



# North Idaho College



## **Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations**

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Colleges and Universities

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# Table of Contents

## Introduction

Institutional Context .....	1
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## Preface

Update on Institutional Changes since Last Report.....	2
Response to Recommendations.....	3
Most Recent Review of Mission and Core Themes .....	3-4

## Chapter One – Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Section 1.A: Mission .....	5-7
----------------------------	-----

Mission, Vision Statement and College Values .....	5
Definition of Mission Fulfillment.....	6
Accomplishments that Define Mission Fulfillment .....	6-7

Section 1.B: Core Themes and Expectations.....	8-16
--	------

Core Theme 1: Student Success .....	8-10
Mission and Strategic Plan Alignment.....	8
Description .....	8
Objectives, Outcomes, Indicators and Rationales .....	8-10

Core Theme 2: Instructional Excellence .....	10-14
Mission and Strategic Plan Alignment.....	10
Description .....	10-11
Objectives, Outcomes, Indicators and Rationales .....	11-14

Core Theme 3: Community Engagement .....	14-16
Mission and Strategic Plan Alignment.....	14
Description .....	14
Objectives, Outcomes, Indicators, and Rationales .....	14-16

Chapter One Summary.....	17
--------------------------	----

Appendices .....	18-21
------------------	-------

Appendix A – Accreditation Steering Committee .....	18
Appendix B – 2009-2010 Timeline of Accreditation Planning Activities .....	19
Appendix C – 2009-2013 NIC Accreditation Timeline .....	20
Appendix D – Institutional Planning Framework.....	21

## Introduction

Founded in 1933, North Idaho College (NIC) is a regional community college that embraces an open door policy for all citizens. As a comprehensive community college, NIC has built a tradition of meeting the educational needs of its students and community by providing access to a broad range of programs, affordable tuition, and an environment free of barriers and discrimination. NIC fulfills its obligations as a comprehensive community college by offering courses and programs for the first two years of undergraduate education for academic transfer students and professional-technical education, and provides workforce training, continuing education, and developmental education.

NIC 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. In 1949, NIC moved to its current location at the confluence of Lake Coeur d'Alene and the Spokane River, once a gathering place for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. This site carries on as the main campus and provides students, employees, and community members with a unique and beautiful setting. In 1971 the college changed its name to North Idaho College to more accurately reflect its mission as a comprehensive community college. As a place of higher learning for over 75 years, NIC is steeped with tradition. The students, faculty, staff, and community take pride in NIC's outdoor facilities, its buildings, the lake front, and the traditions that surround our academic culture.

NIC is governed by a board of trustees (the Board), comprised of members who are elected for four-year terms. The Board derives its authority from the Idaho Code for Community College District Law, Sections 33-2101 through 33-2144. The college president is appointed by the Board. The president provides leadership and direction to students, faculty, and staff with the aid of a cabinet made up of the vice presidents for instruction, student services, resource management, and community relations; and the directors of human resources, information technology, athletics, and the foundation. The Board and college administration are committed to meaningful participation of the college constituent groups in the decision-making process.

The college faculty, staff, students, and administration participate in the governance of the institution. The college Senate, comprised of faculty, staff and students, is the principal vehicle for participatory governance, providing input on policy and procedural initiation, changes, or deletions. The faculty directs the development and the quality of the curriculum, and provides substantive input to the tenure of their colleagues. In addition, faculty, students, staff and administrators serve on a variety of other committees in order to contribute ideas and opinions from a variety of perspectives. Student government and student groups advocate for student interests and provide valuable input on college policy and procedures. In doing so, all members participate in collaborative decision-making and build consensus for positive change within the institution.

In this report, NIC provides its response to Standard One for the first time under the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities' (the Commission) revised accreditation standards and process. This report identifies Core Themes that collectively encompass NIC's mission and establish objectives and meaningful indicators that form a basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives and mission fulfillment.

## Institutional Context

North Idaho College (NIC) is one of only three community colleges in Idaho, each of which serves a large geographical portion of a predominately rural state. NIC serves a vast and rugged five-county service area located within the mountainous, forested terrain of the Idaho Panhandle region—spanning more than 7,000 square miles and containing approximately 280,000 residents, almost 22% of the State's population. As the only higher education institution based within its five-county service area, NIC takes responsibility to provide educational opportunities and enhanced quality of life for the students and the communities it serves.

NIC subscribes to the philosophy of a comprehensive community college, including an "open-door" admissions policy. To truly reflect its role as a community college, NIC accepts the fundamental responsibility to meet the needs of individuals with widely divergent interests and abilities. At the same time, NIC seeks to respond to the needs of area businesses, industries, and governmental agencies by preparing competent, trained employees.

NIC's 45-acre main campus is located in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The traditional base of Coeur d'Alene's economy is the natural resources sector, primarily the timber and mining industries. While these enterprises continue today, Coeur d'Alene's economic base has evolved and expanded to include many new industries. Tourism related businesses provide 7,700 jobs in Kootenai County and it is home to 250 manufacturing businesses with over 4,700 employees. Advances in telecommunications operations have also attracted customer service call centers to the region employing more than 2,500 people. The continual creation of new jobs by a growing variety of businesses requires that NIC remain flexible and focus its concern on providing educational opportunities in order to meet the region's needs.

NIC offers associate degrees in 38 transferable academic majors, and associate of applied science degrees or certificates in 39 professional-technical programs. In fall 2010, NIC served 6,347 students enrolled in transfer, professional-technical and dual enrollment programs, representing 4,435 full-time equivalent students. In addition, during the 2009/2010 school year, 1,400 students were enrolled in Adult Basic Education courses and more than 8,000 students were enrolled in non-credit community education and workforce training courses. NIC works closely with the University of Idaho, Lewis-Clark State College, Idaho State University, and Boise State University to provide transfer options for students.

NIC's mission statement identifies its responsibility to provide access to educational opportunities in the communities of the five northern counties of Idaho: Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshone Counties. In addition to services on its main campus in Coeur d'Alene, services are offered in four (4) Kootenai County locations at Workforce Training Center, Lakeside Adult/Basic Education Center, Ramsey Building, and Atlas Building; three (3) county outreach centers located in the cities of Bonners Ferry, Kellogg, and Ponderay; and the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Education Center, in Plummer. Courses at the outreach centers are delivered by interactive video conferencing (IVC), over the Internet, or face-to-face at the centers.

## Preface

### Update on Institutional Changes since Last Report

NIC posted a 12.16 percent increase in for-credit enrollment for fall 2010 with an increase of 688 students from the previous year's fall enrollment of 5,659, bringing the total for-credit headcount for fall 2010 to a record 6,347. To meet the demand, instructors increased class sizes, added course sections, hired more than 20 new faculty members, and expanded teaching assignments. Internet classes were expanded and new scheduling techniques were utilized to maximize the usage of classroom space. The current economic downturn has affected the region's economy and unemployment rates in the five northern counties of Idaho are currently in the double-digits. As the college experiences both growth and financial challenges, the overall effectiveness of the college takes on greater importance. These challenges require comprehensive planning and assessment processes so that the college can ensure it is meeting its mission.

Expansion of the college's physical footprint is necessary to meet future growth needs. To this end, NIC has been successful in acquiring needed land. The NIC Foundation purchased the former DeArmond Mill site, over seventeen acres adjacent to the NIC main campus, and deeded it to the college. NIC, in partnership with the University of Idaho and Lewis-Clark State College, is planning a joint-use building with classrooms and office space as the first building on this site. This building will also be home to a combined student services function. NIC has also purchased 40 acres north of the current campus near the city of Rathdrum. This acreage is adjacent to a recently approved and funded joint technical high school to be built in the near future. NIC plans to build a Trades & Industry facility as part of the overall project called the Kootenai Technical Education Campus, or KTEC. This building is high on NIC's priority list for state funding.

NIC continues to fulfill its obligations as a comprehensive community college by offering courses and programs in academic transfer education, professional-technical education, workforce training, continuing education, and developmental education. There have been no changes to the graduation requirements since the last Interim Report. In compliance with Operational Policy 2.A, the college participates in the Commission's requirement to communicate substantive changes in instructional programs. The college submitted substantive change reports in 2010 for three programs offered at outreach locations: Welding Technology, Outdoor Power and Recreational Vehicle Technology, and Practical Nursing. All three programs were granted full approval allowing NIC to expand access to educational programs in its service region. In addition to expanded program offerings at the outreach centers, the Associate of Science and Associate of Arts degrees added an Interdisciplinary Studies option. Several new professional-technical programs were added in 2009-2010, including Virtual Administrative Assistant, Fire Service Technology, Computer Applications, and Business Leadership.

Since the 2008 Interim Report minor changes have been made to NIC's organizational structure. A Dean of Health Professions and Nursing was added to the instructional organizational chart, along with a Dean of Students, and Assistant Dean of Students in the Student Services area. All of these positions were created to accommodate increased student enrollment and to create opportunity for further program development in the area of health professions.

## Response to Recommendations

NIC was first accredited by the Commission in 1950. Its last full-scale evaluation visit was in 2003, after which the Commission reaffirmed the college's accreditation. In reaffirming the accreditation status in 2003, NWCCU had six commendations and three recommendations in the Full-Scale Evaluation report. The three recommendations consisted of Planning and Assessment, Educational Assessment, and Financial Planning. The college was asked to submit a progress report in spring 2005 which was accepted by the commission in July 2005. This progress report addressed the improvements made by North Idaho College in responding to the three recommendations.

NIC's most recent review by the Commission was a five-year interim report and visit which occurred in spring 2008. This review resulted in one recommendation for the college to address:

Recommendation 1: The evaluators commend the college for identifying the general education outcomes through the general education abilities and making great progress over the last two years to assess these outcomes. However, the evaluators recommend that the institution still needs to focus on regularly and systematically assessing all general education outcomes to assure that students who complete programs explicitly demonstrate that they have achieved these outcomes. Although the institution has examples of improvements in teaching and learning initiated due to results of assessment, this is not consistent and not well documented. The evaluators recommend that the institution provide evidence that its assessment activities lead to improvement of teaching and learning across all general education outcomes.

NIC responded to this recommendation with a progress report submitted to the Commission in April 2010. On August 5, 2010 the Commission informed NIC that it was "satisfied that progress had been made" regarding Recommendation 1 of the spring 2008 Regular Interim Evaluation Report.

## Most Recent Review of Mission and Core Themes

NIC is guided by its institutional mission and strategic goals. While the mission has remained constant for over 10 years, the current goals of the institution were approved when the 2008-2013 NIC Strategic Plan was developed over an eight-month period by constituents from across northern Idaho. The strategic planning process had several phases and resulted in a five-year plan that guides NIC's development in several critical areas. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee was made up of 10 NIC members and 10 community members. The process included: data collection from internal and external constituents, data review by the steering committee and stakeholder groups, development of a set of preliminary goals from the data, a mini-SWOT analysis by stakeholder groups to provide comment on the preliminary goal analysis, and a final review by the steering committee and President's Cabinet. This draft was opened for public comment before being sent for approval to the Board. No changes were made to NIC's Vision and Mission Statements.

In spring 2009, several NIC representatives attended the Commission's workshop for training under the new standards process. At that time, an Accreditation Executive Committee was created consisting of the vice president for instruction, vice president for student services, vice president for community relations & marketing, director of institutional effectiveness, faculty coordinator for assessment and accreditation, and executive assistant for community relations. Work began to identify and develop NIC's Core Themes through campus-wide input from

various constituent groups. The executive committee organized suggestions and recommended three Core Themes consisting of *Student Success, Instructional Excellence, and Community Engagement*. At this time, the executive committee chose individuals from campus to serve on “theme teams;” one for each Core Theme. During summer 2009, the Core Themes were approved by the President’s Cabinet and presented to the Board.

In fall 2009, an Accreditation Steering Committee was developed consisting of faculty and staff to work with the Accreditation Executive Committee to identify objectives, outcomes, and indicators (*See Appendix A – Accreditation Steering Committee*). The steering committee developed a plan to solicit campus wide input into the process using “Community Rooms.” A three-week period for participation was selected and a “Community Room” opened in the Molstead Library to all students, faculty, and staff. The room was staffed with steering committee representatives and guidance was provided to help solicit input regarding activities and programs supporting the three Core Themes. To accommodate outreach staff, faculty, and students, online Community Rooms were also created. Using the data gathered through the Community Rooms, the steering committee developed objectives, outcomes and indicators for the Core Themes. In spring and fall 2010, the executive and steering committees further developed the Core Theme indicators and established mission fulfillment statements. (*See Appendix B – 2009-2010 Timeline of Accreditation Planning Activities*).

NIC will complete the first seven year cycle under the new standards in three years with visits occurring in spring 2012 and 2013 (*See Appendix C – 2009-2013 NIC Accreditation Timeline*). The current Core Themes align with NIC’s Strategic Goals and it is planned that at the end of the first cycle under the new accreditation standards, the Core Themes and college’s Strategic Plan will mirror each other in terms of their headings and structure. The executive committee currently has plans to expand its membership to include members from campus governance groups as we continue forward with the Standard Two report and prepare for our year three visit in 2012.

# Chapter One: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

## Section 1.A: Mission

*1.A.1 The institution has a widely published mission statement—approved by its governing board—that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.*

### Mission Statement

“NIC is committed to student success, teaching excellence, and lifelong learning. As a comprehensive community college, NIC provides quality educational opportunities that expand human potential and enhance the quality of life for the students and the communities it serves.”

The NIC mission was developed during the 1998-1999 school year as part of the Strategic Planning process. The process consisted of a thorough review of the college’s mission, and the creation of vision and values statements. The mission has not changed since that time and continues to focus on the areas of “student success, teaching excellence, and lifelong learning.” The college’s mission gives direction to all its educational activities, to its admission policies, to the selection of its faculty, to the allocation of resources and to its planning processes. NIC publishes its mission in the college catalog, on the college website, in its program guides, and in numerous college publications. The mission and vision statements are posted in every building on campus, and in most classrooms.

### Vision Statements

NIC will be...

- A comprehensive community college, a regional leader in an integrated education system, and a catalyst for positive change.
- A student-centered institution that embraces innovation and flexibility in response to community needs.
- The first choice of students seeking an accessible and affordable quality education.
- A caring, supportive learning community where the principles of equality are modeled and promoted.
- An institution dedicated to scholarship, personal growth, and lifelong learning.

### College Values

The values upon which NIC bases its mission and vision statements are the principles, standards, and qualities the college considers worthwhile and desirable. The college ensures that its values are freely chosen, publicly affirmed, and consistently acted upon. NIC recognizes that the quality of its faculty and staff is key to the accomplishment of its mission. The values are:

- Pursuing Excellence
- Promoting Scholarship
- Ensuring Access to Education and Training
- Upholding Ethical Practices and Integrity
- Serving the Community
- Fostering Human Dignity
- Modeling Citizenship
- Furthering Cooperation and Collaboration
- Maintaining Accountability
- Nurturing Creativity

1.A.2 The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

### **Definition of Mission Fulfillment**

Following models which focus on excellence, NIC has created its vision for mission fulfillment through its Core Themes. Fulfilling NIC's mission requires innovative and engaging teaching and learning processes, highly-qualified faculty, competent support staff and programs, successful students, appropriate supporting technology and facilities, healthy communication, visibility in our service region, and public support. As a comprehensive community college, NIC's fundamental mission is to provide educational opportunities for all populations, which can best be described in terms of its Core Themes: *Student Success, Instructional Excellence, and Community Engagement*.

NIC's Core Theme Objectives are derived from the college mission. They define the Core Themes and lead to the outcomes which are observable results of actions and accomplishments based on one or more of the related Core Theme indicators. Most of the Core Theme indicators in the Standard 1 Report focus on process indicators (methods of delivery; assessment; quantity produced) and outcomes indicators (benefits or impacts; results), with the understanding that inputs (time; money; staff; materials) will be identified in Standard 2. In order to holistically provide a comprehensive picture of the college, a variety of indicators go beyond traditional financial and academically-related variables that are quantifiable. Examples of less tangible indicators are accessibility for all students, participation in activities, and student/faculty/staff expectations and satisfaction levels. Some of the Core Theme indicators are well-established with analysis methods in place, while others will take time to implement before establishing benchmarks.

The approach taken for benchmarking the Core Theme indicators is based on a Likert-type rating. As applicable, Core Theme indicators will have a definition, how they are measured, their source, the standard for measure as well as criteria for the standard. The standard will include percentage ranges for each of the three levels as are appropriate for that particular indicator. The levels have a color associated with each one so they can be easily identified. If a Core Theme objective indicates weaknesses, a plan to improve will be implemented. The three levels and their associated color include the following:

- Exceeds Expectations (green)
- Meets Expectations (yellow)
- Needs Attention (red)

### **Accomplishments that Define Mission Fulfillment**

The Core Theme objectives are representative of NIC's mission. These objectives will be measured through accomplishments identified in the Core Theme indicators. The Core Theme objectives are:

- Objective 1: To help individuals become North Idaho College students.
- Objective 2: To help students reach their educational goals.
- Objective 3: To offer educational opportunities to best serve a diverse population.
- Objective 4: To maintain a student-centered learning environment.
- Objective 5: To promote innovation and excellence in teaching.
- Objective 6: To establish and maintain collaborative community partnerships.
- Objective 7: To establish and maintain a supportive and sustainable learning and working environment.

The evaluation of mission fulfillment occurs through evaluation of its Core Themes of Student Success, Instructional Excellence, and Community Engagement. This framework provides NIC with a means for identifying its institutional strengths and challenges. Regular reflection by administration, staff, and faculty will inform planning and promote practices focused on continuous improvement (*See Appendix D – Institutional Planning Framework*).

## Section 1.B: Core Themes and Expectations

1.B.1 The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.

1.B.2 The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.

**Core Theme I - Student Success:** To provide access to an education environment that helps students attain their education goals.

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

**Strategic Plan Alignment:** Theme II – Student Support: Goal 1 - Improve student access; Goal 2 - Implement initiatives to increase student success; Goal 3 - Improve student communications.

**Description of Core Theme I – Student Success:** Woven throughout the fabric of NIC’s philosophy, vision and mission statements, values, goals and outcomes is a common thread of purpose – student success. NIC is a comprehensive, student-centered institution, committed to student success, expanding students’ potential, helping students grow and learn. This is demonstrated through recruitment, enrollment, processes, support services, facilities, student programs, recreational opportunities, athletics, performing arts, and extra-curricular activities. The college recognizes that student success is possible by providing access to education, and promoting persistence and progress in studies until a student’s educational goals are achieved. It also recognizes that student success is enhanced by engaging students in college and community activities which provide complementary skills which reinforce learning.

### Objectives, Outcomes, Indicators and Rationales

Core Theme I has two objectives:

Objective 1: To help individuals become North Idaho College students

Objective 2: To help students reach their educational goals

<b>Objective 1: To help individuals become North Idaho College students</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1. Effective support services and resources available to prospective students in order to ensure access.	Implementation of non-instructional program review. Student satisfaction with services.
2. Prospective students successfully transition to North Idaho College.	Rates of enrollment representative of Northern Idaho population. ABE, GED, WINGS, Tech Prep students’ transition rates into degree/certificate programs. Student rates of participation in orientation programs.

**Rationale:** *Implementation of non-instructional program review.* NIC believes that all programs, whether instructional or support, lead to student success and student learning. Program review for non-instructional programs at NIC is new. Implementing program review in non-instructional programs will allow NIC to consider a broader set of questions such as

efficiencies, use of resources, and student learning outcomes achieved through co-curricular activities. This will be measured through successful implementation over a five-year period.

**Rationale:** *Student satisfaction with services.* Support services are critical to student success. NIC has developed targeted and innovative support mechanisms to enhance access and complement a full range of student development activities. Soliciting student satisfaction with services provides validation for existing programs and allows NIC to improve or add services as necessary.

**Rationale:** *Transition, enrollment and persistence rates help* NIC determine whether it is providing sufficient levels of access, particularly to segments of the population that have historically been underserved by higher education. Additionally, this data validates the value of transitional programs such as ABE, GED, WINGS, and Tech Prep; as well as targeted outreach services to the college, students and the community. Persistence rates help NIC keep students on a path leading from college readiness to achievement of educational goals by monitoring movement through courses and programs.

**Rationale:** *Student rate of participation in orientation programs.* NIC serves a student population with vast differences in educational goals, challenging socio-economic backgrounds, and a variety of levels of readiness for college level coursework. Orientation programs for first-time entering freshmen have been shown to increase enrollment and to reduce attrition rates. NIC has implemented orientation for most credit-seeking students. By monitoring participation rates in orientation programs, NIC increases its potential to identify student needs and ensure the quality and availability of orientation for all students.

<b>Objective 2: To help students reach their educational goals</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students achieve their educational goals.</li> <li>2. Effective academic support services and resources.</li> <li>3. A culturally competent student body.</li> </ol>	Academic success rates. Success rates in college skills classes. Degree attainment rates. Transfer rates. Job placement rates. Implementation of non-instructional program review. Educational opportunities reported through the Diversity Steering Committee Annual Report.

**Rationale:** *Academic success rates.* NIC has developed a multi-faceted approach to measuring the success of its programs. Although graduation, transfer and retention rates are traditional indicators of student success, there are other indicators that reflect the demographic characteristics and attendance patterns of community college students. NIC’s institutional data sets allow for analysis of student progress in addition to these traditional indicators.

**Rationale:** *Success rates in college skills classes.* The majority of NIC students enter at a pre-college academic level in at least one area. One outcome of creating access to education and promoting student achievement of educational goals is by providing courses which equip students with the skills needed to perform college level coursework. Tracking success rates in college skills classes provides a means for tracking college-readiness and ensuring students are prepared to move to the next level, thereby ensuring students can reach their educational goals.

**Rationale:** *Degree attainment rates* are standard indicators used to track students’ educational progress and achievement of educational goals. IPEDS tracks a cohort of full-time, first time degree/certificate-seeking students which provides benchmark data for comparing completion

rates from year to year. Information about completion contributes to a fuller understanding of how well the college helps students sustain success throughout their degree program.

**Rationale:** *Transfer rates.* NIC regularly reviews degree requirements to align its curriculum with the 4-year institutions' curriculum in the State of Idaho. NIC monitors rates of transfer to not only show trends and progress over time, but to show that students are successfully transferring to other institutions of higher learning.

**Rationale:** *Job placement rates.* Professional-technical and workforce education students enroll in programs that prepare them to enter the workforce upon graduation. By tracking successful placement in related employment, we ensure NIC's programs are aligned with industry skills and reflect market demand.

**Rationale:** *Implementation of non-instructional program review.* NIC believes that all programs, whether instructional or support, lead to student success and student learning. Program review for non-instructional programs at NIC is new. Implementing program review in non-instructional programs will allow NIC to consider a broader set of questions such as efficiencies, use of resources, and student learning outcomes achieved through co-curricular activities. This will be measured through successful implementation over a five-year period.

**Rationale:** *Educational opportunities reported through the Diversity Steering Committee Annual Report.* The Diversity Steering Committee is responsible for coordinating a variety of groups and activities on campus which support development of a culturally competent student body. Many of these activities are integrated with the Human Rights Education Institute, an independent, internationally recognized center for human rights. An annual report from the Diversity Steering Committee will serve as an indicator of a culturally competent student body. Examples of activities that are reflected in the report include, a Student Leadership Development Class (SOSC 102) that places significant emphasis on cultural competency; a Student Education sub-committee charged with implementing a program and developing techniques for teaching students cultural competency; and The United Against Hate group created to develop and provide student, faculty and staff training and dialogue focused on cultural competency.

**Core Theme II – Instructional Excellence:** Enhance quality educational opportunities that promote student success, teaching excellence and lifelong learning.

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

**Strategic Plan Alignment:** Theme I - Programs: Goal 1 - Improve and expand educational opportunities, programs, and courses for the student population and community; Goal 2 - Expand and improve alternative delivery of education; Goal 3 - Develop and expand opportunities for high school students enrolled through NIC, emphasizing professional-technical and dual credit/enrollment programs. Theme VI - Diversity and Human Rights: Goal 1 - Promote diversity and human rights, including respect for all elements of the college.

**Description of Core Theme II – Instructional Excellence:** NIC fulfills its role as a comprehensive community college by offering courses and programs in five areas: transfer education, professional-technical education, basic skills education, workforce education and community education. Programs are characterized by a curriculum that is well-ordered and diverse and by a faculty and support staff committed to teaching excellence and student success.

The focus of the Instructional Excellence theme encompasses three objectives aimed at evaluating what NIC views as the underpinning for achieving excellence: quality programs which meet diverse needs, student-centered teaching and learning, and innovation and excellence in teaching. The outcomes and indicators for this theme provide a useful way of making sense of the challenge of measuring “Instructional Excellence.” The Instructional Excellence theme provides a means for evaluating the institution’s progress toward providing educational opportunities that promote student success, teaching excellence and lifelong learning.

### Objectives, Outcomes, Indicators, and Rationales

Core Theme II has three objectives:

- Objective 1: To offer educational opportunities to best serve a diverse population.
- Objective 2: To maintain a student-centered learning environment.
- Objective 3: To promote innovation and excellence in teaching.

<b>Objective 1: To offer educational opportunities to best serve a diverse population.</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1. Students obtain college-level skills to pursue and achieve their educational goals.	Institutional student data meet defined success rates.
2. Students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes defined through the General Education Abilities.	Successful implementation of program review action plans and advisory committee recommendations.
3. Students successfully transfer to 4-year institutions.	Consistent curriculum review process which aligns courses and programs with 4-year college or industry requirements.
4. Professional-technical students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to meet the needs of regional employers.	Actions/improvements made to courses and programs based upon student learning outcomes assessment results.
5. Workforce Development and Customized Training courses and programs provide opportunity to upgrade or develop new skills.	Licensure examination results and employment rates.
6. ABE/GED students transition to college-level courses.	Enrollment in and completion of short-term workforce training and customized training courses/programs. Customer/student feedback on courses, training, and services. Completion, transition, and placement rates of ABE courses and GED programs.

**Rationale:** *Institutional student data meet defined success rates.* NIC has developed a multi-faceted approach to measuring the success of its programs. Although graduation, transfer and retention rates are traditional indicators of student success, there are other indicators that reflect the demographic characteristics and attendance patterns of community college students. NIC’s institutional data sets allow for analysis of student progress in addition to these traditional indicators.

**Rationale:** *Successful implementation of program review action plans and advisory committee recommendations.* The review of programs is intended to improve the overall quality of existing instructional programs offered to NIC students. Its purpose is to assist the faculty in conducting a self-study of their programs to assure that the educational programs are responsive to the needs of our students. The program review process provides a seamless method for tying goals to strategic initiatives and budget planning. Advisory committees are

required for all professional-technical programs at NIC. These committees provide interaction with employers and workers who are current in their field. Advisory committee recommendations result in improvements to the curriculum, internships/job opportunities for students, and ensure the skills and knowledge of NIC graduates meet current industry standards.

**Rationale:** *Consistent curriculum review process which aligns courses and programs with 4-year college or industry requirements.* As a comprehensive community college, courses and programs must respond to the rapid expansion of information and skill sets, and at the same time respond to professional standards and Idaho State Board core requirements for transferability. A well-designed and aligned curriculum ensures it is relevant, current, transferable, and competitive. Institutional processes are faculty-driven and promote the integration and application of knowledge reflected in the disciplines, general education, and industry skill requirements.

**Rationale:** *Actions/improvements made to courses and programs based upon student learning outcomes assessment results.* Student performance is the most direct indicator of the Instructional Excellence Core Theme. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) demonstrate what students know and are able to do as a result of their education at NIC. Identifying common outcomes for courses, programs and general education ensures NIC's curriculum is rigorous, provides depth and breadth, and aligns with transfer institutions and potential avenues of employment. Assessment of SLOs provides a means for analyzing the curriculum in order to continuously improve teaching and learning.

**Rationale:** *Licensure examination results and employment rates* are critical indicators of success for the professional-technical programs. Employment indicates how well NIC prepares students to be successful in their chosen field. Licensure examination results are indicators of success for specific programs in fields that require certification for employment and practice.

**Rationale:** *Enrollment in and completion of short-term workforce training and customized training courses/programs.* Enrollment data allow NIC to identify areas of need and increase or reduce programming accordingly. Successful completion of Workforce Training programs allows NIC to track short-term training rates and monitor the success of its trainers.

**Rationale:** *Customer/student feedback on courses, training, and services.* Student and employer satisfaction with community education, and workforce and customized training courses is assessed through a consistent evaluation process. Participant feedback is collected at the end of each course/program and is used in decisions related to curriculum, instructor selection and retention, scheduling, and marketing.

**Rationale:** *ABE/GED students transition to college-level courses.* The performance measures for ABE programs are outlined in the Workforce Investment Act. These measures include adult learners who show measurable gains in completing an educational level, passing the GED test, getting a job or advancing in a job, or entering higher education or vocational training.

<b>Objective 2: To maintain a student-centered learning environment.</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1. Flexible learning environment meets diverse needs.	Range of programs, locations, delivery methods, technology infrastructure and training to meet all population needs.
2. Learning environment encourages student participation and feedback on teaching and learning.	Actions/improvements in consideration of course evaluations and student satisfaction surveys.
3. Learning environment provides consistent communication of student responsibilities.	Consistent statements and publication of student responsibilities.

**Rationale:** *Range of programs, locations, delivery methods, technology infrastructure and training to meet all population needs.* NIC is an open-access, comprehensive community college serving a diverse student population in a rural state with challenging socio-economic circumstances. Over the last few years, NIC has worked to provide outreach to a vast service region through the use of technology and outreach center programming. Maintaining a range of services is necessary to meet the needs of all populations in its service area.

**Rationale:** *Actions/improvements in consideration of course evaluations and student satisfaction surveys.* Course evaluations and student satisfaction surveys provide a means to produce useful feedback which instructors and the college can use to improve the quality of instruction and the teaching and learning environment. The results of course evaluations are beneficial in that instructors can review and improve their teaching methods, curriculum, and teaching resources. Satisfaction survey results from students are related to their perceptions of their educational experience at NIC and provide a means for improving instructional programs, educational services for students, and resources and facilities.

**Rationale:** *Consistent statements and publication of student responsibilities.* The college is dedicated to the open exchange of knowledge and skills, growth in student capacity for critical thinking, and the development of responsible students. Effective communication between all the constituencies in the college is necessary to fulfill the mission and assure student success.

<b>Objective 3: To promote innovation and excellence in teaching.</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1. Faculty, staff and administrators participate in activities that facilitate teaching and learning.	Tracking of faculty, staff and administrator participation in professional development activities.
2. The college maintains highly-qualified faculty and staff.	Percentage of faculty (regular and adjunct) who meet standards for their disciplines.
3. Culturally competent faculty, staff, and administrators.	Percentage of faculty and staff participating in a defined evaluation process. Training and education reported through the Diversity Steering Committee Annual Report.

**Rationale:** *Tracking of faculty, staff and administrator participation in professional development activities.* NIC believes by helping faculty and staff grow in their scholarly and professional work, it enables them to provide service and leadership across instruction, services, and outreach and encourages productive collaborative relationships among participants. In return, the college and its students benefit from a professionally competent faculty and staff.

**Rationale:** *Percentage of faculty (regular and adjunct) who meet standards for their disciplines.* NIC hires faculty who are academically and experientially qualified professionals to teach in its programs. NIC maintains high standards of recruitment and hiring to ensure the most qualified applicants are selected through rigorous hiring processes. A well-qualified faculty contributes to high quality instruction. The ability to attract and retain excellent faculty is critical to the college's mission.

**Rationale:** *Percentage of faculty and staff participating in a defined evaluation process.* All full-time faculty members are evaluated according to established criteria by their peers and division chair on a rotating basis every three years. Evaluation records for purposes of retention, promotion or tenure indicate the performance of faculty in all assigned areas of their workloads, including teaching. These evaluations provide evidence of effective teaching, as well as evidence for improvement. All staff are evaluated in their assigned areas on an annual basis. These evaluations provide evidence of acceptable performance or improvement, as well as aid in identifying individual development goals.

**Rationale:** *Training and education reported through the Diversity Steering Committee Annual Report.* During spring Semester 2010, 12 faculty and staff received cultural competency training with Dr. Raymond Reyes, a nationally renowned educator on intercultural relations. Dr. Reyes also facilitated a Diversity Summit that was attended by 50 faculty, staff, students and community members. At that Summit, ideas for restructuring the Diversity Steering Committee were proposed and those ideas are being implemented during the 2010-2011 academic year. One aspect of that restructuring is the formation of a Workforce Training Committee whose goal is to implement programs that will educate the workforce. This in turn will allow them to work more effectively to infuse the value of cultural competency in the workplace and in classes. In addition, The United Against Hate group was formed to create student, faculty and staff training and dialogue to have a more culturally competent campus. All of these activities are documented in an annual Diversity Steering Committee Report which will serve as a measure of a culturally competent faculty, staff and administration.

**Core Theme III - Community Engagement:** Enhance the quality of life for our students and communities.

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

**Strategic Plan Alignment:** Theme III - College Communications and Climate: Goal 1 - Improve organizational and inter-departmental communications. Theme IV - Finance and Funding: Goal 1 - Pursue expanded funding opportunities through NIC Foundation for student success, faculty-staff support, facility development, and program development. Theme V - College Image and Relations: Goal 1 - Enhance community perception of NIC among targeted groups; Goal 2 - Promote awareness and recruitment through a strong marketing campaign. Theme VII - Physical Resources: Goal 2 - Advance the campus infrastructure with regards to technology and safety.

**Description of Core Theme III – Community Engagement:** Healthy community interaction, both internal and external, are vital to NIC’s continued success. As a community college, part of NIC’s mission is to meet the needs of the communities it serves. This requires institutional involvement with the community through education, scholarship, outreach, and partnerships. Core Theme III focuses on the benefits of engaging community. NIC offers a wide variety of programs that promote learning, diversity, a place for social dialogue, artistic performances, and athletics. Resources are dedicated to creating partnerships with business, industry, government, and other educational entities. Support and engagement of students, faculty, and staff in activities that allow them to explore their interests and capabilities, a well-managed campus which provides appropriate infrastructure and safety, and a satisfied faculty and staff ensures the continued vitality of the NIC internal community.

### **Objectives, Outcomes, Indicators, and Rationales**

Core Theme III has two objectives:

- Objective 1: To establish and maintain collaborative community partnerships.
- Objective 2: To establish and maintain a supportive and sustainable learning and working environment.

<b>Objective 1: To establish and maintain collaborative community partnerships</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sustained relationships with businesses, community, and educational entities.</li> <li>2. Partnerships generate services, programs, and resources.</li> </ol>	<p>Engagement with, and support from, area business, industry, educational institutions, and community entities.</p> <p>Participation in community service and governmental entities.</p> <p>NIC Foundation fundraising report.</p>

**Rationale:** *Engagement with, and support from, area business, industry, educational institutions, and community entities.* Partnerships are mutually beneficial to the college and to the various businesses, agencies, and educational entities with which NIC links. Partnerships build capacity within the college and the community, and result in recognition by the community and other entities. This indicator focuses on significant partnerships and it ultimately aims for growth in significant partnerships.

**Rationale:** *Participation in community service and governmental entities.* NIC recognizes its role as a center for learning, scholarship, creative activities, cultural events, and athletics. NIC’s administrators, faculty, staff and students regularly support, serve, and contribute to a variety of community events, boards, chambers of commerce, non-profits, and commissions. The college recognizes these contributions and believes it reflects the employee’s dedication to its objective of establishing and maintaining collaborative community partnerships.

**Rationale:** *NIC Foundation fundraising report.* This indicator supports the NIC Foundation fundraising efforts which are vital to the success of NIC’s programs, services, and students. The NIC Foundation’s annual report is evidence of a wide variety of funds and activities which directly support the college mission.

<b>Objective 2: To establish and maintain a supportive and sustainable learning and working environment</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators engage in learning opportunities, wellness, scholarships, and creative projects.</li> <li>2. Attract and retain quality employees.</li> <li>3. Effective lines of communication within the campus community.</li> <li>4. Effective services available to ensure safety and inclusion.</li> </ol>	<p>Participation tracked in campus programs designed to develop or enhance learning, wellness, scholarship, or creativity.</p> <p>Strategic initiatives accomplished that are designed to attract and retain quality staff and faculty.</p> <p>Availability and assessment of internal communication initiatives, resources, and activities through satisfaction surveys.</p> <p>Biannual ADA Code and Compliance Report.</p> <p>Campus Safety Reports.</p>

**Rationale:** *Participation tracked in campus programs designed to develop or enhance learning, wellness, scholarship, or creativity.* Employee participation in professional development opportunities indicates a degree of satisfaction and comfort in their work environment. Participation in programs that stimulate learning, promote creativity and scholarship, and promote wellness, creates a staff who are likely to contribute more readily to the college and continue in their employment.

**Rationale:** *Strategic initiatives accomplished that are designed to attract and retain quality staff and faculty.* NIC is committed to attracting and retaining high quality employees. Several

Strategic Goals address recent changes to NIC's hiring practices including developing a formal mentoring program, revising the Professional Development Program, establishing new hiring practices, and a recent job analysis and creation of an internal equity structure with alignment/restructuring of pay grades. The salary changes will be adopted as appropriate and depending upon available funds.

**Rationale:** *Availability and assessment of internal communication initiatives, resources, and activities through satisfaction surveys.* Employee Opinion surveys provide a means to produce useful feedback which the college can use to improve the campus environment and overall campus communication.

**Rationale:** *Biannual ADA Code and Compliance Report.* NIC is committed to providing access and reasonable accommodations to students, faculty and staff with disabilities in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and corresponding state and federal law.

**Rationale:** *Campus Safety Reports.* The personal safety and security of students, staff, and visitors and the protection of property are high priorities at NIC. Creating and maintaining a healthy and safe campus environment requires the cooperation and involvement of everyone. NIC ensures campus safety through a variety of emergency preparedness plans. Emergency plans and procedures are available on the NIC Campus Security web pages. NIC subscribes to an Emergency Alert System available to all employees and students. The Campus Security Department uses a variety of methods and measures to ensure compliance with all safety needs.

## Chapter Summary

NIC's Year One Report has been a collaborative effort from the start. An 18-member steering committee that guided the process was made up of faculty, staff and administrators representing the college community. Core Theme sub-committees made up of steering committee members met on a regular basis to identify objectives, outcomes and indicators for each Core Theme. The final report was reviewed by every constituent group on campus, the college President, and the Board.

NIC's Year One Report describes the college's institutional purpose, objectives, intended outcomes and indicators. Together, these provide a foundation for NIC's institutional effectiveness and mission fulfillment. Preparation of the Year One Report has encouraged the college to consider more carefully how information it gathers illustrates its overall mission fulfillment. The new process has enabled the college to see the institution's strengths and challenges as well as the inner-connectedness of the mission, programs, policies, and services.

Although the initial "phasing in" of the new accreditation process requires NIC to accomplish the transition to new standards in three years, NIC views it as a means for better aligning Idaho State Board of Education goals, institutional goals, strategic goals, and program goals in order to close the planning and evaluation loop. The current climate in higher education focuses on evidence of accomplishments, decision-making in the context of outcomes and measures, and accountability to students and community. The new standards process requires that the college focus on its accomplishments, tie its decision-making to indicators that reflect the outcomes, and be accountable for its decisions. A process which requires in-depth collaboration across all constituent groups and focuses on continuous improvement ensures that NIC will have the opportunity to expand, grow, and meet the needs of the communities it serves.

# Accreditation Steering Committee Structure



## Spring 2009-Fall 2010: Timeline of Accreditation Planning Activities

Date	Activity
<b>Spring 2009</b>	Executive Committee was created by President's Cabinet with the following members: Vice President for Instruction, Vice President for Student Services, Faculty Coordinator for Assessment and Accreditation, Director of Institutional Effectiveness.
	Letter sent by Vice President for Instruction to constituent leaders soliciting campus input into core theme development; Executive Committee organized suggestions and created a recommendation for three Core Themes consisting of Student Success, Instructional Excellence, and Community Engagement.
	Executive Committee members visited Divisions, Chair Meetings, Instructional Council, and Faculty and Staff governance groups to present new accreditation process and Core Theme structure.
	Executive Committee created a Steering Committee of individuals from campus to serve on Theme Teams, one team for each Core Theme.
<b>Summer 2009</b>	Committee Structure for the coming year was developed (see Appendix A); Executive Committee assigned as Theme Team Leaders for each of the three Themes with Vice President for Instruction providing oversight.
	Core Themes were taken to President's Cabinet and the Board of Trustees for review/approval.
<b>Fall 2009</b>	Steering Committee met to review materials and new process, with break-out sessions for Theme Teams and Leaders.
	Campus input solicited using "community rooms." Three-week participation period opened to all students, faculty, and staff; Molstead Library room staffed with steering committee representatives to provide guidance; outreach staff, faculty, and students accommodated through online community rooms; data gathered and used to create the foundation for the Core Theme objectives, outcomes and indicators.
	Executive Committee attended NWCCU workshop.
<b>Spring 2010</b>	Change in Executive Committee structure, Vice President for Community Relations & Marketing and Executive Assistant for Community Relations added.
	Vice President for Instruction and Faculty Coordinator attended NWCCU training.
	Steering Committee met to review and discuss the draft Theme objectives, outcomes, and Indicators.
	Closure e-mail sent to current Steering Committee; Theme Teams' work on Year 1 Report completed.
<b>Spring/Summer 2010</b>	Mission fulfillment discussions led to idea to add two more Core Themes (Resource Stewardship and Diversity & Inclusion); idea presented to President's Cabinet and further discussion resulted in keeping with three original Core Themes.
<b>Fall 2010</b>	Executive Committee plans to add representatives from campus governance to the Steering Committee as work begins on the Year 2 report.
	Year One Report to Management Team for Review.

## North Idaho College Accreditation Timeline 2009 - 2013

Semester/Year	Actions
<b>Fall 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify Core Themes</li> <li>– Identify Objectives, Outcomes &amp; Indicators for Core Themes</li> </ul>
<b>Spring 2010</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Finalize Objectives, Outcomes &amp; Indicators for Core Themes</li> <li>– Identify Goals and Indicators of Mission Fulfillment</li> <li>– Draft the Year 1 Report (<i>Standard 1 report only</i>)</li> <li>– Begin Planning for Year 3 Report</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 2010</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Finalize Year 1 Report</li> <li>– Begin Year 3 Report (<i>update Standard 1; Standard 2 report and visit</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Spring 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Submit Year 1 Report to NWCCU by March 1 </li> <li>– Continue work on Year 3 Report</li> <li>– Begin planning for Year 7 Report (<i>update Standards 1 and 2; Standards 3, 4, and 5 report and visit</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Finalize Year 3 Report</li> <li>– Prepare for spring visit</li> <li>– Begin data collection for Year 7 Report</li> </ul>
<b>Spring 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Year 3 Report submitted (Jan.) for spring visit </li> <li>– Spring – evaluation team visit (<b>April 16-18</b>)</li> <li>– Continue collecting data for Year 7 Report</li> <li>– Begin writing Year 7 Report</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Finalize Year 7 Report</li> <li>– Prepare for spring visit</li> </ul>
<b>Spring 2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Year 7 Report submitted (Jan.) for spring visit </li> <li>– Spring - evaluation team visit (<b>dates TBA</b>)</li> </ul>

= Report due

# North Idaho College Institutional Planning Framework

## Visual Representation

