

*Northwest Association of Schools and of
Colleges and Universities
Commission on Colleges and Universities*

A Full-Scale
Evaluation Committee Report

North Idaho College
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

April 9-11, 2003

*A Confidential Report Prepared for the Commission on Colleges and Universities that
Represents the Views of the Evaluation Committee*

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INTRODUCTION

North Idaho College (NIC) is a public two year institution serving five counties in the Idaho panhandle: Kootenai, Benawah, Bonner, Shoshone, and Boundary. Its main campus is located in Coeur d'Alene on property along Lake Coeur d'Alene. The College also operates instructional centers in Sandpoint and Post Falls. In addition, classes are offered at 15 off-campus sites through distance learning.

North Idaho College is one of only two publicly supported community colleges in the State. The College is authorized by the Idaho legislature and governed by a five-member Board of Trustees. The State Board of Education holds some coordinative responsibilities.

North Idaho College was founded as Coeur D'Alene Junior College, a private institution, in 1933. In 1939, the College became a tax-supported institution and changed its name to North Idaho Junior College. It later was renamed North Idaho College in response to its expanded mission.

The Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges first accredited the College in 1950. Its last full-scale evaluation was in 1993, followed by a focused interim visit in 1994 to address four recommendations: 1. Implementation of general education and related instruction in certificate programs; 2. Implementation of ongoing performance evaluation for faculty; 3. Full implementation and monitoring of an educational assessment plan; and 4. Development of one overall master plan. In 1996, a progress report related to the faculty evaluation recommendation was submitted and accepted. A five-year interim visit was conducted in 1998, followed by a progress report, submitted to the Commission in April 2000, which addressed educational assessment; eliminating the separation between vocational and academic programs and the development of one overall master plan to include programming and facilities.

In 2002, North Idaho College proposed offering courses and degree-completion programs via distanced delivery to the five northern counties of Idaho. The proposal was approved as a major substantive change under Policy A.2. *Substantive Change* revised 2001, Item #9 (*Offering a program or offering a degree-completion program by distance learning*). In approving the proposal, the Commission requested that the College include a thorough evaluation of its distance learning activities in the institutional self-study being prepared for the April 2003 comprehensive full-scale evaluation.

Self Study

The North Idaho College self study was a candid well-crafted document that provided evidence of broad campus involvement in the accreditation process. While perhaps too modest in its descriptions of the College's strengths, it was a very useful document that provided the team with a helpful picture of the College.

The document was clear and comprehensive. The sections fully and directly addressed the institution's compliance with the accreditation standards. The accompanying appendices and

exhibits were appropriate and were well coordinated with the report.

The College is complimented on its serious commitment to developing a document that was not only helpful for the team in its evaluation, but also for the College in its self-examination.

Eligibility Requirements

The College provided evidence to support its compliance with each Commission eligibility requirement in the self-study document. The evaluation team concluded the College was in compliance with all eligibility requirements.

STANDARD ONE INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND GOALS, PLANNING, AND EFFECTIVENESS

North Idaho College's mission is clearly defined: *North Idaho College is committed to student success, teaching excellence, and lifelong learning. As a comprehensive community college, North Idaho College provides educational opportunities that expand human potential and enhance the quality of life of the students and the community it serves.*

The mission was adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1999 and is reviewed every three to four years, at the beginning of the strategic planning cycle. The Board of Trustees adopted the current mission in 1999, following a process that involved faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community representatives. Interviews conducted by the evaluation team found that the mission and goals are widely understood by the campus community.

The mission is published in the College catalog, on the College website and in College publications. In addition, mission and vision statements are posted in hallways and classrooms in every building on campus. The strategic plan, including the College vision, mission, values and key initiatives has been widely distributed.

At the time the Board of Trustees approved the current mission and goals, it also approved the College's strategic plan for 1999-2003. The plan includes the mission statement, a vision and values statement, the six major goal statements, and the objectives for each goal. At the same time, the College developed an outcomes assessment plan.

The College has made planning and assessment a high priority. The strategic planning process has widespread participation, including open forums and opportunities for input from faculty, staff, and student groups. There is evidence to support a tie between planning and assessment and resource allocation. On the college level, a strategic plan has been developed. Outcomes have been identified and included in programs and courses. At the departmental level, goals may relate to the strategic goals, Vice President's area of emphasis or department missions.

It was unclear to evaluators how the various planning and assessment efforts are interrelated. The processes and indicators that enable the institution to make determinations of the level of goal achievement were also unclear.

Public service is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution. The College works with other educational institutions and community agencies to promote economic development throughout its service area. Cultural enrichment and personal development classes are provided; and educational needs of employers are addressed through contract and workforce training programs.

Examples of how the mission and goals influence activities through allocation of resources were found across campus. One example is distance education, where the College has invested

resources to address two key initiatives: increasing educational access and institutional growth.

Planning and Effectiveness

North Idaho College has demonstrated the importance of planning, assessment and continuous improvement in several ways. The College has provided the necessary resources for effective evaluation and planning. The Department of Planning and Assessment was established in 1999, as was the position of Assistant Vice President for Planning and Assessment. Later, a researcher was hired.

In 1999, when the strategic plan was completed, the first of the plan's six initiatives focused on planning and assessment. NIC implemented a systematic planning and assessment process to support ongoing improvement of the College, including: implementation of an annual department planning and assessment process; establishment of an institutional research capability to support planning and evaluation activities; linking the planning and budgeting process; and the creation of a climate of planning that would be respected throughout the College and drive the College's decision making and budget process. The planning process is defined and includes all areas of the College. Faculty and staff generally understand and support the process. It is participatory, involving a number of college-wide committees, as well as involvement at the departmental level. All college departments submit department goals. They are published and distributed each spring and placed on the department websites.

While progress toward department goals is measured, it was unclear that a process has been completed to measure progress toward college-wide goals and benchmarks set to determine when goals are met.

Interviews with faculty and staff provided evidence that employees increasingly understand the integration of planning and resource allocation. One example of how strategic goals guided the President's cabinet in a decision tied to allocating resources is the establishment of a Disability Support Specialist position, which tied department goals to the College's strategic plan. The process was also used to address parking challenges, resulting in the addition of a shuttle service.

While reports about college accomplishments are produced, sufficient evidence was not found to substantiate that the institution uses information from its planning and evaluation processes to communicate evidence of institutional effectiveness to the public on a regular basis.

Commendation:

1. The College is to be commended for its commitment to planning and assessment. There is college-wide participation in setting goals and developing objectives to meet them. Every department is involved in the planning and institutional effectiveness process. Employees support the process. Results of evaluation activities and planning processes influence resource allocation and improve programs and services. Planning and assessment takes place at several levels.

Suggestion:

1. The Committee recommends that the College clarify the interrelationship of the various planning processes, and clarify the alignment of its assessment strategies to those planning processes, in order to systematically determine in what ways, and to what degree, it is accomplishing its mission and goals. It is further recommended that the institution strengthen its process to use assessment results for continuous improvement and to communicate evidence of institutional effectiveness to the public on a regular basis.
(1.B.1)

STANDARD TWO

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS

General Requirements

Commission standards require that the College provide sufficient resources to support student achievement of program objectives and that the programs themselves be compatible with the institution's mission. The evaluators reviewed a wide variety of academic transfer, professional technical training, basic skills education, and continuing education programs. This variety supports the achievement of the mission of North Idaho College as a comprehensive educational resource for the community. The evaluators noted that achievement of the institution's mission to serve the community's needs is further evidenced by the large number of individuals in this community who access the variety of programs and services provided by the College.

The College has successfully addressed the needs of students throughout its service area. While offering programs in a wide variety of locations and through distance education, as well as the main campus, the College has provided adequate resources to meet student needs throughout its service area. NIC demonstrates its commitment to high academic standards through its processes for assuring a faculty qualified for their various roles. Interviews with faculty demonstrated that the core of full time faculty is responsible for building the curriculum and assuring its evaluation and improvement.

A comprehensive program evaluation plan is completed every five years by almost every program.

Degree and certificate program requirements are clearly described in the NIC Catalog and reflect a coherent design as evidenced by analysis of the various individual programs. Competencies for career preparation programs identify skills to be mastered. Taken in their totality the various programs reflect adherence to Commission expectations for design. These programs were found to meet the Commission's requirements for general education and related instruction. (See Policy 2.1.)

NIC assures that all programs meet standards of the College through a curriculum approval process that includes review of course content and outcomes. Faculty describe these processes as a systematic approach to course development, assuring that the general abilities are represented appropriately in every course syllabus. Assessment of outcomes at the course level is well addressed throughout the College. Assessment of outcomes at the program level is present but varies: strong in some areas, modest in some, and lacking in others. Overall College assessment of outcomes at the broader level has not been undertaken. (See Policy 2.2.)

Interviews with faculty and in programs across the campus and with the library staff reveal that the use of library and information resources is well integrated into both the academic transfer program and the professional technical programs.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

This Division is composed of a broad range of transfer and professional / technical programs. On the transfer side are Business Administration / Economics and Business Education. Professional / technical programs administered under the Division are Accounting Assistant, Computer Information Technology / Computer Applications, Culinary Arts, Law Enforcement / Administration of Justice, and, under the broader umbrella of Business and Office Technology, Administrative Assistant, Legal Administrative Assistant, Medical Administrative Assistant, Medical Billing Specialist, Medical Receptionist, Medical Transcriptionist, Office Receptionist, and Paralegal. All of these professional / technical programs except Culinary Arts, Medical Receptionist, and Office Receptionist offer the Associate of Applied Science degree; the Computer Information Technology, Culinary Arts, Medical Receptionist, and Office Receptionist programs offer the Technical Certificate. The Legal Administrative Assistant program offers the Advanced Technical Certificate.

In general, resources are adequate to support these programs. During the past academic year two of the three Assistant Division Chair positions serving this Division were discontinued. The Division responded by assigning the duties performed by those assistants to faculty. Faculty interviewed were very supportive of this arrangement, and for the most part excellent working relationships exist between the faculty and the Division Chair as well as among the faculty.

Currently the Division has 21 full-time faculty, with the Accounting Assistant, Culinary Arts, and Law Enforcement programs having one full-time faculty member each. The number of students in the Law Enforcement program recently declined by 40% due to a decline in demand. The evaluator found a strong core of professionally qualified, full-time faculty in the Division. The Paralegal program experiences some difficulty obtaining the services of qualified (attorney) part-time faculty, on whom it relies heavily. However, adequate numbers of part-time faculty generally are available to the Division. The Committee observed that faculty appreciate working conditions at the College.

The Law Enforcement faculty member coordinates the efforts of about 40 police officers that provide various 'instruction components.' The Division faculty advise students in their programs in coordination with the College's Advising Services; advising loads within the Division range from some 12 to 64 advisees per faculty member.

For the most part, office facilities, classrooms, and equipment are adequate. Faculty in multi-faculty departments have offices in the same buildings. Furthermore, part-time faculty have the use of shared office space. Most faculty in the Division enjoy the use of dedicated computer labs and classrooms with extensive audio-visual capabilities. The only significant classroom inadequacy observed involved the Culinary Arts program. Despite a pending expansion into additional on-campus restaurant space, potential enrollment in this nationally acclaimed program continues to be constrained. Several faculty commented favorably on the quality of the

computer hardware and software available to them. In addition, a number of faculty indicated high levels of satisfaction regarding the purchase of equipment for their use. Library and other information resources are integrated into the Division's learning processes. Internet access is widely available throughout the Division. The Molstead Library has an impressive collection that has increased significantly since the last full-scale accreditation visit. Both faculty and students in the Division use the library's resources widely.

Across the Division, program curricula are coherent. Several Division faculty emphasized that faculty involvement in curriculum design is very extensive. Advisory committees, operating in conjunction with almost all of the Division's professional / technical programs, assist in that process. The College's Curriculum Council and Vice President for Instruction approve all program curriculum initiatives. All degree curricula are required to contain essential general education, and in the case of professional / technical programs, related instruction components. Overall the professional / technical program curricula appear to contain recognizable and adequate instruction in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations and to foster technical literacy in the related, specialized subject matter.

The Division has identified and published educational objectives that are compatible with institutional goals. Syllabi list the specific student learning outcomes, together with the related assessment tool and general education ability, for each course. Each of its educational programs is reviewed every five years by an external team of outside reviewers. The resulting program self-study reports list the exit competencies for each professional / technical program, and exit learning outcomes for each transfer program, respectively. It should be noted that the professional / technical program reports also contain a wealth of data, provided by employers and exiting students, pertaining to learning, program quality, and instructor effectiveness. Self-study reports indicate where course and institutional goals are related, and faculty emphasized the strong ties between those goals.

Faculty indicated that the self-study process has resulted in some improvement of teaching/learning. However, evaluators did not find a comprehensive effort to tie student learning outcome assessment results to improvement, and the general education abilities appear not to be assessed independently from those occasions where they fortuitously coincide with student learning outcomes. Interviews did find that a valuable benefit of program self-study and course syllabi revision/preparation has been increased collaboration among colleagues as they define departmental goals and review the impact of teaching/learning processes on students.

Commendations:

1. The Business and Professional Programs division is commended for excellent collegial working relationships among the Chair, faculty, and staff.
2. The Division is commended for faculty's willingness to share division administrative functions, beyond their normal workload assignments.

Concern:

1. The Division has made good progress in identifying and publishing student learning outcomes and obtaining data pertinent to its mission. It is suggested that the Division utilize assessment tools to evaluate student learning outcomes, and general education abilities, leading to continuous improvement in educational practices across its programs. (Standard 2.B)

COLLEGE SKILLS DIVISION

North Idaho College's College Skills Division provides developmental education services to students preparing to enroll in college credit programs. It offers developmental mathematics, English, study skills, reading, and a student orientation course called Transitions. Other services include peer tutoring and drop-in tutoring coordinated by the Division and supported by full-time faculty in other divisions including mathematics and science, and testing services.

The program is well utilized by students. Reports indicate contacts with more than 500 students each day. A Division Chair, who reports to the Vice President for Instruction, two full time tenure track instructors, twelve part-time instructors and one staff support the program. The Division is located in very good facilities on the main campus and is very well organized by professionals who enjoy providing excellent service to students.

The College Skills Division revised and renewed its curriculum during the past two years. The Division reports completion of its first program review. This review supported significant changes in its curriculum and validated the quality of its services. The Division has also identified student learning outcomes in its course syllabi, but it has not implemented a plan to identify relevant data, complete analysis of information, and implement course and program changes to consistently improve the Division's efforts. While the Division reports interest in implementing a system to identify, gather, and analyze relevant information to understand the extent to which intended outcomes are learned, it has not done so at this time.

Commendation:

1. North Idaho College is commended for the high levels of student participation, growth and commitment to and achievement of student success in its College Skills division.

Concern:

1. Standard Two and Policy 2.2 require a sustained, consistent and continuing commitment to, and application of, an outcomes assessment plan by all instructional divisions. This requirement appears to be inconsistently applied in the College Skills Division. The Division has evidence of parts of a process to collect some data that is part of a good outcomes assessment plan. However, it is suggested that the Division strengthen its processes to insure that in full compliance with Standard Two and Policy 2.2.

COMMUNICATION, FINE ARTS, HUMANITIES

This Division meets and/or exceeds the standards in 2.A. Faculty has a major role in curriculum development and feel that, for the most part, academic freedom is protected. The departmental review process is taken very seriously as an evaluation tool, and the evaluator found evidence that changes are made based on the process. There is clear and consistent improvement in syllabi and outcomes development from 1999 to the present. This Division also provides strong evidence of developing programs to meet NIC's sixth goal - to "form appropriate partnerships to meet the educational and training needs of the College service area." Of particular note is the Music Department's "Jazznic" and "Gathering of the Bands" community outreach events. Faculty take an active role in the advising process, helping students create and maintain academic plans. The award-winning student newspaper provides students a voice in the decision-making process or campus politics through letters and editorials. However, the strongest asset to this Division is the faculty, which are well qualified and dedicated to the mission and vision of the Division, College, and its students.

While the Division has done an outstanding job formulating consistent, measurable outcomes in all departments, the assessment tools to determine if, in fact, students have achieved these outcomes in particular courses are not consistent from department to department. Also, there is some concern that the Division's size has at times made it difficult to promote coordination within and among organizational units.

Commendations:

1. The Communication, Fine Arts and Humanities division is commended for its energy, enthusiasm, and positive work environment.
2. The Speech Department is commended for its outstanding faculty collaboration on learning outcomes and utilization of consistent assessment tools.
3. The Fine Arts Department is commended for its service to the community in keeping with the mission of the College.

Concerns:

1. It is recommended that the Division strengthen its assessment efforts to include assessment tools that measure specific course outcomes in all courses.
2. It is recommended that the Division assess its structure to determine if it might improve coordination within and among the multi-disciplined programs and faculty.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

A Director, who reports to the Vice President for Instruction, leads Distance Education and off-campus delivery of traditional courses. Traditional college credit courses are offered at its Sandpoint center, the Post Falls center and several off campus locations in North Idaho College's five county service area. Courses are scheduled and instructors provided by discipline based divisions on campus.

The North Idaho College Center in Sandpoint and classrooms in other communities are coordinated by this college Division. In addition, Distance Education offers instructional support services, technical support and coordination to enable distribution of college credit courses to students unable to easily attend classes at the main campus.

Distance delivery utilizes three modalities: traditional courses offered at off-campus locations, a very robust video teleconferencing system serving up to sixteen locations with five on campus origination sites, and web based delivery of up to sixty courses. Last year the College offered 21 courses utilizing its video teleconferencing system. It also offered over 120 classes using its web based education system.

Distance Education coordinates instruction to almost eight percent of North Idaho College's students. The distance education program is growing very quickly as it provides teachers and students new ways to teach and learn. The North Idaho College library offers high quality support to all students enrolled in distance learning courses. Distance Education supports access to education by time and place bound students. No NIC distance delivery modality supports achievement of any North Idaho College degree or certificate on its own, but students using multiple distance delivery modes may complete the North Idaho College Associate degree in their home communities.

Commendation:

1. The Distance Education Division is commended for its program expansion that has maintained quality of instruction and provided opportunities to the College's service area.

Concern:

1. Standard Two and Policy 2.2 require a sustained, consistent and continuing commitment to, and application of, an outcomes assessment plan by all instructional divisions. This requirement appears to be inconsistently applied in the Distance Education Division. There is evidence of a process to collect some data that is part of a good outcomes assessment plan. The Division should consider reviewing its processes to insure that it is in full compliance with Standard Two and Policy 2.2

ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE DIVISION

This Division's leadership and faculty have a great deal of energy and focus their enthusiasm on

the best interest of the students. As evident by their involvement in the advising process, they understand the importance of helping students progress towards the goals they set for themselves in their education plans. Communication and decision-making within the Division are open, inclusive, and effective.

English Department:

The Department meets or exceeds all of the requirements set forth in Standard 2.A. Of particular note is the department's responsibility in the design, integrity and implementation of the curriculum. However, the Department's compliance with Standard 2.B and Policy 2.2 is not consistent. While the department has done an outstanding job developing clear and measurable course outcomes, it has not yet developed assessment tools to determine whether or not students are actually meeting those outcomes. This includes both regular classes as well as web-based courses, taught by both full-time and adjunct instructors.

Foreign Languages:

The Department meets or exceeds all of the requirements set forth in Standard 2.A. While the department is managed by one full-time faculty and several adjunct instructors, there is strong evidence of department members working together to design and implement instruction. The variety of languages and cultures taught support the institution's goal of strengthening "the relationship with...other culturally diverse groups in the region."

Commendations:

1. The Division is commended for its shared leadership among the Division Chair, Writing Director, and Assistant Chair.
2. The Division is commended for the organization, environment, and staffing of the Language Lab, which supports the academic success of students.

Concerns:

1. It is recommended that the Division expand its assessment plan to include identifying assessment tools and schedules for assessing specific course outcomes to ensure that students are achieving those outcomes.
2. It is recommended that an assessment tool be developed for the Writing Center that validates its use and analyzes its effectiveness.
3. The Foreign Language Department is encouraged to explore assessment processes to determine if they may aid in student placement and strengthen the outcomes assessment process.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND NURSING

The Allied Health and Nursing Division includes the Associate Degree in Nursing program, the Practical Nursing program, the Human Services program, and the Pharmacy Technician program. While each program has sufficient human, physical, and financial resources to support its educational programs, there are some challenges.

Maintaining quality for the Pharmacy Technology program has been a challenge with a small enrollment and a program coordinator who is also the coordinator for the Human Services Program. This individual advises students, coordinates program details, and supports the needs of the two qualified pharmacists who teach part-time in the program. The College has received a donation of a software program used in many hospitals for managing pharmacy services. While not yet implemented, the use of this software will enable the faculty to provide a realistic introduction to the use of the computer in pharmacy practice. Classrooms used by the Division are well equipped and lighted and allow for flexible use.

The skills laboratory for associate degree nursing is small, in a difficult to access space that appears to be a former attic. There is no plumbing, limited to no storage, and inadequate space for effective instruction of the groups that must use it. The skills practice laboratory for the practical nursing program is located in a basement room. This room is small, poorly laid out for its function, has too few beds for the numbers who are in one group. Twenty students (the largest number ever) were admitted to the PN program this fall. This has exacerbated the skills laboratory space problem. The Director identified that both nursing skills labs will be moved during the summer of 2003 to the former Physical Therapy lab and co-located. The joint use of this new space will allow both groups to have more effective instruction.

All programs have instructional policies, methods, and delivery systems compatible with the institution's mission. Interviews with program coordinators, faculty, and students reveal that the programs as designed effectively move students toward their career goals. Each program has a clearly laid out curriculum. The catalog and program materials provide clear direction for student program planning. A full-time counselor is housed in the nursing department. This individual provides a great deal of pre-nursing advising for pre-nursing students as well as those enrolled in the PN and ADN programs and does crisis intervention and ongoing counseling for students who need those services.

Program outcomes have been developed, assessment of those program outcomes is ongoing, and results of those outcomes are consistently used for program improvement.

Leadership for the Division is provided through the collaboration of the Division Chair who also serves as Director of Nursing, evaluates faculty, manages the budget and leads the faculty in their decision making processes. Each program also has a coordinator who works with student concerns, clinical placements and liaison, faculty curriculum planning and evaluation.

Students consistently reported that they have multiple opportunities to evaluate faculty, courses, textbooks, and facilities used. The students identified specific changes they had observed that

were based on student evaluation. Faculty provided specific examples in their syllabi, student handbooks, and requirements of changes based on evaluation. The five-year program review documents reveal that each program has completed the required evaluation process.

In the Associate Degree Nursing Program, student learning outcomes are being measured through a standardized end of program test as well as through specific classroom assessment activities. General education abilities that are incorporated into the course outcomes are all assessed as part of course assessment for each course. For example, information literacy is assessed through the student's performance on a research paper that requires the submission of the search results and as well as the paper itself. Overall Program Outcomes that are consistently tracked and discussed by the Associate Degree Nursing Program Evaluation Committee include measures such as performance on the licensing examination as well as employment and employer satisfaction. The ADN Program has incorporated an end of program standardized test as an exit examination. Students who do not attain the required score on the exit exam must complete a faculty directed remediation plan and then retake the examination. Since the initiation of this requirement there has been a 100% pass rate on the NCLEX RN licensing examination.

The new PN faculty noted that their course syllabi did not contain the College General Abilities Outcomes when they started at the College. In order to lessen disruption to students who had already been oriented, they continued to use the syllabi as written for their first year. They are now in the process of revising those syllabi to respond both to the need for integration of outcomes and to respond to the recommendations found in their Program Review. Students were able to discuss how such areas as civic responsibility, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and mathematics were included in course expectations. Outcome measures related to passing the licensure examination and employment are in place. This program has had 100% pass rate on the NCLEX PN licensing examination for both students in the local program and the distance education students.

The Human Services Program reflects major changes based on the Program Review. Formerly titled Mental Health Services, the Program Review revealed there were many human services jobs in addition to mental health services jobs available for which there was no educational program in the area. It further revealed that there was limited community awareness of the Mental Health Services program. This and other findings of the Program Review led to major curricular changes to provide a broader focus on the wider variety of jobs available in the service sector of the community. The program title was then changed to reflect this broader approach. Marketing has increased student numbers in the program but it still has a relatively low enrollment with approximately 12 students at the current time. The curriculum meets requirements for a certificate and for continuing enrollment to obtain the associate degree in Human Services. The program tracks completion rates.

The Practical Nursing program also offers theory classes through an interactive video classroom serving outlying locations. This was offered at St. Maries in 2002 and is now being planned for Sandpoint. Clinical experiences for the on-campus students are provided in Coeur d'Alene. When interactive video to a distance site is used for theory, clinical experiences are arranged in the students' locality using preceptors for student supervision. This distance plan expands the

availability of practical nursing education to individuals who would not be able to relocate or commute to Coeur d'Alene. Pass rates on the licensing exam do not differ for distance graduates.

All programs assign the learning resources of library and interviews with students revealed that they consistently used these resources and found them effective.

Commendations:

1. The Associate Degree Nursing Program is commended for integration of both student educational outcomes evaluation and program evaluation into program improvement.
2. The Division is commended for high pass rates on licensing examination of both the Practical Nursing and Associate Degree Nursing programs, both which far surpass national averages and reflect positively on the quality of the programs.
3. The major revisions to the former Mental Health Services, now Human Services Program based on Program Review demonstrates the effectiveness of this process as used in this Division.

Concerns:

1. The College is encouraged to follow through on its current plan to move the practical nursing and associate degree nursing skills practice laboratories into space that provides greater accessibility and storage and allows for more effective instruction.
2. It is recommended that the Practical Nursing Program integrate the General Education Abilities into its course syllabi.

MATHEMATICS AND NATURAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

The Mathematics & Natural Sciences Division plays an essential role in ensuring that the mission and goals of the College are met. The Division provides a variety of courses to fulfill general education requirements in science and math for all degrees and certificates offered at the College and offers degree programs designed to facilitate transfer to four-year colleges and universities. A regular program review process involving outside evaluators ensures that students transfer seamlessly upon graduation. Anecdotal evidence from contacts with former students and colleagues at transfer institutions and statistical analyses of the success of transfer students indicate that students completing science and math degrees at NIC are well prepared for ongoing studies at transfer colleges and universities. Faculty are primarily responsible for designing and revising the curriculum and there is a well-defined, orderly process at the College for curriculum additions, deletions, and revisions.

Classroom and lab space is currently only marginally adequate for most of the programs offered

in the Division. Increased enrollments have made it necessary to schedule lecture sections in laboratories that are often not equipped and arranged in a manner conducive to lecture instruction. Instructional space is fully utilized during high-demand hours of the day (approximately 8:00 am to 2:00 pm), with many additional sections offered during early morning, late afternoon, and evening hours to meet student demand. Saturday course sections are also being considered. A new Health & Science Building is planned for the campus, but recent state budget shortfalls have temporarily postponed the project. Completion of this building will allow science, math, and nursing programs to keep pace with student demand for the next several years.

Instructional equipment appears to be adequate to meet essential needs in the Division, but this is due largely to irregular, periodic infusions of one-time funds from the College Maintenance & Operation budget, NIC Foundation Grants received by faculty, and other sources. Funding and associated plans for regular upgrade and replacement of equipment apparently do not exist, leaving faculty uncertain about how and when old, outdated equipment will be replaced when it eventually fails. The Division has created a prioritized list of equipment needs, but items not at the top of the list may not be funded for several years. In addition, the unexpected failure of expensive equipment essential to a program may potentially exhaust available equipment funds, delaying indefinitely the purchase of other items at the top of the priority list.

Staff resources in the Division are generally considered to be adequate. However, recent budget reductions have reduced the number of work-study students in the Division, increasing the workload for lab technicians. Meeting the challenge of increasing enrollment while maintaining quality and providing time for faculty development is a concern. In addition, finding qualified adjunct faculty in some disciplines has become difficult.

The Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division offers a variety of developmental, survey, and more advanced courses to support specific academic emphases. Course descriptions have undergone a major revision recently as faculty have incorporated the general education abilities and student learning outcomes into all courses. Faculty have attempted to identify, quantify, and strengthen elements of courses, which specifically address these abilities and outcomes. Several instructors mentioned the value they had seen in this evaluation process, both for themselves and for their students. Other faculty remain skeptical that the substantial amounts of time and effort devoted to the evaluation process have actually led to a significant improvement in course content and student learning.

It was not clear that a coordinated process of assessing learning outcomes and general education abilities is in place. Assessment is left to individual instructors and is generally based on exam performance. However, most faculty monitor student performance and report that assessment data are used to revise and modify course curriculum as needed.

Faculty input is sought in decision-making, giving faculty an active role in the workings of the Division. This combination of a collaborative administrative style and a collegial atmosphere has produced a productive, committed Division.

The Vice President for Instruction selects Division Chairs with input from faculty. Despite statements in the NIC self-study that the selection of a Chair is subject to faculty approval, faculty in the Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division reported that they were not given an opportunity to express an opinion on the selection of a Chair, who was selected in 1991-92, before the current practice of seeking faculty input was implemented. However, faculty are satisfied with the current Chair. The recent implementation of a regular process of faculty evaluation of Chairs and other administrators at the College is viewed as a positive step.

Commendations:

1. The Mathematics and Natural Sciences Division is commended for the exceptionally collegial and cooperative relationships that exist among faculty and staff, and for the open, participatory approach to decision-making that prevails in the Division.
2. The Mathematics and Natural Sciences Division is commended for the dedication of faculty, staff, and administration, demonstrated by the well-designed and implemented curriculum, by the well-managed and maintained equipment and facilities, and by the success of graduating students.

Concerns:

1. The Division is encouraged to review its response to increasing student enrollments to insure high quality instruction and faculty development opportunities.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

All departments in this Division (American Indian Studies, Anthropology, History, Political Science, Psychology, Social Work and Sociology) have the financial, physical and financial resources to support their educational programs. The same standards apply to all courses offered through high school dual enrollment and other distance mediated courses as on-campus courses. The same learning objectives, texts, teacher qualifications and division supervision apply to all classes wherever and however delivered. Assessments are being developed to ensure that the learning objectives are as effectively achieved in each setting.

The College assigns instructional space by discipline. As the fastest growing Division in the College, the Social and Behavioral Sciences would find itself without adequate physical facilities without the cooperation of other college divisions. Faculty and administrators within the Division frequently commented on the sense of shared mission and collaboration that characterized their relationship with the colleagues in other campus areas.

The faculty, Division Administrators and Department Chairs have clearly and systematically identified educational goals for each program that are consonant with the mission of the College. This process is monitored through an annual review of all course syllabi by the Division Chair.

While social science faculty members teach a relatively large number of distinct courses each

semester, there appears to be a fair distribution of workload and a general sense that the opportunity to offer a more robust curriculum offsets the challenge associated with multiple preparations. Several faculty members teach within multiple disciplines, and one area, American Indian Studies, has no full-time faculty and is wholly dependent upon faculty from other areas within the Division. While such arrangements might give some reason for concern about unsupported curricula, there was no evidence to support that concern. On the contrary, the Division appears to have achieved an effective support system that extends across disciplinary lines.

Although the College has limited resources for professional development at national conferences, there is ample support for local development opportunities. The faculty mentioned the availability of on-campus professional development courses dealing with Internet and other distance-mediated instruction, implementing culturally sensitive instruction, assessment and pedagogical techniques. Interviews indicated that the College has a commitment to professional renewal.

Each of the degrees and the supporting curricula offered within the Division has been developed collaboratively with involvement by appropriate faculty and administrative leaders. Each program has clear objectives that are accomplished through clear and coherent design of the associated coursework. The recently developed American Indian Studies program reflects that process. Faculty from History, Sociology and Anthropology identified community needs for a broadened understanding of American Indian culture. From this need, they developed a set of educational objectives that would allow meaningful learning by both Native American and non-native American students. They reflected these objectives in four new courses that built upon existing courses in each of their areas to allow greater focus to be given to Native American issues. The resulting program is well integrated with other program offerings and has established assessments to confirm that the objectives are being met.

The Division utilizes the criteria for course development and modification articulated in the college handbook that is available on the web. The Division's internal procedures involve multiple levels of review to ensure consistence with the institutional mission, college learning abilities and departmental learning objectives.

Social and Behavioral Science courses consistently employ library and other appropriate resources in the learning process. In addition to traditional research assignments that utilize library resources, there is a variety of additional resources that faculty have developed to support their curricula.

The Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences is a strong academic area characterized by committed faculty. The curriculum and the programs are well defined with clear objectives that are founded in the College mission. The departments within the Division are in full compliance with Standard 2.A.1.

Commendations:

1. American Indian Studies is commended for its commitment to providing greater access for local Native Americans to the educational programs of the College.
2. The Child Development Department is commended for its efforts in improving the educational preparation of child care providers within the College's service area.
3. The Political Science Department is commended for its commitment to providing a wide range of creative learning activities for its students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND DANCE

The Physical Education Division generally has the financial, physical and financial resources to support its educational programs.

The College has not expanded its gymnasium in the last two decades despite continued growth. This has placed considerable strain on scheduling classes that require these specialized spaces. The department has utilized a variety of community and campus resources to meet these needs, but there are still pressing needs in this area.

The faculty, Division Administrators and Department Chairs have clearly and systematically identified educational goals for each program that are consonant with the mission of the College. This process is monitored through annual review of all course syllabi by the Division Chair.

Each of the degrees and the supporting curricula offered within the Division has been developed collaboratively with involvement by appropriate faculty and administrative leaders. Each program has clear objectives that are accomplished through clear and coherent design of the associated coursework. Appropriate learning resources are employed to support the academic programs in Physical Education. The same standards apply to all courses offered through high school dual enrollment and other distance mediated courses as on-campus courses.

The Division utilizes the criteria for course development and modification articulated in the college handbook that is available on the web. The Division's internal procedures involve multiple levels of review to ensure consistency with institutional missions, college learning abilities and departmental learning objectives.

The Physical Education department has successfully met the challenges of limited physical resources. The curriculum and the programs are well defined with clear objectives that are founded in the College mission.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY DIVISION

The Trade and Industry Division has adequate human, capital and financial resources to support

its educational programs. The Hedlund Vocational Center is limited in size as are the teaching laboratories for the programs. Thus, program enrollments are capped to match the size of the facilities. Interviews with faculty found sufficient state-of-the-art equipment and strong support by the administration.

The Division has strong community relationships, demonstrated by significant donations of laboratory equipment from industry partners. Facilities are clean and well organized, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning technical and life skills.

Students provided similar observations. They feel the labs are small but very well equipped. Students believe they are learning on the most current equipment. One shortcoming noted by all of the students is the limited technical support for faculty in the classroom. All students interviewed noted that NIC had changed their lives and expressed satisfaction with the skills they were learning.

All Trade and Industry programs have measurable goals that are in line with the mission and values of the College. Faculty review the goals and the progress toward their goals with the Division Chair on an annual basis. If goals are not met, the Division Chair works with faculty to develop a timeline to achieve the goal. The Division Chair noted that while faculty were reticent about the process in the beginning, they now actively participate and it has become part of the culture of the Division. Faculty recognized that the process leads to obtaining resources to support their program. They believe the process is linked to the budget process and that as long as they achieve their goals and the administration is aware of the importance of those goals to the success of their program, they will be supported.

All of the degrees in the Trade and Industry Division are well designed with an adequate mix of general education (as required by college policy) and technical skill development. The sequencing of the courses is coherent. All of the course syllabi include co-requisite and pre-requisite designators to ensure that students are taking courses in the appropriate sequence.

Each semester, faculty provide the Division Chair with a copy of their syllabus. Each is carefully reviewed to ensure that it contains all of the components required by college policy.

Programs in the Trade and Industry Division exceed standards 2.A.3 and 2.B.2. All of the programs have identified student learning outcomes. Course syllabi are very complete with learning outcomes and assessment tools identified. Utilizing regular and systematic processes, the faculty ensure that students who complete their programs achieve the stated outcomes. They use a variety of assessment methods including: the use of industry validated projects, standardized certification examinations, advisory committee assessment of industry projects, capstone projects and others. Many examples of exemplary work were evidenced.

- The HVAC/R program embeds national industry certification examinations into the curriculum. Last year, the students did not do as well as the faculty member would have liked in the electronics portion of one of the examinations. This year he modified his program to place more emphasis on electronics.

- Drafting and Design students keep a portfolio of all projects. In the architecture track, students design a house for a real client. As testament to the success of the Design and Drafting program, D&D students have taken 16 of 30 medals in statewide VICA competitions over the past five years.
- Machine Technology students must complete a capstone project at the end of both their first and second years. This project integrates basic machining principles with principles of dynamics and physics. Students must produce this project within acceptable industry standards.
- The Maintenance Mechanic/Millwright faculty member works very closely with his advisory committee. Most of the local employers require pre-employment examinations. The faculty encourages his students to take the examinations even if they are not interested in working for that company. Working with the employers and his advisory committee, the faculty member assesses students' results in those examinations and uses that data to change his curriculum as necessary.
- The automotive faculty use NATEF (National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation) skill standards as the means for gauging their students' success and learning. The Automotive, Diesel and Collision Repair Technology programs use "live" customer work to monitor student success. If the customer is not satisfied with the work, the student has not achieved the learning outcome.

In degree programs, assessment of general education abilities is the responsibility of general education classes and faculty. Technical faculty have developed their curriculum to ensure that students "practice" these abilities. These are clearly noted in the course syllabi.

All programs in the Trade and Industry Division have extensive collections of resource materials available to students in their classrooms and laboratories, resulting in less time spent in the library. Faculty ensure that library and information resources are integrated into the learning process. All programs have access to the Trade and Industry computer lab and students were required to utilize databases and the Internet to search for information. Students reported that the labs were so well equipped with books and periodicals that they did not need to access library resources.

The institution supports the role of advising in helping students achieve success. Each faculty member goes through advising training and is provided with a comprehensive advising manual. All students must see their advisor before registering. Faculty in the Trade and Industry programs are responsible for advising their students. The students complimented the faculty as advisors.

Every five years, in accordance with College procedures, the Trade and Industry programs undergo extensive program review. This program review process contains significant elements, which evaluate the effectiveness of the educational program and provide faculty with the input necessary to make improvements to the program as dictated by the evaluation process. The completeness of the process and the seriousness with which the Trade and Industry faculty take the process demonstrates that the Division exceeds the expectations of Policy 2.1.

Faculty believe the data collected during the review process is useful. It allows them the opportunity to analyze what is important in their program with regards to student learning. The data also provided them the evidence and motivation they needed to make changes to their program or courses. For example, the Design and Drafting program made significant changes to their program after their last program review. The results of these changes have been significant; about 25% of their students successfully transfer to baccalaureate institutions.

All of the faculty noted that the administration pays attention to the results of the review and that the recommendations related to budget allocation changes are honored as possible. For example, the Diesel Technology program received funds to upgrade equipment as a result of recommendations from their program review.

Faculty did express some concerns regarding the process relating to the amount of paperwork and the value of more input from industry representatives. However, on the whole, they found the process very useful in providing them with outcomes assessment data.

As per college policy, all A.A.S. degree programs require 16 credits of General Education including: English composition, mathematics, natural science and social science/human relations. Faculty in the Trade and Industry Division expressed concerns with the number of required credits and its impact on degree attainment.

As a means of continuing to offer opportunities for students unable to complete the general education requirements, all of the programs offer an Advanced Technical Certificate. Additionally, many of the programs are less than two years in length and students are awarded a Technical Certificate. Both certificates are 30 or more semester credits in length and require computation, communications and human relations. To satisfy the human relations requirement, students take ATEC 120 Occupational Relations. Many students expressed that this course was one of the most important courses they had taken to prepare for the job search process. Others felt it prepared them for the culture of work including human relations issues and work place professional behavior. However, this course was not included among the human relations requirements for the A.A.S. degree creating a dilemma for students who wish to pursue the degree and take the ATEC 120 course.

Although the College utilizes general education requirements instead of related instruction for the A.A.S. degree, all Trade and Industry programs have student learning outcomes for work ethics, safety and other SCANS skills integrated into the curriculum and assessed.

In summary, the Trades and Industry Division meets all of the principles of Standard Two. Programs are at the appropriate collegiate level and serve the needs of local business and industry. Continuous improvement is part of the culture of the Division and supported effectively by the Division Chair and the administration. Degree and certificate programs are coherently designed with the appropriate breadth and depth and with degree and certificate objectives clearly defined. Faculty are committed to ensuring that students meet or exceed their educational goals.

Commendations:

1. The Trade and Industry faculty are commended for their strong relationships with the community.
2. The Trade and Industry Division is commended for its innovation. One innovation involves the Division syllabi, which are easily accessible on-line.
3. The Trade and Industry faculty are commended for their commitment to identifying student learning outcomes and to the degree and scope with which they assess those outcomes. Analysis of assessment data is used to inform and modify curriculum.
4. The Trade and Industry faculty are commended for their commitment to student advising.
5. Faculty are commended for their diligence in completing the Program Review process and for using the process to make program improvements.

Concerns:

1. It is recommended that the College consider modifying the Program Review Process for Trades and Industry to include greater involvement from industry.
2. It is recommended that the College assess the impact of the change to the mathematics requirement for general education with regards to the A.A.S. degree to consider how this might be addressed to more effectively assist students in attaining their goals.
3. It is recommended that the College review courses that provide the human relations requirement for the A.A.S. degree to insure that students are able meet program and learning outcomes.

CONTINUING EDUCATION/SPECIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES/NON-CREDIT PROGRAMS AND COURSES

Continuing Education and Special Learning Activities are compatible with the College's mission and goals. All program activities, including distance delivered courses are designed, approved administered and evaluated under established institutional procedures. Faculty are appropriately involved in planning and program approval. Management of Continuing Education is integrated into the organization. Distance programs and courses are adequately supported and provide opportunities for student interaction with faculty. Distance students are supported by staff assigned to off campus centers, by easy phone and e-mail access to staff, instructors; help desk support and student support services. Non-credit course schedules clearly communicate all related policies and procedures including fees and refund practices.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

North Idaho College's Workforce Development Division offers non-credit programs to meet the lifelong learning and workforce development mission of North Idaho College. The program serves over 7,000 students per year. An Assistant Vice President, who reports to the Vice President for Instruction and serves as a member of the President's Cabinet, supports the Division. Program directors and coordinators provide support for each of the Division's functional areas. Most program activity takes place at North Idaho College's center in Post Falls although the program regularly offers courses at other college centers, on the main campus, at worksites throughout the region and in the People's Republic of China.

Two Workforce Development programs would like to offer programming beyond the borders of the College's service district. The Customized Training program is ambitious in its goal to serve local, national and international public and private corporate training needs. It currently serves a significant number of leading local corporations, and the program is serving a growing list of Fortune 500 companies doing business in the Peoples Republic of China. The Workforce Development Center's Sherman Institute is a unique hostage survival and anti-terrorist training program designed to provide customized training to public and private organizations nationally and internationally. The Sherman Institute began operations in October 2001 and employs experts with national and international credentials.

Workforce Development's Community Education program offers hundreds of non-credit, student funded activities and courses per year. Courses, workshops and activities cover a wide array of topics, are affordably priced, and are student funded. In addition, Workforce Development offers web based, online training in several topic areas. It also offers non-credit certificate training programs in Certified Nursing Assistant, Real Estate, Fire Service and Apprentice Training.

Workforce Development's Adult Basic Education program provides educational services to 3,000 students per year. Based at its center in Coeur D'Alene but operating in the entire five county service district through six outreach sites, the program is staffed by 34 full and part time staff. The program participates with other components of the Workforce Development Division to collaborate with community partners in providing "one stop" training and human support services to clients at its six operating sites. It provides Adult Basic Education, ESL, GED and related programming to students throughout the College's service district. The program has achieved state and national recognition based upon its performance and its success in forming partnerships with community organizations. The Adult Basic Education program's GED completers are the largest single source of recent high school graduates who attend North Idaho College. The program's 800 completers last year made it the leading ABE/GED program in the state.

The Workforce Development Division's Small Business Development Center offers entrepreneurial training for existing and start-up business owners and counseling services to businesses in the College's five county service area. Funded equally by North Idaho College, the Small Business Administration, and the State of Idaho, the program serves 500 consulting clients and workshop participants per year.

Workforce Development does not typically offer training for college credit. When a contractor requests training that offers college credit, a clear process involving discipline related divisions participate in the articulation of the course, review of its content and selection of faculty prior to the granting of credit. The College Curriculum Committee gives advance approval and monitors continuing education programs and courses offered for academic credit. Credit for prior learning is offered only at undergrad level in accordance with Policy 2.3

Developmental Education course identification and credit policy communication are clear. The College Skills Division reports processes to accomplish this goal through multiple methods: published course descriptions in the catalog and semester schedule; information given students through the College advising process; and information presented in the Division's orientation course, Transitions.

Workforce Development Division programs at the Post Falls Center operate in excellent facilities. It is located near business and industries served, and offers excellent classrooms, student support and parking facilities. Financial resources from student fees, continuing grants and contracts, as well as college funding provide support for a robust program. Program management appears to be entrepreneurial, imaginative, innovative and enthusiastic.

College support for distance delivery of college courses appears very good. The video teleconferencing system is well managed. Its capitalization was supported by the College and community partners in K-12 education and by the health care community in a mutually beneficial partnership. Web based delivery of courses is supported by instructional divisions who create the courses and provide instructors. The distance education program coordinates support services. Program management is capable and enthusiastic.

The ABE program operates in excellent facilities in its Coeur D'Alene center. Its financial support comes from federal and state grants and direct and in kind support from North Idaho College. The program management and support is excellent.

All programs support North Idaho College's mission and goals. Because of their unique qualities and imaginative concepts, the College may be challenged to integrate the Customized Training program's and Sherman Institute's aspirations to serve regional, national and international markets into its mission.

The Assistant Vice President for Workforce Development sits on the College's Curriculum Committee as an ex-officio member. Much of the course content for ABE/ESL and GED classes is coordinated by the state. But, Division instructional staff, with the leadership and support of the Director have modified and written curriculum to improve student learning.

Non-credit, lifelong learning faculty propose courses and activities, which are controlled by community education management. Distance learning course schedules, instructors and content are determined by and controlled by North Idaho College instructional divisions. North Idaho College faculty with the support of the Distance Learning Director created guidelines to validate the quality and process of adapting traditional courses to online delivery.

Workforce Development programs have the authority to add and delete courses, workshops, and training activities to meet market and student needs. ABE has implemented significant improvements to its instructional program as a result of outcomes tracking information. The curriculum has changed from an open lab concept to a model which offers small classes, open labs and technology mediated learning to better meet student needs, improve the rate of student progress and increase the completion rate for skill development and achievement of the GED.

The Workforce Development Division tracks several indicators to monitor its participants' perceptions of quality. The Division tracks enrollments to determine student interest, and the SBDC and Customized Training Programs track participant satisfaction. The ABE/ESL/GED program has a state provided tracking system that reports student progress, time on task, skills mastered, enrolled students who pass the GED, and those who move from ABE/GED to work or further education. The College as part of its "Institutional Effectiveness Indicators" has adopted these indices. These measures have led to significant change and improvement in course content and in student learning. The Workforce Education Division does not participate in the College program review process. Instructional divisions control courses and course content of courses offered through distance learning.

Course syllabi in Workforce Education non-credit courses, workshops and activities communicate student learning outcomes. ABE/GED/ESL program outcomes are determined by federal and state guidelines and communicated in course learning materials. College Skills Division syllabi clearly communicate learning outcomes as do the syllabi of Distance Education facilitated courses.

The GED is the only Workforce Education Division program leading to a certificate. The test qualifying the student for the GED is the set of measures used to support the learning outcomes. Courses in the College Skills Division do not lead to program completion. The Distance Education Division tracks and reports course completion and class average G.P.A. information in a yearly report to the Curriculum Council. All other outcomes related issues are left to the instructional divisions.

The student course review process is the primary quality improvement process. Two institutional effectiveness indicators for North Idaho College rely on data collected by Workforce Development activities: customer satisfaction in contract training, customer satisfaction with SBDC services. In addition, ABE/GED indicators related to student learning improvement, the ratio of enrolled students to GED attainment, and the number of ABE/GED students who transition to other college programs are used as institutional effectiveness indicators by North Idaho College.

The Workforce Development program does not participate in North Idaho College's general education student abilities effort, nor is it part of the College's program review process. Learning outcomes assessment and general education abilities is managed through the divisions that offer the courses. Web based courses are developed by divisions according to faculty controlled processes and faculty articulated guidelines.

ABE has a strong commitment to outcomes based continuous improvement. It has a comprehensive student tracking system which monitors and reports time on task, student progress and student achievement. This system has allowed ABE to modify curriculum and improve student learning outcomes, completion rates, student success and transition to work and further academic or vocational education.

Commendations:

1. North Idaho College is commended for the innovative and imaginative courses, programs and activities offered by its Workforce Development Division.
2. The College is commended for the quality and effectiveness of its ABE/ESL/GED program. This program demonstrates imagination, customer service, and innovation at a very high level.

Concerns:

1. Standard Two and Policy 2.2 require a sustained, consistent and continuing commitment to and application of an outcomes assessment plan by all instructional divisions. This requirement appears to be inconsistently applied by components of the Workforce Development, College Skills and Distance Education divisions. Each Division has evidence of parts of a process to collect some data or process that is part of a good outcomes assessment plan, but, with the exception of the ABE/ESL/GED program, the Division may need to consider whether it needs to do more to come into full compliance with Standard Two and Policy 2.2
2. Standard One requires all instructional programs to support the College’s mission and goals “which give direction to its educational activities.” North Idaho College’s Workforce Development Division has two very imaginative, unique programs whose goals and objectives are to provide service to regional, national and international participants. Workforce Development’s Customized Training program currently operates in the People’s Republic of China, and its Sherman Institute intends to quickly grow to serve regional, national and international training clients. It is unclear whether or how the College’s mission and goals support the high quality, imaginative and unique educational offerings of these programs. The College and the Workforce Development Division are encouraged to consider how the College can articulate the goals and objectives of these programs within the College’s current mission and goals to assure full compliance with the requirements of Standard One.

POLICIES

Policy A-6 - Contractual Relationships

The granting of credit meets Commission standards. North Idaho College does not offer external degrees or Travel/Study. North Idaho College contracts with one outside provider to offer non-credit online workshops and courses under its name. The practice and contract clearly give North Idaho College control over the courses offered, the course content, and course facilitators. North Idaho College is in compliance with Policy A-6 Contractual Relationships.

Policy 2.1 – General Education/Related Instruction Requirements

The College is in substantial compliance with Policy 2.1. The required general education courses for the A.A., A.S., and A.A.S. are clearly outlined in the catalog, thus fulfilling the requirement “to publish in its general catalog a clear and complete statement of its requirements for general education...” In addition, outcomes for the nine general education abilities are also defined in the catalog. These abilities are further outlined on most campus educational syllabi.

However, two important requirements under Policy 2.1 remain to be addressed more effectively. First, there is not clarity and consistency in regard to the standards for and identification of related instruction for certificates over 30 credit hours. The Commission requires that there must be a “recognizable body of instruction,” content must be “clearly identified” and shown to be “pertinent to the general program of study.” Secondly, while the nine general education abilities have been “cooperatively developed by the faculty, administrative staff, and trustees,” faculty, especially the professional-technical faculty, has expressed some concerns about the large number of outcomes, the redundancy in some abilities, and the restrictiveness of the wellness component.

Commendation:

1. The College is applauded for its efforts to clearly advertise its general education requirements on most related College documents, especially syllabi.

Concerns:

1. It is recommended that the College clearly identify the required related instruction components for all certificate programs over 30 credit hours in length.
2. It is recommended that the College address concerns related to the implementation of General Education Abilities.

Policy 2.2 – Educational Assessment

One of the recommendations from the previous (1993) Evaluation Committee Report was “The College should fully implement and monitor an educational and assessment plan to ensure that the necessary data is available, and secondary, that a system of program planning and review is

established and implemented.” Subsequently the College’s 1994 interim report and visit, the five-year report and visit, and a progressive report submitted in 2000 all emphasized assessment. In response, the College has made steady progress in implementing its Outcomes Assessment Plan. A key element in this process was the hiring, during the fall of 2001, of an institutional research specialist. Virtually every member of the faculty has received training concerning outcomes assessment and the general education abilities.

Educational assessment is processing on three levels – institutional, program, and course – and is intended to utilize a wide variety of data sources. At the institutional level a majority of the college’s twelve Institutional Effectiveness Indicators measure educational results. Assessment activities pertaining at various levels to those results, such as the Student Opinion Survey, the Alumni Survey, and the Institutional Assessment Survey, are administered on a regular basis. At the program level significant components of the data required for both the transfer and professional/technical program five-year review instruments are useful for the measurement of student learning. In addition at the course level the student learning outcomes identified on syllabi, together with the associated general education abilities, measure educational outputs. Three of the college’s nine abilities – Critical/Creative Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, and Mathematical, Scientific and Symbolic Reasoning – correspond to the three discrete general education competencies required pursuant to Standard 2.C for transfer degree programs.

The institution has done an exemplary job of identifying and publishing the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. All institutional programs are reviewed every five years by an external team of professional reviewers. The resulting program self-study reports list the respective exit competencies for professional/technical programs, and exit learning outcomes for transfer programs, respectively. The self-study reports for the professional/technical programs also contain a wealth of data, provided by employers and exiting students, pertaining to student learning, program quality, and instructor effectiveness. Furthermore, the syllabus for virtually every course taught at the college has been revised to list the student learning outcomes for that course together with the associated general education abilities. These two initiatives have been the major assessment initiatives at the college since 1998. It should be noted that the learning outcomes for the general education abilities are published in the college catalog, as well.

A valuable benefit of these comprehensive efforts to self-study programs and revise syllabi has been widespread acceptance by the faculty of the college’s assessment processes. A number of faculty interviewed by members of the committee expressed the view that their initial misgivings about these assessment activities were replaced by a sense of appreciation after involvement in assessment activities. Comments often focused on the satisfaction of working collaboratively with colleagues to define departmental goals, as well as on the opportunity to review the impact on students of the teaching/learning process. New ways of assessing student learning outcomes, such as portfolios, service learning, and innovative grade rubrics, have been identified and implemented. The overall results of the past few years’ work represent an impressive infusion of educational assessment practices, and an appreciation for those practices throughout the institution.

Despite all these very positive efforts what is not clear, however, is whether the College's assessment practices result in the ability to determine that all students who complete programs uniformly achieve the desired educational outcomes. To the credit of the institution the recent "Comprehensive Summary of Assessment Practices, Course Outcomes, and Program Outcomes for All Instructional Departments and Programs," as well as the department notebooks on exhibit during the accreditation visit, provide ample evidence of the widespread use of assessment activities at the course and program level. Nonetheless, there is a lack of evidence that these activities are yielding consistent results across the campus. Clearly, rubrics created to assess student learning outcomes in one class cannot be expected to yield results consistent with results based on other rubrics created to assess the same outcomes in other classes. As a result, assessment results from different courses may not be comparable.

A somewhat similar concern attends the institution's optimism relating to its linking of student learning outcomes to general education abilities. The current Outcomes Assessment Plan states that "the attainment of student learning outcomes in degree and certificate programs and the attainment of the college's stated general education abilities are closely related" and continues that, typically, "the general educational abilities were naturally reflected in the course and program outcomes." There follows an example of a program outcome requiring oral and written analysis of the student's role and responsibility in society as a nurse, with the conclusion that "This program outcome reflects the general education abilities of Communication and Critical Thinking." There no doubt is a link between this specific program outcome and the Communication and Critical Thinking abilities. The analysis asked of students would require both written and oral communication abilities. However, there is no clear method of assessing this outcome in relationship to the general education ability of communication. It appears that significant assessment by the college of its general education abilities will require that it undertake substantial new efforts.

It was unclear about the extent to which the College's assessment activities lead directly to improved teaching performance and student achievement. Significant benefits of current assessment processes, mostly indirect, have been identified: Departments are more cohesive, the program self-study process is providing pertinent information throughout the institution, student learning outcomes are more uniform across different sections of the same course, new methods of assessing learning are being used by some faculty, and there is a broad based awareness of, and appreciation for, assessment practices institution-wide. However based on interviews with many faculty, and the examination of numerous course syllabi and program self-study reports, relatively few instances have been identified where assessment results are informing education practices at either the program or course levels. The institution has yet to develop and implement processes at the program and course levels that inform continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

Much has been accomplished and mechanisms are in place to provide the college the potential to create an exemplary program of educational assessment. Presently the Outcomes Assessment Committee is evaluating how outcomes are being assessed as a precursor to determining how those assessments can be used to effect improvement. The General Education Committee is in

“temporary remission.” It appears that the College has paused, somewhat collectively regrouping, as it prepares to take the next steps leading to highly effective assessment of student learning.

Commendations:

1. The instructional program five-year review process has been implemented across the curriculum and is providing information highly pertinent to the college’s programs.
2. Student learning outcomes and linked general education abilities have been identified and infused throughout the curriculum, although efforts to assess them are not uniform or consistent.

Concern:

1. The college has made exemplary progress in identifying and publishing student learning outcomes and obtaining data pertinent to its educational mission. The college should utilize assessment tools to evaluate student learning outcomes and a general education abilities leading to continuous improvement in educational practices across its programs and divisions (Standard 2.B)

Policy 2.3 - Credit for Prior Experiential Learning

North Idaho College does not award credit for prior experiential learning.

Policy 2.4 - Study Abroad Programs

North Idaho College does not conduct study abroad programs.

Policy 2.5 - Transfer and Award of Academic Credit

North Idaho College is in compliance with the Commission’s policy in regard to the transfer and award of credit from appropriately accredited institutions.

Policy 2.6 - Policy on Distance Delivery of Courses, Certificates, and Degree Programs

North Idaho College is in compliance with Policy 2.6. Distance delivered courses are offered to extend educational services to time and place bound students living in North Idaho College’s service district. The College supports the Associate Degree using distance delivery mediated technologies. The appropriate institutional processes with faculty input control this program. Faculty, with the support of the Distance Education Division, have created a set of guidelines for distance courses, which is followed.

Curriculum and instruction for distance programs and courses are congruent with those of the College as a whole. There is significant interaction required between students and faculty and among students in North Idaho College’s distance program. All distance courses at North Idaho College are adapted by instructional divisions from traditional courses offered by the College. Full-time faculty teach most of the courses. Instructional divisions control student evaluations of

courses, select courses to offer and control course content. The distance technologies - web based courses, web supported courses and videoconference distributed courses - are appropriate for the courses offered. Courses are revised every three years to assure currency.

North Idaho College's policies regarding ownership, creation, compensation and copyright are clear and followed. The Distance Education Division offers excellent support services to faculty with respect to learning to teach using these delivery systems and how to create effective courses. The Division coordinates support services serving distance learners and facilitates needed student services.

The North Idaho College Learning Resources Center provides exemplary access to its information and resources to support distance learning. Online information databases, catalogs, interlibrary loans and mail delivery of text materials are effective. Students report consistent, excellent service. The Learning Resources Center publishes its appropriate use information, including plagiarism and copyright.

North Idaho College requires science lab courses to meet at an appropriate site for hands on laboratory learning.

Student Support Services are in place for distance learning students. Registration occurs online and at centers convenient to students in their communities. Advising services are available online and via phone. The bookstore mails learning materials to distance learners. The Distance Education Division and faculty developed web information regarding skills and attitudes necessary for student success in distance learning. The College off-campus centers provide access to computer technology.

Resource support for Distance Education is imbedded in the Distance Education base budget. The College reported that support for this relatively new and fast growing program is secure.

Evaluation and assessment are included in distance education. Course and faculty evaluation are the responsibility of the instructional divisions. This process appears to be effective. Assessment of student skills necessary to succeed have been developed and disseminated via the College distance education website. Evaluation of program effectiveness was unclear. Student retention and achievement is tracked and reported to divisions. Student learning outcomes and assessment are perceived to be the responsibility of the instructional divisions and may be inconsistent. The Distance Education Division does not participate in the program review process.

Commendation:

1. North Idaho College is commended for the high levels of student participation, growth and commitment to, and achievement of, student success in its programs and courses offered through Distance Learning.

Concern:

1. Standard Two and Policy 2.2 require a sustained, consistent and continuing commitment to and application of an outcomes assessment plan by all instructional divisions. This requirement appears to be inconsistently applied by the Distance Education division. The program should consider whether it needs to do more to come into full compliance with Standard Two and Policy 2.2

STANDARD THREE STUDENTS

The Student Services Division, under the leadership of the Vice President for Student Services, supports the mission and goals of the College by offering services and programs that are student-centered and facilitate student success. Essential services, such as admissions, advising, financial aid, and registration are offered online and are easily accessible to on-campus as well as to distance education and satellite campus students.

Student Services is comprised of experienced staff who are dedicated to student success. Staff members are clear about their job responsibilities and are evaluated annually. Professional development is encouraged and supported, evidenced by support for yearly attendance at national and regional conferences. In addition, opportunities such as technology training and stress management workshops provide professional development on a local level.

Policies and procedures for students are clearly stated in the catalog, the student handbook, and on the web as well as in a brochure entitled *Your Right to Know*. A clear process for policy creation, revision, and review is in place that includes input from the College Senate and review by the President's Cabinet before being presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. The President of the Associated Students of Northern Idaho College attends the President's Cabinet meeting monthly as well as Board of Trustees meetings.

General Responsibilities

Each Student Services area has developed a mission statement and goals which link to any or all of the following: Strategic goals; Vice President's Area of Emphasis; or Department Mission. Methods for assessing goal attainment as well as resources required to meet the goal are included in departmental planning documents. A clear linkage to the institutional mission was not evident in the department planning form.

Opportunities for students to participate in institutional governance are provided. Students are invited to serve on various College committees as well as on the College Senate, along with faculty and staff representatives. The Associated Students of North Idaho College has been revitalized during the past year and a Director of Student Activities has been hired to provide leadership. Student government representatives report this has increased their professionalism and credibility with College administrators. They report improvement in the level of respect and consideration for their concerns by College administration.

Student Services programs and services are periodically evaluated and results are utilized to implement changes in most areas. An example of using student needs assessment results is reflected in the Counseling Department's use of electronic means to communicate with students, as well as in the offering of stress management workshops to classes. The implementation of online admissions was in response to results of a focus group, which indicated that students would like the admissions process to be more accessible. Student satisfaction surveys are also

used for Career Services and Food Services, and results of those surveys are used to guide program and service improvements.

Academic Credit and Records

Criteria for awarding credit are clearly stated. The college catalog clearly describes credit by examination options as well as limitations on the number of such credits that may be applied toward an associate degree. Admissions staff evaluates transfer credit and transcripts submitted to the College as a requirement for admission become part of the student's permanent North Idaho College record.

The College provides security for student records and requires employees to sign a confidentiality statement with regard to maintaining the integrity of the records. FERPA training is provided to faculty and staff throughout the academic year and information about the confidentiality of student records and FERPA guidelines are available on the College website.

Student Services

North Idaho College has an open-door admissions policy, allowing students with varying skill levels to be admitted. COMPASS placement assessment is used to assess entry skills in English, math and reading. Appropriate policies and procedures guide the placement of students into courses that ensure a reasonable likelihood of success.

Information regarding categories of financial aid assistance is provided in the catalog, the course schedule and on the website. The institution monitors the student loan programs and loan default rate. The financial aid office conducts outreach to high schools and college classes to educate current and potential students about financial aid options.

The College provides orientation and advising services for new students. General advisors initially provide advising. Faculty advisors work with continuing students and are assigned advisees based on area of study. Advisors assist students in making educational decisions and in choosing courses that fit with their goals. Students report satisfaction with advising services through focus groups and through the ACT Student Opinion Survey conducted in 2002.

Student Services advising staff provide training to faculty and staff on the use of NIconline, the student information system, and have developed an online tutorial as an alternative to face-to-face training. An Advising Committee meets monthly to address advising issues and provides recommendations for improvement in the campus-wide advising system to the College Administration.

Career Services are consistent with the institutional mission. Student survey results indicate that services meet student needs.

Health services and counseling services are available to all students as appropriate.

The residence hall, which is less than one year old, provides opportunities for student leadership and service learning. Staff is trained and assessed each semester to ensure knowledge of policies and procedures appropriate to residence hall life and student rights and responsibilities.

The bookstore is centrally located in the Edminster Student Union Building and is adequately stocked with textbooks as well as a variety of related items. A Student Advisory Committee provides guidance on policies. A recent example was the committee's involvement in the revision of a textbook return policy.

Food service is conveniently located and is provided for resident and nonresident students. Feedback via surveys is used to make changes in the menu and services offered. For example, students indicated that they would like microwave food options and this change was implemented.

Intramural sports, an activity center and Outdoor Pursuits offer students an array of recreational activities in support of the institutional mission and goals.

Athletics

An Athletics Program Review Committee, which includes faculty, staff, and administrators, has been meeting for the past seven months to look at its statement of philosophy, goals and objectives, budget, and relationship to the institutional mission. Recommendations from the Committee will be presented to the Board of Trustees.

There is equal opportunity for men and women to participate in athletics. The admissions procedures and requirements are the same for athletes as non-athletes.

Policy 3.1 - Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and Representation of Accredited Status

North Idaho College exhibits integrity and responsibility in its advertising, student recruitment and representation of its accredited status. The catalog and the website are the two most comprehensive sources of information and are thorough and accurate in their depiction of institutional mission and goals, program and degree information, tuition and fees, admissions procedures, and related information about College services and procedures. The College catalog is revised and published annually. Qualified admissions staff conducts student recruitment.

Student Services at North Idaho College meets the Commission's criteria on Standard Three. The student programs and services support the institution's mission by fostering the educational development of its students and provide essential support services to students both on-campus, online and at satellite sites.

Commendations:

1. The Student Services staff and leadership team are commended for their innovative use of

technology to streamline services in order to more effectively serve students. One such innovation is the development of a NIC online tutorial. (3.A.1)

2. Student Services staff members are commended for their connection to the community. One example is the involvement of the counseling staff in providing Critical Incident Response Training to the campus and for their coordination with the community Critical Incident Response Team. Another example is the American Indian/Minority Student Advisor who has developed connections with the American Indian community, which has increased the number of American Indian students who will receive grants in aid, thus enabling their attendance at North Idaho College. (3.A.1)
3. The student services staff is commended for progress made in the advising system. Students reported very positive advising experiences and faculty commented favorably on advising system improvements and their satisfaction with the advising system. (3.D.10)

Concern:

1. It is recommended that Student Services address the impact of the increasing student population on the College's effectiveness in providing services to meet student needs.

STANDARD FOUR FACULTY

North Idaho College has clear policies and procedures regarding the employment of professionally qualified faculty. Transfer faculty are required to possess a masters degree in their primary area of instruction before attaining tenure. The College also has a clear policy regarding non-instructional responsibilities for faculty. Professional-technical faculty qualifications are commensurate with the standards set by the State of Idaho Vocational Certification. NIC takes the state policy one step further requiring all professional-technical faculty to possess both an associate degree and industry experience. The College strongly encourages professional-technical faculty to attain a baccalaureate degree and offers professional development financial support through the Professional Improvement Plan funds.

Both full- and part-time faculty are held to the same academic background standards and/or professional experience. Hiring processes are clear and consistent with a commitment to fostering diversity and fairness through the College's EEO policies. Upon hire, all full- and part-time faculty are made aware of College employment practices and conditions of employment. Presently, the College does not have a faculty handbook. However, a committee has been developing a handbook and expects to publish it fall 2003. Institutional policies are reviewed periodically with faculty participating in this endeavor.

Faculty play an integral role in academic planning and curriculum development of all programs and courses. The Curriculum Committee is made up of faculty members selected by their peers (who may on occasion also be Division Chairs), administration and staff (as ex-officio members). This Committee is responsible for all decisions regarding curriculum, course content and review, and program content and review.

Faculty have a strong role in College Governance Committees and take this role very seriously. The College has a significant number of committees and the faculty participate in all those regarding instruction and student success. The College has fostered a culture of participatory governance. As described in the College policy on governance, faculty propose policies and procedures through the Faculty Senate. When asked about the large number of committees on campus, faculty indicated that the committees were the venue for getting things done and for obtaining resources, so they made certain that they participated.

Faculty workloads reflect the mission of the institution. Workloads are consistent across the campus and allow adequate time for faculty to grow professionally and to participate in college and community activities. The faculty contract clearly outlines faculty duties and responsibilities. Faculty may be compensated for duties beyond those described in the contract. Policies on faculty salaries are clear, consistent and equitable. Periodically, the College scrutinizes workload issues through peer review and review of student-faculty ratios. All members of the Evaluation Committee found faculty to be positive about working conditions. For the most part, faculty held the administration in high-regard and felt supported by the administration.

In addressing Standard 4.A.5 and Policy 4.1, NIC has a very comprehensive policy and procedure on faculty evaluation. The Committee found that all members of the campus, including faculty and administration, were well aware of the policy and followed it diligently. The policy ensures teaching effectiveness, a collegial process, input from students as a valued component of the process, and administrative responsibility for the professional and ethical behavior of its faculty. A summative report is signed by both the faculty and the administration and kept in the faculty member's file in the Human Resources Office. All members of the accreditation team were impressed with the comprehensiveness and standardization of the process. Faculty and administrators consider the process valuable. There was some concern expressed about the process for remediation where deficiencies are identified. However, for the most part, faculty and administration felt that the process worked well, was substantive and comprehensive. It appeared that the process for record keeping regarding full and adjunct faculty evaluations was inconsistent.

NIC fosters an environment that protects and respects academic freedom. The College has a clear policy on academic freedom and faculty indicate that the administration honors its commitment to the tenets of academic freedom. The College's commitment to academic freedom is supported by the College's policy on Professional Ethics, which addresses the faculty member's obligation to their profession/discipline/trade, their students and their colleagues.

The evaluation team found the College meets and exceeds the requirements set in Standard Four and Policy 4.1.

Commendations:

1. The College is commended for its faculty evaluation policies and procedures.
2. The College is commended for its comprehensive and standardized summative evaluation form.
3. The administration is commended for maintaining positive working relationship with the faculty.

Concern:

1. The Committee recommends that the Human Resources Department work with divisions to establish a clear and consistent adjunct evaluation tool, to formalize procedures across campus and to develop a centralized location for maintaining adjunct records.

STANDARD 5 LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Molstead Library, including the Instructional Media Services Department, has a well-defined purpose that directly supports the mission of North Idaho College. The evaluator found that library staff are aware of their role in supporting the College and take this responsibility very seriously. The staff is focused on providing quality service and the necessary resources to allow library users to meet their information needs.

The library is well supported by the College in regards to the budget available to purchase print and electronic materials and resources for the library collection. The currency of the print collection and the number of internet-accessible online databases are noteworthy. The library has purchased over half of its collection since 1990, providing library users with timely and relevant information resources. The library also provides access to 45 online information databases, both Internet-based and on CD-ROM.

The library staff offers a variety of services, including reference assistance in person and via e-mail, bibliographic instruction, and interlibrary loans. The interlibrary loan service at Molstead Library is notable in that because it and the University of Idaho share an online catalog, the library users at each institution can make use of their combined library holdings. A courier service between the institutions allows for library users to receive loaned materials in a timely manner. The Instructional Media Services Department supports instruction at the College by undertaking such services as video production for instructional purposes, web page design and assistance, maintenance of campus audio-visual equipment, production and preparation of materials for internet streaming, and creating and printing print display materials.

The library is dependent on adequate technological resources to carry out its mission. The North Idaho College *Information Technology Recommendations, 2001* addresses campus equipment upgrades and replacement schedules.

Information Resources and Services

The Public Services Librarian coordinates collection development at Molstead Library, with participation from other library faculty and staff. Requests for materials are solicited from and requested by members of the College community, especially faculty. Interviews with faculty indicate that the library purchases materials they request to support instruction. The evaluator found that students, as well as faculty, were very satisfied with the library collection. Students interviewed indicate they routinely used the library for class research, either in the physical library facility or by remote access to internet-based online databases available through the library. One indication of the perceived quality of its book collection is that Molstead Library lends more books to University of Idaho Library users than vice versa.

Facilities and Access

The 27,500 square foot Molstead Library is on the first floor of the Molstead Library Building, constructed in 1990. It is well laid out, assessable, and presents a welcoming physical environment. Good lighting and various displays of artwork add to the environment. The information desk, where reference services are provided, is located so that it has a significant presence in the library and is readily visible from the library entrance. Approximately half of the computer stations providing access to the Internet, including electronic library resources, are in close proximity to the information desk, making it convenient for computer users to receive reference assistance. The evaluator found the physical arrangement and placement of the information desk conducive to providing reference services to library users. There is ample seating room for students, with group seating and individual carrel arrangements. Study rooms are available for groups or for faculty to work with individual students.

One assessment of library facilities and services is reported in the results of the 2000 and 2002 North Idaho College Student Opinion Surveys. In each survey, NIC students evaluated the library (facilities and services) as the top service at the College, with a 4.24 and 4.23 rating respectively, on a five-point scale. Interviews with current students supported these ratings.

Regarding space for the library print collection, at the present rate of collecting books, the library staff anticipates running out of shelf space for new materials in two years. A library expansion to alleviate space issues is addressed in the *NIC Facility Master Plan, 1999*. Since State budget considerations preclude any certainty as to when the expansion will be funded, contingency plans, such as a substantial weeding of the book collection or temporary reassignments of existing space have been discussed.

Use statistics for various databases indicate that both on- and off-campus users extensively access the library's internet-based online databases. Interviews found that Learning Resources staff are very responsive in meeting the information needs of distance education faculty and students, and that access to online information was instrumental in the effort of distance education faculty to make distance education classes comparable to those taught on campus. The library website, the product of a collaborative library staff effort, provides a clear and understandable gateway to the online databases and other library information and resources.

Personnel and Management

Library staff members are well qualified, possessing the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their job responsibilities. Job descriptions are up-to-date and accurate.

Several of the library staff interviewed spoke of the problem of insufficient staffing in the library. There is evidence to support the conclusion that not having sufficient personnel to cover public service areas in cases of illnesses, campus meetings, professional development activities such as conferences, and evening and weekend hours, is a cause of concern and some stress to the library staff. The evaluator found this to be equally so for the Instructional Media Services department, which in some ways is a victim of its own abilities and success. The department

faces increasing demand on its services that go beyond its primary mission of supporting classroom instruction, yet are beneficial to the College. These demands are occurring without additional staff to meet them, which the evaluator found is starting to have a detrimental effect in the IMS staff not being able to fulfill some of its basic services in a timely manner. Interviews with library management team members indicate that staffing concerns are being expressed in library planning activities and through the College's Instructional Council.

Molstead Library does not have a Director. Instead, it has a unique structure of a four-member library management team, with the public services librarian as team leader. The management team concept was developed by the library staff in 1998, approved by the Vice President of Instruction and subsequently implemented. Interviews indicated that there is unanimous support of the management team concept by library staff.

Planning and Evaluation

The library has developed a multi-year strategic plan, modeled after the College's strategic plan. Each year the library management team creates project plans to address the goals and objectives in the strategic plan. These projects are assessed annually, with a report forwarded to the Vice President of Instruction and the Vice President of Planning, Assessment, and Research.

The library conducts a variety of formal and informal assessments of its services and resources. Informal assessment is largely a product of feedback received from college faculty, students, and staff through their day-to-day interactions with library staff. Formal assessment efforts consist of evaluating annual projects tied in to strategic planning, as well as specific instances, such as when the library had to reduce its hours of operation due to budget constraints. The evaluator did not find evidence of library staff currently undertaking a systematic assessment of library services and resources. Interviews indicated that library management is aware of this concern and is committed to a systematic and well-conceived planning and assessment process.

Commendations:

1. The Molstead Library staff is commended for the quality of services and resources it provides to North Idaho College. The College community sees library staff as having a strong commitment to serving library users. The library provides access to a timely and relevant print collection as well as an extensive selection of cd-rom and internet-based full-text and bibliographic databases. The library staff is also commended for its emphasis on strategic and annual planning activities and how the planning is directly related to the library carrying out its purpose to support the mission of the College.
2. The library staff is commended for initiating and successfully employing a unique library management structure that fosters staff communication and creates a positive and productive work environment.

Concern:

1. It is suggested that the library strengthen its assessment processes through a formal systematic assessment of library services and resources to complement informal and external assessments of library services (5.E.3).

STANDARD SIX GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

North Idaho College is one of two publicly supported community colleges in the state. Exclusive control and administration of NIC are vested in its five-member board. State funds are funneled from the legislature through the State Board of Education (SBOE) to NIC. Although the SBOE does not directly govern its activities, North Idaho College maintains strong relationships with the SBOE. Board responsibilities and relationships among the board and employees are described in policy documents. The board makes provision for consideration of employee and student views through Policy 2.02.4 that describes the College's commitment to participative governance. Each constituent group is charged to act for and to represent its members. The College Senate, made up of representatives of students, faculty and staff, is charged to act for and to represent constituent groups in matters of college policy and procedures. Any member of the College community may initiate a recommendation for board policy or procedure through the College Senate.

Governing Board

The Board of Trustees is an elected five-member Board, elected from Kootenai County for staggered six-year terms. Staggered terms and college policies provide for continuity of board membership. The Board acts only as a committee of the whole. Board policy also defines the duties, responsibilities, operating procedures, and ethical conduct requirements of board members.

The board oversees institutional operations, including hiring and evaluating the President and approving the institution's mission and budget. A board policy defines the President's responsibilities to the trustees. The Board of Trustees evaluates the President annually, in "order to strengthen his performance, to enable the President and board to reset mutually agreed upon goals, and to inform annual decisions on compensation and other terms of employment." The board delegates to the President its authority and responsibility to administer the College in accordance with applicable laws and policies, rules and regulations approved and/or sanctioned by the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees approved NIC's current mission statement in 1999. It will again review the mission statement at the beginning of the next strategic planning cycle in 2003. The board approves all major academic, vocational and technical programs of study, degrees, and certificates. It also approves annual budgets, salary schedules, and curricular offerings of the College.

The Board of Trustees evaluates its performance at its annual retreat. The board is knowledgeable of the institution's accreditation process and status. As an example, the board has a representation on the Strategic Planning Committee and the Accreditation Steering Committee.

Leadership and Management

The North Idaho College President's full-time responsibility is to the institution. The President reports to the Board of Trustees.

As part of a shared governance model, the President's Cabinet, College Senate Faculty Assembly, Staff Assembly, and Associated Students report through the President to the board. The cabinet is made up of the Vice Presidents for Instruction, Administrative Services and Student Services, Director of Academic Computing, Director of Human Resources, and Assistant Vice Presidents for External Relations and Planning, Assessment and Research. The President's cabinet meets weekly. Once a month, the cabinet meets in expanded format to include Chairs of the Faculty Assembly, Staff Assembly, the College Senate, and President of the Student Government. Interviews with employees and students indicate that the shared governance model is effective and inclusive.

Duties and responsibilities of the institution's administrators are clearly defined and published. Ethical conduct requirements are not specifically addressed in job descriptions; however, college policies and procedures address ethical conduct expectations for all employees. In addition, one of the College values is "upholding ethical practices and integrity- the College models the highest standards of ethics and integrity."

Evidence was provided that all non-faculty positions/administrators are evaluated on a regular basis. The process is thorough and consistent, utilizing an upward appraisal system that solicits employee feedback for all management personnel. The President conducts annual evaluations with each Vice President, which includes a written review of individual action plans.

The NIC Foundation raises funds for projects that directly relate to the College mission and goals/strategic initiatives. The foundation has been very successful in securing funds for scholarships and programs, and acquiring land and facilities that directly contribute to achieving college goals and strategic initiatives. Faculty grant applications ask applicants to relate their requests to the College mission and strategic initiatives.

All managers meet monthly to facilitate cooperative working relationships and to promote coordination.

Faculty Role in Governance

Faculty participate in governance through their departments, college-wide committees, and the Faculty Assembly. Representatives of the Faculty Assembly serve on the College Senate. A faculty member attends Board of Trustees meetings. Interviews with faculty indicate there is satisfaction with the level of involvement and participation in the College governance process.

Students Role in Governance

Opportunities for students to participate in shared governance are provided. Students are invited

to serve on college committees as well as on the College Senate, which also includes faculty and staff representatives. The President of the Associated Students of North Idaho College participates in the monthly expanded President's cabinet meeting and attends the Board of Trustees monthly meeting.

Policy 6.1 Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination

The Board of Trustees approved a non-discrimination/affirmative action policy in 1993. Policies and procedures have also been approved addressing sexual harassment, civil rights, and malicious harassment. These emphasize the College's commitment to provide equal employment and learning opportunities to students. The College has increased its activities to promote diversity, establishing a Diversity Committee. The College values address the importance of fostering human dignity and modeling citizenship.

Collective Bargaining

The College does not operate within a collective bargaining framework. A Meet and Confer Committee serves as the venue to deliberate salary and benefit issues and to provide input to the Board of Trustees as part of the budget process.

Commendation:

1. The College is to be commended for adopting a governance structure that fosters a culture that values and encourages a spirit of collaboration in providing programs and services to meet the College mission. Faculty, staff, and students are significantly involved in making decisions that support the College mission.

STANDARD SEVEN FINANCE

North Idaho College is one of two public community colleges in Idaho. General operating funds come from the State of Idaho (50%), local property taxes (23%) and tuition and fees (24%). State funds for academic transfer programs are allocated to the College in total, giving the College substantial discretion in their use. Funds for professional technical programs are allocated based upon line item and their uses are much more restricted.

An elected five member Board governs the College.

Financial Planning

The NIC Board of Trustees, Idaho Board of Education, the Idaho legislature and ancillary college groups all affect financial planning and budgeting at NIC. The budget process is relatively centralized with the President's Cabinet serving as the budget development team. It evaluates and refines budget requests. The "Meet and Confer Committee" serves as a conduit for communication about the budget and specifically employee compensation issues between the President's Cabinet and the various constituencies. The budget process culminates in public Board of Trustee meetings on the budget in May and June of each year. While the Board sets broad parameters for budget development, it is not involved in the detailed budget development processes.

The North Idaho College Board of Trustees has a written policy on the use and limit of debt. Historically, debt at NIC has been minimal. However, in the past few years the College has issued certificates of participation for the remodeling of the student union and construction of a new residence hall. The residence hall is just completing its first year of operation. Student fees and operating profits are first sources for payment of the debt on these buildings.

Adequacy of Resources

The College is financially stable. In the face of increasing enrollments, it has been able to keep revenues and expenditures in line with one another. NIC had an ending fund balance of over 10% of current fund revenues at the end of 2000-01 and is working towards its auditors' recommended goal of 12.5%. In light of Idaho's current economic situation, which is resulting in holdbacks of state support, the College is prudent to have so strong a reserve position.

Expenditures for the intercollegiate athletic program exceeded their budget by over \$140,000 in FY 2002. Since that time a review of intercollegiate athletics has occurred.

Financial Management

The Vice President for Administrative Services is the chief financial officer of the College. He reports directly to the President. Financial information is reported to the Board of Trustees each

month.

The financial staff of the College is adequate to meet its needs. The staff is competent and activities appear well organized. The College is planning improvements to its financial information system that will tie expenditure history with proposed budgets in the budget development process.

Additionally, one of the College's goals is to tie the planning and budgeting processes more closely. Further efforts in this area, though very difficult in a time of constrained resources, are encouraged.

Fund Raising and Development

The Development Department at NIC has recently been reorganized. The Director of Development now reports to the President and supervises the North Idaho College Foundation, the Alumni Association and Grants Development. In addition, a working relationship between the Foundation and the athletic Booster Club has been developed. The Booster Club is a separate not-for profit corporation that predates the NIC Foundation.

Commendation:

1. The College is to be commended for a Foundation that provides innovative and considerable support in the areas of land acquisition, facilities and equipment. This support allows the College to successfully meet its mission and goals, and prepare to meet future demands.

Recommendation:

1. The College does not prepare a minimum three-year projection of income and expenditures for operations as required for Standard 7.A.2. Although the vagaries of State funding will make this projection less accurate than desired, if tied to the strategic plan of the institution, it will be useful in identifying gap between mission and funding. Additionally, in a time of decreasing resources and increasing costs, such projections can provide an early warning of an upcoming budget deficit that may require tuition increases and/or cutbacks of programs and support services.

STANDARD EIGHT PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The College is comprised of a main campus in Coeur d'Alene, a Workforce Training Center in Post Falls, a classroom and administrative center in Sandpoint and an adult education center in downtown Coeur d'Alene.

Instructional and Support Facilities

The main campus is well kept and consists of approximately 46 acres. Opportunities for expansion to this campus are limited due to the Spokane River, Coeur D'Alene Lake, and an historic neighborhood adjoining the campus on the east. The remaining land is already developed, but as mentioned in the self-study, the College is exploring opportunities to add contiguous land to the campus.

Given the limitations of land, parking is a problem. In 2002, adjacent homeowners successfully lobbied to have resident-only parking imposed on streets near the campus. The College has shown initiative in adding a free campus shuttle from two nearby parking lots owned by the City.

In general, facilities are adequate to achieve the institution's mission and goals. However, the Christiansen Gymnasium was not designed for current student populations and does not meet current accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In 1992-93 the College was audited by the United States Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and found to have several areas of deficiency. Since then, the College has met all the requirements of the settlement agreement reached with the OCR. The Workforce Training Center is a modern facility without the accessibility issues of the older buildings on the main campus.

Several of the buildings on the Coeur d'Alene campus are reaching the end of their useful life unless significant renovation occurs. In addition, enrollment growth and heavy community usage suggest that additional facilities are needed. The College has appropriately planned for this growth, but construction has been delayed due to funding limitations.

Campus Safety and Security staff members are well trained and professional. With the opening of the new residence hall in 2002, the number of incidents on campus has increased. Campus Safety and Security has added patrols at the residence hall to support residence life and student safety.

In what is a relatively unique situation, the College owns and maintains a strip of public beach along Coeur d'Alene Lake. During warm weather, tourists and local residents use this beach heavily. This places a patrol and intervention responsibility upon Campus Safety and Security that is unique for a college of this size.

Equipment and Materials

In general, instructional equipment is adequate. Two departments did comment that they did not have appropriate capital for their programs. Student fees fund about \$185,000 in computer replacement needs for labs and are also used for other items. Given the current specter of additional financial holdbacks by the State of Idaho, there is concern that funds for equipment purchases will be insufficient in the future.

Physical Resources Planning

A major recommendation from the 1993 accreditation visit was to develop an overall master plan to include programming and facilities. This plan was completed in 1999 with broad input from the campus and surrounding community. The College prepares a six year Capital Improvement Plan for submission to the State of Idaho for funding consideration. This plan reflects the findings and themes of the Facilities Master Plan. Annually, the College collects requests for minor renovation and remodeling from the departments through the Vice Presidents. They are considered by the President's Cabinet for inclusion in the budget or deferral. The College is in the process of updating its inventory of deferred maintenance projects.

STANDARD NINE INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

The self-study team addressing this standard relied on interviews with members of the College as well as a review of publications.

Evidence was found that North Idaho College subscribes to high ethical standards. This commitment can be found in the values stated in the strategic plan: “North Idaho College models the highest standards of ethics and integrity and consistently applies fairness, honesty, and accountability in its educational offerings, professional interactions and business practices.” The Board of Trustees has adopted a policy that addresses standards of good practice (code of ethics). In addition, a policy on professional ethics for faculty has been adopted, which addresses conflicts of interest and defines ethical responsibilities accorded to their discipline, their students, their colleagues, their institution and their community. Interviews with faculty, staff, students and board members found that the College administration values, models, and expects high ethical standards.

Policies defining Board responsibilities were reviewed. One policy outlines the procedures for making recommendations for board policies and procedures. One responsibility is to adopt policies and procedures for the governance of the College and to review them periodically. The policies that were reviewed included dates of revision, demonstrating that the policies are regularly reviewed.

A review of publications and interviews with students and faculty found that the College represents itself accurately and consistently to its constituencies. Students noted that pictures used in college publications are taken on campus, featuring NIC students and employees.

Conflict of interest policies and procedures address board members, administrators, faculty and staff.

NIC demonstrates, through its policies and practices, its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge consistent with the institution’s mission and goals. The board, in 1999, approved a policy on professional ethics, which addressed academic freedom. It also has approved a policy on academic freedom. The policy on academic freedom notes that the College recognizes each faculty member’s fundamental right to academic freedom as the cornerstone of the educational process. Faculty experience academic freedom in the classroom and in all matters related to teaching.

The College further demonstrates its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge by encouraging guest speakers and performers for student, faculty and community sponsored events and activities.

Evidence was found that the College has created a healthy climate for all voices, including those of students, faculty, staff and the community it serves.

GENERAL COMMENDATIONS

1. Community Involvement

North Idaho College is commended for its commitment to, and success in, developing mutually beneficial partnerships to meet the educational, cultural and economic development needs of its service area. The institutional culture fosters an environment that supports and encourages involvement in the life of the community.

2. Fundraising and Development

The College is commended for a Foundation that provides innovative and considerable support in the areas of land acquisition, facilities and equipment. This support allows the College to successfully meet its mission and goals, and prepare to meet future demands.

3. Campus Climate

The College is commended for fostering a campus culture that values and encourages a spirit of collaboration in providing programs, services and sharing of resources to meet the college mission and goals.

4. Learning Resources

The College is commended for the high quality and effectiveness of the services, resources, planning and innovative management structure of its Learning Resources Department in meeting institutional and educational program missions and goals.

5. Student Success

The College is commended for its faculty and staff commitment to, and support of, student advising, enrichment and goal attainment.

6. Leadership

The College is commended for leadership in implementing a governance system that actively involves faculty, staff and students in decision-making processes.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Planning and Assessment

The College has made planning and assessment a high priority. A number of planning activities are underway across the campus. Faculty and staff are involved with, and supportive of, the process. There is evidence to support that planning and assessment lead to resource allocation. On the college level, a strategic plan has been developed that describes the college's vision, mission, values, as well as key initiatives. Outcomes have been identified and included in programs/courses.

It was unclear to evaluators how the various planning and assessment efforts are interrelated. Also unclear are the process and indicators that enable the institution to determine the level of goal achievement.

The committee recommends that the college clarify the interrelationship of the multi-tiered planning processes, and clarify the alignment of its assessment strategies to those planning processes in order to systematically determine in what ways, and to what degree, it is accomplishing its mission and goals. It is further recommended that the institution strengthen its process for the using assessment results for continuous improvement. (1.B.1)

2. Educational Assessment

The college has made significant progress in evaluating the effectiveness of its educational programs. Program Reviews are regularly conducted for all educational programs. The data collected is consistent, valuable, and standardized. Student performance outcomes have been identified and included in programs and courses. However, the college is encouraged to pursue assessment tools to effectively and consistently assess student-learning outcomes and general education abilities to improve the teaching-learning process across programs and divisions (Policy 2.1)

3. Financial Planning

The college does not prepare a minimum three-year projection of operating income and expenditures as required by Standard 7.A.2. It is recommended that the college planning process included a minimum of a three year projection of income, and expenditures, in order to comply with this Standard (7.A.2).