Hiring Faculty for the Next Century," in Innovation Abstracts, 20(19), to define characteristics of an outstanding instructor at NMC.

Qualifications for all positions are communicated through job descriptions and job postings. Applicants for instructor positions can access requirements for all teaching assignments by following the link on the NMC Employment Opportunities web page.

To ensure that faculty are qualified to teach courses they are assigned, an instructor qualification

form may be completed by the academic division chair and submitted to HR. All regular and adjunct faculty and regular staff are required to provide official transcripts to verify their academic credentials as well as other official licenses and certifications. Hiring managers validate experience during the reference check process. Once hired, all faculty and staff names, titles, and credentials are posted on NMC's website (faculty and staff credentials).

New faculty are given a three year provisionary status. During that time they are required to attend two conferences per year, one in their discipline and one focused on teaching. New faculty are also expected to attend monthly Friday Forums and the three professional development days per year sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL formerly known as CIE). Beginning in Spring 2017, new faculty were invited to join the New Faculty Learning Community. Courses taught by new faculty are evaluated using student surveys in the middle of the semester and at the end of the semester. They are also given a peer evaluation by a non-provisional faculty or the division chair. The peer evaluation involves a classroom observation and feedback on the faculty's performance. The complete list of requirements is accesible in the provisional faculty requirements documents.

At the end of the three-year provisionary period, a committee made up of faculty from within the division and outside of the division, along with the division chair and instructional vice-president review all student and peer evaluations and the faculty member's annual reviews to determine if the faculty should be moved off provisionary status according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (Article 24A, Part 6, p.18).

3.C.4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

The faculty evaluation process begins with faculty goals which are created at the beginning of Fall semester. Goals fall under three main categories: Helping Students Learn, Professional Development, and Supporting College and Community Initiatives. Faculty must have at least six goals and include one from each category . One of the goals must represent a major project or endeavor (faculty goal example). The Helping Students Learn category includes assessment results and student feedback with the focus on improving student performance. The Professional Development category covers conferences, training, recertification, and additional topics relevant to the subject area(s) of instruction. Support of College and Community Initiatives includes developing an Open Educational Resource (OER) curriculum, volunteering within the community, and participating in committee work. The full scope of each goal category is defined in the collective bargaining master agreement (Article 24A, Part 2, p.15).

Once the faculty submits their goals, their supervisor reviews and approves them (or asks for revisions). The faculty will implement their goals throughout the school year and report back on their progress in the annual review.

Procedures for faculty feedback are outlined in Article 24A, Part 3, p.16 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Faculty feedback involves classroom observation, peer feedback and student feedback. For regular faculty, classroom observations are done once a year by the faculty supervisor or a designated peer observer. A standardized form is used. Once the observation is completed, the faculty and observer meet and discuss the results of the observation (see observation example). If faculty are participating in the Online Course Review Cohort, they can use the cohort's review of the course in place of the classroom observation (online course review form). For provisional faculty, observations take place twice a year. Faculty address course observations in their annual review.

For regular faculty, students provide feedback on every course at the end of the semester (course evaluation). For provisional faculty, students provide midterm and end of semester feedback. Faculty address student feedback in their annual review.

Faculty annual reviews are designed to summarize the checks that have happened throughout the year. They are similar to staff reviews. The process has been revised as of August 2017 and now includes the following: Faculty members complete a self-review based on: goals set by the faculty member, classroom observations, written feedback from peers, student evaluations, and feedback from standardized tests, such as the Test of Everyday Reasoning and Numeracy which assesses critical thinking and quantitative reasoning.

After the faculty submits their annual review, they meet with their supervisor to discuss the review and go over potential goals for the following year. Both the faculty and supervisor sign off on the review which is submitted to HR through NMC's talent management software.

Provisional faculty follow the same annual review process; however, they are observed more frequently, receive more frequent student feedback, and have additional professional development requirements (provisional faculty three year requirements). These reviews are used to support the Chair's recommendation to continue employment after each of the provisional status semesters, to move the provisional faculty member into regular status at the conclusion of the third year, or to terminate employment at the conclusion of any one of the provisional status semesters.

Adjunct faculty reviews currently happen at the end of fall semester for those who do not teach in the spring, and at the end of spring semester for all other adjunct faculty. All courses have student evaluations. Adjunct faculty address student evaluations in their annual review where they also reflect upon their teaching, accomplishments, and professional development they have completed. Once the review is submitted, the supervisor meets with them to discuss their performance (Staff/Adjunct Faculty Employee Guide, p. 37).

3.C.5. 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.

Provisional faculty are required to attend two conferences a year for the first three years of employment at the College. They must attend a teaching-related conference and an industry-specific conference within their discipline area. Non-provisional faculty are also encouraged to attend teaching and industry conferences.

The procedure for both provisional and non-provisional faculty is to submit a request to the Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE). Once the request is approved, they can proceed with plans to attend the conference. The criteria for approval are based on the academic impact of the conference and the status of the faculty (provisional faculty must attend two conferences a year).

Through the annual review process, faculty set professional development goals. To meet these, faculty engage in a variety of activities such as workshops, conferences, webinars, reading, memberships and participation in professional associations, or other professional development strategies (D-753.01). Each department budgets according to the development required to achieve instructional goals, acquire new certifications and maintain current certifications.

CIE offers a wide variety of professional development opportunities for faculty including: Friday Forums where faculty meet at the beginning of each month to discuss and investigate different topics

and trends in education; Teaching Fellows where faculty collaborate with others twice a month to explore teaching and learning practices; Learning Communities where faculty meet four to five times a semester and share ideas over a common area of interest; and Coffee Club where faculty meet for an hour one Friday a month to discuss a variety of topics related to teaching and learning.

CTL also offers full days of professional development training at the beginning of each semester and in October. The October Conference is for the entire campus and consists of many sessions faculty and staff can attend (sessions are run by faculty, staff and community leaders, and cover different areas of interest related to students and learning).

The Educational Media Technology (EMT) department works with CIE to offer several professional development opportunities for faculty. Teaching Solutions is NMC's online teaching certification program required of all online, hybrid and livestream instructors. Participants learn about best practices in course delivery, instruction, assessment, feedback, technology and learner support. NewCourseDev partners faculty with the entire Educational Technology team throughout a semester to build a new, high quality, engaging, and interactive online course. A third opportunity involves participating in the Online Course Review Cohort.   A group of faculty are given training to assess online courses and provide feedback to instructors on areas for improvement. Online courses are reviewed every 5 years and instructors who are trained to be in the course review cohort participate in the reviews.

The EMT department also offers shorter training videos, teaching resources, and tutorials on a variety of topics such as instructional design, writing course outcomes, assessing general education outcomes, digital literacy and information literacy.

Every month the CIE and EMT put together a newsletter with timely, relevant instructional topics and tutorials.

3.C.6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Faculty serve as academic advisors and are available at orientation and throughout a student's education experience. Full-time instructors are required to hold a minimum of 5 posted office hours per week as outlined in Article 24A, Part 4, p.17 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. All office hours must be included in the syllabus and should also be posted to the instructor block within the Moodle course management system.

3.C.7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

As part of each year's planning and budgeting process, leaders review departmental metrics and ask if the right number of support service personnel are in positions to meet student needs, align with projected enrollment, and meet strategic goals. If not, leaders explore re-allocating resources and/or initiating the position request process outlined in Workforce Planning.

Through the annual review process, all regular employees set professional development goals. To meet these, staff engage in a variety of activities such as workshops, conferences, webinars, reading, memberships and participation in professional associations, or other professional development strategies (D-753.01). The allocation of professional development funds varies. Each department budgets according to the development required to achieve operational goals of the unit and maintain

required certifications.

Departments, such as tutoring, have training requirements in place that must be completed before tutors can work with students. Academic advising also requires new instructors to attend training sessions with the Director of Advising or with Academic and Career advisors before they are assigned students to work with. Provisionary faculty are not given advising training until their second year at the College.

Sources

- 2022 NMC October Conference Schedule
- annual faculty evaluation example 2
- annual faculty evaluation example1
- annual-faculty-observation-form for Lisa Balbach spring 22 CIT 280
- Article 15 pp 8 to11 Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Article 17 pg 12 Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Article 24A Part 2 p 15 Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Article 24A Part 3 pg16 Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Article 24A Part 4 pg 17 Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Article 24A Part6 Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Article 24A Parts 3 and 4 Collective Bargaining Agreement
- CIE and EMT Newsletter
- CIE Learning communities
- CIE Teaching and Learning Activities
- CIE Teaching Fellows
- CIT178 LB Online Course Review Guide
- CourseOutline
- Course-Proposal-Form
- Course-Proposal-Instructions-2019-20
- Criteria-Guidelines-ProfDevActivity
- Faculty and Staff Credentials
- Faculty Annual Review Example.pdf
- Faculty goals 2022-2023
- FORM-Prof-Dev-Leave-Activity-Application
- Friday Forum
- GEO Descriptions
- GEO Rubrics
- instructor block in Moodle
- Instructor Qualifications to Teach NMC Courses
- New Online Hybrid Course Development
- New-Replacement-Hire-Request-Form
- NMC Diversity Percentages
- NMC Diversity Equity and Inclusion goal and objectives
- NMC Employment Opportunities
- NMC Non-Discrimmination Policy
- NMC staff and adjunct guide
- NMC Strategic Goals
- NMC Vision Mission and Values

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- Prof Dev-Travel Request Blank Form Revised 1_26_2018
- Provisional Faculty Observation example
- Provisional Faculty Requirements
- Qualifications_Form
- Staff HR Policy D-753.00 Professional Development
- Staff HR Policy D-753.01 Professional Development Procedures
- Staff HR Policy D-759.00 Hiring of Staff Policy
- Staff HR Policy D-762.00 Faculty Teaching Credential Requirements
- Staff HR Policy D-762.01 Faculty Teaching Credential Requirements Procedure
- Student Course Evaluation example 1.pdf
- Student Course Evaluation example 2.pdf
- student to faculty ratio and student demographics
- Teaching Solutions
- TER-N feedback report example 2020-2021.pdf
- TER-N spreadsheet feedback example 2020-2021.pdf
- TER-N Website

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
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.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
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 and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

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

NMC offers a wide range of student support services including academic and career advising, child care, disability services, health services, housing and dining, personal counseling, and tutoring.

Through My Success, students have access to advising and a wide variety of support services.   Use of the system requires filling out a short intake form so student success coaches can identify which resources students need and who to connect students with.

In addition to My Success, every student is assigned an academic advisor. While they are encouraged to meet with their advisors throughout their time at NMC, new students must meet with their advisors for the first two semesters.

3.D.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.

The College uses multiple placement measures to determine entering student's math and english placement. High school GPA, test scores and writing surveys are some of the assessment methods used to properly place students.

Faculty and staff can refer students to the Tutoring Center or to the Student Success Center for Academic Success Coaching. Trained coaches share strategies and tools to assist students in overcoming learning challenges, setting and working toward goals, and developing college-level study skills. Faculty members are encouraged to allow learning aids in the classroom, and coaches are available to make class presentations at the instructor's invitation.

The Tutoring Center is open M-Th from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Students can make appointments for help on Friday or in the Evening. Students can receive individual tutoring, drop-in tutoring, and study skills assistance. The Tutoring Center also provides 24/7 online tutoring in most subjects.

NMC also provides a [Math and Science Center](#) and a [Writing and Reading Center.](#)

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.

Every student is assigned an academic advisor. While they are encouraged to meet with their advisors throughout their time at NMC, new students must meet with them before registering for classes during their first two semesters. Students on academic probation are also required to meet with advisors before registering for classes.

Additionally, Advising and Records work together to reach out to students who have not registered for the next semester or who are close to graduating.

Advising responsibilities are shared among professional and faculty advisors. Faculty advise students in their discipline while the professional advisors primarily advise students in general and transfer programs.

3.D.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 and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

In 2016, to better align college spaces and equipment with 21st Century learning needs, NMC embarked on a five-year plan to implement renovations and building additions to its campus. In 2018, the new exhibition space in the Dennos museum was completed. The space is large enough to allow permanent collections and traveling, educational collections and exhibitions.

By September, 2020 the new Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center and library was completed. The project involved converting the old West Hall into a multi-story library with dynamic learning spaces for students. The Innovation center acts as a cross-disciplinary hub to serve resident and commuter students, community members, and workforce partners. The new facility also houses two cafés, a technology help desk, the campus safety and security department, and the college radio station.

To support faculty and student teaching and learning needs, NMC also converted four regular classrooms to active learning classrooms designed to be flexible, interactive, and conducive to student-centered learning experiences. The Student Success Center has also added portable white boards, collaborative work stations, and bring-your-own-device stations to keep pace with student needs.

To support internship programs required in many occupational programs such as Computer Information Technology and Business, NMC has a full-time coordinator for business and technical programs. A part-time position supports these career services for all other students.

To ensure proper clinical placement in health occupation programs, NMC has developed educational agreements with hospitals, clinics, dental practices, or other healthcare providers.

To prepare students for conducting research throughout their college career, library staff teach Information Literacy as an embedded and integrated part of the freshman composition sequence. Using the standards from the American College and Research Libraries, library staff and faculty guide students in the effective use of research and information resources. LibGuides on the website

offer information to students when they are not in the classroom.

College facilities include dedicated laboratories and equipment for automotive, construction technology, dental assisting, maritime technology, freshwater studies, aviation, audio technology, music, computer information technology, and other programs. NMC recently purchased 2.8 million dollars in technical and nursing program equipment upgrades through a CSTEP Grant.

Advisory group feedback and special programmatic accreditation criteria are critical in helping to assess the quality and appropriateness of our spaces and equipment for effective teaching and in meeting students' learning needs.

Sources

- Admissions- placement testing
- My Success
- Student Success Coaches
- Tutoring Center
- writing center

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

Through a rigorous process of internal review of its offerings, the College maintains a high level of quality. When programs or courses are created, the College expects a multi-level process to assure that the courses or programs are of high quality. NMC ensures that teaching responsibilities are carried out by highly qualified faculty. The Center for Instructional Excellence supports student learning by encouraging faculty-driven initiatives, promoting development of faculty knowledge and recognizing the achievement of excellence. The faculty-led Curriculum Committee monitors all new offerings at every level from new courses to new programs. Faculty offer equivalent sections of multi-section courses whether they are taught on-campus or elsewhere.

When applicable, the College reviews publications and attends conferences from other institutions such as the AAC&U, HLC, NISOD, and others to assure that NMC is aligned to emerging trends in higher education. In addition, the College encourages faculty to attend conferences within their profession to maintain connections to trends within their discipline.

The College also maintains a mechanism for cyclical review of courses that are offered online, and also reviews its offerings through student services. This review assures that its offerings are appropriate to the needs of the learners. In addition to an internal review process, the College must articulate its offerings with other institutions of higher learning. This process assures that the credits earned at NMC are equivalent to those offered at other institutions. The College also maintains relationships with other stakeholders to assure that its offerings meet the demands of local entities that have a vested interest in high-quality graduates.

The College continues to review supports that are needed by students for curricular and co-curricular learning. Changes and additions to support services are based on those reviews. NMC recently invested in the construction of the Innovation Center, a multi-story library and flexible 21st century learning space, to support student learning experiences.

This process of rigorous internal review and checks with stakeholders and external trends assures that the College continues to provide a quality education to its learners.

NMC's process of rigorous internal review and checks with stakeholders and external trends assures that the College continues to provide a quality education to its learners.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - 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.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
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 ensures 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.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials 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.

Argument

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

The College's planning process ensures that program and department goals align with strategic goals, and that service area goals appropriately support program goals. Program review falls under the purview of the Vice President of Educational Services, in collaboration with the Director of Academic Affairs and program area chairs.

Once a program is developed, NMC's program review process ensures programs and courses are up to date and effective. The general review process occurs annually while several occupation programs are required to be reviewed on a multi-year cycle based on their respective program accreditation standards. This annual process sets a high standard, ensuring the quality of all program offerings and was created to be useful, meet all reporting requirements, and is not duplicative with other college processes. Program needs and corresponding budgetary implications are identified as part of the annual review which includes faculty hires and capital equipment needs. Identified needs are then forwarded to the Planning and Budget Council for recommendations for the Capital Outlay Allocation once approved by the VP of Educational Services. While program review is not under the

purview of the Board of Trustees (A-106.00), the board reviews the college budget for approval.

The review includes an annual evaluation of quantitative metrics and qualitative reflection on the prior year's activities. The metrics tracked in program review are categorized in four levels of evaluation: Learner Perception and Behavior, Learning, Skill Transfer, and External Assessment. Goals for the program are then set and action plans identified for the upcoming year. Program review documents and organizational metrics are available in interactive dashboards on the Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) Intranet site.

Advisory Group Feedback is critical in ensuring our programs are up-to-date and effective. Program areas meet with advisory groups at least once per year to discuss the relevance of the program curriculum, resources, and student success. Advisory Group feedback is captured informally through meeting minutes, and ORPE conducts surveys annually. Survey data is published in the quantitative metrics in Level Four: External Assessment of learning effectiveness. Advisory group meeting minutes are posted on the Intranet.

As mentioned previously, program areas use specific accreditation requirements and evaluations to inform program relevance and effectiveness. NMC maintains several programmatic accreditations that are listed online and in the NMC catalog.

While academic chairs, program coordinators, and faculty are monitoring outcomes throughout the year, formal college-wide annual program review occurs in late fall, in preparation for the upcoming budget planning cycle. ORPE collects and publishes program metrics for faculty to use in developing/revising their Program Review (4.C). The data are analyzed by the unit, and goals for the upcoming year are developed based on that analysis. Faculty and instructional leadership initiate curricular course changes based on advisory committee input, assessment results, accreditation agency recommendations, and through cross-discipline communication on the Curriculum Committee (CC). Changes that substantially impact course content are presented to the CC for approval.

Since the last review, the College adopted the 2022-25 Strategic Plan. The plan consists of an objective to evaluate the most costly and distinct programs over the next three years. The focus for the reviews are both financial and curricular in nature which has led to the reviews of three program areas to date: Great Lake Water Studies Institute, Great Lakes Culinary Institute and Aviation. The process also includes a financial review component of two additional program areas, Audio Technology and Music.

4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

NMC is a member with other Michigan community colleges and universities in the Michigan Transfer Agreement, a block transfer initiative, in which 30 credits of general education requirements would transfer automatically to universities. NMC has multiple articulation agreements with specific colleges and universities related to academic programs.

To help students receive credit for all coursework leading to a degree, NMC signed twelve Reverse Transfer Agreements with Michigan universities. These agreements assist students in transferring credits earned at their transfer institutions back to NMC in order to complete associate degree requirements. By working with the universities, both schools track student progress in obtaining

credentials for which they are entitled.

In addition to transferring in credits per transfer agreements, many students have experiential or prior learning experiences equivalent to learning that occurs within a college course. To receive credit for prior (PLC) experiences, learning must align to the course learning outcomes as identified by the academic chair in the relevant area. The only limit to the number of credits awarded for prior learning is that every credential must meet the College's residency requirement. For example, through our regional healthcare partner, we award 43 paramedic credits towards our AAS Paramedics Degree.

There are several assessment options available for students to demonstrate prior learning. Before students can receive credits for prior learning, they must complete the application process. Students meet with their respective department members who assist students with the application. The application is then reviewed by the Department Chair or Director for approval.

Objective 1, Strategy 1 of the 2022-25 Strategic Plan focuses on increasing the number of students receiving prior learning credit by approximately 10 percent by 2024. Specific action steps to accomplish this goal involves enhancing communication strategies and promoting efforts to increase student awareness of PLC opportunities. For example, the College is following up with all applicants who have taken advanced placement to send their scores so that they can be eligible to earn credit for those courses. The success of achieving this metric will improve persistence and degree completion. Given that the majority of the NMC student population attends part-time, it is anticipated that credits awarded based on prior learning will result in significant savings in tuition and fees by completing or graduating degree pathways in less time. A progress tracker is accessible on the public website and shared with the Board of Trustees at regular board meetings.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

NMC ensures the quality of transfer credits through an efficient process. The Registrar routinely works with academic areas and Curriculum Committee (CC) when determining course equivalencies. Recently, the transfer specialist joined as members of the CC to ensure that any curriculum changes are communicated when determining equivalencies for transfer courses. Transfer credit information is available online to students on the NMC public website for transfer credit evaluation. Students are able to see how credits will transfer to NMC by searching sending institutions, entering specific course and subject information through an online portal provided by the Michigan Transfer Network. At the individual learner level, NMC evaluates the credit on transcripts through several credit inventory processes. Staff procedures guide experiential and prior learning evaluation and the acceptance of transfer credit. Course equivalencies are standardized, ensuring consistency when subsequent transfer credit requests are made by students. Courses that are not accepted as equivalent are transferred as electives. High school students are able to enroll for dual credits. NMC accepts dual credit from accredited institutions. NMC offers dual credit courses that are at the same level (e.g., syllabi, grading scale, curriculum) and taught by qualified NMC faculty as are all other courses offered at the College. Dual enrolled high school students must meet the same requirements (e.g., prerequisites) in order to register for courses, which are taught by NMC faculty. Students can see how their credits transfer through a Michigan schools transfer guide posted on NMC's website.

Faculty are also called upon to evaluate the credit earned in courses at other institutions to transfer in when necessary. For example, anatomy and physiology faculty are asked to determine if courses at other institutions are equivalent to anatomy and physiology courses at NMC. Course descriptions and

syllabi are evaluated for equivalency. When courses have been determined to be equivalent by the faculty, the registrar then awards transfer credits.

4.A.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 ensures 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.

Regardless of delivery method, location, or level, course outcomes are applied consistently. Each program area is responsible for developing courses specific to the academic area and collaborates with other program and general education areas to determine the courses needed in order to complete the degree. Faculty members set expectations to ensure course quality to be approved at the department level. Course outlines are approved by the CC, reviewed annually by lead faculty, and used by all faculty in developing their section of the offering.

Required levels of preparation for programs and courses are documented in the official College catalog. Program requirements and model schedules (course sequence guides) are available on specific program websites (Infrastructure and Security, AAS example). Faculty and program chairs determine course prerequisites. Prerequisite information is programmed into the student data management system (Banner) and available to students when registering. My Academic Plan (MAP) provides students the required courses needed for their program of study in a self-service format. Advisors work with students to schedule required courses needed to fulfill degree requirements.

Student learning outcomes are required to be included in all course syllabi and are available in the course catalog. The syllabi also includes course objectives and general education and other learning outcomes. As mentioned previously, the CC approves all new course outline information in our Curriculum Inventory Management system, a software system, and the academic chairs and directors direct that all course syllabi include required information.

While the College has established general guidelines regarding levels of preparation for degrees and certificates, faculty members work with business/industry/educational member advisory committees and program accrediting agencies to determine the level of preparation students are required to have for specific programs and courses.

Faculty credentials are carefully reviewed and must be consistent with NMC requirements (**3.C.3**). In conjunction with Human Resources, academic areas created a taxonomy of courses and identified the level of faculty preparedness required to teach courses offered at the College. All faculty, regardless of teaching location or level, are required to meet these qualifications as defined by HLC guidelines, industry specific requirements, and NMC requirements based on NISOD criteria. The College retains authority over establishing all of these requirements regardless of program offerings, modalities, and locations of delivery (D-762.00; D-762.01).

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

NMC maintains several programmatic accreditations to ensure NMC's graduates qualify for required state or national certification exams, increase the employability of our graduates, and ensure the portability of their degree. The links to all program area accreditation are available online. The College allocates resources, as part of the budgeting and program review process, to support faculty

and program coordinators who have program accreditation job responsibilities.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials 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.

Faculty assess student success outcomes by reviewing skill attainment/certification pass rates, advisory board evaluations, graduate/employer satisfaction surveys, and other program outcomes data. Occupational programs with industry-specific certification exams report their student exam data during the review process. Liberal studies programs use many of the same measures, but instead of advisory group feedback, employer surveys, and external certifications, they may use general education outcome assessments (Humanities and Communications examples) and student perception of preparation through graduate or transfer surveys to evaluate learning outcomes (4.B.2).

The ORPE distributes a six month post graduation survey for graduates each semester. Typically, surveys are administered to graduates who receive an award during a fiscal year (July 1 to June 30), six months following their graduation, as required under Perkins V. Surveys are first distributed electronically via email through the Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (ORPE). For those not returned, NMC callers attempt to reach graduates by phone. Response rates average approximately 50 percent.

The survey includes employment and placement information as well as items intended to measure the overall experience of the graduates. Changes to the Perkins V (1P1) reporting include retention or transfer and placement (employment) targets. Historically, NMC has exceeded the target outcome for this metric set by the State. The most recent metric for NMC, 48.5%, was well-above the State target (18.2%) and in the 90th percentile compared to the other community colleges in Michigan. As mentioned, the graduate survey also is used to collect qualitative data, specifically, the extent to which the graduate perceived how well their educational experience prepared them across several areas (i.e.,communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning). Over the past two years, graduates have rated their educational experiences as having well-prepared them in these areas. Advisory Committee members, which consists of local employers, are also surveyed for their perspective regarding student outcomes (e.g., technical skills, work attitude and overall performance). Over the past three years, the program aggregate for satisfaction with student outcomes has ranged from a mean of 3.97 to 4.16 on a five-point scale. Individual program areas track and evaluate their respective advisory committee ratings annually, on the program review or A3, as part of the continuous improvement cycle, Plan, Do, Check and Adjust (PDCA).

Occupational programs at NMC assess and evaluate pass rates for programs with respective state or national certification exams. For example, the average pass rate on the NCLEX for NMC ADN graduates over the past three years was 91%, which has been steadily increasing. In 2021, the 95.7% pass rate by NMC ADN nursing graduates surpassed both the Michigan (82.4%) and national (78.9%) averages. Faculty and administrators track and evaluate the pass rates of NMC graduates in comparison to state or national pass rates as part of their annual program review process.

Sources

- A-106.00
- Credit for Prior Learning
- D-762.00

- D-762.01
- FY 23 A3 Communications Gen Ed
- FY 23 A3 Humanities Gen Ed
- Infrastructure and Security Associate in Applied Science Degree Course Sequence Guide
- Michigan Transfer Network Link
- NMC Action Plan
- NMC CTE Su 1P1
- NMC CTE Summary
- PDCA image
- Preparation for Graduates
- Program Accreditations
- Strategy 1 Objective 1 Progress Tracker
- Strategy 5 Progress Tracker

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

4.B.1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.

NMC articulates the purpose and content of General Education Outcomes (GEOs) on the NMC website and in the NMC catalog (D-101.01; General Education). NMC has identified three GEOs that it assesses in both the fall and spring semesters.   These include: Communications (COMM), Quantitative Reasoning (QR), and Critical Thinking (CT). All faculty participate in the assessment of GEOs that are identified as being supported in their classes. All faculty use the same rubric for each GEO. Faculty input assessment results into Moodle so that the Assessment Team (AT) may download institutional results and monitor student learning in regards to the GEOs.

Instructors are also provided with an opportunity for their classes to participate in an external assessment, the Test for Everyday Reasoning-Numeracy (TER-N). The results of the TER-N provide the College with an external benchmark for courses that support CT or QR. Individual faculty results are to become part of faculty annual plans for continuous improvement. The AT has a well-defined role which includes monitoring the generalized results in the GEO dashboard to identify any areas of the college that may need support. While the process of gathering data is ongoing, the expectation of academic departments is to implement course or program level changes in the fall semesters after reviewing data throughout the academic year. The Curriculum Committee(CC) and the Educational Services Instructional Management Team (ESIMT) also review assessment results and may recommend improvement actions.

NMC has identified four levels of achievement for its three GEOs: proficient, sufficient, developing, and deficient. These levels are defined through rubrics, which were created by faculty-led subteams of the CC. The GEOs are embedded in all degrees, and NMC aspires to ensure that all graduates will demonstrate sufficiency or higher on each of the outcomes. The data collected by individual faculty members not only drives changes at the course level of instruction but also changes at the program and institution levels to assure that students progress towards sufficiency and proficiency. The GEOs are reviewed every two years by the CC and refinements to the rubrics are made on an as needed basis (D-101.02). In

addition to the three GEOs identified by NMC as important to student success, NMC has also identified Cultural Perspectives and Diversity (CPD) as a graduation requirement for its ASA, AGS, and BS degrees. Each student within one of these degree programs must complete a course with the CPD designation.

As a priority of the 2022-25 Strategic Plan, experiential learning is at the forefront of learning experiences for our students, *Every credential-seeking student will engage in at least one experiential learning opportunity (ELO)* (Strategy 1, Objective 5). Progress can be tracked on the NMC public website and is shared at monthly Board of Trustee meetings. To assist in this objective, an Experiential Learning Institute (ELI) Co-curricular Committee (CCC) was created to define, identify and assess co-curricular activities as a part of the ELI. The ELI is led by two faculty co-directors with a purpose to ensure that the student experience of experiential learning (EL) is consistent across campus. Presently, the EL Teams are working on a rubric to assess levels of experiential learning in which courses may engage. A variety of faculty and staff resources is available on the ELI intranet page. The rubric will determine the amount EL in particular courses and allow the College to designate the course experience, in terms of EL, in the course catalog. The rubric will determine courses that will make up the floor (base designation for EL) and the top tier (full immersion) of EL designated courses. Currently the goal is to use the EL Course Assessment Rubric in General Education courses to ensure the course is providing quality learning. The ELI is planning to create separate rubrics for service learning, internships, and co-curricular activities.

In conjunction with the CCC, the Assessment Coordinator, a faculty member, created expectations for assessment of co-curricular activities and an assessment method to ensure quality programming and to maintain focus on student learning. The co-curricular committee is composed of fourteen faculty and staff representing a cross section of NMC. The CCC includes the Coordinator for Student Success, a Success Coach, a Librarian, the Associate Dean of Residence Life/Special Assistant to the President for DEI, an Academic and Career Advisor, the Employment Readiness Specialist, the Student Life Office Manager, three faculty, the VP for Educational Services, the Office Manager for EL and the committee is chaired by the Associate Dean for Learning Services.

The first step was to define co-curricular events at NMC. The following definition for co-curricular events was approved by the CCC in the fall of 2021: *Co-curricular refers to activities, programs and learning experiences that complement what students are learning at NMC.* This leads to an expectation that any co-curricular activity must then tie that event to one Gen Ed *or* another learning outcome that supports NMC's Mission and values. Following the event, the event leader will survey students in regards to the indicated learning outcome for the event. The coordinator of the event will then submit answers to the following questions to the AT:

1. Name of event and number of students attending.
2. What was the outcome for the event? (Learning Outcome tied to Mission/Values/General Education)
3. How did you assess your designated outcome?
4. What were the results of your assessment?
5. Through your reflection, what was successful? What didn't work? How will you make changes to future events to help students achieve your intended outcome?

Upon completion of the form, the event coordinator will have the necessary data to adjust the event the next time it is offered so students continue to progress towards the event's stated goals.

Aligned with NMC's mission, vision, and general education philosophy, students are offered a variety of experiences to support their academic learning through student groups and co-curricular activities related to their academic program and areas of interest. The College offers programming in support of the NMC Global Endorsement, such as study abroad opportunities, as well as a variety of service learning and experiential learning projects throughout the curriculum. For example, business majors were encouraged to participate in service learning-focused activities including Thanksgiving food drives. The 2021 Food Pantry and Thanksgiving Meal Project resulted in more than 125 families receiving donated meals. NMC students are also involved in the Big Little Hero Race which supports NMC's College for Kids Scholarships for Big Brother Big Sisters within our local community. These are a few of the many curricular and cocurricular activities available to students in sociology, social work, English, and business communication courses (1.C.1). The project culminates in community presentations that articulate the impact of homelessness. Students who participate in college-sanctioned service learning and global opportunities may receive documentation of these activities on their college transcripts.

Instructors or other program sponsors use assessment tools and methods suited to the context of co-curricular programs. These may include pre-post assessments, journal or other reflections submissions, post-event debriefs, or assessment of projects or presentations. For example, the purpose of the NMC Global Endorsement is to develop global awareness and understanding. Students can earn a Global Endorsement on their transcript through academic and experiential learning, activities and event participation, and preparing a final capstone presentation. Study abroad opportunities for students to experience different cultures are offered through the International Services and Service Learning Office. Learning is demonstrated and assessed through a final capstone presentation.

An additional method of assessment includes surveying students after they have completed an overseas educational experience, or service learning project. Surveys are distributed by the International Services and Service Learning Office, in collaboration with the Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness. Once survey data is compiled, a report is issued to the Institute of International Education (IIE). The report to IIE encompasses information such as what the students learned from the experience and if they felt it was a successful experience. The Director of International Services & Service Learning also compiles data from individual experiences and sends the reports to the faculty leading the experiences so that this information may be used to improve future international experiences. The International Services Director also uses the data to inform changes to the entire program that will appear on the program area A3. For example, response rates from the study abroad survey ranged from 33% to 80% in Summer 2022. To be better able to assess students participating in the international experiences, the goal to obtain higher response rates for each experience will be included in the FY2024 International Services and Service Learning operational plan (A3). Finally, free-form responses are used to help recruit more students to participate in the program.

4.B.2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

While program coordinators and faculty are monitoring outcomes throughout the year, formal college-wide Annual Program Review occurs in late fall, in preparation for the upcoming budget planning cycle. Program Coordinators work with other faculty to review outcomes in order to identify strengths and gaps as well as the potential causes of the gaps. An action plan is then developed and documented (Sample Occupational Program Review; Sample Liberal Studies Program Review). Program review is part of an aligned process, goals from these action plans cascade to individual program faculty member's goals as appropriate. Goal progress is assessed at the individual level as well as the program level. While faculty are to provide data assessment in their annual plan, the use of Moodle, NMC's learning management system, as a collection point for data also allows faculty to make real-time adjustments to teaching methodologies as they collect data over the semester.

Faculty develop a variety of assessment activities such as case studies, simulations, research projects, portfolios, or capstone projects appropriate to their courses and use a set of institutional rubrics to measure student proficiency. Results are collected and tracked through Moodle. Faculty must use yearly data collected from general education assessment in their Faculty Annual Plan (FAP example) and state if students are meeting goals, or if they are not, the faculty member must address these shortcomings and create a plan to get students on a path toward goal achievement.

The CC commissioned faculty sub-teams to develop a set of institutional rubrics that align with the GEOs. All teams invited faculty to provide input in the process of developing these rubrics. Training sessions on the rubrics then preceded dissemination to all faculty. Refinements to the rubrics are made as needed, and all are subject to a two-year review cycle described earlier (D-101.02).

4.B.3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

The Assessment Coordinator, a faculty member, in collaboration with the AT, compiles scores and identifies trends which are visually shared on the ORPE website. Instructors are also able to access their own data to analyze how their students are progressing toward GEOs. At the end of each semester, instructors submit their GEO assessment score within Moodle, and summarize their student's strengths and weaknesses in terms of the outcomes of the FAP. The FAP allows instructors to identify and document how they plan to address opportunities for improvement of their students.

While the process of gathering data is ongoing, the expectation of academic departments is to implement course or program level changes in the fall semesters after reviewing data throughout the academic year. ESIMT also reviews assessment results and may recommend improvement actions.

Faculty assesses each GEO every semester whereas previously, faculty assessed one outcome once every three semesters. However, with improved data collection processes, faculty are able to record assessment scores within Moodle, affording greater efficiency. This not only provides longitudinal data on student cohorts by class standing (e.g., freshman, sophomore) in order to measure student progress, it will allow instructors, departments, and programs greater ability to address gaps in student achievement in real-time, ultimately, shortening the PDCA cycle of continuous improvement.

Sources

- Assessment Team Charge
- Assessment Team Charge
- Big Little Hero Race
- CIT department certifications
- CIT E-Portfolio Specifications
- co-curricular event reporting form
- D-101.01
- D-101.02
- EL course assessment rubric
- EL student assessment
- Example of a CIT Students ePortfolio with PII heading
- Experiential Learning Institute Resources
- Experiential-Learning-Model-Breakdown
- Experiential-Learning-Model-for-Faculty
- Faculty Annual Review Example.pdf
- Faculty Assessment
- Food pantry Thanksgiving meal project
- Gen Ed Outcomes Dashboard
- General Education Catalog
- GEO Descriptions
- GEO Descriptions
- GEO Rubrics
- github repository example
- Global Endorsement
- Global Endorsement Overview, Details, Courses and FAQs
- International Services
- NMC ELI
- NMC Vision Mission and Values
- nmc-global-endorsement-requirements-and-examples
- Office of Global Studies and Service learning
- Office of Planning and Research Site
- OP_A3_Template_Liberal_Studies_FY18
- OP_A3_Template_Occupational_Studies_FY18
- Rubrics GenEd
- Sample Liberal Art PR
- Sample Occupational PR
- Strategy 5 Tracker
- TER-N feedback report example 2020-2021.pdf
- TERN Report
- TER-N spreadsheet feedback example 2020-2021.pdf
- TER-N Website
- TER-N Website
- Welcome to the Experiential Learning Institute

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
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.)

Argument

4.C. The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

The College uses a variety of success metric data for completion/persistence/retention goals; these include the Perkins Core Indicators, National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), MichiganSchool Data Success Rate metrics (MiSchoolData), and the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) benchmarks.These are used to assess how NMC is performing in relation to other institutions regionally and nationally. A review of several metrics including completion, persistence and retention, for example, over the past three academic years enables the College to establish concurrent validity. [add analysis/take-away]

In determining which targets or benchmarks to choose, the College considers both strategic and operational benchmarks. Strategic benchmarks provide the College with longer-term targets (e.g., completion rates, graduation rates) that support student success through the strategic plan, supporting the College's mission. Operational benchmarks inform shorter-term strategies related to student success (e.g. department/program operational plans). Our Plan, Do, Check & Adjust (PDCA) cycle supports continuous improvement at the department/program level which aligns to strategic-level goals at the institutional level. The College also considers the purpose of the analysis or data reporting as well as the number of colleges similar to NMC in budget-size and purposes to make peer comparisons useful. For example, NMC uses VFA and NCCBP benchmarks as their success definitions which reflect the part-time enrollment proportion of many community college students.

Since the last review, NMC developed a new strategic plan for the College, adopted by the Board of Trustees, and implemented in 2022. The College has defined goals for student retention, persistence

and completion/graduation/transfer that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings. Key performance indicators were recommended that the College pursue as part of the strategic plan.

Fall-to-fall persistence rates for credit-bearing students over the past three years has ranged from 52-56%. Fall-to-spring persistence rates during this same period ranged from 72-78%. Significant decreases occurred for both metrics in the Spring 2020 semester which can be attributable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of Strategy 2, Objective 1 of the Strategic Plan is to increase the persistence rate to 82% by 2025. Institutional-level persistence and retention targets are based on VFA and MiSchoolData college averages. The Strategy 3, Objective 2 goal relates to improving retention for all vulnerable populations, reducing the equity gap.

Increasing course-level success is the one of the first steps to graduation, completion or transfer, depending on the goal of the student. Therefore, the College focused on this goal in the 2022-25 Strategic Plan. The goal of Strategy 2, Objective 4 of the Strategic Plan is to increase college-level course enrollee success rates from 80% in Fall 2020 to 83% by Fall 2025. To meet this goal, the college created specific action steps to increase the percentage of students using success coach services:

- Define, implement, and train faculty and staff on an early alert and nudging system to connect coaches with at-risk students through the use of My Success.
- Identify cohorts of at risk students (low gpa, dev ed, probation students, SAP Warn/Suspend students, adult returning) and assign them a Success Coach starting at orientation through goal completion.
- Embed coaches in developmental education course sections (math and English).
- Integrate coaches in student success and engagement activities to ensure students know their campus resources.
- Research and implement communication strategies to connect students with current success trends and reach students where they are.

The three-year success rates (i.e., completion/graduation/transfer rates) of full-time students have ranged from 34.3 to 38.9% over the past three years. The impact of the pandemic resulted in a dip in success rates for the most recent three-year rate (37.1%). It was determined to set the goal to increase three-year rates to 40.4% by spring 2025. Strategy 2 of the strategic plan outlines initiatives that have been implemented to increase both the persistence and the completion/graduation/transfer rates of our students:

- Increase student sense of belonging through participation in extra and co-curricular activities for first semester students to increase 1st semester persistence from 77.7% in Fall 2019 to 82% by Fall 2025
- Enhance student completion supports to increase the three year completion success rate from 38.9% to 40.4% by Spring 2025
- Increase percentage of students using success coach services to increase College-level Course Enrollee Success Rate (2.0 and above) from 79.8% in Fall 2020 to 83% by Fall 2025

The status of the goals is tracked and regularly reviewed by leaders identified as Champions and Leads.

Academic areas are making adjustments in their program areas to support transfer rate goals. For example, the Fine Arts Department identified an opportunity to improve the transfer rate of students

to a four-year institution.   Based on discussions with NMC's University Center (UC) partners and student feedback, changes were made to the syllabi and curriculum in a few courses to improve transfer rates. In addition, the instructor for ART 161 is using aspects of UC partner university syllabi as a framework to be better aligned to what a four-year university requires. These changes were implemented in fall 2022 and transfer rates will be tracked over the next several semesters.

The NMC strategic objective metrics, externally benchmarked to NCCBP, MiSchoolData and the VFA, directly measure learner success in terms of persistence and completion. When an external benchmark is available, the College incorporates the metric into a goal, such as the Strategic Plan Action Plan.   During the planning process of the most recent Strategic Plan, the College received input from over one thousand community residents, alumni, students, faculty and staff, board members and donors. The Board of Trustees approved the 2022 to 2025 Strategic Plan in January 2022. Strategy leads update the board of trustees and public of the progress of each goal at regular board meetings. Information is publicly made available on the NMC website, NMC Next, with details regarding the strategic planning process.

The College regularly selects challenging yet attainable goals. Factors considered in determining targets include peer comparisons, historical data (including previous year goals), and state and national comparison information. For example, the most recently reported (Fall 2020) college-level online course completion success rate is 88%. The goal for the college in Fall 2024 is 90%, higher than the 90th percentile of the NCCBP most recent three-year national average (88%) and the college's historical three-year data average (87%). Given this ambitious yet attainable goal, the college is well underway in developing additional teaching strategies to support increased student success rates (Strategy 1, Objective 3).

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

NMC collects and analyzes a variety of data related to student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs and then uses this information to inform improvements. These data include certificate and degree completion of at-risk students, advancement in developmental education coursework (English and Math), transfer to a four-year institution, licensure/certification pass rates and placement rates of occupational certificate or degree completers. The interactive dashboard allows users to disaggregate student data by age, ethnicity/race, gender, Veteran status, socio-economic status and full- and part-time status. For example, the Maritime dashboard provides persistence, awards, graduation rates, enrollment patterns as well as specific data needed for the Maritime program accreditor.

Academic Program Review Data uses additional benchmarks that align with the four levels of evaluation of the annual program review process (Program Review Metrics). These additional benchmarks reflect an internal criterion-referenced framework based on the three-year historical college average. While external benchmarking provides a comparison of student success metrics to peer institutions, internal benchmarking allows NMC to directly compare our baseline benchmarks to current outcomes in order to set new goals as evidenced in the 2022 to 2025 NMC Strategic Plan.

In 2020, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee was established and developed initiatives for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) students. In fall 2021, NMC created the first position dedicated to DEI. A goal of the Strategic Plan (Objective 4) aims to address the barriers to entry to improve application to enrollment rates from 28% in fall 2021 to 35% by fall 2025.   As identified previously, the College created specific action steps to address this goal (Strategy 3,

Objective 4).

The use of performance indicators, produced for Perkins requirements, NCCBP reporting, and for internal use, allows continuous improvement at the program level in annual planning as well as at the institutional level in strategic planning. It was suggested during the last review (2018) that the college has the opportunity to ensure that data is segmented at the program level in order to make improvements. The college most recently (2022) implemented a data visualization software program to accomplish this task. For example, ORPE created a General Education (Gen Ed) Outcomes dashboard that disaggregates this data at the class-standing level (e.g., Freshman, Sophomore) based on overall credits earned across program areas.

Three Gen Ed outcomes are evaluated each semester: Communication (COMM), Quantitative Reasoning (QR) and Critical Thinking (CT). COMM is evaluated using an internal evaluation rubric developed by the Assessment Team (AT) and approved by the Curriculum Committee. In addition to internal evaluation rubrics, both QR and CT can be assessed using an external assessment, the Tests of Everyday Reasoning- Numeracy (TER-N) as a benchmark (4.B.). At the time of the last review, the College had recently begun to analyze Gen Ed Outcome results by class standing. A Gen Ed Outcomes dashboard was created and made available for departments to analyze and evaluate the data in order to make improvements. Comparing across class standing, instructors and program chairs are able to identify gaps in proficiency based on the Gen Ed Outcomes in order to change the focus on respective contents or sections at the course and program levels.   NMC also conducts several internal surveys (e.g., graduate, program evaluation) that serve as qualitative measures of student outcomes and progress. Qualitative measures complement the objective success metrics of the College and follow a survey process protocol that assists in determining research priorities. ORPE collects data through electronically administered surveys and evaluations (e.g., Survey Monkey, Watermark). For graduates and students that left the institution, a phone follow-up is used to increase overall response rates.

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

The College uses the PDCA model to assess retention, persistence, and completion. To support data driven decisions regarding success metrics, ORPE provides consultation, evidence-based resources (e.g., EAB), and professional development training to individuals or department teams. Additionally, ORPE identifies evidence-based practices in data collection and analysis through active memberships in national and regional symposiums or conferences (e.g., Association of Institutional Research, EAB, HLC) and professional organizations (e.g., Michigan Community College Data and Evaluation Committee, Michigan Community College Collaborative for Accountability, Research, and Effectiveness). ORPE shares relevant evidence-based practices and emerging trends from the Education Advisory Board (EAB) in data collection and analysis with the College on the ORPE page, in departmental and area meetings and with the Leadership Council. For example, the ORPE coordinates with the EAB to deliver current and relevant community college topics either in-person or in virtual presentations or workshops.

In addition to using information to provide professional development to help faculty and staff make needed changes, the college also uses data to make program improvements. For example, the Math and Science Department focuses on one Gen Ed each semester and creates lectures and assignments specific to the course to address the Gen Ed Outcome. The results of doing so have incrementally increased Gen Ed Outcome scores in math and science courses over time. The average proficiencies for all departments have also increased across all Gen Ed Outcomes over time:

Average COMM proficiencies from fall 2018 to spring 2022:

- Years 1 and 2: 66% to 77% (+11%)
- Years 3 and 4: 85% to 88% (+3%)

Average QR proficiencies from fall 2018 to spring 2022:

- Years 1 and 2: 69% to 75% (+6%)
- Years 3 and 4: 80% to 89% (+9%)

Average CT proficiencies from fall 2018 to spring 2022:

- Years 1 and 2: 65% to 71% (+6%)
- Years 3 and 4: 71% to 78% (+6%)

While average CT and QR (Numeracy) proficiencies have increased across time for the first and second year students, no change was noted for upperclassmen on the TER-N sub-components from fall 2019 to spring 2022 which is expected given the higher percentages of scores. The AT attributes this to the higher assessment discrimination ability of the internal rubrics.

- Years 1 and 2: QR: 87% to 89% (+2%)
- Years 3 and 4: QR: 91% to 91% (+0%)
- Years 1 and 2: CT: 87% to 89% (+2%)
- Years 3 and 4: CT: 90% to 90% (+0%)

After reviewing and analyzing program level data, respective stakeholders review and assess the data in helping them reach new outcome goals in their respective areas. This aids college leaders in making data informed decisions that align with the strategic directions of the College as ways to meet established targets.

Survey and evaluation data from all sources is used by faculty, academic/administrative leaders at the course, program, or service area level to make improvements. For example, instructors and their academic chairs review course evaluation data to make improvements to courses when warranted. The results of the written midterm evals are shared with the new faculty shortly after administration. Areas for improvement that are identified by the supervisor are addressed during the reminder of the semester if possible or in the following semester. The evaluations are done in tandem with in class observations conducted during each of their semesters. Students are encouraged to provide feedback to instructors using feedback forms. Response rates have significantly increased from the low 30 percent response rates in 2015 to 58% in Spring 2022 (Margin of Error is <1%), supporting the validity of student responses. The increase in response rates is attributed to the use of a course evaluation software product, Watermark (formerly Evaluation Kit), that interfaces with the learning management system, Moodle. Although qualitative in nature, student feedback is a significant source of information that faculty and administration can use to improve student retention, persistence, and completion at the course level which is the foundation to program completion and graduation.

Departments use operational plan results to make other improvements as well. For example, Computer Information Technology (CIT) recently began to promote area-related activities and events to develop a sense of cohesion or belonging for students through various initiatives. Previous research initiated through the Michigan Guided Pathways Institute found that sense of belonging is a

significant, if not the most important, non-cognitive factor relating to student retention. CIT created various student groups and developed a social media presence to provide opportunities for current students as well as recent alums. CIT is also integrating additional collaborative active learning projects in the classroom and is considering adding a boot camp. Using the PDCA model, the department will continue to refine data collection in order to more clearly and accurately refine targets/goals.

4.C.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice.

The enterprise resource planning system (ERP) of the College is Ellucian Banner. NMC collects student retention, persistence, and completion data in its student information system, Banner. To promote consistent longitudinal reporting methods, the Office of Research, Planning, & Effectiveness (ORPE) maintains detailed work instructions for each custom Ellucian Banner report. ORPE also develops and maintains work instructions for data collection through surveys and for reporting to governmental, benchmarking, and community stakeholders.

As mentioned previously, NMC conducts several internal surveys (e.g., graduate, program evaluation) that serve as qualitative measures of student outcomes and progress. Qualitative measures complement the objective success metrics of the College and follow a survey process protocol that assists in determining research priorities. ORPE collects data through electronically administered surveys and evaluations (e.g., Survey Monkey, Evaluation Kit). In some cases, phone follow-up is used to increase overall response rates.

The College uses a variety of data including the Perkins Core Indicators, National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), VFA, Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) metrics, and the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) benchmarks, to assess how NMC is performing in relation to other institutions regionally and nationally. A review of several metrics enables the College to establish concurrent validity.

Perkins Core Indicators provide six benchmarks related to core performance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators. These external benchmarks established by Michigan for occupational programs allow NMC to compare success metrics with a comparable peer group of colleges.

Academic Program Review Data uses additional benchmarks that align with the four levels of evaluation of the annual program review process. These additional benchmarks reflect a criterion-referenced framework which are primarily based on the three-year historical average of the College. While external benchmarking provides a comparison of student success metrics to peer institutions, internal benchmarking allows NMC to directly compare our baseline benchmarks to new results in order to set new goals.

A tool, method, or instrument is selected based on its ability to address the research question. Operational definitions, cohorts, and targets are critical to the development of meaningful retention, persistence, and completion outcomes. Data and tables within internal databases and tools such as statistical packages, MS Excel, and Access, all support efforts for staff to analyze data. Additionally, NMC has been increasingly using tracking tools from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to determine subsequent student enrollment and credential attainment after transfer from NMC.

To collect qualitative data, ORPE distributes internal surveys (e.g., transfer, withdrawal, graduate) to

gather more complete information about students' graduation and transfer experiences and to help identify possible barriers to non-completions. For example, course and program evaluations by students measure satisfaction in programs. Results provide instructors and academic administrators with information to take action within the classroom and increase probability of student success. Student withdrawal survey results are distributed regularly to the Education Services Management Team and Enrollment Services staff for review. Student response data is also aggregated in a final report. The Learner Engagement Survey provides information related to programs and services which can affect student success.

NMC uses many federal or state mandated student success metrics (e.g., IPEDS, Perkins) as well as success metrics from initiatives that provide more suitable comparison for community colleges . At the course level, persistence metrics are benchmarked with the NCCBP at the 90th percentile. Occupational program areas use Perkins Core Indicators in their program review to set action plans for the upcoming year. Institutional retention, persistence, and completion rates measure progress on the strategic goals, to name a few. While NMC has little to no input as to how many of these national metrics are defined or reported, the College benefits by using them to monitor retention, persistence, and completion for national and state peer college benchmarks and evaluate longitudinal data.

Sources

- Academic Program Review
- Completion Metrics Descriptions
- Developmental Ed Success Metrics
- Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) Committee
- Gen Ed OutcomesDashboard
- January NMC creates first position dedicated to DEI
- Maritime Dashboard
- Next 2022 25 Strategic Plan
- NMC Action Plan
- NMC NextStrategicPlanBrochure
- ORPEhomepage
- Persistence Metrics descriptions
- Planning Schedule SP
- Retention Metrics descriptions
- Strategy 1Objective 3
- Strategy 2 Objective 1
- Strategy 2 Objective 4
- Strategy 3 Objective 4 KPI
- Strategy Two Student Engagement and Success track
- Strategy Two Student Engagement Success
- Watermark Course-Eval-Online

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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.

Summary

Northwestern Michigan College has a number of processes in place, at many levels, to assure its educational programs are of high quality. Within the NMC 2022-25 Strategic Plan, current goals focus on improving the quality of its educational offerings through Future-Focused Education, Student Engagement & Success, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Community Partners & Engagement and Distinction & Sustainability. Faculty and staff are able to regularly assess and evaluate progress of key performance indicators and metrics.

Throughout the timeline of the 2022 -25 Strategic Plan, NMC will focus on enhanced offerings through flexible academic pathways, innovative instructional delivery models and relevant, hands-on educational experiences to empower learners globally. This plan as well as the Strategic Enrollment Plan plan prioritize student use of success coaches, new student recruitment, program offerings, student retention and success and co-curricular activities designed to increase student sense of belonging.

Recently implemented platforms for sharing data (e.g., MS PowerBI dashboards, Degree Works, MySuccess) will increase data use for faculty and staff to identify and track progress around student success metrics (e.g., retention, persistence and completion rates) to identify gaps and students at-risk leading to data-informed decisions.

NMC actively collaborates with the Education Advisory Board (EAB), a strategic partner dedicated to improving education by strengthening national and international communities globally. Through focusing on evidence-based practices among educational institutions, NMC is in a better position to transform the lives of students, close equity gaps and thrive despite disruptions.

Beyond the strategic plan, the College maintains a cycle of assessment, review, and discussion designed to make improvements when it is deemed necessary. Review cycles occur annually, as with academic programs and assessment of general education outcomes within their courses. Other cycles have a longer window of review. General education outcome assessment processes are reviewed every two years by the Curriculum Committee to determine if components of the outcomes need to be addressed.

College programs also maintain a review of continuous improvement, our Plan, Do, Check and Adjust (PDCA) cycle. Data is collected and reviewed annually to determine trends within the data, which are maintained on program review documents (A3). This process provides everyone within the program to identify recent trends within the data and respond quickly to any declining trends. Feedback loops (e.g., general education outcomes) maintain data at various levels, ensuring the appropriate team to respond to trends. NMC regularly tracks state and national trends to determine how to respond to emerging trends. Currently, the College is working through a process to identify and evaluate experiential and co-curricular learning across the campus. A goal of the strategic plan

includes that every credential-seeking student will engage in an experiential learning opportunity.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

5.A.1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

Following our comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation in 2017, there have been significant changes in the administration. In 2020, the president retired and a new president was appointed by the Board of Trustees. In 2021, the College also experienced turnover with several executive positions including the vice presidents of finance and lifelong learning and the executive director of the president's office and board operations. For each of these positions, internal candidates were chosen which was viewed as an advantage for the college, given their familiarity and experience within their respective areas.

NMC is committed to fulfilling its mission through shared governance structures and processes that include internal and external stakeholders. The College governance and administrative structures in place that promote effective and transparent leadership while simultaneously providing constituent groups input.

Shared governance at NMC includes the Board of Trustees, college governance councils (Faculty Council, Staff Council and a Student Government Association) and committees to ensure that faculty, staff and students are represented. This organizational structure enables the Board, faculty, staff, and students to be involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees consists of a seven-member board. Trustees serve for six years or until their successors have been appointed. Regular terms of office commence on the first of January, following the next general state election.

To facilitate appropriate board oversight and ensure the Board of Trustees is knowledgeable about the College, monthly board agendas include specific standard topics such as financial and enrollment reports, Foundation reports, and legislative issues. The Faculty Report highlights academic accomplishments, innovation, and topics relevant to student learning and success. The Program Focus agenda item provides an opportunity for the Board to learn more about the wide range of College programs and services (Board Packet). In addition, sub-committee meetings, participation in College events, and involvement in planning, advocacy, and other community functions ensure the governing board is knowledgeable about the institution.

In addition to its regular meetings, the College administration provides information sessions, referred to as study sessions, to update the Board on various items. The sessions are for receiving information only, and no votes are taken. Notice of meetings and study sessions are made available to the campus, public and media along with notices of the agenda meetings and sessions. Board of Trustees study sessions are open to the public except where there is an allowable exemption to the Open Meetings Act requirement per Michigan Code (A-100.00).

New trustees participate in a board orientation that includes an overview of the college's overall structure and operations including its strategic plan and goals, fiscal operations, college policies, board member bylaws and procedures, conflict of interest policy and other information that impacts NMC's operations. All board authority delegated to staff is delegated to the president so that all authority and accountability of staff is provided to the president (A-102.00).

NMC supports internal vertical and horizontal alignment through cross-functional meetings of the Leadership Council (LC), including Academic Chairs, directors, council chairs, Action Project chairs, and other leaders from across the College, as well as Planning and Budget Council, Policy Council, and President's Council. This cross-functional planning helps identify potential resources, gaps, and areas for collaboration (NMC Councils, Committees & Teams).

Faculty Council

The purpose of the Faculty Council is to represent all faculty, to pursue relevant faculty interests, with a focus on leadership, shared governance, academic issues, and faculty innovation. The Faculty Council acts as a liaison between faculty and other leadership groups, councils and committees across the college. It also oversees the Curriculum Committee (CC) and one member serves as the CC chair.

Staff Council

The purpose of the Staff Council is to provide an avenue for staff involvement. The council serves as a liaison between non-faculty employees and administrators. It supports the exchange and coordination of information between staff, administration, faculty and students for ideas and discussion and to meet the college's goal to provide opportunities for employee engagement through recruiting governance council members and providing feedback to them. The chair for the staff council represents staff through membership in the LC.

Leadership Council (LC)

The purpose of the Leadership Council is to serve as the primary college-wide group to enhance communication and engagement between unit leadership and executive staff. LC addresses issues raised by institutional research reports and discusses and reviews alignment of the strategic plan with each of the departmental and program operational plans. Members are responsible for bringing ideas and information forward from their respective areas for sharing.

Student Government Association (SGA)

The Student Government Association consists of NMC students who are elected by the student body to represent them. The purpose of the SGA is to act as a liaison between students, employees and the community to help offer a better education for all and to ensure quality and integrity in academia. The SGA includes two staff advisors and includes elected positions.

NMC also has a committee structure with responsibilities for oversight and processes across areas of the College. Each committee has guidelines for membership as well as a mission or stated purpose. Most committees include faculty, staff, administrators, students and in some cases community members. Committee structures are regularly reviewed to revise, as deemed necessary.

5.A.2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

The College collects, maintains and makes a tremendous amount of institutional data available through the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) and other areas. ORPE oversees data management for federal and state compliance reports, accreditation reviews, strategic planning benchmarking, peer comparisons, surveys and other internal and external requests. At the time of our comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation in 2017, internal stakeholders were limited to data provided by the Information Technology (IT) team in the Digital Dashboard. The Digital Dashboard is not interactive but rather provides frozen admissions, registration, enrollment, etc. data by semester. ORPE is charged with requests beyond what the dashboard provides. ORPE primarily uses an internal database, Datamart, in order to provide stakeholders with the data needed for their role at the College. This process is marginally efficient but does not provide stakeholders with the ability to drill down in order to filter and export the data in various ways that include demographics, program areas, department level, student characteristics, at-risk populations, etc. ORPE recognized the need to make the College more efficient making data accessible. The time and resources necessary to extract and analyze data in order to support and help stakeholders make data-informed decisions cannot be understated.

In 2022, after the comprehensive evaluation, ORPE, in collaboration with IT, acquired data visualization dashboard software, Microsoft Power BI. The software enables multiple and unrelated sources of data to be transformed into an interactive, coherent, and visually appealing representation of data. ORPE has been creating and making numerous dashboards available for users to interact with the data in order to make data informed decisions in various areas across the college such as enrollment, retention, strategic planning, programming, etc. A major goal of this work is to support student success. For example, increasing retention by a few percentages means that we have the opportunity to change the lives of hundreds of students. Although work with this tool has begun somewhat recently, its use will support democratizing data across the College.

After the adoption of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, ORPE began creating interactive dashboards to include metrics for the respective strategic goals. The dashboards include quantitative metrics related to each of the goals related to student engagement and success, DEI and community partnerships, for

example. The DEI committee will use the course success metrics to identify inequalities among students, for which they are able to make recommendations to take action in order to address any inequalities. In another example, the Construction Technology department was able to increase course efficiency by nearly 20 percent by using quantitative and qualitative data from their department A3 (program review metrics) and student comments provided in course evaluations regarding course delivery. Survey data is also used by service departments to make improvements. made available in a dashboard is another example of how stakeholders are able to utilize results. For example, the IT department and Library use metrics from the Learner Engagement Survey to make improvements, when appropriate. The metrics provide an overall rating on a specific area in which follow-up information is obtained from students.

Dashboards not only provide easily accessible data to address nice-to-know information but they specifically are able to be used in scheduling. One of the first dashboards created was based on course demand. The Course Demand dashboard is interactive and allows academic chairs to monitor course demand during registration periods. The information provided includes course capacities throughout registration periods, so that academic chairs know when to add sections in order to offset a waiting list.

5.A.3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

The College has a process in place for introducing curriculum proposals. This Decision-Making Process was created as part of a previous AQIP Action Project and is designed to enable informed decision making in stages. Each stage requires a decision to be made before moving to subsequent stages. This approach ensures that the College devotes the appropriate level of resources to investigating program ro service concepts.

Faculty work within their respective departments to develop, review and revise program curriculum. In order for programs or degrees to be changed, the faculty created proposals are shared with the CC. Proposals that need to be modified are sent back to address any concerns before moving forward.

Staff and students are also involved in the academic requirements, policy and processes within our collaborative structures. For instance, several staff members serve on the CC. These include the registrar, curriculum and instructional designer, academic advisor, and the director of Academic Affairs. In addition, staff comprise the majority of the college's Policy Council that is responsible for college policy development and review. These staff represent all levels of the institution. There is also a voting student representative on the Policy Council, who is selected by the Student Government Association.

In regards to planning, the college's shared governance council for that function is the Planning and Budget Council. Here also, the staff comprise a majority of the council, representing all levels of the institution. The council also has a voting student representative selected by the Student Government Association.

Sources

- A-100.00 Policy

- A-102.00 Policy
- Academic Program Review Data
- Board-Packet
- BoT Notice
- BoT Study Session Packet
- Course Demand
- Decision-Making Process
- DEIDashboardMetrics
- Digital Dashboard
- Faculty Council
- Leadership Council
- Learner Engagement Survey Responses
- NMC Action Plan
- NMC Councils Committees and Teams
- Program Improvements
- Staff Council
- Student Government Association
- Trustee Orientation Materials

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

5.B.1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure are sufficient to support the college's operations. Qualifications for all positions are communicated through job descriptions and job postings. Applicants for staff and instructor positions can access requirements on the NMC Employment Opportunities webpage. Team members independently review the refined list of applicants' application packets and assess strengths using a position-specific evaluation matrix. Together the team determines candidates for phone interviews.

Phone interviews assess candidates according to selection criteria, and a final subset of applicants is brought to campus for in-person interviews. In-person interviews address skill and foundational competencies, and organizational fit through interview questions, portfolio review, teaching demonstrations, presentations, or other skills evaluations. There is a second interview with the academic chair and area vice president for faculty positions. For staff positions, teams occasionally schedule second interviews with the hiring manager and area executive. For some executive-level positions, open interviews with finalists allow all interested campus community members to assist in vetting. Selection After interviews, the search team recommends a finalist and acceptable alternatives for hire to the responsible executive. HR conducts background checks and requests official transcripts, while the hiring manager conducts employment reference checks. The executive approves and recommends a finalist to the president. All regular and adjunct faculty and regular staff are required to provide official transcripts to verify their academic credentials as well as other official licenses and certifications. Hiring managers validate experience during the reference check process.

The on-boarding and orientation processes for new employees are standardized. A New Hire Checklist ensures consistency, and the entire on-boarding process is available and tracked through NMC's on-boarding software. The initial online component includes NMC's history, Mission, Vision, and Values, and compliance training required for NMC and for their position. Day one begins with a meeting with HR, then the hiring manager begins the process of orienting new employees to their department. The first two weeks include meeting with a tech liaison and an introduction to NMC systems.

The New Employee Orientation is a one-day event that includes meeting with executive staff; an introduction to our CQI processes and accreditation pathway, and ending with a campus tour highlighting new program and service innovations.

Similar to faculty movement from provisional to regular status, once the Learning Plan is completed and assessments indicate the new employee is meeting all expectations of their role, hiring managers recommend movement to the "Experienced Zone." This indicates the person is meeting all key responsibilities and demonstrating essential competencies. This process is designed to ensure all staff and administrators possess the required qualification, skills, and values.

NMC is committed to providing professional development (PD) opportunities and ranks in the 96th percentile in the 2020 National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) for professional development expenditures per full-time-equated employee. To achieve the purposes outlined in the PD policy (D-753.00), the College consistently allocates 2.25% of general fund salaries and wages for professional development in accordance with Resource Guidelines. In addition, the College offers tuition benefits, and after seven full-time years of service, faculty and executive, administrative, and professional staff may apply for Sabbatical Leave per policy (D-753.02) or per the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement (Article XVIII).

Through the annual review process, all regular employees set professional development goals. To meet these, faculty and staff engage in a variety of activities such as workshops, conferences, webinars, reading, memberships and participation in professional associations, or other professional development strategies (D-753.01). The allocation of professional development funds varies. Each department budgets according to the development required to achieve operational goals of the unit and maintain required certifications.

The College established the Professional Development Institute (PDI) in 2013 which continues to develop and align internal professional development opportunities with the NMC Competency Model. With an advisory team of employees across roles and departments, PDI serves as an umbrella for all internal professional development, working closely with the Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE). Beginning in Fall 2016, NMC holds a professional development day open to all regular staff, faculty, and adjunct faculty. The event encourages collaboration across departments and employee groups centered around various themes.

5.B.2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

Each year Planning and Budget Council reviews, President's Council recommends, and the Board of Trustees approves guidelines for financial planning and budgeting that reflect the mission and values of the College (Resource Guidelines).

Proposals for new programs or services go through a four-step decision making process that analyzes fit with mission, strategic agenda, market, and resources. Any new program or service that advances to step four (Implementation Planning) will have resources assigned prior to launch.

As the College aligns plans with budgets, risk is addressed in several ways. It begins by setting priorities given resource availability, pursuing key strategies within the window of opportunity, and placing less time-sensitive goals in a pool for future consideration. At the operational plan level, the A3 template contains sections where plan authors analyze and justify activities and resource needs. These can inform discussions with executive leaders regarding potential impact as well as risk.

NMC's four-step decision-making process guides those proposing new programs or services, as well as those reviewing those proposals, through a risk-assessment process. Through market research (step two), business model development (step three), and implementation planning (step four), sponsors and decision makers can understand potential risks and determine ways to reduce or manage them. In addition, NMC takes steps to mitigate risk by maintaining a Working Capital Reserve Fund and establishing additional reserves for building projects and other significant purchases of products and/or services (Resource Guidelines, page 2).

A3 templates used throughout the College support linking operational goals with organizational strategy by asking plan authors to identify the Institutional Effectiveness Criteria and/or strategic direction directing the goal or activity. Since planning precedes budgeting, there is also an area in the A3 action plan section which identifies budget considerations for a specific goal or activity. Budget impacts, with rationale, then carry over to the departmental budget request. If a budget request is not granted, the A3 is revised to reflect the impact of lessor or different resources. VPs are able to restructure resources within their area of responsibility to execute action plans efficiently and effectively.

For example, to aid in planning, the Educational Technology (ET) department distributed a Student Technology Use Survey in Fall 2019 (the most recent launched again in October 2022). Based on the results of the 2019 survey, recommendations included: (1) Consider offering more online courses, (2) Consider requiring instructors to use Moodle regularly, and (3) Consider offering instructors professional development or training for Moodle. These results were available in Spring 2020 and ET ramped up efforts to address these recommendations, despite the effects of the pandemic. Regarding online courses, ET provided additional support to faculty enabling them to transfer their face-to-face sections to an Online or Livestream version while maintaining the quality of the courses delivered to students. Livestream courses are those in which significant parts of the course are presented online and in a synchronous format whereas online courses are asynchronous. In 2017, faculty participated in an external Faculty Technology Survey. Initial plans to send a follow-up faculty survey in 2020 were delayed due to the pandemic with plans to be distributed in 2023.

5.B.3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

The College excels in preparing resources in advance of implementing plans, ensuring fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered. Consistent with Board-approved Resource Guidelines, NMC has budgeted conservatively and built reserves to address potential reductions in state funding, fluctuations in expenses, and provide resources for innovation and improvements to existing programs and infrastructure In addition, NMC created a Technology Plant Fund, funded by a student technology fee, to finance ongoing technology-based initiatives such as replacement or upgrade of computers or other technology needs (NMC Resources Guidelines, p. 2).

The College monitors financial thrivability by tracking Primary Reserves ratio, Composite financial index, and Net Operating Ratio. The Office of Finance and Administration provides monthly financial reports to PBC, President's Council, and the Board of Trustees. In addition, the College contracts with a third party to conduct annual financial audits.

NMC's Capital Outlay Allocation Team (COAT) oversees the general fund allocation so evolving technological infrastructure and other capital purchases keep pace with needs in the classroom and in support services. Department leaders annually submit requests along with a statement of the level of

importance for funding, and a committee of peers selects projects to fund within the level of resources allocated for capital for the coming year. All COAT recommendations require the approval of PBC before final recommendation to the president.

5.B.4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

The College monitors financial thrivability by tracking Primary Reserves ratio, Composite financial index, and Net Operating Ratio. The Office of Finance and Administration provides monthly financial reports to PBC, President's Council, and the Board of Trustees. In addition, the College contracts with a third party to conduct annual financial audits.

The College conducts a comprehensive facilities assessment and updates to the master plan. As outlined in NMC's Resource Guidelines, NMC maintains a Physical Plant Major Maintenance and Future Buildings fund to ensure resources are available for infrastructure maintenance and improvements. The plant fund continues to be supported to address current and future facility needs. The operating budget supplies annual funding to support plant fund activities.

NMC's planning budgeting has allowed agility in responding to market opportunities without adversely affecting current current programs.To ensure funding for NMC's educational purposes is not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas, the College created two funds expressly for funding needs outside of regular operational budget: the Strategic Fund and the Fund for Transformation. The former is managed by the president and is intended to help fund strategic initiatives that do not yet have resources available through the regular budget. The Fund for Transformation is a Board-designated fund for transformation initiatives.

Sources

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- Employment Opportunities Webpage
- NMC Resource Guidelines 2022
- Student Tech Survey Report 2020

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.

The College allocates its resources to align with its mission, vision, core values and strategic priorities as reflected in the strategic plan. The budget planning and allocation process promotes the integrity of funding for current and future plans to support instruction, facilities, technology, departments, and auxiliary services. The Board of Trustees discusses and ultimately approves financial matters including but not limited to tuition, fees, operating budgets and institutional planning assumptions (Agenda Sample).

Revenue growth from property tax is limited by statute and state funding, revenue has declined as a percent of revenue sources and the percentage of the budget relying on tuition and fees has steadily increased. To minimize tuition increases, NMC has implemented a number of strategies. In addition to recruitment efforts and workforce planning strategies, resource development planning is an essential and highly successful strategy for bolstering economic strength, capitalizing on assets, and increasing capacity to meet our mission, vision, and future needs.

Once goals are clarified, the College develops its budget to ensure that the allocation of resources is aligned with the College's mission and priorities. Under the strategic plan, the College commits the budget process to be aligned to the strategic priorities. All proposals for new programs or services go through the NMC Decision-Making Process in the first of four stages in order to make the connection of how they support the strategic plan.

Despite set-backs related to the pandemic, the College continued to prioritize its mission, vision, core values and strategic priorities. In 2021, the College developed a new enrollment marketing plan in which a goal was implemented in the 2022 -25 strategic plan. The goal is to increase the percentage of area high school graduates attending NMC (Strategy 2). Each year, the student services area sets goals for enrollment for the upcoming year. One action step in this goal includes targeting area high

school students. The public relations and marketing team collaborates with admissions to develop an email/texting/social media strategy to send to all senior high school students who are applying to NMC (Objective 2A, Action 2). Progress is tracked and available to the public on the NMC Webpage (Strategy 2 Tracker).

NMC continues to explore revenue potential with unique programs. The College participates in a state-wide economic development strategy through the Michigan New Jobs Training Program, has developed programs such as our International Summer Flight Experience, and has been a service provider for grant-funded research such as the National Park Service and Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore coastal assessment project. The College has also expanded its use of differential tuition in high-cost occupational programs as a way to sustain both these programs and the College as a whole. One of the strategies on the strategic plan focuses on institutional distinction and sustainability. Associated objectives are tracked and shared with the public on the website and at monthly board meetings.

In recent years, the College has invested in the NMC Foundation with personnel, software infrastructure, and strategic planning with goals of increased donations to offset operating costs and strengthen student scholarship funding. Additionally, the College, through the NMC Foundation, has launched a comprehensive campaign to increase philanthropic resources available for the development and sustainability of all programs. The campaign focused on three areas: scholarships, programs and facilities with a goal of $35 million. At its close, the campaign surpassed the goal and raised more than $40 million for all three priority areas with current and future planned gifts. $7.2 million in gifts supported the expansion and renovation of The Dennos Museum Center and the Innovation Center. $4.1 million was unrestricted and directed to the Fund for NMC. Nearly nearly $7 million was given in support of NMC programs with 13 new funds created to support specific programs. Support for existing scholarships and programs funds increased by $9.6 million and $4 million respectively. Additionally, 64 new scholarships were established which will generate 320 $1,000 scholarships annually.

The use of data and performance information is aligned within the annual planning process. Economic impact studies (most recent 2017-18) and planning assumptions inform the strategic plan and goal setting, which leads to proposals for new programs and services. Market research and business modeling for new programs and services informs metrics and action plans. Continuous improvement initiatives operationalized by action project teams stem from strategic goals so the College is always working on its top priorities. Budget allocation decisions reflect these priorities.

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

Departments consider both organization-wide strategic goals, anchored by NMC's mission, vision and values, and area-specific goals in developing annual operational plans. For example, academic areas (Comunications Example) conduct annual program reviews to identify strengths as well as opportunities to improve student or program success. Similarly, other departments (Academic and Career Advising Center example) review their operation-specific success metrics and targets to identify opportunities for improvement. All academic areas and departments capture their annual plans on a one-page document (Academic and Career Advising Center Example) that summarizes metrics, targets, goals, and action steps. Goals are coded to identify the Institutional Effectiveness Criteria and/or Strategic Direction to target. Leaders identify budget and resource implications of the annual plans, which inform budget requests.

Since 1997, the College has operated through strategic planning. After a year in development, the 2022-25 plan is the most comprehensive strategic plan in decades. Similar to previous plans, the plan contains well-defined metrics to track performance and effectiveness. The current plan is increasingly data-driven and focused on challenging, yet attainable goals. Champions and objective leads meet regularly to review the status of the action items, update the plan and review performance. Strategic goal updates are tracked and presented monthly at the Board of Trustee meetings.

The College systematically improves its operations and student outcomes. For example, in 2020, the opening of the Innovation Center resulted in a 54,000 square-foot, multi-story library and flexible 21st-century learning space with classrooms, conference rooms, student-centered workspaces and simulation labs (see Component 1.A.2.).

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

The aligned planning process begins with a thorough review of data on learners, employees, and the community, as well as an economic impact study and planning assumptions of external drivers. Additionally, the Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (ORPE) tracks performance metrics. These data help identify strengths and opportunities as well as potential threats and shortcomings to inform strategy and operational planning across the College.

As part of the Plan, Do, Adjust and Check continuous improvement cycle, the first step, "grasping the situation," focuses on understanding the current conditions with respect to learner success, progress on department and strategic goals, finances and other operations, as well as changes in the local or global environment. In 2021, the College partnered with an external planning partner, Campus Works Inc. to help guide the planning process. This partner was chosen based on their experience with dozens of other community colleges, plans to include all stakeholder groups and their willingness to adapt to NMC's culture and community engagement needs and student-focused philosophy. While this process occurs throughout the year, data are systematically analyzed at the beginning of every planning cycle (schedule). Key inputs include: Formal and informal feedback gathered from students, employees, the NMC Board of Trustees, the community, our partners, and external stakeholders. NMC uses national benchmarks, where applicable, in determining targets. Emerging issues related to technology, demographics, globalization, and trends in higher education discovered through the NMC Scan planning assumptions.

The NMC executive team considers these analyses as it reviews the College's mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria, developing a draft strategic plan with input from leaders across the College (Guiding Principles Map). The plan includes updated goals, metrics, and targets. Through the most recent annual planning retreat, the Board of Trustees provided input to the draft plan and identified the most important goals and metrics to monitor for the upcoming year. This ensures that the Board is spending its time on the most important priorities to preserve and enhance the College. Once approved, the strategic plan becomes the basis for operational planning at both the organization and department levels.

5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

NMC considers shifts in technology and funding, developing its budget model based on anticipated enrollment, projected revenue from tuition and fees, state aid, property taxes, and other sources as

well as projected costs (Budget Considerations). The Cost to Educate model, available on NMC's digital dashboard, provides an understanding of NMC's current capacity and helps anticipate economic fluctuations. Each monthly Board of Trustees meeting includes a review of the budget to actual financial results. During each planning and budgeting cycle, NMC develops and evaluates multiple scenarios based on all these inputs before making a final fiscal year budget recommendation.

While NMC's plan is based on the sustainability and stability of current capacity, planning is also intended to take advantage of growth opportunities. As shared in the previous assurance argument, NMC continues to establish national and international competencies and provide leadership in select educational areas connected to the regional economy and assets such as Freshwater, Applied Technology, Arts and Culture, Innovation/Entrepreneurism, and Value-Added Agriculture. Within these areas of expertise, NMC further explores opportunities to provide value and increase revenue. One of the newly created strategies, Strategy 5 of the Strategic Plan, Institutional Distinction and Sustainability, focuses on NMC's distinctive programs with objectives centered around their long-term sustainability and growth. Activities in this strategy include goals such as expansion of the Aviation Program and deployment of a unique maritime culinary certificate leveraging existing expertise, for example.

The College continues to distinguish among service levels within program offerings: Portfolio A: Academic offerings priced through our standard College tuition rates. Portfolio B: Offerings of programs and services that can be priced outside the standard rate system and marketed to individuals who may not be normally served by the traditional community college. These learners include those who are seeking state, national and international credentials based on the College's specialty areas. Portfolio C: Offerings utilizing intellectual property that may be related to College offerings but are held by partner organizations. The partners work together to market offerings. These strategies allow NMC to anticipate and respond to the possible impact of fluctuations in standard sources of revenue.

A review of NMC's budget planning highlights the many factors the College considers in budget development. As revenue growth from property tax is limited by statute and state funding, revenue has declined as a percent of revenue sources, and the percentage of the budget relying on tuition and fees has steadily increased. To minimize tuition increases, NMC has implemented a number of strategies. In addition to recruitment and retention efforts (described in 2P1) and workforce planning strategies (described in 3P1), resource development planning is an essential and highly successful strategy for bolstering economic strength, capitalizing on assets, and increasing capacity to meet our mission, vision, and future needs.

NMC continues to explore revenue potential with unique programs. The College participates in a state-wide economic development strategy through the Michigan New Jobs Training Program, has developed programs such as our International Summer Flight Experience, and has been a service provider for grant-funded research such as the National Park Service and Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore coastal assessment project. The College has also expanded its use of differential tuition in high-cost occupational programs as a way to sustain both these programs and the College as a whole.

As mentioned previously, the College, through its Foundation, raised more than $40 million focused on three areas: scholarships, programs and facilities. Support for existing scholarships and programs funds increased by $9.6 million and $4 million, respectively, resulting in the addition of 64 new $1,000 scholarships annually.

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

Beginning in 2020, the College identified planning assumptions relevant to higher education and the impact that they potentially have on NMC stakeholders: Students, Employees and Community.   A major impact that the College has been increasingly experiencing is major shifts in the enrollment landscape. External factors inform the planning process such as the State of Michigan's goal to increase credential attainment for those over 25 years of age to 60% by 2030. The proportion of non-traditional students is increasing which includes single parents, returning veterans and working adults. Challenges for working students aged 25 and older were identified.   Given the limited flexibility in class scheduling, access to services, little to no basic needs support and credit for past experiences, several goals of the strategic plan address these concerns. Additionally, the number of high school graduates choosing NMC dropped from a high of 46% in 2017 to 37% in 2021, accounting for a significant portion of the decrease in traditional students.   New economic realities as a result of the pandemic and the current state of the economy were driving forces of the Strategic Enrollment Plan. The plan identifies several strategies including new student recruitment, flexible program offerings, student retention and success rates as well as advocacy initiatives. The College is participating in two significant Michigan initiatives, Michigan Reconnect and Future for Frontliners, in support of the State's goal to increase the number of working-age adults with a certificate or degree to 60% by 2030. Michigan Reconnect was first made available to students in the 2020-21 academic year and Future for Frontliners in Spring 2021. Eight hundred forty-three students enrolled in one of these programs during 2021-22, accounting for over 20% of student enrollment and higher persistence rates compared to the total student population (4.C.5).   The College continues to monitor and work towards increasing student success. Strategies and objectives that address these issues were prioritized and are included in the 2022-25 Strategic Plan:

- Strategy 1, Objective 1: Increase the number of students receiving prior learning credit using flexible academic pathways
- Strategy 1, Objective 2: Increase the proportion of online course offerings
- Strategy 1, Objective 4: Create additional accelerated course pathways in multiple academic disciplines
- Strategy 2, Objective 2A: Implement new enrollment marketing plans to area high school graduates
- Strategy 2, Objective 2B: Implement new enrollment marketing plans for students 21 years of age and older
- Strategy 2, Objective 3: Enhance student supports
- Strategy 2, Objective 4: Increase percentage of students using success coach services

Another major impact affecting students at NMC is that minority students are less likely to be successful. Meaningful changes in the area of diversity and inclusion require examination of curriculum and pedagogy. At NMC, course pass rates have been consistently lower for minority students by an average of seven percent, compared to the rest of the student population. To address this gap, action steps have been identified to support student success for minority students as well as those identified as vulnerable. While the College has made significant progress on cultivating an inclusive environment, a significant amount of work has yet to be done as the College consistently tracks and analyzes success metrics:

- Strategy 3, Objective 4; Action 1: Find course completion rates from 2019 for BIPOC students, students with disabilities, and low-income students.

- Strategy 3, Objective 4; Action 3: Benchmark NMC course completion rate for BIPOC and/or low income students against other MI community colleges
- Strategy 3, Objective 4; Actions 3 and 4: Research and implement success/support tools for students

NMC continues to explore revenue potential with community partners. The College participates in a state-wide economic development strategy through the Michigan New Jobs Training Program, has developed programs such as our International Summer Flight Experience, and has been a service provider for grant-funded research such as the National Park Service and Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore coastal assessment project. The College has also expanded its use of differential tuition in high-cost occupational programs as a way to sustain both these programs and the College as a whole.

5.C.6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

As mentioned previously (5.A.3.), the College has a decision-making process in place to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes. This Decision-Making Process is designed to enable informed decision-making in stages. This approach ensures that the College devotes the appropriate level of resources to investigating program and service concepts.

Given the new Strategic Plan, initiatives were developed to address the college's strategic goals, which are outlined in the Action Plan of the 2022-25 Strategic Plan to address five key strategies:

- Future-Focused Education: For instance, feedback from the adult student focus group indicated the need for "expanding flexible instructional delivery and alternative credentialing options, and enhancing faculty use of new and emerging technologies." This strategy directly meets these identified needs.
- Student Engagement and Success: Enrollment targets are included in this strategy along with additional student completion support and increased use of success coaches, leading to higher rates of retention and student success.
- DEI: A Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) was hired as part of this strategy and retention strategies will be developed for our BIPOC students in order to increase success.
- Community Partnerships and Engagement: This strategy focuses on enhancing relationships with the community, industry, and university partners, and includes growth of workforce development and the long-term sustainability of Extended Education Services (EES).
- Institutional Distinction and Sustainability: A focus on NMC's distinctive programs with objectives centered around their long-term sustainability and growth.

The goals of each objective are tracked using KPIs and metrics. These metrics are shared with internal and external stakeholders regularly at the Board of Trustees meetings each month. Although just begun in 2022, the college is making progress at meeting the goals.

Improvements in assessment have been an ongoing priority for the College. Since the last review, the Assessment Team (AT) has made significant improvements in making general education outcome results available to be used to improve general education outcomes. The co-coordinators for the AT continue to hold meetings regularly, several times a year, to share and review data with the team in order to glean insights and make recommendations to department chairs at ESIMT meetings. The change in making data available for review, discussed previously (4.C.2), involved making the data increasingly easy to access to be used for improvement purposes. Users can drill

down in the general education outcomes dashboard using filters such as major, class standing and demographics, for example. The addition of a benchmark (TER-N) criterion for the Critical Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning outcomes also allow the college to compare to students at TER-N participating colleges. Areas identified for improvement based on TER-N results are documented in faculty annual reviews (Faculty Review Excerpt). Assignments or discussion exercises developed to target the areas in need of improvement are also outlined in the faculty annual review (CT and CR exercise examples). Yearly results are monitored to determine levels of improvement and to detect new areas for improvement (Faculty Review Excerpt).

Every student at the College is given a personalized degree tracking tool, called MAP (My Academic Plan). This allows students to track degree progress in real time, know which courses are required, and work with an advisor to create a semester-by-semester plan. NMC has implemented the EAB Starfish student success platform, which we call "My Success". With that our faculty, advisors, and student support services work in coordination to provide checkpoints throughout the semester. Data from "My Success" is used in several ways. For example, as more students returned to campus after stay-at- home mandates were lifted post the COVID pandemic, in-person events such as Transfer Table days, in cooperation with our University Center partners were reinstated. The College adapted the Transfer Fair event to be safe while also continuing to offer face to face options for students. With information from the My Success intake survey, the College crafted targeted messages based on students' intended transfer schools for special events, visits, and information sharing about scholarships. Student feedback and open rates for these messages have been strong.

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- Faculty Annual Review Excerpt on GEOs 2021-2022 3
- Futures for Frontliners
- FY 23 A3 Communications
- FY23 Academic Career Advising Center A3
- Guiding Principles Map
- Innovation Center
- Michigan Reconnect
- NMC Action Plan
- NMC Action Plan - KPI metrics
- NMC Action Plan Student Engagement Success
- NMC Strategic Planning Process Overview
- Planning Assumption Summaries for NMC 2021
- Planning Schedule SP
- Progress Trackers
- Strategy 2 Tracker

- Strategy 3 Tracker
- Strategy 5 Tracker

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

NMC's resources, structures, processes and planning fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings and respond to future challenges and opportunities. Resource and budget monitoring processes are in place, providing the infrastructure necessary to sustain the future of the College.

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The 2022-25 NMC Strategic Plan is comprehensive and transparent as a result of an inclusive process that engaged students, employees, community members, business partners, education partners and donors around opportunities, needs and challenges in learning. The plan brings renewed energy and focus to fulfillment of the updated mission to *deliver lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities.*

Academic and service departments annually engage in the College's continuous improvement model: Plan, Do, Check and Adjust (PDCA). A3 planning templates used throughout the College support linking operational goals to organizational strategies by authors identifying Institutional Effectiveness Criteria that align to institutional-level strategic objectives.

NMC's budgeting process for monitoring its finances is well-developed. NMC excels in preparing resources in advance of implementing plans, ensuring fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Enrollment growth goals based on NMC's Strategic Plan and the Strategic Enrollment Plan through 2025 are identified and regularly monitored. Progress is tracked and available on the NMC public website and is regularly discussed at Board of Trustee meetings.

The resolution of usability issues with the data management system has been a focus for the Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness as well as Information Technology Services staff. Significant progress has been made in making data easily accessible and usable through an interactive dashboard. This data visualization tool has recently been made available across the campus along with professional development training. Plans to make public data available in using this data visualization software are underway.

Sources

There are no sources.