

Perceptions about North Idaho College

Summary of a Focus Group Discussion Held January 14, 2008

Focus Group Setup, Background, and Highlights

Primary objectives:	<p>In December 2007 North Idaho College commissioned Strategic Research Associates to conduct a focus group of external constituents to explore perceptions and attitudes about their relationship with the college.</p> <p>The primary objectives were to gauge the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Perceptions about NIC's relationships with partner institutions2. Perceptions about NIC's current performance on meeting the communities needs3. Perceptions about and recommendations for the future of NIC
Discussion time:	The group was convened on Thursday, January 14, 2008 from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm
Where:	Allen Hall on the North Idaho College Campus
Moderators:	Dean Moorehouse, Liza Nirelli and Aaron Rux of Strategic Research Associates
Recruiting method:	North Idaho College was responsible for all of the recruiting
Composition of groups:	The focus group consisted of eight women and four men. Eight were between the ages of 51-60; three, 61 or older; and one, between 41-50 years.
General Procedure:	<p>The group consisted of 12 individuals who represented different facets of the business and local leadership community. An audience testing system, OptionPower, was employed, which allowed respondents to answer anonymously and to capture these results in quantitative form.</p> <p>Appendices to this volume include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The moderator's guide• The discussion questionnaire
Limitations:	The following synopsis is based upon a discussion with 12 individuals. Results should be interpreted cautiously. In particular, quantitative projections require research with much larger sample sizes.
Executive Summary:	<p>The focus group exercise consisted of five sections: Introduction, Demographics, Relationships with Partner Institutions, Relationships with the community, the Future of NIC and Conclusion. While this summary is not comprehensive, it will provide a brief description of the most salient findings within each section. Please refer to the tables for further exploration of the OptionPower exercises.</p> <p>See the Discussion Synopsis (starting on page 4) for elaborations and additional details.</p>



Executive Review of Primary Findings

This two page *Executive Review* provides a quick summary of selected focus group findings. The *Synopsis of Results* (pages 4-11) provides a more thorough summary.

- **How the focus group was conducted and who participated**

North Idaho College commissioned Strategic Research Associates to conduct a focus group composed of area business leaders that convened on January 17th, 2008. The goal of this group was to gauge stakeholders' perceptions of their relationship with the College. The group lasted for an hour and a half and had 12 participants. North Idaho College recruited the participants for this group.

The composition of the group was 4 males, 8 females, ages varied from 41 to over 61 years with the majority of participants falling between the ages of 51 and 60. Of the 12 respondents, 9 had lived in North Idaho for more than 21 years, and when asked how many North Idaho College graduates have been or are currently employed within their respective organization, 4 said "10 or more" 6 said "none", one of the individual selected "1" (There were only 11 responses to this question).

The focus group was conducted in six sections: Introduction, Demographic, Relationships with Partner Institutions, Communication with the Community, Economic Development, the Future of NIC, and Conclusion. In addition to traditional group moderation techniques, the moderators used OptionPower, an innovative audience testing system.

- **Relationships with Partner Institutions**

When rating the benefit of NIC's relationships with Lewis-Clark State College and the University of Idaho, 9 of 12 participants reported that these partnerships were advantageous to them, while 2 were "neutral" and one individual selected "Don't know". Among the advantages, participants highlighted that these partnerships make higher education more geographically feasible by providing a larger service area, offer a broad array of programming, provide flexibility for part time students, is less threatening for students transitioning from rural communities, and these partnerships support economic development by allowing students to stay in North Idaho while pursuing higher education. The perceived disadvantages of these partnerships were competition among these three institutions for a limited pool of applicants and duplication of coursework.

When asked whether a degree earned locally in Coeur d'Alene through NIC's partner institutions was just as valid as the same degree earned at one of the main campuses, the response was very positive for both University of Idaho and Lewis-Clark State College; well over half of participants "strongly agreed" with this statement.

Respondents also indicated that while NIC is making considerable outreach efforts to promote these partnerships, University of Idaho and Lewis-Clark State College are not.

- **Communication with the Community**

This section aimed to explore and measure the performance of NIC on various community related issues. Similar to previous sections, the exercise was a combination of a series of OptionPower questions in which respondents rated the performance of NIC on several items and a group discussion which explored the two items that received the lowest average ratings. The two areas explored were NIC meeting the needs of the senior citizen community and NIC meeting the needs for technical and professional training. With regard to the senior community the group cited two problems (1) the process for registration is incredibly tedious, requiring numerous phone calls and confidential information such as Social Security



Numbers, and (2) the senior citizen community is not aware of these opportunities for life-long learning because the current marketing messages are not reaching them. One solution offered was “going straight to the source”, or making these programs available at more convenient locations such as nursing homes or community recreation centers.

The second area that respondents felt needed improvement was in technical and professional training. The comments varied from specific complaints like, “NIC dropped the ball when it decided to eliminate the welding programs” or “We are faced with the challenge of supplying a new generation of miners, but we can’t find any workers who are willing or prepared with the skill set for a career in the mining industry” to more abstract reflections on topics such as the burden of the higher education system in meeting the ever-changing needs of the workforce in North Idaho and whether or not the institution should be emphasizing technical programs at the expense of deterring students from pursuing a four year education.

- **Economic Development**

The goals of this section were (1) to assess the group’s perceptions about the value of both a 2 and 4 year education and (2) to measure the group’s perceptions about the value of NIC. Clearly, this group of participants felt that the presence of NIC in the community was an asset and not a burden. The discussion offered the following benefits: provides increased opportunities for higher education (these respondents also thought that the satellite services provided in Sandpoint and Bonner’s Ferry contribute to economic development of the region), provides a more educated community and therefore a better citizenry, more resources for culturally enriching activities like theatre, art and music, provides a good education at an affordable price, and dual enrollment opportunities for motivated high school students.

Respondents were also asked about the importance of a four and two year degrees; they generally agreed that higher education is an important component in meeting the needs of the workforce.

- **The Future of NIC**

The final section of the group focused on the future direction of NIC. One of the goals of this section was to measure the current performance of NIC on various issues. With regard to the direction of the college, of four areas that were tested, *Community relationships* received the most support while *Marketing/Web* the least.

The final question challenged respondents to identify the greatest strength and most pronounced weakness of the College. The top two greatest strengths were *Emphasis on Health Programs*, and *the continued expansion of the workforce training center*. The two weaknesses receiving the highest votes were *educating the community of the value of NIC* and *maintaining a balance between 2yr technical and 4yr oriented programs*.



Discussion Synopsis

- **Demographics**

Table 1

**Q3. In the past 5 years, estimate how many NIC students, past or present, have been employed with your organization or are currently employed with your organization?
(n=12)**

Answer	Responding
None	6
1	1
2-5	0
6-10	1
10 or more	4

Table 2

**Q4. How long have you lived in Northern Idaho?
(n=12)**

Answer	Responding
1-2 years	2
16-20 years	1
21-30 years	5
Over 30 years	4
Don't know	1

- **Relationships with Partner Institutions**

This section consisted of an introductory OptionPower question which aimed to assess general perceptions about these partnerships. A follow up exercise asked respondents to create a specific list of the advantages and disadvantages of these partnerships. The next question tested the specific relationships with Lewis-Clark State College and University of Idaho and the extent that respondents felt that a degree from these institutions earned locally in Coeur d'Alene was just as valid as a degree earned on the primary campuses.

Table 3

Q5. Locally, NIC partners with Lewis-Clark State College-Coeur d’Alene and University of Idaho, Coeur d’Alene. From your point of view, do you feel these partnerships are beneficial to you as an employer? (n=12)

Answer	Responding
Strongly agree	7
Mildly agree	2
Neutral	2
Mildly disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Don’t know	1

Of the 12 respondents in attendance, 7 selected “Strongly agree”, 2 “Mildly agree” and two selected “Neutral” when asked about the value of these partnerships. It should also be noted that none of the 12 respondents selected “Mildly disagree” or “Strongly disagree”.

As a follow up to this question, respondents were asked to list the advantages and disadvantages of these partnerships, which the moderators tabulated on an easel. Advantages were listed as follows:

- Flexibility for part-time students
- Less threatening for students transitioning from rural communities
- These partnerships make higher education geographically feasible by providing a larger service area
- Provides a broader diversity of programs offered within the three institutions
- It supports economic development in the region by allowing students to stay in North Idaho

Similarly, the disadvantages, although fewer in number, were listed as follows:

- Competition among these institutions for a limited pool of students
- Duplication of resources with regard to the courses that are offered

After discussing the advantages and disadvantages to these partnerships, the exercise continued with two questions that measured the reputations of these alternative degree programs for both Lewis Clark State College - Cd’A and University of Idaho - Cd’A. As Tables 4 and 5 show, the four year degree programs offered in Coeur d’Alene received a high level of support for both institutions. For LCSC – Cd’A, 10 respondents selected “Strongly agree” while for University of Idaho, the voting totals were similar: 8 individuals selected “Strongly agree” and 3 chose “mildly agree”. None of the respondents selected a “Neutral”, “Mildly disagree” or “Strongly disagree” when asked about the validity of either four year degree options.



Table 4
Q6. A Bachelor's degree earned locally through NIC and LCSC-Cd'A is just as valid as the same degree granted from the main campus located in Lewiston? (n=12)

Answer	Responding
Strongly agree	10
Mildly agree	1
Neutral	0
Mildly disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1

Table 5
Q7. A Bachelor's degree earned locally through NIC and UI Cd'A is just as valid as the same degree granted from the main campus located in Moscow? (n=12)

Answer	Responding
Strongly agree	8
Mildly agree	3
Neutral	0
Mildly disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1

To conclude this section, participants were asked if they believed that the University of Idaho and Lewis Clark State College were doing enough to attract potential students into these collaborative four year programs. The first comment that surfaced in the discussion was that while NIC is doing a great job of outreach in the more rural communities to attract potential students, respondents felt that University of Idaho and Lewis Clark State College are doing enough to ensure that these students are aware of the many opportunities that these collaborations provide.

- **Communication with the Community**

This section aimed to explore and measure the performance of NIC on various community related issues. Similar to previous sections, the exercise was a combination of a series of OptionPower questions in which respondents rated the performance of NIC of several items, and a group discussion which explored the two items that received the lowest average ratings. (Table 6 displays the average ratings for each question).

Table 6
NIC's performance on meeting the community's needs

Question Item	Average Rating (5= Strongly agree, 1= Strongly disagree)
B. NIC responds to the community needs	3.83
A. NIC communicates well with the public	3.75
G. NIC meets the community needs for high school students	3.75
H. NIC meets the community needs for adult learners	3.58
D. NIC meets the community needs for academic training	3.42
E. NIC meets the community needs for job and skill enhancement	3.17
C. NIC meets the community needs for professional and technical training	3.00
F. NIC meets the community needs for senior citizens	2.73

As Table 6 shows, the three areas that received the lowest rating, in order, were as follows: “NIC meets the community needs for citizens,” “NIC meets the community needs for professional and technical training” and “NIC meets the community needs for job and skill enhancement”. For the senior citizens, respondents indicated that there are two common problems that undermine NIC’s attempts to engage the senior citizen community: (1) the process for registration is incredibly tedious, requiring numerous phone calls and confidential information like Social Security Numbers and, (2) the senior citizen community is not aware of these opportunities for life-long learning because the current marketing messages are not reaching them. One solution that was offered was “going straight to the source”, meaning that perhaps these programs, as well as the seniors themselves, would benefit from having more programs available at more convenient locations such as nursing homes or community recreation centers.

The second area that respondents felt needed improvement was in job and skill enhancement. With regard to this topic, while the average rating of the question was a 3.17, putting it somewhere between “neutral” or “mildly agree”, arriving at a singular solution or reason for this sentiment was challenging for the group. The comments varied from specific complaints such as, “NIC dropped the ball when it decided to eliminate the welding programs” or “We are faced with the challenge of supplying a new generation of miners, but we can’t find any workers who are willing or prepared with the skill set for a career in the mining industry” to more abstract reflections on topics such as the burden of the higher educational system to meet the ever changing needs of the workforce in North Idaho and whether or not the institution should be emphasizing technical programs at the expense of deterring students from pursuing a four year education.

In addition to discussing the difficulties of supplying a technical workforce, the group also explored some of the obstacles that can undermine the success of an institution like NIC. One of the topics that surfaced in this section was an unfair social stigma, or lack of prestige attributed to a two year education. One respondent said “We, as a society, need to do a better job of educating graduating high school students as to the benefits and the income potential of a technical degree.” This sentiment was supported by another respondent’s comment who stated that “This is a cultural issue; we need to recognize that higher education can take on many different forms.”

Responding to the problem of some of the deficiencies in areas of technical education, participants suggested that NIC work with the business community and area high schools to develop additional collaborative programs.



• **Economic Development**

The goals of this section were (1) to assess the group’s perceptions about the value of both a 2 and 4 year education and (2) to measure the group’s perceptions about the value of NIC from the perspective of a cost/benefit analysis. After a five minute discussion in which respondents were asked to list their “top of mind” benefits of having NIC located in their community, three OptionPower questions followed; their responses are displayed in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

Clearly, this group of participants felt that the presence of NIC in the community was an asset and not a burden. The discussion offered the following benefits:

- More higher education opportunities for people (in Bonner’s Ferry and other outlying communities)
- Provides a more educated community and therefore a better citizenry
- More resources for culturally enriching activities like theatre, art and music
- Provides a good education at an affordable price
- Dual enrollment opportunities for motivated high school students

The second part of the section was to measure the group’s attitudes towards different higher education models such as technical/2year degree and a 4 year college degree, and the ability of each to accommodate the needs of today’s workforce. As Tables 7 and 8 illustrate, the distribution of opinions for both education paths is somewhat similar. Overall, the first question received less support as a “Very important” component of meeting the workforce needs, but this difference is marginal at best.

Table 7

Q9. How important is a technical/2 year degree to meet the needs of the workforce? (n=12)

Answer	Responding
5 – Very important	4
4 –	3
3 –	4
2 –	1
1 – Not very important	0
Don’t know	0

Table 8

Q10. How important is a 4 year college degree to meet the needs of the workforce? (n=12)

Answer	Responding
5 – Very important	5
4 –	3
3 –	3
2 –	0
1 – Not very important	1
Don’t know	0



It appears that both models are viewed as equally important to the workforce and without any single option, be it 2 year/technical or 4 year, receiving a dramatic disparity in support.

Table 9
Q11. NIC is reasonably priced (n=12)

Answer	Responding
Strongly agree	6
Mildly agree	3
Neutral	3
Mildly disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0

The third OptionPower question in this section attempted to test the relationship between price/affordability of the education and the value it provides for students and the community. As Table 9 shows, half (6/12) of the respondents selected “strongly agree” with the statement, while options “mildly agree” and “Neutral” each received three votes. However, it should be noted that none of the 12 respondents indicated that they disagreed with this statement on any level.

The question that concluded this section was “Given the tremendous growth in North Idaho in recent years, do you think that NIC’s curriculum is addressing the changing needs of the workforce? What are some of the areas where it has done well in accommodating this growth?” The comments are listed as follows:

- NIC has done an excellent job in CNA, LPN and assisted living programs
- Creation of new programs that encourage strategic partnerships between other institutions of higher education (this respondent cited a recent newspaper article that discussed collaboration between NIC and Spokane Falls Community College in a health care related field)
- Very friendly to the returning students (non-traditionally aged students)
- Recent growth has been supported by the workforce training center

• **The future**

The final section of the group focused on the future direction of NIC. One of the goals of this section was to measure the current performance of NIC on various issues. For this task, a brief questionnaire was developed which respondents were given five minutes to complete. Tables 10 and 11 provide the average rating for each of the questions. A copy of the NIC Future questionnaire has been included in the appendix.



Table 10
Is NIC moving in the right or wrong direction? (n=12)

Item	Average Direction Rating (5= Right direction, 1= Wrong direction)
A. Community relationships	4.4
B. Creation of new programs	4.3
C. Quality of the education	4.1
D. Marketing / Web	3.3

Of the four areas that were tested, *Community relationships* received the most support while *Marketing/Web* the least. However, it appears that, in general the respondents are pleased with the current direction of the college.

Table 11
Please rate the following at NIC: (n=12)

Item	Average Rating (5= Excellent, 4=Very good, 3=Good, 2=Fair, 1= Poor)
D. Affordability	4.3
E. Instructional Quality	3.9
G. Prepares Students for 4 Year Degrees	3.8
F. Extra-Curricular Opportunities	3.6
B. Program Options	3.4
C. Prepares Students for Careers	3.3
A. Customer Service	3.1

The next set of questions examined additional attributes of NIC and current performance related to these items. Of the seven attributes being tested *Affordability* garnered the highest average rating (4.3), while *Customer Service* the lowest (3.1).

Table 12
Q12. From the reasons listed below, select the option that you feel is NIC's greatest strength. (n=12)

Answer	Responding
Emphasis on health programs	6
Continued expansion of the workforce training center	3
Dual enrollment	2
Community relationship	1
Growth of web / technical	0
High school outreach	0

In this exercise participants compiled a list of NIC’s greatest strengths and their responses were written on an easel. Respondents were then asked to vote on the single greatest strength of NIC and of the ten options that were generated in the exercise, *Emphasis on health programs* and *Continued expansion of the workforce training center* received the most support.

Table 13
Q13. Of these options, if you could select one area that NIC needs to work on the most, what would it be? (n=12)

Answer	Responding
Educating the community of the value of NIC	6
Maintain a balance between 2yr/technical and 4yr programming	4
Retraining the displaced worker	2
Marketing / education to HS students	0
Professional population	0
Marketing to variety of different age groups	0
Market affordable tuition / scholarship	0

Similar to the previous question, respondents were asked to generate a list of some of the areas where NIC needs improvement and to vote on the item that requires the administration’s most immediate attention. Of the seven areas, *Educating the community of the value of NIC* received the highest amount of support, followed by *Maintaining a balance between 2 year/ technical and 4 year college oriented programming*. In general, the comments about NIC were very positive, and it should be noted that respondents felt that NIC is a tremendous asset to Coeur d’Alene and many of the surrounding communities in North Idaho; however, many respondents also indicated that often the value the institution provides is overlooked. One respondent attributed this to a traditional skepticism of higher education in North Idaho, while another respondent said that she didn’t believe that the marketing efforts were reaching the targeted demographics. She also expressed concern that in addition to not reaching these younger populations, the college isn’t emphasizing the affordability of NIC.

FOCUS GROUP THEMES

EXTERNAL:

I. Introduction

5 minutes
(4:00PM)

- A. Welcome
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Topic: North Idaho College
 - 3. Why you were invited...[All have experience with this topic]

You have been invited because you represent the different facets of the business community in North Idaho. This exercise is intended to allow NIC to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses from different perspectives.

- B. What we're going to be doing...

Today's session will last an hour and a half, and before we begin, I want to emphasize that we are going to cover a lot of ground, so it's important that we stay on track and keep the discussion moving. This exercise is going to be a mix of a survey and a discussion. At times, we will ask you to elaborate in further detail, while other times we may say, we need to move on. For some of the questions you may be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire or write down your top of mind responses. So that said, let's be quick, let's be honest and now let's get moving.

- 1. Rules
 - Participation/courtesy/give others a chance, etc. Speak clearly, one at a time in a voice as loud as mine. No side conversations. No right or wrong answers. Want honest opinions. Represent others who aren't here.
- 2. Restroom
- 3. Taping to be used for moderator's use only in writing report
- 4. Questions

II. Demographic

5-min
(4:05PM)

This hand held unit is called option power. This audience testing tool is used to help us capture quantitative information in larger group settings. It's also nice because it allows all the responses to be tabulated anonymously. So just to get you familiar with the unit, let's start with some questions that you definitely know the answers to.

OptionPower:

- Gender: male/female
- Age: under 25, 26-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61+
- In the past 5 years, estimate how many NIC students/former students have been employed with your organization or are currently employed with your organization: none, one, two to five, six to 10, or more than 10.
- Total number of years living in Northern Idaho: less than 1, one to two, two to four, five to ten, ten to fifteen, fifteen to twenty, twenty to thirty, thirty+

III. Relationships with Partner Institutions (CDA Campuses of LCSC & UI) 20min (4:10)

Option Power:

Locally, NIC partners with Lewis-Clark State College-Coeur d'Alene and University of Idaho, Coeur d'Alene. From your point of view, do you feel that these partnerships are beneficial to you as an employer?

Scale: Strongly agree, Mildly agree etc. ... Don't know

Follow up 1: Some of you feel that this is beneficial, while others don't. Help me understand this. Let's compile a list of the advantages and disadvantages that NIC receives from having a relationship with these partner institutions. Let's write them on the board. These could be anything that you can think of.

[Separate into two categories on the easel]

[Probe for the following reasons as needed, keeping time in mind]

Positives: [Stay in CDA

Stronger workforce

More educated/qualified work pool

Option power:

Agree or Disagree. A Bachelor's degree earned locally through NIC and Lewis Clark State College-CdA is just as valid as the same degree granted from the main campus located in Lewiston?

Scale: Strongly agree -- Strongly disagree - - Don't Know

Option Power:

Agree or Disagree. A Bachelor's degree earned locally through NIC and University of Idaho CdA is just as valid as the same degree granted from the main campus located Moscow?

Scale: Strongly agree -- Strongly disagree - - Don't Know

Follow up: Are UofI and LCSC doing enough to attract NIC students into their local programs?

IV. Communication with the community

**25-min
(4:30PM)**

Next we are going to switch directions and talk about the how well NIC communicates with the community and if the community needs are being met by NIC.

In this next section, please think and answer these questions in light of how they pertain to YOU, as a member of the North Idaho business community. We are going to ask you a series of 8 questions, and then afterwards we will have time to discuss some of these questions further detail.

Option Power:

Scale: 1.Strongly agree - to - 5. Strongly disagree

1. NIC communicates well with the public
2. NIC responds to the community needs
3. NIC meets the community needs for Professional & technical training
4. NIC meets the community for Academic training
5. NIC meets the community needs for Job & Skill Enhancement
6. NIC meets the community needs for Senior Citizens
7. NIC meets the community needs for High School Students
8. NIC meets the community needs for Adult Learners

[Compile results for the questions and then use mean scores to try and generate conversation as to what could be done to improve these scores, starting with the highest (closest to strongly disagree). For reasons of time, we'll try to explore the 2 least agreed upon statements.]

From what you said, the two statements that scored closed to strongly disagree (highest) were: 1____ and 2____. Therefore, we are going to explore these areas further.

[Using the questions below that correspond to each of the statements above, generate conversation]

1. What are some suggestions that you would give NIC on how better to communicate better or more effectively with the community?
2. Can you give us specific examples of how NIC does not respond to community needs?
3. What does NIC need to do to better meet the community needs for Professional & technical training?
4. What does NIC need to do to better meet the community needs for Academic training

5. What does NIC need to do to better meet the community needs for Job & Skill Enhancement
6. What does NIC need to do to better meet the community needs for Senior Citizens
7. What does NIC need to do to better meet the community needs for High School Students?
8. What does NIC need to do to better meet the community needs for Adult Learners?

V. Economic Development

20 min
(4:55pm)

Next we are going to switch directions and talk about Economic Development.

As you all know, NIC is a publicly funded community college. Do you feel that the region benefits from having the college here? If so, what are these benefits, or how does the region benefit?

[Create a group discussion for 5 minutes]

In this next section, please think and answer these questions in light of how they pertain to YOU, as a member of the business community in North Idaho. We are going to ask you a series of 3 questions then afterwards we will have time to discuss some of these questions in further detail.

Option Power:

1. How important is a technical/2 year degree to meet the needs of the workforce? 1: Not very important – to – 5: Very important. **NATE: notice opposite scale direction.**
2. How important is a 4 year college degree to meet the needs of the workforce? 1: NOT very important – to – 5: Very important. **NATE: notice opposite scale direction.**
3. NIC is reasonably priced. 1: Strongly agree - to – 5: Strongly disagree **NATE: Keep scale in typical direction.**

[Compile results for the questions and then use mean scores to try and generate conversation as to what could be done to improve these scores, starting with the highest (Strongly agree or NOT Very Important). For reasons of time, we'll try to explore the highest score only.]

From what you said, the statement we are going to explore in further detail is 1_____.

[Using the questions below that correspond to each of the statements above, generate conversation]

Now let's think about the tremendous growth in North Idaho in recent years. Do you think that NIC's curriculum is addressing the changing needs of the workforce? What are some of the areas where it has done well in accommodating this growth, and what does it still need to work on? Are there any particular areas that are lacking at NIC, such as programs or curriculum?

VI. The Future

**20-min
(5:10PM)**

In the next section we are going to talk about the future of NIC. Before we go on in our discussion, in front of you is a piece of paper titled “NIC Future”. Please fill out this packet. Please indicate if you think NIC is moving in the right direction or wrong direction on these issues. You will be given five minutes to complete the survey.

	Wrong Direction				Right Direction		DK
Community Relationships							
Creation of New Programs							
Quality of the Education							
Marketing/WEB							

Rate the following at NIC:	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent		DK
Customer Service							
Program Options							
Prepares Students for Careers							
Affordability							
Instructional Quality							
Extra-Curricular Opportunities							
Prepares Students for 4 Year Degrees							

Let’s explore the direction of NIC. The 1st set of questions you answered was about the direction of NIC. Either from this list of topics or some of your own not listed, what are some areas that you feel NIC is definitely moving in the right direction? Together, let’s come up with **5** reasons.

[List five reasons on the board]

Option Power: From the reasons listed below, select the option that you feel is NIC’s greatest strength.

Is there anything that you believe is undermining the goals and or future of NIC? Together, let’s come up with **5** things.

[List on the board]

Option Power: Of these options, if you could select one area that NIC needs to work on the most, what would it be?

[Pick up papers NIC FUTURE]

VI. Closing

**5min
(5:30pm)**

Summary of the themes:

Follow up: Is there anything else you would like to add?

End of session.

