

# **SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT**

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

## **NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**

**September 20, 2010**



**Academic  
Quality Improvement  
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight **Northern Michigan University's** achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

### Category 1:

- NMU appears to have in place significant data gathering capability and NMU reports extensive assessment at the course level. Compared to its peers, learning outcomes appear to be equal or higher. Extension of assessment to the program level could identify further opportunities to improve student learning outcomes. However, utilization of assessment information to improve processes appears uneven across the institution. NMU appears aware of this and is encouraged to broaden the use of assessment information among its departments. NMU has identified the need for increased support of at risk students, which is an opportunity to improve outcomes of those students. In addition, there appears to be a need to better connect the various sections of this category in the portfolio. The institution reports processes for which results are not reported and results of actions not discussed in the process section.
- Overall, NMU appears to be moving from designing processes towards implementing and determining the effectiveness of the processes. As it continues its journey, potential next steps include integrating regular review processes or feedback processes into the currently implemented student learning processes and increased use of direct measures of student learning. NMU's increased focus on the use of results suggests an opportunity to identify acceptable or target levels of student performance for each of the relevant metrics, allowing NMU to focus its efforts for continuous improvement on those areas it judges to be most off target. As the institution matures, a systemic and holistic approach to its processes may lead to improved results, better cross-department coordination, and a mechanism for prioritization of efforts in an environment of constrained resources.

### Category 2:

- NMU presents examples of improvements in accomplishing its other distinct objectives. The institution has identified the need for further actions in the development of its key

processes to support non-instructional programs and is moving forward in selected areas. Although NMU does describe many accomplishments, it would strengthen the portfolio to include developed targets for measuring these objectives, tracking the trends of these measures, and providing analysis of data supporting evidence of its accomplishments. In addition, the processes presented by NMU are not connected to the results section. In the results section, economic development, workforce development, and community engagement are provided as three overarching classifications of other distinctive objectives. Yet, in the processes section, these are mentioned in passing and not fully addressed or integrated throughout. Elevation of economic and workforce development to the same level as community engagement would create a more effective system for accomplishing other objects.

#### Category 3:

- Overall, it appears the university is committed to internal and external stakeholders; however, the extent to which there is a holistic approach is not evident. Continued development of processes to serve its identified three key non-instructional objectives will assist the region and strengthen the institution.
- NMU has numerous data gathering efforts underway in an attempt to measure satisfaction of its stakeholders and has established a variety of mutually beneficial relationships with external stakeholders. Although venues for understanding student and stakeholders needs are identified and operational, such processes are largely informal and greater data analysis is needed for results and findings to inform future planning. Opportunities exist to establish an overall strategy for implementing actions based on the data and benchmarking the institution's progress against other comparable peers. The university will benefit from a more coordinated institutional effort in these areas permitting a more efficient process for evaluating its relationships and the satisfaction level of its stakeholder groups.

#### Category 4:

- NMU has invested resources in balancing productivity and employee satisfaction, training processes, the implementation of the Leadership Model, and aligning its rewards to Road Map 2015. However, there appear to be opportunities for a more systematic

and strategic approach to valuing its people. NMU has a data rich environment; it has an opportunity to use the collected data to identify improvement opportunities.

Category 5:

- NMU is aware of its needs to continuously improve its ability to lead and communicate for the betterment of the university. It has put time and effort into redesigning its mission and strategic plan providing leadership for decisions and future actions. There is an opportunity to use these documents to identify and clearly articulate an institutional culture, to monitor performance, and to formalize performance measures and communication processes. Establishment of metrics and performance targets specific to leading and communicating and collection of relevant data can help NMU better assess its performance in this area.

Category 6:

- NMU appears to be on the way to well-designed processes to identify, document, and communicate available institutional support services. Results are reviewed and integrated into planning processes. Additional measurements of performance compared to peer institutions may benefit student support areas.

Category 7:

- NMU is in the process of establishing more direct measures of institutional effectiveness that connect more closely to its mission and goals. NMU currently reports collecting and analyzing data in a variety of areas, but does not seem to have identified a process by which the effectiveness of these activities can be measured. NMU may benefit by addressing how effective its data collection and reporting systems are in providing relevant and useful information for performance assessment and decision making. As NMU appropriately states, “the University’s measurement of performance results can be improved by implementing processes that are more systematic.”

Category 8:

- NMU has taken the need to plan its continuous improvement seriously. Using the Road Map to 2015 as a core anchor, activities have occurred to define the institution’s place in the future. Although NMU has a well designed planning process that flows from its strategic plan to shorter term plans and actions, it is not clear the extent to which

evaluation of those processes is integrated and aligned across the institution. The University would benefit by focusing on establishing measures of effectiveness in its planning processes. The successes reported appear to be *ad hoc* targets of opportunity rather than the result of a comprehensive and systematic approach to selection of initiatives. NMU operates in a severely constrained resource environment; determining that the chosen initiatives represent its highest priorities can ensure the most effective use of available resources. There is a need to distinguish between the outcomes of strategies and actions and the effectiveness of the processes used to identify, develop, and implement them.

Category 9:

- NMU has many relationships that contribute to its institutional mission; however, the data and information in the portfolio do not provide a reader with clarity concerning what processes are in place or how those processes led to the establishment of identified relationships. Additional improvements could include critical analyses of relevant measures and discussion of how systematic processes are used to improve institutional performance in this category.

Accreditation issues and Strategic challenges for **Northern Michigan University** are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

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## ELEMENTS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY'S FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

**Executive Summary:** Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

**Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis:** Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If accreditation is essential for your institution then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified both of these kinds of issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview and the feedback it provided for each Category, as well as by reviewing the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic issues offers a framework for addressing ongoing improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

**Critical Characteristics:** Your Systems Portfolio's Organizational Overview provides context for the team's knowledge of your institution's identity, mission objectives, strategic goals, and key factors related to improvement. Critical Characteristics are those features most important for understanding the institution's mission, environment, stakeholders, competitive position, goals, and processes. Characteristics having the greatest relevance to each Category are identified in the Report.

**Category Feedback:** The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report.

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## STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the team attempted to identify the broader issues that present the greatest challenges and opportunities for your institution in the coming years. These are all strategic issues, ones you need to grapple with as you identify your institution's strategies for confronting the future and becoming the institution you want to be. The team also examined whether any of these strategic issues put your institution into jeopardy of not meeting the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation expectations.

**Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*.** An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institution's systems and processes under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the



*Criteria* and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that **Northern Michigan University** has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the Criteria will serve as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

**Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies.** The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues to assist Northern Michigan University in prioritizing and taking action on the important broad challenges and opportunities it faces. From these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, shaping strategies that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. Implementing these strategies may call for specific actions, so AQIP's expectation that your institution be engaged in three or four vital Action Projects at all times will help encourage your administrators, faculty, and staff to turn these strategic goals into real accomplishments. Knowing that Northern Michigan University will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified three areas:

#### **Collection and Use of Data**

- NMU relies mainly on indirect measures. Increased use of direct measures would improve the validity of information collected and used.
- There is a lack of consistency between the measures stated in the R1 sections and the results reported in the other results sections. The team noted that many of the results presented were not linked to the processes or measures presented in the portfolio. It is important to report on the measures stated. NMU will benefit from a more focused effort on collecting and analyzing data related to clearly defined targets and learning outcomes.
- NMU has made many improvements in the AQIP categories. However, much of the information provided does not link to the performance process and results provided in the previous answers. An opportunity exists to connect the threads among process,

results, and improvements. Absent a systemic approach to improvements, *ad hoc* improvements may lack cross-departmental consideration and coordination and lack a mechanism for prioritization of efforts in an environment of constrained resources.

- NMU may benefit from more clearly defined peers for the purposes of benchmarking. The team recognizes that each category may require differing institutions for benchmarking purposes, but each category should have a peer group referenced. Researching peer institutions may assist NMU to identify best practices and to set realistic targets for improvement.

## Processes

- Throughout the portfolio NMU describes numerous activities used to accomplish its goals. However, there is a concern that there are few formal systematic processes described. NMU may benefit by more clearly articulating its processes and by ensuring a systematic approach.

## Culture

- The team consistently pointed out NMU's difficulty articulating its culture and how it impacts the institution's decision-making processes. The institution would benefit considerably from identifying its predominant institutional culture and the impact this culture has on its processes for continuous improvement. This will help the institution more clearly articulate who they are, why they function in specific ways, and how they interact with various stakeholders. In doing so the institution will be able to strengthen and retain those attributes it values most.
- Much of what has been described in the portfolio indicates that NMU tends to react to its external stakeholders and environment rather than being proactive in its processes. This suggests a culture of compliance as opposed to one of continuous improvement.

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## USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

The AQIP *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* is intended to initiate action for improvement. It is therefore important that the Report produced by the Systems Appraisal Team stimulate review of organizational processes and systems. Though decisions about specific actions are each institution's, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of

continual improvement. At the next Strategy Forum an AQIP institution attends, its peers will examine in detail how it is using the feedback from its Systems Appraisal.

An organization needs to examine its Report strategically to identify those areas that will yield greatest benefit if addressed. Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of the Report may be: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

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## CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most important aspects of Northern Michigan University, its current dynamics and the forces

surrounding it, and its internal momentum and aspirations, at least as team members understood them. This section also demonstrates that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes Northern Michigan University distinctive. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public.

**Item    Critical Characteristic**

- OVa    In 2008, Northern Michigan University (NMU) adopted the *Road Map to 2015* with four broad elements: Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Campus Attributes, and Community Engagement.
- OVb    NMU is a public, not-for-profit, mid-sized, comprehensive master's institution in the city of Marquette in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.
- OVc    NMU has approximately 9,400 students: 88% Caucasian, with a balance spread across all other categories no one of which exceeds 4%; 53% female; 92% undergraduate
- OVd    Forty-five percent of NMU's \$101 million general fund budget financed by the state government, 54% by tuition and fees, and 1% from research grants and private giving.
- OVe    NMU is the third largest employer in the community.
- O1a    Liberal Studies Mission and Goals includes six divisions and encourages practices to support faculty and student inquiry and reflection.
- O1b    NMU offers degree-granting programs, through face-to-face education in modest class sizes (60% of NMU class sections have class sizes under 30 students) and web-enhanced learning, ranging from Certificate to Master's as well as an Education Specialist degree.
- O2    Three external stakeholder service categories receiving the most institutional attention are: workforce development, economic development and community engagement. NMU supports over 80 workforce training partners and serves as the principal "public space" in the U.P. for forums and discussions regarding economic development.
- O3a    NMU defines stakeholders as employers, students (prospective, transfer and current) and community (regional and alumni).

- O3b NMU holds a unique position as the local education service provider and has a dual role as both a four-year and a community college role; however its tuition is high compared to other Michigan community colleges.
- O4a NMU has targets for faculty mix to increase flexibility as it adjusts to enrollment declines. The institution expects an anticipated enrollment decline of college-bound students by as much as 20%, which must be balanced with changes in the workforce.
- O4b As of December 2009 NMU had 944 full-time and 235 part-time employees, 86% of whom are represented by a union; five different collective bargaining units. Seventy-six percent of the faculty are tenured or on the tenure track. The average term of service is 13.6 years and the gender distribution is approximately 47% female and 53% male; 93% of the employees are Caucasian.
- O5a Strategies that align leadership, decision-making and communication processes with mission and values, the policies and requirements of oversight entities, and legal and ethical and social responsibilities were addressed in a 2008-2009 Action Plan for an academic master plan that resulted in Road Map to 2015 and Beyond.
- O5b The President's Council, composed of 32 people from across the campus, meets every other week to communicate information and discuss campus issues. A web project promotes localized departmentally controlled websites allowing rapid posting and communication of information to multiple audiences. Additionally, NMU has adopted electronic communication as the primary mode of communicating with students.
- O6a The Campus Master Plan discusses long-term facility needs to support key administrative support services: Student Services, Budget and Financial Services, Facilities, University Services, Technology Support Services. NMU is committed to a sustainable and effective infrastructure of support services aligned with mission and values.
- O6b The physical plant includes 61 buildings with 3.5 million square feet of space on 684 acres of land, with 358 acres on the main campus, 120 acres of Longyear Forest and 206 acres in South Marquette. The University became a member of the U.S. Green Building Council in 2004.

- O7a Data collection done by Institutional Research is determined by external reporting requirements, management information used in support of the mission and goals, and information required to transact business. NMU uses multiple software packages for data management which are supported through the technology infrastructure of Administrative Information Technology and Academic Information Services.
- O7b Over the last decade the Teaching, Learning and Communications (TLC) Initiative at NMU has supplied all faculty, staff, and full-time students with a notebook computer, software, Internet access, and technology support at no additional cost. This effort has made NMU the largest laptop university in the country.
- O8a NMU is constrained by location: the Upper Peninsula population of college-bound students is declining, weather is severe at times and requires higher physical plant operating costs to manage, the median household income in the UP is below the state average causing high levels of financial need, and it admits academically “at-risk” students.
- O8b NMU has one of the lowest tuition and fee structures among the 15 Michigan public universities.
- O9 Key external partnerships include the regional K-12 community, legislators, major employers, regional Native American community, Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Olympic Education Center, and international partners and affiliated study abroad programs.

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## CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these “strengths and opportunities” sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing or outstanding opportunity for improvement* (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention,

either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

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## **AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN**

*Helping Students Learn* identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1, Helping Students Learn:**

***Item      Critical Characteristic***

- OVb    NMU is a public, not-for-profit, mid-sized, comprehensive master's institution in the city of Marquette in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.
- OVc    NMU has approximately 9,400 students: 88% Caucasian, with a balance spread across all other categories no one of which exceeds 4%; 53% female; 92% undergraduate
- O1a    Liberal Studies Mission and Goals includes six divisions and encourages practices to support faculty and student inquiry and reflection.
- O1b    NMU offers degree-granting programs, through face-to-face education in modest class size (60% of NMU class sections have class sizes under 30 students) and web-enhanced learning, ranging from Certificate to Master's as well as Education Specialist degree.

- O3b NMU holds a unique position as the local education service provider and has a dual role as both a four-year and a community college role; however its tuition is high compared to other Michigan community colleges.
- O7b Over the last decade the Teaching, Learning and Communications (TLC) Initiative at NMU has supplied all faculty, staff, and full-time students with a notebook computer, software, Internet access, and technology support at no additional cost. This effort has made NMU the largest laptop university in the country.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1, Helping Students Learn.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1P1	S	The Liberal Studies Committee (LSC) at NMU is responsible for setting common learning objectives. The Liberal Studies Committee utilizes data and information from various sources including faculty surveys, discussion forums and examination of current higher education practice to inform its draft common learning objectives and goals. There is a defined process, led by faculty, to add or remove courses to and from the Liberal Studies Program that includes approval by Academic Senate and provides the ability to modify objectives if the mission and/or vision are modified.
1P2	S	NMU department objectives are developed through the use of multiple approaches depending on the needs and learning objectives of the program. Cross-disciplinary specific programmatic learning objectives are determined at the departmental level in a variety of ways – faculty committee, curriculum committee or in conjunction with other departments.
1P3	S	Specific requirements are determined by the faculty at the departmental level with guidance provided by advisory boards, accrediting bodies, or other appropriate stakeholders. NMU uses a curriculum approval process that involves review and approval by appropriate Senate committees,



which include faculty and students, before review by the 15 state institutions in Michigan through a committee of Provosts.

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| 1P4a | S  | NMU processes for design of appropriate academic programs includes employer surveys, alumni reports and interviews so that program offerings reflect students interests and job market needs.  |
| 1P4b | O  | Although NMU describes the sources of information used to determine program offerings, the process by which that information is used to assess relevancy of programs is not clear, nor are the criteria used to vet the information evident.   |
| 1P5  | S  | Incorporation of enforcement into the automated course scheduling system to preclude students lacking prerequisites and required testing from enrolling is notable and ensures that students have the expected preparation for courses in which they enroll. Establishment of course prerequisites and preparation follows the same process as for creating/removing courses; determination of preparation requirements begins at the discipline level and is reviewed at the institutional level to ensure consistency across the institution.                              |
| 1P6  | SS | NMU uses multiple means of communication to inform potential and current students of required preparation and objectives for specific programs. Of note is the use of the program audits to alleviate confusion and enhance clarity for students as they progress towards degree attainment. As of 2009, an automated audit system was implemented to allow students and advisers to monitor student progress towards meeting those objectives. Institutional Research tracks internal preparatory statistics and monitors the Common Data Set for the institution's review. |
| 1P7  | SS | The First Year Experience Program gives students an excellent transition program into university life. Each incoming student with a declared major is immediately assigned a faculty advisor from an academic department and undeclared students are assigned an advisor from the Academic and Career Advisement Center.   |

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| 1P8a  | S | Placement tests for Math and English, Freshman Probation and College Transitions Program for non-baccalaureate students are in place to identify and support underprepared students.   |
| 1P8b  | O | Although NMU has assessment tools to detect underprepared students; there is no indication as to how these students' needs are addressed. NMU describes its remedial courses as "available and recommended when indicated" and not as mandatory for students requiring remediation. Mandatory remediation ensures that students do not over-estimate their abilities despite placement test results. It is not clear that self-assessment of English proficiency is an accurate determinant of proficiency and the use of standardized and normed assessment instruments may provide greater validity. |
| 1P9   | O | At the student level, the First Year Experience program helps students to determine their learning styles. At the faculty level, seminars and workshops are provided to increase awareness of different learning styles and the use of various teaching methods. However, there is no information provided as to what the institution does with that information or what resources are available.  |
| 1P10a | S | NMU has specific programs and processes to address special needs of student subgroups which include Disability Services, Academic Career and Advising Center, <i>Campus Connection</i> and Health Physical Education and Recreation Department. NMU provides multiple channels of communication to inform students of the services available to special needs students. The process by which faculty are informed of authorized student accommodations is in place.  |
| 1P10b | O | One potential group of students not addressed in this response are those that lack substantial knowledge and/or use of computers. Although NMU provides a laptop and the majority of information available to student subgroups is online, it may be beneficial to consider ways to involve those less inclined to computer use.   |

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| 1P11a | S | TLAC functions to encourage conversations on issues involving expectations for effective learning and teaching. CITE offers faculty workshops throughout the year that can assist faculty to improve teaching abilities. Language is included in collective bargaining contracts to document instructional responsibilities. NMU has a new faculty orientation program that includes an assigned faculty mentor and a resource manual.  |
| 1P11b | O | Although the assignment of a mentor is a valuable addition to faculty orientation, the resource manual and the college faculty manual are examples of “one-way” communication. The inclusion of two-way communication and reflective practice in new faculty orientation is not evident in the materials provided. The role and responsibilities of the mentor are not discussed. Additionally, there is no evidence provided as to a process by which effective teaching is defined or documented.   |
| 1P12a | S | NMU provides a variety of course opportunities in terms of duration, delivery method, and time of day to meet the needs of specific populations of students. The University places minimum and maximum enrollments as it delivers courses via face-to-face, traditional continuing education formats, online and hybrid delivery systems. Course scheduling originates in departments, and IT staff and Academic Information Services provide course design support. The course scheduling process is also adaptable to increased or decreased student demand for courses and effective use of resources. |
| 1P12b | O | Although NMU states that the course delivery system provided a variety of delivery methodologies based on the needs of specific populations of students, no evidence is provided as to the process by which it ensures that course delivery in each of its modalities meets both student and organization needs. A process by which effectiveness of each course delivery modality is assessed and that information incorporated in modality revisions could help ensure that both student and organizational needs are met.  |

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| 1P13a | S | Institutional Research (IR) coordinates in-depth alumni surveys that include reasons for attending NMU, employment, satisfaction with employer feedback from advisory boards and surveys, external programmatic accreditation information, and monitoring at the departmental level with specific program objectives to ensure that programs and courses are up-to-date on a departmentally determined cycle. Quantitative and qualitative results are prepared by IR and given to the departments. |
| 1P13b | O | NMU monitors course effectiveness at the department level through several feedback methods. However, there is no indication of a holistic program review process. Academic departments, Career Services and Institutional Research have separate processes to evaluate whether programs are effective and reflect current theory and practice. A systemic approach could provide consistent and regular attention to ensure effectiveness and that the voices of all stakeholders are considered.   |
| 1P14  | S | The process for changing or discontinuing a program or a course parallels the process to add programs and courses and is outlined in Figure 1.2. NMU acknowledges its obligation to conduct a teach-out of discontinued programs. NMU stresses the importance of maintaining currency in its curricula.   |
| 1P15a | S | Disability Services, Dean of Students, Academic and Career Advising Center and the Health Physical Education and Recreation Department provide a range of student services. Offices providing support services specific to assessment of student learning include All-Campus Tutoring Program, Peer Assisted Learning System, Specialty Tutoring Labs, Writing Center, Student Support Services and Online Learning.  |
| 1P15b | O | NMU addresses learning support needs of students and faculty through retention, tutor, online and computer, instructional and library, and faculty support. However, it is not clear how support needs are determined or if there are processes in place to address new or changing support needs.  |

It is also unclear as to how, once student needs have been determined, students are notified and referred to the services in place.

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| 1P16 | O | NMU offers a broad range of co-curricular activities to its students. However, it is not clear from the materials provided how these activities align with and support its curricular objectives. Clarity in how co-curricular activities align with and support curricular objectives can help NMU prioritize its support of these activities in a period of constrained resources.  |
| 1P17 | O | Other than board and licensure exams, NMU does not provide evidence of how it determines that students have the learning and development objectives it expects upon completing its programs. Although alumni and employer surveys can provide indirect data, direct data are also needed. NMU could benefit from more direct measures of student/graduate performance to ensure that those awarded degrees, certificates, etc. have attained the knowledge those degrees and certificates evidence to the public. |
| 1P18 | O | Liberal studies uses a rotational method to design its processes to assess student learning while specific programs rely on results of licensure exams and reports generated by academic departments from assessing capstone courses, portfolios, major field exams, internships, standardized tests, surveys, interviews, etc. However, the details of the rotational method or the process by which data points influence the design of assessment methodologies are not documented.                            |
| 1R1  | S | NMU regularly collects cohort performance measures to track students as they progress to degree. In addition, samples of student work, exams, interviews, and other measures are gathered at the program level.   |
| 1R2a | S | NMU has multiple results available on student learning including long-term tracking, liberal studies outcomes assessment results, and study abroad courses. Performance results are used to revise mission and goal statements, improve programs and curriculum, and allocate resources.  |

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| 1R2b | O | Although Tables 1.9 and 1.10 detail retention and graduation rates, it is unclear how these relate to performance results for student learning and development objectives. Clarity in the linkage between retention and graduation rate results and attainment of student learning and development objectives is needed. First year academic standing, also in Table 1.9, has deteriorated in all four tracked groups in 2009 compared to 2008. It is not evident from the materials provided that NMU has identified the causal factors for this and corrective actions needed. Reversal of this change can improve student learning outcomes and retention. |
| 1R3  | O | Although one hundred percent of the departments have an assessment plan on file providing NMU with an excellent opportunity to conduct regular internal benchmarking with regard to identification of measures and data collection techniques, only 59% and 50% of academic departments reported results for program specific objectives for 2008 and 2009, respectively. In 2008 and 2009 62% of service departments reported data. Further, NMU states that 50% of departments used data in 08-09 to improve their services. NMU has self-identified these opportunities and uses continuing educational opportunities to assist departments to improve.    |
| 1R4a | S | Career Services collects post graduation data which provide evidence of the degree to which students have acquired skills and abilities required by external stakeholders. Licensure exams, graduate placement and employer evaluations indicate that NMU students have acquired the knowledge and skills required.   |
| 1R4b | O | NMU reports high pass rates on program specific external exams and high employment or retention rates of graduates. However specific employer response to the knowledge and skills of the graduates hired is not reported. Table 1.14 portrays a mixed picture of direct measurement of student performance, with some programs improving and others deteriorating. Target levels of outcomes are not provided, making interpretation of the results difficult for many of the reported metrics.  |

- 1R5      OO      Performance results for FYE and the College of Business are provided, but multiple student support services are not addressed including Student Support Services support program, AIS, and the Library. Comparable data for the overall campus, as well as for each college and professional program, could provide a more holistic picture of performance results.
- 1R6      S      NMU compares itself to peers in a variety of metrics in Tables 1.16 through 1.18. The reported results indicate favorable outcomes in some elements, unfavorable in others, and equivalent outcomes in some.
- 111a      S      NMU documents several improvements throughout the campus based upon assessment data. For example, the Superior Edge Program is increasing in student participation and engages students in service activities in a structured environment. NMU reports curricular improvements based on assessment activities in a number of divisions.
- 111b      O      NMU provides a variety of examples of recent improvements made to increase student learning. However, the information provided does not link to the performance processes and results in the previous answers. An opportunity exists to connect the threads among process, results, and improvements. Absent a systemic approach to improvements, *ad hoc* improvements may lack cross-departmental consideration and coordination and lack a mechanism for prioritization of efforts in an environment of constrained resources.
- 112      OO      Although NMU provides examples of improvements and may be developing a culture and infrastructure to improve processes to help students learn, it does not address how its culture and infrastructure guide it in choosing the specific targets to improve and to set targets for improved results. Explicit consideration of these factors can help to ensure objectivity in selection and prioritization of initiatives so as to maximize their affect on student learning.

## **AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES**

*Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives* addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:**

***Item      Critical Characteristic***

- OVa    In 2008, Northern Michigan University (NMU) adopted the *Road Map to 2015* with four broad elements: Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Campus Attributes, and Community Engagement.
- OVD    Forty-five percent of NMU's \$101 million general fund budget is financed by the state government, 54% by tuition and fees, and 1% from research grants and private giving.
- OVe    NMU is the third largest employer in the community.
- O2      Three external stakeholder service categories receiving the most institutional attention are: workforce development, economic development and community engagement. NMU supports over 80 workforce training partners and serves as the principal "public space" in the U.P. for forums and discussions regarding economic development.
- O9      Key external partnerships include the regional K-12 community, legislators, major employers, regional Native American community, Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Olympic Education Center, and international partners and affiliated study abroad programs.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.**

***Item                      S/O      Comment***



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| 2P1 | O | While NMU has several Centers which coordinate and serve external stakeholders involved in entrepreneurial activities, it is unclear how non-instructional processes such as athletics, research, economic development, and alumni affairs are designed and operated. Clear design and operation of non-instructional processes including environmental scanning for potential new groups, will further NMU's continuous quality improvement efforts. |
| 2P2 | S | Input from the President's Council and external stakeholders are gathered to inform development of the University Strategic Plan, currently titled Road Map to 2015.  |
| 2P3 | S | NMU's Office of Communications and Marketing works closely with administration to inform expectations of stakeholders about the non-instructional programs through the use of a variety of delivery methodologies as documented in Table 2.2.   |
| 2P4 | O | Although the University's representatives meet with on and off-campus groups in the review of assessment, completion of the 2009-2010 Action Project to establish specific objectives and outcomes for these programs, as well as to expand assessment to include quantitative measurements, will enhance the assessment and review processes.  |
| 2P5 | S | NMU uses an iterative process to manage resource requirements to meet the staffing needs for the university. Staffing needs are based on knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as time on task requirements.  |
| 2P6 | O | Although NMU describes its sources of information and states that the Board of Trustees are the final reviewers of information gathered, it is not clear what process is used to make adjustments in non-academic programs once these programs have been established.   |
| 2R1 | S | NMU has established clear metrics for measuring accomplishments of each objective: economic development, workforce development, and community engagement.   |

2R2a	S	There is a very large increase in the number of students impacted by the Center for Economic Education and Entrepreneurship resulting from educator participants expanding the conveyance of information from Center programs. In a constrained environment, this variation on “teach the teacher” provides a cost effective way to expand program impact.
2R2b	O	Although the number of academic programs and students impacted via the activity center for economic education has increased over the last three years, several programs have seen a decrease in participation: engineering technology, trades, child care, etc. No discussion of these declines or potential causes is included in the portfolio, nor are the results of grants such as the 2008 Business Incubator grant documented. Investigation or documentation of programs whose results are less than favorable needs to be provided for a comprehensive view of these Other Distinct Objectives.
2R3	O	Limited results from NSSE are provided to compare the institution’s results with other higher education organizations. NMU recognizes this and reports that it is in the process of expanding its collection of comparative data.
2R4	S	Results from accomplishing other objectives improve curriculum, strengthen bonds between faculty, staff, administration and the external community, improve student job opportunities and enhance availability of various resources to campus. In addition, benefits of strengthened business and community relationships include a stronger regional economy, campus recruiting, opportunities for field research and student volunteer opportunities.
2R4	O	Although NMU provides multiple examples of Distinctive Objectives that strengthened the organization and enhanced relationships, there is no supporting evidence provided to the statements made. Linking the performance results to the statements made would provide the evidence of the effect on the overall institution, the relationships with the communities, and regions served.

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| 2I1a | S | NMU reports recent improvements including new program development, conferences, performing arts series and creation of the Center for Resources for Enterprise.  |
| 2I1b | O | Although NMU has initiated a broad range of activities as listed in the section, it is not clear from the information provided that there are systematic and comprehensive processes or performance results in place. Completion of the AQIP Action Projects (2P2) can be of assistance in this.   |
| 2I2  | O | NMU does appear to have developed a culture for innovation and has described the beginning of the supporting infrastructure. As the institution itself notes "The new Wildcat Innovation Fund Award has an application and selection process, and the Road Map goals and priorities will be benchmarked and targets set over the next few years." Attainment of those priorities and targets will further support emerging infrastructure. Clarification of the institutional culture could provide insights for NMU as it accomplishes other distinct objectives. |

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### **AQIP CATEGORY 3: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS**

*Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs* examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

- OVa In 2008, NMU adopted the *Road Map to 2015* with four broad elements: Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Campus Attributes, and Community Engagement.
- OVe NMU is the third largest employer in the community.
- O2 Three external stakeholder service categories receiving the most institutional attention are: workforce development, economic development and community engagement. NMU supports over 80 workforce training partners and serves as the principal “public space” in the U.P. for forums and discussions regarding economic development.
- O3a NMU defines stakeholders as employers, students (prospective, transfer and current) and community (regional and alumni).
- O3b NMU holds a unique position as the local education service provider and has dual roles as both a four-year and a community college, however, its tuition is high compared to other community colleges.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1	O	NMU has documented that academic affairs, student services and enrollment are responsible for identifying student needs, but does not provide processes for determining a course of action based upon identified needs. While numerous data collection activities are taking place there does not appear to be a coordinated effort at the institutional level. In addition, reliance on indirect sources may miss current student concerns, particularly as regards co-curricular and other non-academic issues.
3P2a	S	NMU provides numerous formalized mechanisms to initiate relationships with its students. The manner of maintaining a relationship depends on the characteristics of the student: prospective, current or transfer. The process to maintain these relationships are similarly formalized. NMU recognizes that, to students, faculty create the primary sense of the institution.

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| 3P2b | O | Although NMU has a number of independent activities that help students connect with the institution; there is no evidence of a coordinated institution-wide effort to do so or feedback processes to determine if approaches are effective. Additional processes to maintain relationships with students, particularly those not resident on campus, can provide additional channels to build bonds between the institution and its students.                                   |
| 3P3  | O | NMU uses multiple approaches including surveys and feedback loops to identify the changing needs of stakeholder groups. The information provided suggests that NMU reacts to requests from local and regional stakeholders. NMU could benefit from a proactive approach to identifying stakeholder needs.   |
| 3P4  | S | NMU has a well developed process by which it builds and maintains a relationship with other stakeholders including partnerships, internships, involvement of local practitioners on advisory boards, outreach programs and targeted communications.   |
| 3P5  | O | Although examples of new student and stakeholder targets such as the online students and the newly developed Loss Prevention Program are provided; the examples appear to occur absent an institutional process. It remains unclear as to whether a specific process exists; in addition, it is unclear how NMU decides which stakeholder groups to target. Clarification of the decision process could help prioritize among the competing proposals and requests it receives. |
| 3P6  | O | Although specific venues are established through which particular complaints are discussed and addressed, it is unclear how analysis is accomplished and disseminated to the broader institution for action, or how these decisions are communicated. In addition, provision of a neutral channel may give students greater comfort in raising issues of concern.   |
| 3R1a | S | NMU has a variety of measures, both formal and informal, in place to determine stakeholder satisfaction.  |

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| 3R1b    | O  | With the exception of the NSSE survey item, regularly collected information by which satisfaction is measured is most often anecdotal or obtained by indirect measures. Validity and reliability of the data collected could be improved with the use of more direct measures of satisfaction.   |
| 3R2     | S  | The university regularly surveys its alumni and also participates in the NSSE to document current student perceptions and attitudes. Additionally, the College of Business and Housing and Residence Life conduct independent surveys for their respective students on an annual basis.  |
| 3R3     | O  | The results reported do not appear to directly address building and maintaining relationships. Although NMU has several years of survey results in different venues, it is unclear how NMU measures performance results for orientation for prospective students and transfer students or how results are used to improve or demonstrate success in performance. By determining and analyzing its overall performance in building and maintaining relationships, NMU may identify opportunities for improvement. |
| 3R4-3R5 | OO | Much of the data provided are in the form of usage statistics with no evidence to determine performance results or relationship building with stakeholders. It is unclear how an increase in numbers indicates satisfaction with services provided. The institution could benefit from a more coordinated effort of data collection with regard to stakeholder satisfaction.   |
| 3R6     | O  | NMU recognizes the opportunity to increase utilization of comparative data and has begun to take improvement actions. One additional focus could be inclusion of other college specific data as opposed to solely College of Business EBU results.   |
| 3I1     | O  | NMU documents several improvements in this category but there is no indication as to a systematic process being in place at this time. The application of a systemic and comprehensive approach can lead to  |

improved understanding and identification of additional opportunities for improvement.

- 312            O     Although improvements are being made, it is unclear from the narrative presented how the culture and infrastructure of NMU have motivated or supported process improvement or set any performance targets. An in-depth look at the interrelationship of culture, infrastructure and action could indicate formal processes and targets to measure improvement.

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#### **AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE**

*Valuing People* explores your institution's commitment to the development of your employees since the efforts of all of your faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4, Valuing People:**

***Item     Critical Characteristic***

- OVa     In 2008, NMU adopted the *Road Map to 2015* with four broad elements: Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Campus Attributes, and Community Engagement.
- O1a     Liberal Studies Mission and Goals includes six divisions and encourages practices to support faculty and student inquiry and reflection.
- O3b     NMU holds a unique position as the local education service provider and has a dual role as both a four-year and a community college role; however its tuition is high compared to other Michigan community colleges.

- O4a NMU has targets for faculty mix to increase flexibility as it adjusts to enrollment declines. The institution expects an anticipated enrollment decline of college-bound students by as much as 20%, which must be balanced with changes in the workforce.
- O4b As of December 2009 NMU had 944 full-time and 235 part-time employees. 86% of whom are represented by a union; five different collective bargaining units. Seventy-six percent of the faculty are tenured or on the tenure track. The average term of service is 13.6 years and the gender distribution is approximately 47% female and 53% male; 93% of the employees are Caucasian.
- O7b Over the last decade the Teaching, Learning and Communications (TLC) Initiative at NMU has supplied all faculty, staff, and full-time students with a notebook computer, software, Internet access, and technology support at no additional cost. This effort has made NMU the largest laptop university in the country.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 4, Valuing People.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4P1	S	NMU has a defined process for establishing minimum accepted credential standards and qualifications to identify and hire new faculty and staff for each position.
4P2	O	Although HR and/or a search committee review applications attainment of minimum qualifications and further screening is conducted; it is unclear what processes are utilized in the screening.
4P3	O	Although NMU has an employee retention rate of 94% which is clearly a low turnover rate; it is unclear what processes the university utilizes to produce such a high retention rate. An understanding of why employees remain would ensure that this rate can be maintained.
4P4a	S	New faculty orientation is provided prior to the start of the fall semester. Periodic campus forums, framed by the Roadmap, enhance the orientation experience.



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| 4P4b | O | Merely providing employees with an opportunity to learn about the institutional history, mission, and values does not adequately introduce and inculcate the new hires to the institutional culture. NMU could benefit from a more systematic approach to orienting its new employees.   |
| 4P5  | S | NMU has a low turnover rate, with turnover largely due to retirement, and planning provides adequate support for personnel change. Proper “faculty mix” is ensured through the use of the Educational Policy Committee.  |
| 4P6  | S | NMU has criteria based processes in place that allows jobs to be redefined to improve the value to the institution while increasing employee productivity.   |
| 4P7  | S | Ethical policies and practices are available in multiple formats throughout the campus. Audits are conducted, line responsible administrators are notified of the implication of unethical outcomes and expected to respond.   |
| 4P8  | O | Although the training process is well defined, it is unclear how training is aligned to the overall university strategic plan. Ensuring the training is aligned to the overall strategic plan will help ensure the institution’s advancement towards its strategic goals.  |
| 4P9a | S | The University encourages training, from first entering employment to on-going development, for administration, staff, and faculty and training is available throughout the campus.  |
| 4P9b | O | Although NMU provides an extensive list of higher education conferences that it attends, none of the conferences is focused on community college issues. As NMU describes itself as having a community college mission, attendance at community college focused conferences could provide information that strengthens this part of its mission. |
| 4P10 | S | NMU has a defined process for personnel evaluation in place that fosters alignment around the goals of the institution.  |

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| 4P11 | O | While the University offers a variety of employee recognition programs NMU has self-identified a need to align its rewards program with Road Map 2015.   |
| 4P12 | O | It is not clear from the system portfolio what processes are in place to identify motivation issues. A clear course of action once issues are identified would lead to greater satisfaction and productivity for the staff and faculty.  |
| 4P13 | O | NMU evaluates employee satisfaction through regulatory compliance and indirect measures. A direct survey of employee satisfaction would provide documented evidence of satisfaction.   |
| 4R1  | O | The identified items are indirect measures. Validity of data collection could be substantially increased with the addition of direct measures that include the frequency and method of collection.   |
| 4R2  | O | It is unclear if all of the satisfaction measures that are needed to produce meaningful results are adequately being surveyed. NMU could benefit by developing and implementing actions to address the opportunities for improvement identified by survey participants. For example, NMU reports 77% of surveyed employees had no recent experience in training. NMU may want to assess whether its training program is reaching all employees who could benefit from training in light of the survey participants' recommendation to "Improve staff training for new employees and reintroduce staff training." |
| 4R3  | S | NMU use of state peer data as evidence of productivity and effectiveness allows the institution to improve despite constrained resources and evidences its commitment to achieving goals.  |
| 4R4  | O | Comparative data for the measures listed in 4R1 are not included, which reduces the usefulness of assessment of the data as a measure of employee value.   |
| 4I1  | O | Recent changes include improvements to the staffing process and the development of the Leadership Model demonstrates NMUs commitment   |

in valuing people. However, it is not evident how these are part of a systematic and comprehensive plan of improvement. Ensuring that initiatives, taken together, advance a common plan can help NMU ensure appropriate use of resources in a constrained environment.

- 412            O    Although a strong labor relations environment exists, it is unclear how institutional culture, structure, or processes contributes to improving performance. There is no information provided as to how the institutional culture or structure contributes to its processes nor is there any evidence of a process in place for selecting targets for improvement in valuing people.

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## **AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING**

*Leading And Communicating* addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

- OVa    In 2008, Northern Michigan University (NMU) adopted the *Road Map to 2015* with four broad elements: Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Campus Attributes, and Community Engagement.
- O5a    Strategies that align leadership, decision-making and communication processes with mission and values, the policies and requirements of oversight entities, and legal and

ethical and social responsibilities were addressed in a 2008-2009 Action Plan for an academic master plan that resulted in Road Map to 2015 and Beyond.

- O5b The President's Council, composed of 32 people from across the campus, meets every other week to communicate information and discuss campus issues. A web project promotes localized departmentally controlled websites allowing rapid posting and communication of information to multiple audiences. Additionally, NMU has adopted electronic communication as the primary mode of communicating with students.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5P1	O	NMU has documented the process by which its 2008 mission statement was revised and subsequently reviewed by each unit to assure alignment with those mission statements. If an ongoing process and frequency of mission and value statement review exists it is not documented.
5P2	O	NMU describes the process used to develop its Road Map 2015 strategic plan, as well its use of participatory input from its stakeholders. However, NMU does not discuss the process by which its leadership assures that the direction set is in alignment with its mission, values, and high performance. Alignment of the institutional direction decisions by its leadership with its mission and values is necessary to ensure attainment of the intended high performance.
5P3	O	Although a variety of stakeholder groups played a role in the development of the University's mission, goals and ultimately the Road Map, it is not clear from the material provided how the directions established by NMU's leadership take into account the needs and expectations of its students and stakeholder groups. A holistic approach would facilitate attainment of the institution's established goals.
5P4	O	Although there appears to be significant involvement in setting the institutional direction there is no indication as to how the institution's

leadership connects its future opportunities to student learning. Utilizing a comprehensive perspective to seeking future opportunities can identify opportunities of all types, not just through technology and telecommunications.

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| 5P5  | S | NMU uses leadership committees or <i>ad hoc</i> task forces in making its decisions. Table 5.1 documents the standing committees including their membership and oversight responsibilities. The decision making is reported as being based on analyzed data.   |
| 5P6  | O | Although NMU describes how data are collected and for what purposes and identifies what data are used for which decisions, clarification of the process to use collected data in the decision-making processes presents would strengthen decision making.  |
| 5P7  | S | A variety of mechanisms (e.g., President's Council, Academic Cabinet, committee structures, electronic transmissions, hard copies of policies) are used to provide the on- and off-campus community with relevant information. The Communications and Marketing Office also facilitates internal and external communication.   |
| 5P8  | S | NMU leaders communicate shared mission, vision, and values through multiple units' reporting that incorporates institutional alignment. In addition, leaders actively seek input and provide updates to the campus community facilitating feedback.  |
| 5P9  | O | NMU provides numerous opportunities for individuals to develop their leadership potential but there does not appear to be a process in place to encourage such development or to identify the next generation of institutional leaders. A program that seeks to develop and encourage the development of leadership skills, regardless of a person's existing leadership ability, can lead to leadership by staff of all levels. |
| 5P10 | O | NMU reports that its Board stability ensures ongoing commitment to high performance. Although a formal succession planning process has been initiated, an opportunity exists to use the work of that process to ensure continued development of leadership committed to high performance.  |

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| 5R1 | O  | NMU describes metrics related to position performance rather than those specific to leading and communication. The reported metrics do not address leadership skills or communication ability of those evaluated. Establishment of metrics specific to leading and communicating and collection of relevant data can help NMU better assess its performance in this area.  |
| 5R2 | OO | Membership in professional organizations does not constitute a result for leading and communicating. Establishment of metrics specific to leading and communicating and collection of relevant data can help NMU better assess its performance in this area.   |
| 5R3 | OO | Because NMU provides no metrics or results for its leadership and communication processes, it has no comparative data with its peers. Although NMU has joined the Voluntary System of Accountability, it is not clear how the metrics reported through VSA will address the institution's performance of its processes for leadership and communication. Establishment of metrics specific to leading and communicating and collection of relevant data can help NMU better assess its performance in this area. |
| 5I1 | O  | NMU provides four examples of initiatives in leadership and communication. It is not evident from the information provided how these are part of a systematic and comprehensive process approach. Ensuring that initiatives, taken together, are part of a systematic and comprehensive plan can help NMU ensure appropriate use of resources in a constrained environment.  |
| 5I2 | O  | There is no information provided as to how the institutional culture or structure contributes to its processes nor is there any evidence of a process in place for selecting targets for improvement in leading and communicating. Ensuring that initiatives, taken together, are reflective of its culture and infrastructure can help NMU ensure appropriate use of resources in a constrained environment.  |

## AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

*Supporting Institutional Operations* addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

- OVa    In 2008, Northern Michigan University (NMU) adopted the *Road Map to 2015* with four broad elements: Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Campus Attributes, and Community Engagement.
- O6a    The Campus Master Plan discusses long-term facility needs to support key administrative support services: Student Services, Budget and Financial Services, Facilities, University Services, Technology Support Services. NMU is committed to a sustainable and effective infrastructure of support services aligned with mission and values.
- O6b    The physical plant includes 61 buildings with 3.5 million square feet of space on 684 acres of land, with 358 acres on the main campus, 120 acres of Longyear Forest and 206 acres in South Marquette. The University became a member of the U.S. Green Building Council in 2004.
- O7a    Data collection done by Institutional Research is determined by external reporting requirements, management information used in support of the mission and goals, and information required to transact business. NMU uses multiple software packages for data management which are supported through the technology infrastructure of Administrative Information Technology and Academic Information Services.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6P1	S	NMU identifies support services through established proactive and reactive processes. Students are represented on major university committees. President Wong holds regular "Let's Chat" sessions.
6P2	S	Committees, strategic development, planning, and feedback are regularly part of identifying administrative support services.
6P3	S	Physical and security processes align with federal, state, and local agency requirements. The university uses electronic data collection systems to enforce regulatory compliance. In 2008, the university implemented an emergency notification system.
6P4	S	NMU assesses data from call logs, reports, and real time data collections that contribute to the annual outcomes assessment report.
6P5	S	NMU documents and publishes its support processes, holds status meetings, and provides staff training.
6R1a	S	NMU regularly collects and analyzes support services data.
6R1b	O	NMU reports regularly collection and analysis of organizational support services process measurements, however, it is unclear when, if, or by whom it is collected and analyzed.
6R2	O	Several results are for measurements not listed in 6R1. There is no evident correlation between collection and improvement outcomes.
6R3- 6R4	S	Past data collections have been used to address and improve administrative support functions.
6R5	S	NMU shares collected performance data with peer institutions while using the data to improve services and verify expenditures.
6I1	S	NMU has demonstrated recent improvements using data collected resulting in a reduction of operational costs.



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| 6I2 | S | A culture of continuous improvement has resulted in streamlined processes and cost containment. Target improvement goals are set by an annual evaluation. |
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## AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

*Measuring Effectiveness* examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

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| OVa | In 2008, NMU adopted the <i>Road Map to 2015</i> with four broad elements: Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Campus Attributes, and Community Engagement.  |
| O7a | Data collection done by Institutional Research is determined by external reporting requirements, management information used in support of the mission and goals, and information required to transact business. NMU uses multiple software packages for data management which are supported through the technology infrastructure of Administrative Information Technology and Academic Information Services. |
| O7b | Over the last decade, the Teaching, Learning and Communications (TLC) Initiative at NMU has supplied all faculty, staff, and full-time students with a notebook computer, software, Internet access, and technology support at no additional cost. This effort has made NMU the largest laptop university in the country.  |

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
7P1	S	NMU describes a process to select, manage, and distribute information supporting instructional and non-instructional programs and services based on both external requirements and internal needs. The institution uses a variety of technology information services including BlackBoard/WebCt, Academic Information Services (AIS), and IBM/Cognos reporting tools.
7P2	O	Although NMU reports individual efforts to select, manage and distribute data to support planning and improvement (such as the workflow techniques, dashboard development, and graphical representation), it does not address a comprehensive process to coordinate these efforts, identify items for distribution, or determine involvement in the processes. Developing clarity of the processes could help to integrate cross-institutional planning and involvement.
7P3a	S	NMU uses user input and regulatory requirements to determine the data needs of its departments and units. In addition, the support and consulting services provide access to data through multiple routes and work with units to build customized applications to meet the departmental needs.
7P3b	O	Not all departments/units subscribe to the central system. Data needs appear to be determined reactively. Efforts by AIS, Technology Service and Institutional Research to proactively determine needs and coordinate centralized collection would provide a smoother and more effective approach to data collection and access.
7P4a	S	Information is shared with the Board of Trustees at regular meetings. The formal committee structure provides distribution to the broader campus community.

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| 7P4b | O | Although NMU discusses several offices involved in the analysis of institutional level data; it is not evident that there is an established process in place nor how data are analyzed to ensure a holistic view of overall performance.  |
| 7P5a | S | Required federal, state, and external reports are the primary determinant of comparative data and selection of sources used to gather those data. Further, NMU has established peer relationships with institutions throughout Michigan, the Midwest, and nationally.   |
| 7P5b | O | Although NMU has identified several sources for comparative data, it is unclear what criteria and methods were used for selecting these comparators. Developing a process to determine what data is collected as well as understanding of the criteria and methods will serve to validate the choices.  |
| 7P6  | O | NMU reports that its primary mechanism to align data and information with organizational goals resides at the individual unit level through Outcome Assessment Report and Plan documents. It is not evident from the portfolio how a comprehensive and systematic alignment is achieved, how outcomes are shared, or how continued alignment is ensured. Developing a process for congruence would provide a uniform basis for individual department and unit assessment. |
| 7P7a | S | NMU implemented a high-speed Intranet infrastructure and an emergency/disaster recovery plan in 2008. Monitoring for accuracy is part of the monthly and annual procedures using reports generated by the respective system.  |
| 7P7b | O | The reactive nature of several of the processes listed suggest that NMU is still focused on measurement of “errors” rather than identifying processes that could prevent such errors. In addition, procedures that preclude the entry of inaccurate data can improve the quality of data and information generated. The institution could benefit from a more proactive approach to quality initiatives.  |

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| 7R1a | S | NMU uses several measures of IT system performance related to timeliness, reliability, accuracy and security of data integrity.  |
| 7R1b | O | As the role of the system is to collect, process, and manage data to create information, it is not evident from the information provided how NMU's systems are assessed in terms of their effectiveness in creating useful and usable information.   |
| 7R2  | O | Although NMU has evidence of systems and processes for measuring effectiveness; it is unclear that this evidence demonstrates needs for accomplishing institutional mission and goals are being met outside of usage and availability of technology. Use of broader measures and a direct comparison of evidence and need would provide a more complete picture of the success of the systems and processes. |
| 7R3  | O | For the metrics presented, NMU provides comparative data that shows NMU is performing better than its benchmarks. However, much of the data addresses technology performance and does not compare the performance of the processes to measure effectiveness. NMU will benefit from the collection of data that can be directly connected to measuring the effectiveness of its mission and goals.            |
| 7I1  | O | Although institutional improvements regarding technology have been extensive, the processes described and results provided in this section do not indicate that NMU is systematic or comprehensive in measuring its effectiveness. Development of targets for satisfactory performance could provide metrics against which improvements could be measured.   |
| 7I2  | O | It is not evident from the portfolio how NMU's culture and infrastructure influence its choice of initiatives to undertake. The institution self-identifies an opportunity to implement processes that are more systematic.  |

## **AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

*Planning Continuous Improvement* examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:**

***Item      Critical Characteristic***

- O5a      Strategies that align leadership, decision-making and communication processes with mission and values, the policies and requirements of oversight entities, and legal and ethical and social responsibilities were addressed in a 2008-2009 Action Plan for an academic master plan that resulted in Road Map to 2015 and Beyond.
- O8a      NMU is constrained by location: the Upper Peninsula population of college-bound students is declining, weather is severe at times and requires higher physical plant operating costs to manage, the median household income in the UP is below the state average causing high levels of financial need, and it admits academically "at-risk" students.
- O8b      NMU has one of the lowest tuition and fee structures among the 15 Michigan public universities.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement.**

<b><i>Item</i></b>	<b><i>S/O</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
8P1	S	NMU has a nested planning process that builds from a variety of short-term planning processes through a five-to-seven year long-term planning process.

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| 8P2 | S | Short-term strategies are selected after an analysis of the University's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, related to the ability to move toward the University's vision. Selection is guided by the availability of resources, external environment and stimuli, and internal pressures and interests. Long-term strategies are derived from campus-wide strategy session(s) mentioned in 8P1 where identification and analysis of major threats and/or opportunities is conducted using internal and external data. |
| 8P3 | S | NMU develops its action plans through standing committees assigned specific planning foci. Action plans include a timetable of measurable outcomes, as well as inclusion of an abandonment option. Action plans are supportive of higher level goals and strategies.   |
| 8P4 | O | NMU gathers input from a variety of levels including students and external stakeholders as represented in Figure 8.3. Communication goes out through regular department meetings, electronic messages and other media. Although the relationships are represented, the process of coordinating, aligning, and moving to action plans is not clear. A formalized institution-wide coordination process may be in place but is not evident by the presented narrative.   |
| 8P5 | O | NMU discusses the information used to define objectives and performance targets for its strategies and action plans and the stakeholders involved. However, it is not evident from the material provided the process by which it defines objectives and selects performance targets. Identifying such a process would allow for uniformity of future planning.   |
| 8P6 | O | Due to the nature of the state's economy, an important part of NMU's planning has focused on sustaining operations and imposing budget reductions to balance the budget. The 2009-10 budget had four scenarios, each implementing goals and priorities in the Road Map at different levels. It seems the state of the budget was the major driver in strategic decision making. Although the economic turmoil in Michigan has  |

had a detrimental impact on NMU's access to resources, there is still an opportunity to develop processes to link institutional strategies and action plans.

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| 8P7  | O | The institution does not provide evidence of a process to assess and address risk in the planning process. NMU's focus on the financial implications of its processes is important but should not be the only factor considered. Taking a more strategic long-term approach to planning may be beneficial to the institution and its stakeholders. |
| 8P8  | O | NMU provides examples of activities that assist its senior leadership to adapt to changing conditions. However, it is not evident that a systematic process is in place to ensure that faculty, staff, and junior administrators have the ability to address change in a planned and comprehensive manner.   |
| 8R1  | O | It is unclear from the measures presented how these address strategic initiatives or the effectiveness of the planning process itself. Selection of specific measures to address planning processes as well as targets will allow for improvement of the planning process in the future.   |
| 8R2a | S | NMU has one of the lowest tuition and fee structures among the 15 Michigan public universities. In addition NMU has not had hiring freezes or program reductions to the extent faced by peer institutions. Graduation rates are below the average of Michigan universities but show a steady upward trend.   |
| 8R2b | O | NMU provides a listing of measures mostly related to its financial health. Although this is an important area for most institutions it is not a good measure of planning continuous improvement. More direct measures of planning are expected.  |
| 8R3a | S | NMU outlines multiple projections for performance over the next 1-3 years. Although NMU expects declining enrollment through 2028, it is responding to this through a program to better use its facilities and to make excess space available for other organizations and purposes.  |

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| 8R3b | O | The only projections provided are for enrollment, which is important to the planning process but is not the only planning factor that should be considered. The institution indicates other items are being considered but there is no indication of any action taken.   |
| 8R4  | O | NMU provides metrics concerning comparative tuition and facilities usage. It does not provide comparative metrics regarding performance of its planning processes for continuous improvement. Such metrics could provide an opportunity for NMU to improve its planning processes and systems.   |
| 8R5  | O | NMU provides examples of strategic and action outcomes. However, it does not address how effective are its planning processes nor the metrics by which that effectiveness is measured. Such metrics could provide an opportunity for NMU to improve its planning processes and systems.  |
| 8I1  | O | Although there is evidence of individual action plans improving the institution, there is little evidence presented of a systematic approach to planning and improvement.  |
| 8I2  | O | Shared governance, the use of task force input, and a robust system of committees serve as infrastructure which promotes improved performance results. Although NMU reports a variety of improved outcomes that are <i>ad hoc</i> initiatives, it is not clear how its culture and infrastructure influence its selection of processes to improve or its setting of performance targets. |

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## AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

*Building Collaborative Relationships* examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.



**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Northern Michigan University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:**

***Item      Critical Characteristic***

- O2      Three external stakeholder service categories receiving the most institutional attention are: workforce development, economic development and community engagement. NMU supports over 80 workforce training partners and serves as the principal “public space” in the U.P. for forums and discussions regarding economic development.
- O8a      NMU is constrained by location: the Upper Peninsula population of college-bound students is declining, weather is severe at times and requires higher physical plant operating costs to manage, the median household income in the UP is below the state average causing high levels of financial need, and it admits academically “at-risk” students.
- O9      Key external partnerships include the regional K-12 community, legislators, major employers, regional Native American community, Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Olympic Education Center, and international partners and affiliated study abroad programs.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Northern Michigan University’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships.**

<b><i>Item</i></b>	<b><i>S/O</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
9P1a	S	NMU discusses a number of established processes for building relationships with high schools and community colleges.
9P1b	O	It is not clear how potential relationships are prioritized or determined as well as sustained. Developing clear processes for selection of potential partnerships will allow for focused use of resources and efforts.
9P2	O	Although NMU describes processes for creating and building relationships with potential employers, there is little discussion of other institutions to which students may transfer or of alternate routes students may take upon graduation. Exploration of students’ paths upon exit of the institution will allow NMU to prioritize relationships with employers,

		educational institutions, and other ventures students take. In addition, there is little evidence of an institutional approach to building relationships.
9P3a	S	NMU has established many relationships with external constituents who provide health care and counseling to students.
9P3b	O	Although NMU identifies health care and counseling as the “key” services provided by outside organizations to students, its students are likely to be extensive users of other services available in its community. NMU may find it helpful to think more broadly in terms of off-campus services used by its students and to build relationships with those having significant usage by its students.
9P4	S	NMU leverages its place within the state organization MACUPA, works to maintain relations through Regional Skills Alliance with Upper Peninsula Construction Council, and as a member of regional, state, and national consortia library services provides academic support to its students.
9P5	O	NMU describes a variety of efforts; however those activities are not processes through which relationships are maintained with education associations, external agencies and the general community. Definition of the processes would enhance NMU's maintenance of those relationships.
9P6	O	NMU provides limited data and describes informal and reactive processes to determine if the needs of partners are met. Developing proactive and formal processes will allow NMU to respond in a timely manner to any identified needs as well as to anticipate and address concerns before they arise.
9P7	O	Although NMU outlines the network of committees that facilitates relationships between departments; it is unclear how the institution assures integration as well as communication through the committee network. Determining systematic processes to ensure integration and communication will allow NMU to fully and effectively utilize its committee network.

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| 9R1a | S | As described in 2R1 and 3R1, NMU has identified multiple measures that it collects and analyzes to determine the effectiveness of its partnerships.  |
| 9R1b | O | The measures provided do not detail the effectiveness of relationships NMU has with different partners nor discuss what internal measures are gathered. Perception, attendance and longevity of program/relationship are indirect measures. NMU could benefit through use of more direct measures of external and internal collaborative relationships.  |
| 9R2  | O | Performance results provided do not relate to the measures collected in 2R1 and 3R1. NMU needs to be consistent and connect its reporting of measures to the data actually collected. In addition, the performance results provided cover limited aspects of the multiple relationships and partnerships NMU discussed previously in the category. It appears that the institution provides hypotheses but little or no data or trend analyses to evaluate those hypotheses. |
| 9R3a | S | NMU has won a number of competitive awards confirming its favorable results in comparisons with other peers.   |
| 9R3b | O | NMU describes significant accomplishments. However, the institution may benefit through more direct comparison to a peer group, greater clarity as to how these accomplishments demonstrate results of processes used to build collaborative relationships, and appropriate evidence as to the results of its efforts.   |
| 9I1  | O | Being an “engaged” university indicates that NMU is committed to community engagement and collaboration. However, it is unclear how systematic or comprehensive are those activities or how they represent results of processes for building collaborative relationships.  |
| 9I2  | O | Although NMU's culture of community engagement clearly defines many of its collaborative relationships, it is unclear how this engagement establishes processes to improve and set targets for enhanced performance.   |