Northwestern Michigan College

HLC ID 1355

AQIP: Comprehensive Quality Review   Visit Date: 3/11/2019

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Context and Nature of Review

Visit Date

3/11/2019

Overview the Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR)

A Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR) is required as part of the Year 8 comprehensive evaluation during the final year of the AQIP Pathway cycle and may also occur in Year 4 based upon institutional request or HLC determination. The goals of the CQR are to:

- Provide assurance that the institution is meeting HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. (With respect to the optional Year 4 CQR, the goal is to alert the organization to areas that need attention prior to its next Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Such concerns may be signaled during the Systems Appraisal process in the third year of the cycle.)
- Provide assurance that the institution is meeting the Federal Compliance Requirements.
- Facilitate the institution's continuing quality improvement commitment, confirming that a developing or established continuous quality improvement (CQI) culture and infrastructure exist that advances organizational maturity in relation to the AQIP Pathway Categories.
- Verify any issues identified in Action Project Reviews, Systems Appraisals or HLC actions.
- Validate process-level development and deployment as described in the Systems Portfolio.
- Identify actions taken to minimize identified strategic issues and to alleviate potential accreditation issues.
- Review CQI priorities and progress, including how Action Projects are integrated into the institution's overall performance improvement strategy.
- Review distance and/or correspondence education delivery, if applicable.
- Evaluate distributed education (multiple campuses), if applicable.
- Develop an initial recommendation regarding Pathway eligibility (Year 8 only).

Scope of Review

- Quality Highlights Report
- On-site Visit
- Federal Compliance Review
- Multi-campus Visit (if applicable)
- Reaffirmation Review (Year 8 only)

- Federal Compliance 2018
- CQR Quality Highlights Report

Institutional Context

Northwestern Michigan College, the first community college in the state, was founded in 1951 and offers over 100 transfer, career degree and certificate programs. In the 17-18 academic year, the College awarded 682 degrees or certificates. Over 90% of NMC graduates report being satisfied to very satisfied with the career preparation through the College. In 2017–2018, 4,271 students were enrolled in credit classes.

The College is comprised of the Main Campus, the Aero Park Campus, the Great Lakes Campus, the University Center Campus, and the Rogers Observatory. The College has a high CFI and the VP Finance indicates that "the College has identified its deferred maintenance projects and has built into the annual budgeting process a plan to address deferred maintenance projects. " At a time when many small 2 year colleges are contracting, NMC is in the midst of an expansion with the West Hall Innovation Center renovation and expansion. This will include a 37,000 sq. ft. facility that provides opportunities for the College to collaborate with community stakeholders and connect with partners in other countries. The College is also undergoing a fundraising effort that has seen initial success toward the ultimate goal of $35 million.

The College has a number of long term employees who provide institutional context and history. The President has served for over 18 years and will retire in 2019. A firm has been retained to conduct a search for his replacement. The College has a culture of CQI and often has many more Action Projects underway than are required by HLC.

Recently the College has had many conversations regarding shared governance and the faculty recently unionized, with a faculty union contract that is in the early stages of implementation.

Interactions with Constituencies

Meeting with **President and President's Council** (10 in attendance, between 5-38 years of service. Includes Student Services, Educational Services, Foundation, ORPE, Finance and Admin, PR/Marketing, HR, Exec Asst.)

Meeting with **CQI Committee** (16 in attendance, range from 5-38 years of service, includes admin, support staff, faculty, HR, foundation, , 16 in attendance)

Meeting with **staff** and tour of facilities

Meeting with **Diversity Team** (11 individuals, 5-33 years of service)

Meeting with **Academic Affairs Team** (15 in attendance, between 3-40 years of service, admin. faculty, staff ORPE, Ed Media Tech)

Meeting with **Board of Trustees** (14 in attendance, between 1-24 years of service)

Meeting with **Strategic Planning team** (8 in attendance, between 3 and 38 years of service, admin, faculty, staff, foundation, support staff)

Community Forum (13 community members in attendance)

Staff Meeting (17 in attendance)

Meeting with **Human Resources**

Open Forum with **Faculty** (23 in attendance)

Meeting with **Students** (10 in attendance: International Club leader, SGA, Carpentry, Phi Theta Kapa, RA, Exercise Science, Aviation, maritime, early childhood majors)

Meeting with **Action Project** participants (15 in attendance)

Meeting with **concerned community member** who provided 3rd party comments and additional documentation

Additional Documents

Faculty onboarding documentation

Agendas for several of the training days

The Course development process

The course review process

The program reviews for

Humanities

Liberal Arts

Communications

The Excel spreadsheet of faculty qualifications

The Faculty Evaluation process (including one faculty member's evaluation)

The union contract

February 25 Board of Trustees Agenda and Board Packet

Technology Plan

Facilities Master Plan

FY 2018 Five Year Capital Outlay Plan

Curriculum Committee Agenda & Minutes for 9-14-2018

Northwestern Michigan College Approved Budget Year Ending June 30, 2019

January 14, 2019, Board of Trustees Agenda and Board Packet

Cost to Educate Model

Transfer Credits to NMC – Website

Completion Results – Updated

Retention Results – Updated

Persistence Results – Updated

Accounting A3 FY20

Communications A3 FY20

PN Occupational Studies A3 FY20

LWE Program Plan A3 FY20

Student Example – Capstone Project

Global Endorsement

NMC Model for Online Course Review

Adjunct Reviews Web Page Screenshot

Annual Faculty Observation Form

Teaching Qualifications Evaluation Form

Standard Evaluation Form – Faculty

Completed A3 Planning Document

Random Syllabi

Screen Shot of Moodle Course Shell (with login info)

Advising Center Survey

Dennos Concert Series Flyers

Nexus College Magazine (spring & fall 2017,spring & summer 2018, spring 2019)

International Affairs Forum Flyer

Guerilla Girls Postcard

Inuit Art Collection pamphlet

NMC College Facts brochure

NMC Extended Education 2019 Winter/Spring Catalog

NMC "Find it Here" Look Book

A Pale Blue Dot NMC magazine Spring 2018

Advising Center survey

Signed conflict of interest forms for board members, faculty, staff

Signed alcohol, drug, and Title IX policies.

Signed ethical use of network policy

Agendas or artifacts from Title IX, FERPA, etc. training

Examples of mock phishing e-mails

Purchasing card and money handling training artifacts

Org chart that shows multiple sign off process on financial transactions.

An MOU that demonstrates an additional layer of review

Screenshot of talent management software that shows professional development tracking.

Artifacts from Title IX training

Example of article or work from faculty members and students as evidence of freedom of expression

Artifacts from library training on information literacy

Minutes from the IRB process (ORPE)

CIE documents about academic integrity, addressing plagiarism and cheating.

ADA compliance and training documentation

Master Campus Plan

Technology Plan

Examples from Financial Aid office of outreach and activities regarding student financial literacy

NMC Magazine, fall 2018

West Hall Renovation and Expansion flyer

Northwestern Michigan College: Mission and the Evolution of Platforms slideshow

The College as Investor in its Mission slideshow

NMC Foundation Board Orientation slideshow

1.7&8.209 Opening Conference slideshow

Reimagining College for the 21st Century Traverse City Business News article, October 2015

NMC Strategic Agenda BOT Meeting slideshow 8.28.2017

Strategy Retreat Workbook 8.24.2011

NMC brochures (college facts, innovation, strategic directions, services for business, global opportunities)

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 broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Board was familiar with and could recite the college mission. They state that they take the lifelong education mission seriously. When it was noted that the mission statement has not been changed in some time, multiple Board members stated that it still meets the needs of the community and that it is reviewed for currency at Board retreats and learning sessions "at least annually." Board Policy A-106.00 dictates that the Board of Trustees approve the mission statement, and the Board verified in their session that they do indeed take this step. NMC has a process for developing, deploying, and reviewing its mission, vision, and values.

NMC has a multi-step approach to ensuring its academic and student support programs and services, and subsequently its enrollment profile, are consistent with its mission to provide lifelong learning opportunities to our communities. Academic programs offered by the College are consistent with this mission while also congruent with the geographic location of the College on Lake Michigan, such as Maritime and Freshwater Studies. A review of the college's website shows programs than span all age groups, including College for Kids, non-credit courses, and Life Academy to "lifelong learning for age 50 and better." The student services offered by NMC, as displayed on the College's website and verified through conversations with College staff, are designed to support students at different phases along the educational spectrum. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

NMC has a budget process that clearly delineates how areas of its budget shall be allocated. The A3 planning template includes progress toward previous year's goals, goals for the upcoming year, and budget requests that are linked with strategic priorities. The institution also has a five year capital outlay plan, adopted in Fiscal Year 2018, which demonstrates a clear connection between the

mission, educational programming, and planned budgetary spending. A review of the approved FY2019 budget also verifies spending is aligned with its mission and priorities. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The mission statement is published in the Catalog, on the website, and embedded in policy and process documents that guide the behavior of the institution.

The Board indicated that the mission is reviewed annually. Although the mission has not actually been changed in years, this review process indicates that NMC takes efforts to keep its mission current and that the emphasis on various parts of its mission is appropriate.

Interviews of faculty and staff indicated a deep commitment to the mission, collectively stating that operationalizing the mission was the primary focus of classroom instruction as well as mentorship of students.

Interviews of students indicated they understood the mission (they were able to quote the mission accurately). When students were asked about whether or not faculty and staff lived the mission, they were effusive in their praises. "I believe that the staff members I have worked with know and understand the mission." "Many of our faculty and staff are alumni of this college; if that is not a commitment to life-long learning, I don't know what is."

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The strategic agenda discusses the importance of diversity and living in a multi-cultural society. The College President asked the Human Resources department to address the homogeneity in the faculty and staff in an effort to help students from various backgrounds see themselves reflected by the College personnel. As a result, currently all searches are national to attract a diverse body of applicants. Search teams have also been trained in implicit bias. Hiring teams are between 4-8 members and look for diversity of function, background and role in the community and college. NMC has recently been recognized by the community for diversity in the student body and in the employee ranks as the college was more diverse than the region. College leadership also worked with large regional employers on how to make the community more welcoming to people coming from other areas and cultures.

While the College states it does not have a large number of students of color, they support a number of diverse groups and activities at the institution. Since 1993, an initiative funded by a commitment grant has been developed to reach back into the K-12 schools to acclimate students with low socio-economic status to life at college. Currently over 400 students are involved in the program and some are still in high school. In November 2017, NMC started a food shelf to assist food insecure students. In the first year, over 900 individuals were served which included both students and community members.

The College has organizations for students who have been in foster care for those who are entering college. There is access to an Educational Planner for two days of the week and office space in Student Life so she can meet with students to discuss navigating bureaucracies such as medicaid and financial aid. There are 2 full time counselors, and one of the residence halls with a kitchen is open year round for students who might not have a home to return to during semester breaks.

The college also holds orientation session for student veterans. There is a liaison that works with veterans to understand and access available federal educational resources and to plan their educational pathway. In 2019, NMC was named by Military Times magazine as the "second-best community college in the nation for its service to veterans". The College was ranked third in 2018 and was the only two-year college in Michigan to be published in the Best for Vets list.

The College has a Native American Council and a success coach who works alongside them. Grant

monies are made available from the state of Michigan from the Grand Traverse Band. The Council holds cultural events and provides a point of contact for students. There is also a substantial Inuit art presence on campus, both in the museum and displayed in various campus buildings. There is also a Black Student Union, a Student Pride group to support LGBT students, and an increasing number of international students. Additional activities related to academics will be discussed in the feedback for 3B4.

The College is also a regional leader in providing activities that reflect attention to human diversity through the Dennos concert series and museum exhibits. The College will also be hiring a Director for its International Affairs Forum, which is celebrating its 25th year. Speakers for this series include topics such as Latin American issues, relationships with Russia, China and trade, and an event featuring a journalist from Beirut.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
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 identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC has embarked on creating the West Hall Innovation Center. According to their website, it will "incorporate innovative and transformative learning environments and multiple academic and simulation spaces." It will be open 24/7 and available to the residents of the community college district.

The College demonstrates its commitment to broadly serving the public good through its educational opportunities and public events. Some examples of these include advisory boards for occupational programs, dual enrollment programs with area high schools, and events held regularly at the Dennos Museum Center. NMC does not provide financial returns to investors. Instead, it relies on state funding, grants, and student tuition and fees to meet its mission.

The College has a program for first-generation college students that reaches into the high schools starting in 9th grade. NMC partners with local high schools to identify students. These students receive scholarships that extend beyond Pell Grants. The program started in 1993, and currently has 400 students.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Evidence

Board Policy A-106.00 dictates that the Board of Trustees approve the mission statement, and the Board verified they review it at least annually. NMC has a process for developing, deploying, and reviewing its mission, vision, and values. The mission statement is published in the catalog, on the website, and embedded in policy and process documents that guide the behavior of the institution. Interviews of faculty and staff indicated a deep commitment to the mission, collectively stating that operationalizing the mission was the primary focus of classroom instruction. The College has a multi-step approach to ensuring its academic and student support programs and services, and subsequently its enrollment profile, are consistent with its mission to provide lifelong learning opportunities. Academic programs offered by the College are consistent with this mission while also congruent with the geographic location of the College. The educational mission of the institution is the primary focus and there are no distributions to a superordinate entity. The College provided a number of examples of community partnerships, in terms of community programming, innovation, and academic programming, in fulfillment of the mission.

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 operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC conducts a number of training sessions for faculty, staff and students regarding integrity and ethical use of resources. During on campus forums, each group confirmed they are aware of the policies and had completed required training regarding ethical behavior and expectations.

For financial transactions, new employees attend training and sign the acceptable use policy. In the past, the Business Office reviewed all credit card activity. However, since an employee was caught inappropriately using funds, the process was changed to require a department level supervisor to sign off on all purchases and a narrative explanation can now be included in the expense report. There is a formal disciplinary system and training program on credit card usage, and training completion is tracked in Human Resources. In the case of a violation, Human Resources initiates an investigation with findings reported to the respective Vice President and the President. NMC passed multiple annual financial audits with no findings.

For ethical use of information resources, the Library staff offer information literacy training embedded in freshman composition courses English 111 and 112. This includes proper citation and attribution, finding, and vetting resources. The session is connected with an assignment in the class and has been offered for over 12 years. All sign an acceptable use policy for computers and IT resources.

Staff members stated that all had undergone FERPA and Title IX training. Students also stated they had received training and this topic was covered in new student orientation. All managers get a list of employees who have not completed training to follow up and ensure compliance. Each new staff member, including support staff, receive Financial Aid 101 training that is delivered through the state. There is also online training that can lead to a credential. It was confirmed in multiple forums that student workers receive the same level of training in FERPA, Title IX, and confidentiality that an NMC employee would receive. Judicial Affairs provides additional training for students about how to de-escalate a volatile situation, how to say no, when not to answer, and when to seek help from another person.

The Board confirmed that they receive training and comply with conflict of interest requirements and have recused themselves from decisions that would violate this policy. Staff reported that new policies come through shared governance for input. Faculty and staff receive annual updates through town halls and open houses, meeting minutes are available for review, and meetings are recorded for later viewing.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College website is comprehensive and includes information about programs, mission and vision, admission requirements and accreditation. On the accreditation page, the HLC leaf logo is displayed and links to HLC documentation is available to the public. Third party program accreditation information is also included on the accreditation page and is current.

During the open forum with the community, stakeholders felt the institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships. One of the community members with a history of working in higher education felt the information on programs and requirements was very accurate. He stated "I knew more about NMC than I knew about many of the other institutions and that information was confirmed once I started working here. I recall seeing the accreditation stamp and knowing they had regional accreditation."

A member of the Foundation Board stated the communication is ongoing, "There is a great deal of press in the paper and the radio so there is a great deal of awareness about what is going on at the college. Another community member stated that "meeting minutes can be accessed on NMC's website. The newspaper is usually a recap of what was discussed. I never feel like the information is not available."

On the program pages, gainful employment information is readily available. When asked about the cost, a community member stated "each year when they set the pricing, it is often front page news—it's a small town. It also appears on the website." Students agreed that it was easy to find pricing information before they came to the college and knew of mechanisms after registration to track costs. One stated "when you register for the class, it tells you right away how much it is." Another added "everyone in orientation has to stop in financial service to make sure you know your financial aid information. You can meet with someone." When asked how they get questions answered, a student stated "If someone cares they can find that information quickly through email or one phone call. Student services is quick to answer questions."

Financial Aid confirmed that they provide outreach to area high schools to help the community understand the FAFSA and financial aid in general. They also hold events in the residence halls to promote financial literacy. Staff stated that sometime there is confusion from students coming from other institutions because about consortium agreements vary by the institution and this was reflected in the student survey. In response, a website with an FAQ page is under development to provide more

transparency and clear communication. There is also a partner advisor available on site every Tuesday so students can speak directly to them.

Students offered one criticism of the institution. They stated that the college represented themselves accurately, but perhaps could promote themselves a bit more. "They have a great aviation program and I went to another college that had a great sales pitch and they were really bad. NMC is great." Many students agreed and felt the college exceeded their expectations.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Rating

Met

Evidence

In discussions with the Board of Trustees, the issue of risk was raised. Board members stated the College is in good shape due to a number of factors that they continually monitor. First, the status of reserve funds is reviewed to ensure the college can meet large expenditures and is well positioned to mitigate financial risk. A mill rate was passed in perpetuity, but has been capped by the state of Michigan. Internal audit control is reviewed by the Board Finance and Audit committee without faculty or administration in the room. When asked about the risk of reduced enrollment due to demographic trends, a Board member stated that there was an administrator who was tasked with identifying potential student groups (adults with some college, international students) and were developing strategies to address each of these groups. Another stated "the President has a business background, and he put programs on a business plan and that methodology has been very successful." Another noted " [we] need to teach people in the community how to think and how to adapt. We're here to try and make that happen.The best way to manage risk is to address it and not ignore it."

It was verified that budgets, program reports, strategic planning documents and metrics are reviewed on a regular basis and this was confirmed by Board meeting minutes from January 14 and February 25, 2019. The Board Chair, a CPA, stated that "the reporting we get is outstanding. We get budget info every month: budget to actual, comparison to prior years, trends." Contracts over $35,000 come to the Board. The Board member added "we ask questions—we ask a lot of questions." A third Board member stated they were pleased with the amount of shared information, stating " I have been impressed with how much information is shared as the budget is built each year. We have benchmarks where we compare with other CCs in the state. That has been really useful." Finally, the Board has received training on and honors the Michigan Open Meetings Law and allows time for public comment before deliberations.

When asked about attempts to influence their actions, one Board member stated "This college is so well loved by the community: politicians don't tell us what to do." The Board Chair added "I wear

an NMC shirt once a week and sometimes people want me to contact the college, but there is an appropriate contact to go to." He then produced his Board business card. On the reverse are numbers for various individuals including the Information Desk, President's Office, Foundation Office, the Technology Help Desk, Extended Education Services, Admissions/Enrollment Services, Advising, Student Life, Campus Security, Dennos Museum, Hagerty Conference Center and Lobdell's restaurant. Multiple Board members agreed that this process of referral has been very effective in redirecting questions so they can avoid becoming overly involved in college business. Board members verified that they sign Conflict of Interest forms, and these were reviewed by the team. Furthermore, they stated that if there are decisions to be made, Board members have recused themselves from discussions and decisions to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

The Board had a clear understanding of their role. "We have one employee, the President." They agreed that day-to-day activities were managed by the administration and that academic matters were the role of the college faculty. When asked what happens when a Trustee has a question, "they submit it to President and [the administrative assistant] and the response goes back to all of the trustees. And we're doing it through the President." While board members were supportive of faculty, they confirmed that faculty have the role of academic oversight. They also stated that "We learn from the faculty and staff at the professional development day. It's a real eye opener to hear what they're doing. We get a better understanding of everything."

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Freedom of expression manifests itself in a number of ways at NMC. The Student newspaper, the White Pine Press, is a student run endeavor and treated like all other members of the media. College staff do not exert any internal pressure on student journalists. The student radio station, WNMC FM, has a staff manager. Students choose which newspaper stories to cover without censorship. For example, the students were unhappy when tuition was raised a few years ago and were free to cover it from their perspective, acting as advocates for their readers and listeners.

The Dennos Museum center has had complaints about some art installations that have been controversial, but staff state that they felt supported by administration. Staff also said that the "... desire for lifelong learning drives the desire the learn new things. That spirit is throughout the college. We encourage freedom of expression. We have absolute freedom to present what we want. We have never been asked not to show something." Staff select the exhibition programming. Recently the plastinated body exhibit was controversial as is *Guerrilla Girls—Not Ready to Make Nice-in the Art World and Beyond*. This event addresses gender inequity and prejudice. Additional activities for self expression related to this event include a hands-on print making class and a community discussion about these topics.

As expected of two year community college, research is not a primary aspect of the college mission. The Office of Research Planning and Effectiveness reviews requests for research, conducts surveys, and provides data to numerous stakeholders. The Library Staff offers workshops on how to evaluate information for truthfulness to ensure that research includes reliable sources. In the Museum, staff demonstrate the pursuit of truth and research to ensure their exhibits and supporting information is factual. For the Inuit Art exhibit, staff contacted curators in Canada who work with Inuit women who are art historians and can give context to some of the pieces. "We want to make sure we are being truthful in our communication."

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC has policies and process in place to monitor academic integrity, to report violations, and to hold students, faculty and staff accountable if there are violations. ORPE reviews any request for research as a human subjects review panel. The academic integrity policy is included on all syllabi and students confirmed during open forums that they are familiar with it.

For ethical use of information resources, Library staff stated they offer training for all students through required English coursework that includes proper citation and attribution, finding, and vetting resources. Faculty are vigilant and monitor for violations of academic integrity and for instances of plagiarism. When encountered, faculty members provide evidence to Judicial Affairs.

In the test proctoring center, photo ID is checked on entry. Lockers are provided for student belongings and cell phone use is not allowed while testing. The test proctor desk can remote view all monitors in the center, and the room is video recorded. If cheating is suspected, the recorded archive is held for 30 days and can be reviewed. if a violation is substantiated, faculty determine the sanction based on the syllabus and level of the course. Judicial Affairs oversees the completion of the sanction.

When staff were asked if they shared information with parents, they confirmed that this only takes place if a FERPA release had been signed. When asked if they ever felt pressure to let an instance of academic dishonesty slide or of their job would be in jeopardy if they upheld the policies in place, one staff member stated "No: my job would be in jeopardy if I *didn't* hold the line." Instances of academic dishonesty are tracked via Maxient software and staff say they are declining, which some attribute to the training provided to students on appropriate and ethical behavior.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Evidence

NMC conducts a number of training sessions for faculty, staff and students regarding integrity and ethical use of resources and follows its policies and procedures to ensure an ethical environment. During on campus forums, each group confirmed they are aware of the policies and had completed required training regarding ethical behavior and expectations. The academic integrity policy is included on all syllabi. ORPE reviews any request for research as a human subjects review panel.

Community members, the Board, and internal constituents believe the institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships. Inquiry is open and freedom of expression is honored, as evidenced by student media and numerous campus community programs. The Board understands its role and delegates day to day operations to the President and faculty. Processes are in place to avoid undue influence on their decision making. NMC faculty, staff, students and Board expressed the belief that integrity is important and that the College operates in an ethical way in their operations and oversight.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for 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).

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC offers Associates of Applied Science (AAS), Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), Associate in General Studies (AGS), Associate in Sciences and Arts (ASA), a handful of Bachelor degrees.and certificate programs. NMC employs 87 well qualified full-time faculty members for these programs.

The advisory boards for these programs guide the content of these programs. The written statements and conversations with faculty articulate well developed expectations for its various degree programs. These expectations enhance the overall teaching/learning process. NMC passed new credit hour policy in spring of 2019 to formalize past practice and ensure common practice across the institution.

The institution has a clear policy for the equivalence of learning outcomes across all modalities. The online courses have a clear backwards design path that starts with learning outcomes and moves into developing the online courses to both meet the learning outcomes and engage the student in the learning.

NMC publishes a catalog that is available on the website and the catalog is reviewed with students during an orientation course. The catalog describes each program and includes information on each program's mission, admission requirements, a general curriculum plan, and requirements for graduation. The graduation requirements include a minimum GPA and, in some cases, a minimum grade requirement for each course.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC has three areas of general education skills: communication, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking. NMC's selected goals meet the requirements of "collecting, analyzing, communicating information, mastering modes of inquiry and developing appropriate skills.

As noted in their 2011 Assessment report, "Assessment of General Education Outcomes at NMC uses an integrated (or distributed) curriculum model that scores course-specific artifacts as a form of authentic assessment across the disciplines." These efforts have included training, inter-rater reliability testing and confirmation, and the development of standardized rubrics for assessment. The assessment efforts utilize class artifacts that are part of the students' grade in the course.

The College has an interactive international peer connective experience call Soliya. NMC students are in face-to-face groups with global peers and the groups are led by trained facilitators. The goals of this program include sustaining dialogue and supporting an environment where students can comfortably explore perspectives, uncover biases, and arrive at a better understanding of diverse cultures. Feedback from students was very positive about this course and what they had learned.

The college offers short-term international experiences. Scholarship funds are available for students to travel and currently NMC is 16th nationwide in international experiences. Students can earn a global endorsement on their transcripts.

Overall goal is for 5% of student body to be international. Given the local lack of diversity, bringing in international students is a way to offer diversity to local students. Currently, all the flags of countries with students at NMC are displayed on campus and when international students graduate, they carry their home country's flag in the graduation ceremony. These international experiences help students "recognize the human and cultural diversity of the world."

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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 has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC does not offer dual credit in the traditional sense of the term – NMC does offer some courses at local high schools but these are taught by NMC faculty. In addition, some high school students take courses at NMC. Neither of these types of courses qualify for the designation of dual credit.

NMC employs 87 full-time faculty, all of whom hold appropriate qualifications in terms of degree, certifications and/or experience. Several administrators and adjunct faculty also teach in the programs. Expectations for faculty credentials are included in the union contract. A review of fulltime and adjunct faculty files verified appropriate credentials. The number of faculty and their length of service also indicate satisfaction with the institution.

There are more than sufficient funds devoted to faculty professional development. Conversations with facutly expressed their contentment with the opportunities for travel to faculty development opportunities as well as outside speakers brought in to address the campus or subgroups of faculty.

There are procedures and policies for the evaluation of fulltime and adjunct faculty members. Course evaluations occur in the first two semesters of a course taught by an adjunct facutly member and a probational full-time faculty member. All classroom observations use the same evaluation form.

Full-time faculty members are required to set personal and professional development goals. Conversations – both to note areas of strength and for improvement – are held between the full-time

faculty member and the appropriate supervisor. The annual evaluation report requires the full-time faculty member to report on their progress towards completion of these previously set goals.

NMC has a group of dedicated staff, many of whom have been there for many years. The monies for staff development have been distributed to the various functional and academic areas for staff training purposes. Staff reported that they have taken advantage of these opportunities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and 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 programs 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, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Students reported satisfaction with the advising system, stating that advisors and faculty are available and willing to provide assistance. Students who had switched their majors reported that their advisors knew enough about their new major to help them into their new major.

Students use MAP - my academic plan. This has allowed students to look ahead to plan for the next semesters. Currently about 48% of students utilize MAP with the expectation that as incoming students are trained on MAP, this percentage will rise.

Several of the programs had very locked down course schedules with limited choices for electives. Students appreciated that they knew in advance what courses they were taking when, however, they did note that, in the case of a poor grade in a course, the student could not retake the course for a full year.

Students, faculty and staff reported satisfaction with technology services, the classrooms, the laboratories, and the overall facilities. Students and faculty expressed satisfaction with the library and its services. Students and faculty have 24/7 access to databases and several online information sources.

Students are provided with research skills via English coursework that utilizes a library.training module and the library training portion of this course was provided to the reviewers.. English 112 (a required course for all students) has an extensive information literacy component in the course.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The clubs and programs offered by NMC are well suited to its mission. Flyers and advertising materials for a number of student, club and outside activities are scattered throughout the campus. There are community events held on campus and students are able to attend.

There are few goals for student activities and clubs, and assessment of co-curricular activities is further discussed in Criterion 4B. Currently, assessment is primarily measured with attendance figures at events and in the Student Engagement Survey. The College has begun assessment practices and states they will continue to improve in this area.

Student groups plan and carry out their desired events. Student groups can request funding through Student Life and/or fundraise. Examples were cited of recent events carried out during Black History Month.

The art museum on campus is an extraordinary resource available to students. In addition, there are sculptures located across campus and art installations in many of the buildings.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Evidence

Programs at NMC engage students in the knowledge process through course expectations for general education goals of communication skills, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning

The College has made large strides in the last five years in the development of the assessment culture across campus.

The faculty and staff at NMC are justifyable proud of the degrees and programs offered by the campus and believe they are living NMC's mission in the serving the students of the region.

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 demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
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 assure 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 assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
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 assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC reviews programs every year for all programs. These programs are divided into two categories: occupational and liberal arts. Reviews are tied to the budgeting process and to the College's strategic plan. Evidence included the review of several occupational and liberal arts program review and separate discussions with faculty and administration. The College faculty feel responsible for and take ownership of this process.

Faculty review transfer credit for their areas of expertise. From accredited institutions, credit is given for courses with a 2.0 GPA for either course-for-course or elective credit. NMC offers credit via AP, CLEP, ACE, DSST, articulation credit earned at secondary schools, and credit from industry-

recognized credentials. While they do have a procedure for students wanting to earn credit for prior learning from work experience, neither the college nor faculty had examples as no one could recall when it had ever been used. The culinary program is considering using the process to award credit for prior learning in order to expedite students through that program. Posted on the College's website are steps that students need to take in order to have transfer courses evaluated. Speaking with several students verified that this process works.

The College has a publicly displayed procedure for the transferring of credit to NMC. Once students are accepted to the institution, they can have their courses evaluated for transfer. For students transferring in classes from other MI colleges and universities, a self-service portal is available to view how the classes will transfer. This is driven by the Michigan Transfer Agreement. For international students, links are provided to third-party providers that can help with having their prior coursework evaluated.

NMC uses Banner to maintain credential information for its faculty. Copies of original transcripts are in the system and were verified against course credentialing requirements. Other documents, such as professional licensing is in the system as warranted. For some CTE courses (AT 120 for example), there are multiple measures that a faculty member may use to be credentialed for a course. It could be no college, but professional licensure and relevant work experience or it could be a college degree with relevant work experience. The College does not offer dual-credit courses with their high schools but does offer dual enrollment. These courses are taught in the high schools by NMC faculty. This helps to ensure that the rigor of the courses is maintained and that prerequisites are met and the learning outcomes are measured consistently.

NMC has several programs that have external accreditation: Maritime, Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Aviation, Culinary, Automotive, Electrical, and Allied Health/Surg Tech. The College's website has links to program accreditation information and the College's administration verified that all programs are current. There are no programs on campus that have failed to be accredited or re-accredited.

The College's Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (ORPE) conducts an annual Graduate Survey Report. The findings from the most current report (2019) indicate the following: 92% were satisfied or very satisfied with the career preparation through coursework they received from NMC, 97% reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their career choice, and NMC's 2018 placement rate is 94% (% of graduates employed and/or continuing education). The report contains nine years of data and contains benchmarks for each item. The college is exceeding its goals on each. While the College does not have a formal process in place for gathering employer satisfaction of graduates, anecdotal employer satisfaction was gained during the open session in which two members of the community commented positively on the graduates that work at their organizations. In addition to data collection from ORPE, the CIT faculty said they are using social media to keep track of students to help monitor their professional accomplishments.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Staff Policy D-102.01 states that "[a]ssessment offers Northwestern Michigan College the opportunity to improve the teaching and learning process for its students. NMC uses assessment in all areas of instruction to promote student achievement." This policy outlines the three levels of assessment at the institution: general education, program, and course. Assessment responsibility is clearly delineated and an annual review is identified.

The College assesses both curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes in its programs. Learning for curricular outcomes is assessed as dictated by programmatic curriculum maps and is documented in program review documents. For co-curricular activities, NMC has been challenged with assessment of these learning outcomes. In 2017, NMC created the Experiential Learning Action Project to address this shortcoming. Professional development opportunities have led to training held by the National Society of Experiential Education (NSEE). Faculty have started to create curriculum based on this professional development opportunity. The College has created an advisory board for experiential learning. They are making strides in the assessment of co-curricular activities. Examples of co-curricular assessment include the capstone project for the Global Endorsement options for students and the CIT program's IT Academy Olympics and AP-CSP Hackathon.

The Nursing program's learning outcome assessments revealed that students were not performing well with quantitative reasoning…students were not good at judging their answer at being correct (important specifically when taking the NCLEX). Faculty made changes to the curriculum and will be assessing these changes in the future. When assessing the program learning outcomes associated with the pharmacology course, it was noted that the students did not perform as expected. Follow up with the students resulted in the reorganization of the course into two courses: a one-credit hour intro class and a two-hour follow-up class. This change will result in a lightened load during their first semester and is expected to yield better student performance.

NMC follows sound practices when assessing learning outcomes. During a session with faculty, they

said all faculty are involved with assessment and that they take collective ownership of the process. Additionally, the Office of Research, Effectiveness and Planning (ORPE) and the College's instructional designers are called on for assistance by faculty as needed.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to 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 but 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.)

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC has clearly stated goals for student retention, persistence, and completion and provided data for five consecutive years. Metrics are from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) and the Michigan Governor's Dashboard. The college met 93% of its goals (13/14). The only metric it did not meet (by 1%) was the NCCBP – College-level Course Completer Success. NMC has met this metric in 3 of the 5 consecutive reporting periods. All goals are consistent with its mission student population, and educational offerings.

The college collects and analyzes data on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs. This information was viewed in aggregate form and by the review of several individual program review documents. For example, the Perkin's 3P1 target is a 71% retention rate, and the CIT program reported 73.3%. Faculty use this data to make improvements to their courses and programs.

Meetings with faculty support assertions by the administration that the College follow-up is excellent when students are reported via the early alert system. This system is in place to assist in increasing retention, persistence, and completion of students. Faculty said they informally share information about students with each other and work closely with counseling to get students the help they need to be successful in the classroom. The College uses the Leaver Survey to keep in tune with students and understand from this that students are challenged by the work/life balance. The Maritime program uses intentional advising and sends a letter to all students whose GPA falls below 2.0. Since this is a cohort program, they stress to students the importance of staying on track and provide guidance for

doing so (math lab for example).

The Office of Research, Effectiveness and Planning (ORPE) is the data hub at NMC. The College's processes for collecting and analyzing data appear to be sound. Targets/benchmarks are selected from numerous sources (IPEDS. VFA, NCCBP, and others) and appear to align with the institution's mission, programs, and student population. Retention, persistence and completion data is collected continually based on discussions with ORPE staff and supplied documents.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Evidence

NMC appears to have institutionalized Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement. The College has policies and procedures in place to ensure that its programs demonstrate quality by maintaining active advisory boards and annual program reviews. Curricular learning outcomes are assessed per programmatic curriculum maps and changes are made when warranted by the data. NMC is addressing the concerns that were found in the most recent Systems Appraisal regarding 4.B.2. The creation of an Experiential Learning Action Project and concrete steps to assess co-curricular activities have been taken.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC has clearly established processes for supporting the employee professional development. Staff HR Policy D-753.00 clearly articulates the rationale for professional development, while policy D-753.01 defines ways in which faculty and staff can achieve their professional development goals. These policies are supported by fiscal actions, with the College consistently allocating 2.25% of its annual budget to professional development, per 2017-18 resource guidelines. Two percent of the appraised replacement of the College's physical assets are maintained in reserves for major maintenance and renovations, while the replacement and upgrade of technology is also delineated in the budgeting guidelines. A review of HR files verified faculty are qualified to teach the courses for which they are credentialed. Furthermore, the institution also has a technology plan and facilities master plan, which were both reviewed. NMC has taken steps necessary to ensure its faculty and staff are current in professional development activities to support its operations. NMC has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations.

NMC has worked to create clear guidelines for how its budget should be built each year. The Resource Guidelines articulate how each expenses area is funded, including competitive salaries,

budgeting 100% of current costs for debt service, maintaining a reserve of 10-15% of annual budgeted expenditures, and creating a "fund for transformation" equal to approximately 2% of the General Fund to respond to emerging opportunities and changes. These guidelines are reviewed each year by the Planning and Budget Council, recommended by the President's Council, and approved by the Board of Trustees. NMC has a resource allocation process that ensures its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations due to the process clearly spelled out in its Resource Guidelines.

NMC has created a guiding principles map to demonstrate how operational and strategic goals, institutional effectiveness criteria, and strategic directions align with the College's mission, vision, and values. A review of the A3 template, which is the departmental goal reporting document, is divided into sections that ask authors to identify operational goal with organizational strategy and/or strategic direction while also incorporating budget considerations. Any budget request that is not approved required the revision of the A3 document to reflect this change. In addition, proposals for new programs or service go through a four-step decision-making process to ensure alignment with mission, vision, and values. These processes help ensure NMC's mission and goals are realistic given institutional organization, resources, and opportunities.

NMC has worked to develop a professional development and training program. Complementing professional development training policies are the College's MyPDCA performance planning and assessment process, which allows individual employees to identify training or professional development opportunities. NMC has also implemented additional training, such as budgeted, lock-down, and Title IX training for employees, which were verified through materials shared during the visit. A review of HR files verified faculty are qualified to teach the courses for which they are credentialed. The institution has staff that are appropriately qualified and trained.

The College has developed a process for budgeting and monitoring expenses, which includes progress against the established budget throughout the year. Meeting minutes confirm the Board of Trustees approves the operating budget each summer and receives regular updates on the budget during meetings. The Finance & Administrative Services department monitors the budget through the year, as does the President's Council. NMC has an appropriate process in place for budgeting and monitoring expenses.

It should be noted that students raised a number of accessibility concerns, that while not direct accreditation issues, would be beneficial for the institution to review. These include blocking sidewalks by the apartments with construction dumpsters; not adequately clearing snow from sidewalk ramps, handicapped parking spots, and sidewalks during the winter; not all building entrances are handicapped accessible; construction equipment blocking parking spaces for construction of new innovation building; and having handicapped stalls in restrooms within the Art and Music building that are not truly accessible due to the angles at which the stall doors open. In should be noted that ADA training is required of all employees, and the collective bargaining agreement clearly dictates the requirement that faculty adhere to ADA accommodations. Accommodations for disabled students was also a part of the faculty report to the Board of Trustees on January 14, 2019.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC's Board of Trustees has policy B-100.00 in place, which delegates day-to-day management of the College to the President. A review of Board of Trustees meeting minutes provides evidence the Board discusses matters important to the institution at its regular meetings, which includes budget and financial policies and practices, approving the annual budget (as shown in Board Policy A-106.00), approval of new academic programs, and general institutional reports. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution while also meeting its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The College's aligned planning process works to engage all internal stakeholder groups throughout the governance process. A review of the process demonstrates exact points where each group is engaged. It was confirmed in conversations on the campus the process matches the policy. This engagement is further supported through cross-functional meetings of the Leadership Group, which includes academic chairs, directors, council chairs, action project chairs, and other leaders from across the institution, as well as Planning and Budget Council, Policy Council, and President's Council. This is articulated through Staff Policies D-502.00 and D-502.01. NMC has policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies in the institution's governance.

NMC Board Policy A-106.00 requires the Board of Trustees to approve the creation and discontinuation of academic programs and degree requirements. The Curriculum Committee, which is a subcommittee of Faculty Council, is responsible for recommending, monitoring, and reviewing the academic curriculum. This includes the adoption of program, course modifications, revisions of degree requirements, and setting curriculum standards, while also making other educationally-related recommendations to the VP for Educational Services. A review of curriculum committee minutes verifies the role of this committee in setting academic requirements and policy. NMC has demonstrated processes for the collaborative creation of academic requirements, policy, and processes.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
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. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC has a budget process that clearly delineates how areas of its budget shall be allocated. The A3 planning template includes progress toward previous year's goals, goals for the upcoming year, and budget requests that are linked with strategic priorities. The institution also has a five year capital outlay plan, adopted in Fiscal Year 2018, which demonstrates a clear connection between the mission, educational programming, and planned budgetary spending. A review of the approved FY2019 budget also verifies spending is aligned with its mission and priorities. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

NMC's A3 planning template has become a critical component in linking the operational, planning, and budgeting processes. All academic and non-academic departments use this document to document outcomes, capture their annual goals, and request new funding. The cross-functional Leadership Group also helps identify potential resources and gaps to assist the College in developing its budget and allocation resources. A review of the A3 planning template verifies the link between student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. NMC has a clear process for linking these areas.

The College's aligned planning process outlines procedures that encompass all aspects of the institution and engages both internal and external stakeholders. This is exemplified at the "Grasping the Situation" stage, where employee feedback, community listening sessions, and an external scan all occur. Furthermore, the executive team drafts new planning documents and receives input from the Board of Trustees throughout the process. The College's Summary of Planning Involvement, and its Planning Calendar, also demonstrate this broad-based involvement in the planning process, both of which was voiced through campus meetings. NMC has created a planning process that considers perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

NMC has develop budget resource guidelines for the creation of its annual budgets. These guidelines, as evidenced in the in its Fiscal Year 2018 Update, delineate what percentage of the budget each year shall be allocated to specific items such as reserves and professional development. The guidelines also dictate that debt service obligations must be budgeted at 100% of the current costs and that the annual budget should provide for regular maintenance, replacement, growth, and contingency funding for technology and capital. These steps all provide a stable financial foundation when there are fluctuations in the institution's revenue streams.

As part of its aligned planning process NMC works to anticipate emerging factors and issues. During the first step, "grasping the situation," NMC conducts an environmental scan to identify emerging issues related to technology, demographics, globalization, and overall trends in higher education. This is outlined in the Aligned Planning Process map and verified by campus stakeholders. Through this process NMC adequately anticipate emerging factors.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Rating

Met

Evidence

NMC has implemented several surveys over the last decade to monitor and document performance of its operations to compliment the work of the Office of Research, Planning & Institutional Effectiveness and the aligned planning process that was implemented in 2011. The most important tool in documenting performance is the use of program review and department A3 planning documents. These documents explicitly require each department to post data that is tracked to inform improvement efforts, including a reflection of lessons learned, and requires clear goals for the upcoming year that is aligned with institutional effectiveness criteria and strategic directions. Surveys, such as the Institutional Effectiveness survey, provide indirect evidence of how each person perceives their work as aligning with a culture of evidence. The institution has a clearly defined process for developing and documenting evidence of its operational performance.

The College's A3 planning document was designed to be a critical tool in documenting operational learning. A review of the form clearly shows each department is required to provide a reflection on lessons learned over the past year. One resulting change that has occurred recently is the creation of the Leadership Group, which meets monthly to review College-wide issues and to serve as the primary group for enhancing communication and engagement between College groups. NMC has also shown that is learns from past experiences. After an employee was caught making unallowable charges to a College purchasing card, all employees were required to go through additional training on allowable expenses. Supervisors are also now required to approve all monthly charges, which is a new additional layer before Business Office approval. Proof of these changes were verified during the visit. NMC. These demonstrate the institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Evidence

NMC has created a solid financial foundation upon which to support the institution's educational programming, which is indicated by the College's strong CFI that is consistently above the range. The College's A3 planning document was designed to be a critical tool in documenting operational learning, with the document and process serving as a way to link goals, accomplishments, professional development, and student learning with the budgeting process. This also ensures alignment of resources with institutional mission.

The College's aligned planning process outlines procedures that encompass all aspects of the institution and engages both internal and external stakeholders. This is exemplified at the "Grasping the Situation" stage, where employee feedback, community listening sessions, and an external scan all occur. Furthermore, the executive team drafts new planning documents and receives input from the Board of Trustees throughout the process. The College has also taken steps to adequately plan for the future. NMC has developed a five year capital outlay plan, a technology master plan, and a facilities management plan. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

6 - Commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

6.A - Question 6.A

Levels of Organizational Maturity in Relation to the AQIP Pathway Categories
Please provide a brief paragraph or two that captures the team's perception of the institution's overall level of maturity (and the relevant challenges and strengths) and how the institution might further advance its agenda.

Evidence

The faculty, staff, administration, and board expressed a firm commitment to the AQIP Pathway and are sorry to see the Pathway disappear. A member of the Board stated, "I love AQIP". There was a shared understanding and appreciation of the value of continuous quality improvement at the institution. All interviewed at the college seem to truly believe in the focus on Action Projects and NMC expressed that are always doing more Action Projects than those that are required by HLC.

The visit team observed a College with a very high level of maturity, as indicated by the number of criteria and subcomponents that were "met". It was clear that the College gathers and uses data. Some noted that it is unfortunate that state data gathering and reporting is not as robust as hoped, and did not allow for a great deal of comparisons across institutions. As the College seeks new leadership and selects a new pathway, there might be challenges in adjusting as AQIP has been a good fit for the College. The College leadership, faculty, and staff are exploring how CQI will manifest itself under this new paradigm and are confident that the structure they have developed will lend itself well to future CQI efforts.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

6.B - Question 6.B

Evidence of Principles of High-Performance Organizations
Please provide a brief paragraph or two that indicates how and where the institution demonstrates its systematic approach to continuous quality improvement through aspirational values found in the Principles of High-Performance Organizations.

Evidence

NMC demonstrates a number of the principles of High Performance Organizations. The College clearly employs **Focus**, ensuring that projects align with the mission, have a business plan and related metrics, and add value to the surrounding community. This focus has also led to some innovative combinations of programs, such as culinary and maritime. The concentration on community need reinforces the role of NMC as a key economic driver in the region. The College has enjoyed long term **Leadership**, and a base of long term employees that provide institutional context and history. Community members stated that the College plays a leadership role not only in academics, but also in providing a venue for crucial community conversations and an outlet for artistic expression. Clearly the College values **Foresight**, and sound financial and academic planning has resulted in a high CFI and ongoing expansion at a time when many small colleges are decreasing their footprint due to budgetary and enrollment concerns. There is also a spirit of **Collaboration** and respect for **People** evident at the College. The community and Board had very high praise for the College and its employees. Students also gave NMC high marks and said their only criticism is that the College is perhaps too modest. They felt valued as members of the College community.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

7 - Commitment to the AQIP Pathway

7.A - Question 7.A

Actions That Capitalize on Systems Appraisal Feedback
Provide brief bullet points that demonstrate success or progress.

Evidence

* NMC has implemented software to track professional development and training. Employees verified on site that if training is not completed, a supervisor will be notified and the employee will be continually notified until the training is complete.

*The site team verified that the student code of conduct related to academic integrity is now present on all syllabi. This was in direct response to Systems Appraisal feedback. Students were aware of the Red Flag system and the requirements to comply with academic integrity.

* Staff confirmed that maxient software is in place, and results are being reported and monitored on a regular basis.

* In faculty and staff forums, there was discussion of the Experiential Learning efforts, which was related to Systems Appraisal feedback regarding measuring co-curricular outcomes. Faculty state that this has also had an impact on academics at the College and the use of experiential learning in the classroom.

* NMC is now able to aggregate and disaggregate student data to seek trends and patterns.

* NMC continues their work on developing mechanisms to communicate within a new shared governance model.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

7.B - Question 7.B

Actions That Capitalize on Strategy Forum Participation
Provide brief bullet points that demonstrate success or progress.

Evidence

The institution has expressed their devotion to the AQIP process including their Strategy Forum participation. Their participation has resulted in many successful Action Projects. Although AQIP is going away as a Pathway, the institution has indicated that they intend to continue with Action Projects and continuous quality improvement.

During open forums, a few people indicated that they participated in Strategy Forums and stated that these were helpful in fostering and maintaining a spirit of shared governance at the College. There are minutes and notes on the website regarding past Strategy Forum details including who participated, what pre-work was required and what was discussed. It is clear that these sessions are taken seriously, there is board involvement and communication, and these sessions drive Action Projects and continuous improvement at NMC.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

7.C - Question 7.C

Actions That Capitalize on Action Projects
Provide brief bullet points that demonstrate success or progress.

Evidence

* One major initiative originating out of an Action Project that is still in its infancy is the creation of a shared governance model. Multiple factors indicated a need to review the current structure and processes, including the unionization of faculty, changes in staff classifications, and employee and Board of Trustees' feedback.

* The College completely re-imagined the purpose of the Leadership Council through a recent AQIP Action Project. The group was once a communication-sharing body, but was re-envisioned as a Council with a deliberative role through the work of the Action Project determining a more active role was needed of this cross-functional group. The Council's new roles include reviewing the alignment of the strategic plan with operational plans of departments and programs, addressing College-wide issues raised by institutional research reports and other sources, and serving as the primary College-wide group to enhance communication and engagement among units and between the unit leadership and the executive staff.

*An Action Project on student retention evolved through looking at graduation rate data. The suggestion came from 4 faculty chairs that led the activity and identified practices that were strong indicators of helping students. Early alerts were established along with early assessments, either formative or summative, so students could get feedback right away.

* There was also a Developmental Ed committee comprised of math and English faculty. Faculty stated that it became clear there was a need for more involvement across the faculty and they wanted to bring in advising and Student Services. The team looked at student success rates for students who placed in developmental ed, reviewed 39 semesters of data and 13 different courses, and there was a significant gap in completion rates. This started as a two year project but was extended to three years. One faculty member noted "I like that it evolved organically from what we saw in the classroom. We included key stakeholders and got so much buy-in, we were talking to one another. My expertise was valued and I could also learn from my colleagues. That ability to bring those voices together and all collaborate through that common goal is what really worked."

*The College has a clear process for supporting Action Projects. Projects are elevated to President's Council for Action Project consideration when they are time sensitive, the outcome fits with the strategic plan, when it stems from local and national data, when it has to be reported to an external entity, and it has to have institutional versus only departmental impact. This designation also comes with automatic budgetary support.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

7.D - Question 7.D

Commitment to Active Engagement in the AQIP Pathway

Provide brief bullet points that demonstrate success or progress.

Evidence

One administrator noted in a forum that "CQI has always been part of the culture. It (AQIP) was aligned to the culture versus the 10 year model." Forum participants agreed and stated that AQIP was a good fit for NMC because many different people could participate in a number of ways. One noted " It helped us to focus our innovation." People nodded and verbalized agreement. The President added that "the fundamental model will not change. Before AQIP, we didn't have PDCA to the extent that we do now. Now CQI is built into how we finance the organization."

The Vice President of Educational Services said that AQIP is part of ongoing, regular processes. "As part of the Program Review process, you will be responsible for the goals of academic quality student learning outcomes. There is an annual plan. Program goals are tied to the faculty goals. As you get oriented to the faculty evaluation plan, you will tie your goals to the program review plan."

During the review team's meeting with the Board of Trustees, one member asked why AQIP was "going away." He believed the AQIP Pathway fit well with the institution's culture and wanted the opportunity to continue with this option. During a separate meeting with the President's Council the President, who will be retiring at the end of the 2019 calendar year, indicated his belief that Continuous Quality Improvement will remain a part of the institution's operations even as they transition to either the Open or Standard Pathway, as it is ingrained in their culture. Other Council members agreed.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	
6	Commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)	
6.A	Question 6.A	
6.B	Question 6.B	

7	Commitment to the AQIP Pathway	
7.A	Question 7.A	
7.B	Question 7.B	
7.C	Question 7.C	
7.D	Question 7.D	

Review Summary

Conclusion

NMC has enjoyed success as an AQIP institution and there is a culture of continuous quality improvement evident at the College. The tendency to strive and improve is likely to continue at the College in the future; however there will soon be a transition in leadership as a President with a long tenure will be retiring. In addition, there is a renewal of shared governance at the College and a new faculty contract. For this reason, the College should collaboratively decide which is the most appropriate pathway for the term ahead. The team believes that the College will likely continue to thrive with either the Standard or Open Pathway, but that the Open Pathway might be the best fit for a College with a robust and mature CQI methodology in place.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation
Met

Sanctions Recommendation
No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation
Eligible to choose

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

Evaluation of Federal Compliance Components

This worksheet is to be completed by a Federal Compliance reviewer or by the peer review team that conduct the on-site visit. If a Federal Compliance reviewer completes the form, the reviewer will evaluate the materials in advance of the visit and refer any issues to the team for further exploration and confirmation. The team chair will confirm that the team has reviewed the Federal Compliance reviewer's findings, make any necessary adjustments to the worksheet following the on-site visit, and submit the worksheet as part of the team's final report.

The Federal Compliance reviewer or the team should review each item identified in the *Federal Compliance Filing by Institutions* (FCFI) and document their findings in the appropriate spaces below. Peer reviewers are expected to supply a rationale for each section of the Federal Compliance Evaluation. Refer to the *Federal Compliance Overview* for information about applicable HLC policies and explanations of each requirement.

Generally, if the team finds in the course of this review that there are substantive issues related to the institution's ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised in the appropriate parts of the team report. If the team recommends monitoring on a Federal Compliance Requirement in the form of a report or focused visit, the recommendation should be included in the Federal Compliance monitoring sections below and added to the appropriate section of the team report.

Submission Instructions
Federal Compliance reviewer: Email this worksheet and the *Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours* in an editable format to the team chair. The team chair's email address is provided in the Assurance System.

Team chair: Send the draft of this worksheet and the *Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours* to the HLC staff liaison for review and then to the institution for corrections of errors of fact. Submit the final worksheets to HLC at finalreports@hlcommission.org.

Institution under review: Northwestern Michigan College

Please indicate who completed this worksheet:

☒ Evaluation team

☐ Federal Compliance reviewer

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Page 1

To be completed by the evaluation team chair if a Federal Compliance reviewer conducted this part of the evaluation:

Name: Leslie Bleskachek

☒ I confirm that the evaluation team reviewed the findings provided in this worksheet.

Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition
(See FCFI Questions 1–3 and Appendix A)

1. Complete the *Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*. Submit the completed worksheet with this form.

    - Identify the institution's principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level (see the institution's Appendix A if necessary). The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:

        o Associate's degrees = 60 hours

        o Bachelor's degrees = 120 hours

        o Master's or other degrees beyond the bachelor's = At least 30 hours beyond the bachelor's degree

    - Note that 1 quarter hour = 0.67 semester hour.

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

    - Review any differences in tuition reported for different programs and the rationale provided for such differences.

2. Check the response that reflects the evaluation team or Federal Compliance reviewer's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

    ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

    ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

    ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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

Rationale:

Associates degree programs are 60 credit programs. Certificates range from 15-59 credits. However, the college does not define a credit hour. The instructions for course outline indicates that the college defines a credit hour as 55 minutes of instructional time for 1 credit hour and the expectation of 2 additional hours of study time by student.

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Page 2

In spring of 2019, NMC passed a credit hour policy (Staff Policy D-104.06) which states:

Northwestern Michigan College operates under a semester credit hour system. The credit hour policy applies equally to courses of varying credits, duration, and modes of instruction, and applies to all credits granted by the college.

Credit hours are determined by the Curriculum Committee to align with the documented direct instructional time needed to address all required student learning outcomes as identified on the official Course Outline. In addition, students are expected to engage in a minimum of two hours of independent learning activities (e.g., reading, research, homework, studying) for every credit hour of direct instruction provided.

NMC awards one credit hour for a minimum of 800 minutes of lecture time (55 minutes per week for 15 weeks). Other methods of instructional delivery (e.g., clinicals, lab, studio, music lessons) are assigned credit hours based on a contact hour to credit hour ratio as follows:

Delivery Method	Contact Hour to Credit Hour Ratio
Lab, Studio, Music Ensembles	2:1
Clinical	3:1
Applied Music (one-on-one instruction)	0.5:1

For example, two contact hours of lab instruction are equal to one credit hour; three contact hours of clinical instruction are equal to one credit hour; and one-half contact hour is equal to one credit hour.

This policy is available to students through the College Syllabus, the College website, and the College catalog.

The Vice President for Educational Services, in conjunction with the appropriate faculty and staff, is responsible for the development and publication of any procedures or guidelines that may be necessary to administer this policy effectively.

If any provision of this policy or set of bylaws conflicts with laws applicable to Northwestern Michigan College, including the Community College Act of 1966, the Freedom of Information Act, or the Open Meetings Act, as each may be amended from time to time, such laws shall control and supersede such provision.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Records of Student Complaints
(See FCFI Questions 4–7 and Appendixes B and C)

1. Verify that the institution has documented a process for addressing student complaints and appears to by systematically processing such complaints, as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.

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Page 3

- Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints, its complaints policy and procedure, and the history of complaints received and resolved since the last comprehensive evaluation by HLC.

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

- Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into improvements in services or in teaching and learning.

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

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

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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

Rationale:

NMC's complaint process addresses multiple types of complaints: general complaints, concerns about conduct/behavior, and unfair grading. Complaints are tracked and stored in a tracking software, Maxient, and is reviewed by the VP of Student Services and Technology. The first step in the process is to refer the student to the director of the relevant service or academic area for resolution. If the complaint is not resolved at that level, the student must submit a written request for further resolution. The Vice President of Student Services and Technology arranges a meeting with the student and appropriate parties and documents the outcomes in Maxient.

Complaints from the general public come through the Office of the President and are either addressed by office staff or routed to the appropriate person on another area of the college.

Student Services teams review complaint information trends in Maxient. Judicial Affairs Committee meets weekly and the BIRT team once/month. Each area reviews the complaints in they have received. Outcomes of complaints are handled in face-to-face meetings with students with final resolution given in writing by the V P after the final meeting.

Complaint processes is posted on the college's website.

NMC's complaint log of the past 3 years is disaggregated by type: academic, BIRT, Complaint, Conduct, FYI, Security, and Title IX. The college also tracks the length of time to

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Page 4

complaint resolution. The college's review process includes an analysis of frequency, root causes, and determination of appropriate action.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Publication of Transfer Policies
(See FCFI Questions 8–10 and Appendixes D–F)

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

    - Review the institution's transfer policies.

    - Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and for specific programs and how the institution publicly discloses information about those articulation agreements.

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

    - Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. The information the institution provides to students should explain any program-specific articulation agreements in place and should clearly identify program-specific articulation agreements as such. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution (1) accepts credits from the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; (2) sends credits to the other institution(s) in the articulation agreements; (3) both offers and accepts credits with the institution(s) in the articulation agreement; and (4) what specific credits articulate through the agreement (e.g., general education only; pre-professional nursing courses only; etc.). Note that the institution need not make public the entire articulation agreement, but it needs to make public to students relevant information about these agreements so that they can better plan their education.

    - Verify that the institution has an appropriate process to align the disclosed transfer policies with the criteria and procedures used by the institution in making transfer decisions.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

    ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

    ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

    ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

    ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate

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Page 5

reference).

NMC posts its transfer policy and process posted on its website and in its catalog. The policy addresses types of institutions from which credits will be accepted, grades received on courses, applicability to course of study. The process also discusses military service school credits, CLEP, AP and DSST.

The college participates in the Michigan Transfer Agreement which facilitates transfer to other Michigan public colleges and universities. It also participates in several articulation agreements. These agreements are posted on their website. NMC has a Board policy regarding articulation agreements.

The College provided 3 years of data regarding credits awarded in transfer. The data suggests that NMC are consistently applying their process. For example, the percent of students transferring in credits and the average number of credits per student are consistent across the years.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Practices for Verification of Student Identity
(See FCFI Questions 11–16 and Appendix G)

1. Confirm that the institution verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided through distance or correspondence education. Confirm that it appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students, and that the method of verification makes reasonable efforts to protect students' privacy.

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

   - Check that any costs related to verification (e.g., fees associated with test proctoring) and charged directly to students are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance or correspondence courses.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate

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Page 6

reference).

NMC provides students with an unique ID and password for accessing online materials as their primary way of verifying identities. The college reminds students 15 days prior to password expiration to update their password. The college has Single Sign-On which requires students to update password from the initial temporary passwords in order to make the credentials unique to each student. There are no costs to students for this. There is the availability of online test proctoring which the college charges a minimal fee for, however, most students come to campus or to a physical site close to home for testing.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Title IV Program Responsibilities
(See FCFI Questions 17–24 and Appendixes H–Q)

1. This requirement has several components the institution must address.

   - The team should verify that the following requirements are met:

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

      o **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 5 if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)

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

      o **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its

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Page 7

disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.

- o **Student Right to Know/Equity in Athletics.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 2, Core Component 2.A if the team determines that the disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)

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

- o **Contractual Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Contractual Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)

- o **Consortial Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Consortial Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)

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

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

- If the institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the Federal Compliance portion of the team report and whether the

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Page 8

institution appears to be moving forward with the corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.

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

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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

Rationale:

NMC is provisionally certified to participate in Title IV HEA programs until the end of September 2021. The college received provisional certification due to the disbursement of funds to students at an ineligible location. NMC was not fined for this but were required to reimburse the total amount of aid disbursed for the Audio Technology Certificate. The college discontinued offering the program at that location. They must reapply by June 2021 to continue to participate in Title IV programs. It's last program review was in 1982 and it has not been audited.

NMC last 3 years of financial audits found 1 finding, in 2018. They did not report a student's change of status in a timely manner. This was considered a significant deficiency. The college states that they have corrected the problem.

NMC's CFI has varied from 4.22 in FY 2015 to 3.75 in FY 2017. There have been no fines, penalties, letters of credit or other requirements imposed as a result.

The college's default rate has increased from 15.3% in 2015 to 19.3% in 2017. The college states that its rates are lower than its peers, but they are still working to lower the default rate. The college gave no reason for the increase in default rate between 2016 and 2017. NMC provided documentation of the steps they implemented in 2017 as a result of a study of its default rates. However, this study looked at default rates up to 2014 and not the most recent 3 years. The visiting team may want to determine what additional analysis and/or steps the college has taken.

NMC has a robust campus safety and security website, posts its current Clery report and also posts a daily crime log on its website.

Student Right to Know link was broken and the college refers people to the schedule of classes, student newspaper, and states that this information is available in the Admissions

office. However, its Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment webpage disclosed this information. Financial aid policies including satisfactory academic progress, cost of attendance and employment disclosures are all posted on the college's website. The College's satisfactory academic progress policy meets federal requirements.

The college has a previously disclosed contractual agreement with Munson Medical Center to offer its AAS in Surgical Technology. The college has no consortial agreements.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Required Information for Students and the Public
(See FCFI Questions 25–27 and Appendixes R and S)

1. Verify that the institution publishes accurate, timely and appropriate information on institutional programs, fees, policies and related required information. Verify that the institution provides this required information in the course catalog and student handbook and on its website.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion   .

Rationale:

Catalog and student handbook presents course and program details as well as student rights and responsibilities and policies. The college also publishes a resident hall handbook and provides gainful employment information on its website. Tuition and fees are posted on the college's website.

The college has a process to annually review and revise the content of its catalog, handbooks, tuition and fees, student right to know, gainful employment and other required information. The process involves the units of the college who are responsible for the information, such as the Director of Financial Aid and the Chief Academic Officer. Reviewed materials is then posted. The information on where to find information is given out at new student orientation.

Additional monitoring, if any:

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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 10

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information
(See FCFI Questions 28–31 and Appendixes T and U)

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

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

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

   - Review the institution's catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, website and information provided by the institution's advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate, timely and appropriate information to current and prospective students about its programs, locations and policies.

   - Verify that the institution correctly displays the Mark of Affiliation on its website.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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

Rationale:

The Mark of Affiliation is posted on the college's website under About Us. It also discloses its relationship with other accrediting bodies. Currently, the college holds the following accreditations:

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
American Culinary Federation
American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation
Bureau of Automotive Regulation - State of Michigan
Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs as recommended by the Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting
Electrical Apprenticeship Program with the State of Michigan
Federal Aviation Administration / Federal Aviation Regulation Part 141 approved

Audience: Peer Reviewers
Form
Published: 2018 © Higher Learning Commission

Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 11

Great Lakes Maritime Academy approved by the United States Coast Guard as regulated and audited by the United States Maritime Administration
Michigan Board of Nursing
Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards

Additional monitoring, if any:

Review of Student Outcome Data
(See FCFI Questions 32–35 and Appendix V)

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

   - Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about planning, academic program review, assessment of student learning, consideration of institutional effectiveness and other topics.

   - Review the institution's explanation of its use of information from the College Scorecard, including student retention and completion and the loan repayment rate.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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

Rationale:

NMC post a variety of data on its Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment website. It includes a dashboard of key enrollment, retention metrics, graduation and licensure metrics. It also tracks National Student Clearinghouse data. It states that much of its student outcome data are used to measure the overall performance and implementation of the college's strategic priorities and BOT performance metrics.

Program review processes include an annual evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative metrics. The college also has assessment plans in place to understand how the curriculum and student experiences are preparing students in communication, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning.

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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 12

Academic leadership, program coordinators, faculty members, and instructional staff work collaboratively to review data and make decisions around planning, academic program review, assessment of student learning, and institutional effectiveness.

The College uses the Voluntary Framework for Accountability, National Community College Benchmark Project and IPEDS to benchmark itself against its peers.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Publication of Student Outcome Data
(See FCFI Questions 36–38)

1. Verify that the institution makes student outcome data available and easily accessible to the public. Data may be provided at the institutional or departmental level or both, but the institution must disclose student outcome data that address the broad variety of its programs.

   - Verify that student outcome data are made available to the public on the institution's website—for instance, linked to from the institution's home page, included within the top three levels of the website or easily found through a search of related terms on the website—and are clearly labeled as such.

   - Determine whether the publication of these data accurately reflects the range of programs at the institution.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion   .

   Rationale:

   NMC posts institutional metrics, student outcomes and other data on its Research, Planning and Effectiveness website. This is a robust site with dashboards, student right to know data, assessment information, graduate outcomes, and enrollment metrics.

   Additional monitoring, if any:

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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 13

Standing With State and Other Accrediting Agencies
(See FCFI Questions 39–40 and Appendixes W and X)

1. Verify that the institution discloses accurately to the public and HLC its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditors and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

   The team should consider any potential implications for accreditation by HLC of a sanction or loss of status by the institution with any other accrediting agency or of loss of authorization in any state.

   Note: If the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of the other agency in the body of the assurance section of the team report and provide its rationale for recommending HLC status in light of this action.

   - Review the list of relationships the institution has with all other accreditors and state governing or coordinating bodies, along with the evaluation reports, action letters and interim monitoring plans issued by each accrediting agency.

   - Verify that the institution's standing with state agencies and accrediting bodies is appropriately disclosed to students.

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

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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

   Rationale:

   NMC is in good standing with the accrediting agencies it discloses on its website.

   Additional monitoring, if any:

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Page 14

Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment
(FCFI Questions 41–43 and Appendix Y)

1. Verify that the institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third-party comments. The team should evaluate any comments received and complete any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments.

   Note: If the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comments relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the appropriate section of its report in the Assurance System.

   - Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including copies of the institution's notices, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public and seek comments.

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

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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

   Rationale:

   NMC has posted notice for public comment on its website. In addition, it emailed students to invite them to participate in the student survey and posted information in the student newspaper. The college also sent notice to local newspapers and one regional periodical. Copies of print notice submitted as proof.

   Additional monitoring, if any:

Competency-Based Programs Including Direct Assessment Programs/Faculty-Student Engagement
(See FCFI Questions 44–47)

1. Verify that students and faculty in any direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution have regular and substantive interactions: the faculty and students communicate on some regular basis that is at least equivalent to contact in a traditional classroom, and that in the tasks mastered to assure competency, faculty and students interact about critical thinking,

Audience: Peer Reviewers
Form
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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 15

analytical skills, and written and oral communication abilities, as well as about core ideas, important theories, current knowledge, etc. (Also, confirm that the institution has explained the credit hour equivalencies for these programs in the credit hour sections of the Federal Compliance Filing.)

- Review the list of direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution.

- Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty in these programs regularly communicate and interact with students about the subject matter of the course.

- Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty and students in these programs interact about key skills and ideas in the students' mastery of tasks to assure competency.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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

Rationale:

NMC has no competency based programs.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list of materials reviewed here:

Federal compliance report and associated appendices A through Y

Northwestern Michigan College' website: https://www.nmc.edu/index.html

Catalog

Student Handbook

course outline instruction/process document

NMC Syllabi for Review – Fall 2018 and/or Spring 2019

Audience: Peer Reviewers
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Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 16

1. ANT 113
2. AT 110
3. AT 160
4. AVG 251
5. BIO 227 & 227L
6. BUS 101
7. CIT 213
8. CUL 110
9. CUL 295
10. ECE 202
11. EGR 101
12. ENG 111
13. ENG 241
14. ENV 131
15. HNR 125
16. HST 225
17. MDK 112
18. MFG 113
19. MNG 328
20. MTH 121
21. PHL 203
22. SOC 220
23. SRG 222
24. VCA 125
25. WPT 112

Credit Hour Policy Staff Policy proposal

Credit Hour Staff Policy D.104.106

4/12/19 Policy Council Minutes

Audience: Peer Reviewers
Form
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Process: Federal Compliance Review
Contact: legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Page 17

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FORM

Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours

Institution Under Review: Northwestern Michigan College

Review the *Worksheet for Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*, including all supplemental materials. Applicable sections and supplements are referenced in the corresponding sections and questions below.

Part 1. Institutional Calendar, Term Length and Type of Credit

Instructions
Review Section 1 of Appendix A. Verify that the institution has calendar and term lengths within the range of good practice in higher education.

Responses
A. Answer the Following Question

1. Are the institution's calendar and term lengths, including non-standard terms, within the range of good practice in higher education? Do they contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

    ☒ Yes   ☐ No

    Comments:

    NMC has standard and non-standard terms, including 15-week, 10-week,12-week, 7.5-week, 5-weeks and 2-week terms. The number of class sessions and length of time for each session appear to within the range of good practice in higher education.

B. Recommend HLC Follow-Up, If Appropriate

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution's calendar and term length practices?

☐ Yes   ☒ No

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Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 1

Rationale:

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

Part 2. Policy and Practices on Assignment of Credit Hours

Instructions

Review Sections 2–4 of the *Worksheet for Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*, including supplemental materials as noted below. In assessing the appropriateness of the credit allocations provided by the institution the team should complete the following steps. The outcomes of the team's review should be reflected in its responses below.

1. **Format of Courses and Number of Credits Awarded.** Review the *Form for Reporting an Overview of Credit Hour Allocations and Instructional Time for Courses* (Supplement A1 to the *Worksheet for Institutions*) completed by the institution, which provides an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats.

2. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution (see Supplements B1 and B2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, as applicable).

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

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

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

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

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Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 2

3. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course (see Supplement B3 to *Worksheet for Institutions*). Pay particular attention to alternatively structured or other courses completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor that have particularly high credit hour assignments.

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

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

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

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

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

5. **Direct Assessment or Competency-Based Programs.** Review the information provided by the institution regarding any direct assessment or competency-based programs that it offers, with regard to the learning objectives, policies and procedures for credit allocation, and processes for review and improvement in these programs.

6. **Policy on Credit Hours and Total Credit Hour Generation.** With reference to the institutional policies on the assignment of credit provided in Supplement A2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, consider the following questions:

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

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

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

   - Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public

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Process: Credit Hour and Clock Hour Review
Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 3

institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

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

- Do the number of credits taken by typical undergraduate and graduate students, as well as the number of students earning more than the typical number of credits, fall within the range of good practice in higher education?

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

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

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

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

Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours
A.   Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team

1. ANT 113
2. AT 110
3. AT 160
4. AVG 251
5. BIO 227 & 227L
6. BUS 101
7. CIT 213
8. CUL 110
9. CUL 295
10. ECE 202
11. EGR 101
12. ENG 111

Audience: Peer Reviewers
Form
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Process: Credit Hour and Clock Hour Review
Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 4

13. ENG 241
14. ENV 131
15. HNR 125
16. HST 225
17. MDK 112
18. MFG 113
19. MNG 318
20. MTH 121
21. PHL 203
22. SOC 220
23. SRG 222
24. VCA 125
25. WPT 112

Credit Hour Policy Staff Policy proposal

Credit Hour Staff Policy D.104.106

4/12/19 Policy Council Minutes

B.   Answer the Following Questions

1. Institutional Policies on Credit Hours

   a. Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution? (Note that for this question and the questions that follow an institution may have a single comprehensive policy or multiple policies.)

   ☒ Yes   ☐ No

   Comments:

   In the past, the college had an Instructions for the Course Outline document which gave guidance on credit hours. This document defined a credit hour as "A unit of academic credit equivalent to one hour per week for a fifteen-week semester; a credit hour is a 55-minute session of classroom instruction with a normal expectation of two hours of outside study for each class session." In spring of 2019, NMC formalized their credit hour policy which states:

   "Northwestern Michigan College operates under a semester credit hour system. The credit hour policy applies equally to courses of varying credits, duration, and modes of instruction, and applies to all credits granted by the college.

   Credit hours are determined by the Curriculum Committee to align with the documented direct instructional time needed to address all required student learning outcomes as identified on the official Course Outline. In addition, students are expected to engage in a minimum of two hours of independent learning activities (e.g., reading, research, homework, studying) for every credit hour of direct instruction provided.

Audience: Peer Reviewers
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Process: Credit Hour and Clock Hour Review
Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 5

NMC awards one credit hour for a minimum of 800 minutes of lecture time (55 minutes per week for 15 weeks). Other methods of instructional delivery (e.g., clinicals, lab, studio, music lessons) are assigned credit hours based on a contact hour to credit hour ratio as follows:

Delivery Method	Contact Hour to Credit Hour Ratio
Lab, Studio, Music Ensembles	2:1
Clinical	3:1
Applied Music (one-on-one instruction)	0.5:1

For example, two contact hours of lab instruction are equal to one credit hour; three contact hours of clinical instruction are equal to one credit hour; and one-half contact hour is equal to one credit hour.

This policy is available to students through the College Syllabus, the College website, and the College catalog.

The Vice President for Educational Services, in conjunction with the appropriate faculty and staff, is responsible for the development and publication of any procedures or guidelines that may be necessary to administer this policy effectively.

If any provision of this policy or set of bylaws conflicts with laws applicable to Northwestern Michigan College, including the Community College Act of 1966, the Freedom of Information Act, or the Open Meetings Act, as each may be amended from time to time, such laws shall control and supersede such provision."

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

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

The new policy explicitly states "…students are expected to engage in a minimum of two hours of independent learning activities (e.g., reading, research, homework, studying) for every credit hour of direct instruction provided.

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

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

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Process: Credit Hour and Clock Hour Review
Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 6

The team reviewed syllabi, spoke with administration, faculty and students who all verified that learning outcome expectations were reasonable given the time allotted. The team did not discover any syllabi that indicated an unreasonable expectation of student achievement or a substantially compressed timeframe.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The policy is comprehensive and reflects good practice. Furthermore, the policy states that it will remain in compliance: "If any provision of this policy or set of bylaws conflicts with laws applicable to Northwestern Michigan College, including the Community College Act of 1966, the Freedom of Information Act, or the Open Meetings Act, as each may be amended from time to time, such laws shall control and supersede such provision."

2. Application of Policies

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

This policy is new, adopted in spring of 2019. The new policy appears to formalize and codify past practice. The syllabi reviewed reflect compliance with this new, official policy.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

This policy is new, adopted in spring of 2019. The new policy appears to formalize and codify past practice. The syllabi reviewed reflect compliance with this new, official policy.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Audience: Peer Reviewers
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Process: Credit Hour and Clock Hour Review
Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 7

Comments:

This policy is new, adopted in spring of 2019. The new policy appears to formalize and codify past practice. The syllabi reviewed reflect compliance with this new, official policy.

d. If the institution offers alternative-delivery or compressed-format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonable for students to fulfill in the time allocated, such that the allocation of credit is justified?

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

This policy is new, adopted in spring of 2019. The new policy appears to formalize and codify past practice. The syllabi reviewed reflect compliance with this new, official policy.

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

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

This policy is new, adopted in spring of 2019. The new policy appears to formalize and codify past practice. The syllabi reviewed reflect compliance with this new, official policy.

C. **Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate**

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

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

☐ Yes   ☒ No

Rationale:

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

D. **Systematic Noncompliance in One or More Educational Programs With HLC Policies Regarding the Credit Hour**

Audience: Peer Reviewers
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Process: Credit Hour and Clock Hour Review
Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 8

Did the team find systematic noncompliance in one or more education programs with HLC policies regarding the credit hour?

☐ Yes   ☒ No

Identify the findings:

Rationale:

Part 3. Clock Hours

Instructions

Review Section 5 of *Worksheet for Institutions*, including Supplements A3–A6. Before completing the worksheet below, answer the following question:

Does the institution offer any degree or certificate programs in clock hours or programs that must be reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs?

☐ Yes   ☒ No

If the answer is "Yes," complete the "Worksheet on Clock Hours."

Note: This worksheet is <u>not</u> intended for teams to evaluate whether an institution has assigned credit hours relative to contact hours in accordance with the Carnegie definition of the credit hour. This worksheet solely addresses those programs reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes.

Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (for which an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definitions per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. Clock hour programs might include teacher education, nursing or other programs in licensed fields.

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

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

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

Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution's requirement for student work

Audience: Peer Reviewers
Form
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Process: Credit Hour and Clock Hour Review
Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 9

outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour includes at least 20 semester hours.

Worksheet on Clock Hours

A.   Answer the Following Questions

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

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    Comments:

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

3. Did the team determine that the institution's credit hour policies are reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that if the team answers "No" to this question, it should recommend follow-up monitoring in section C below.)

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    Comments:

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

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    Comments:

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

☐ Yes   ☐ No

C.   Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

Rationale:

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

Audience: Peer Reviewers
Form
Published: 2016 © Higher Learning Commission

Process: Credit Hour and Clock Hour Review
Contact: 800.621.7440
Page 11

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	Northwestern Michigan College, MI
TYPE OF REVIEW:	AQIP Comprehensive Evaluation
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	Visit to include a Federal Compliance reviewer: Dr. Lisa Schlotterhausen.
DATES OF REVIEW:	3/11/2019 - 3/12/2019

☐ No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: no change

Degrees Awarded: Associates, Bachelors

Recommended Change: no change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2011 - 2012

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2018 - 2019

Recommended Change: 2028-2029

Accreditation Stipulations

General:
  Bachelor's degrees limited to the Bachelor of Science in Maritime Technology.
Recommended Change: no change

Additional Location:
  Prior HLC approval required.
Recommended Change: no change

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Recommended Change: no change

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway   AQIP Pathway

Recommended Change: no change

Upcoming Events

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None

Recommended Change: no change

Institutional Data

Educational Programs

Undergraduate

		Recommended Change: no change
Certificate	39	_____
Associate Degrees	39	_____
Baccalaureate Degrees	4	_____

Graduate

Master's Degrees	0	_____
Specialist Degrees	0	_____
Doctoral Degrees	0	_____

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

None

Recommended Change: no change

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Additional Locations

Aero Park Campus, 2600 Aero Park Drive, Traverse City, MI, 49686 - Active

Great Lakes Campus, 715 East Front St., Traverse City, MI, 49686 - Active

Recommended Change: no change

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change: no change

Distance Delivery

11.0601 - Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications, General, Certificate, Certificate in Computer Studies: Office Applications Specialist

11.1006 - Computer Support Specialist, Certificate, Certificate in CIT Support Specialist

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, Associate in Science & Arts - General Liberal Arts & Sciences

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Certificate, Certificate in Science and Arts

24.0102 - General Studies, Associate, ASSOCIATE IN GENERAL STUDIES(AGS)

24.0102 - General Studies, Certificate, Certificate in General Studies

51.3801 - Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse, Associate, Associate Degree Nursing

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Associate, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

52.0302 - Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping, Associate, Associate in Applied Science Degree

52.0402 - Executive Assistant/Executive Secretary, Certificate, Administrative Support Specialist

52.0408 - General Office Occupations and Clerical Services, Certificate, Certificate in Clerical Support

52.1201 - Management Information Systems, General, Associate, COMPUTER INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-GENERAL (106)

Contractual Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: no change

Consortial Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: no change