



FORM

Comprehensive Quality Review Report

Institution: Northern Michigan University City, State: Marquette, MI

Date of On-Site Visit: 03/20–22/2017

Evaluation Team

List names, titles and affiliations of each peer reviewer and indicate the team chair.

Dr. Christine Manion, Associate Provost, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee WI, Chair

Dr. Diane Dingfelder, Emeritus Executive Director of Adult & Continuing Education, Winona State University, Winona MN

Dr. Constance Johnson, Provost, Colorado Technical University, Colorado Springs CO

Dr. Cathy Ayers, Professor, Lewis University, Romeoville, IL

Ms. Laurie Gruel, Senior Director of Institutional Planning & Grants, San Juan College, Aztec, NM

Background and Purpose of Visit

A. Overview of the Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR)

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

- Provide assurance that the institution is meeting HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. (With respect to the optional Year 4 CQR, the goal is to alert the organization to areas that need attention prior to its next Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Such concerns may be signaled during the Systems Appraisal process in the third year of the cycle.)
- Provide assurance that the institution is meeting the Federal Compliance Requirements (Year 8 only).
- Facilitate the institution's continuing quality improvement commitment, confirming that a developing or established Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) culture and infrastructure exist that advance organizational maturity in relation to the AQIP Pathway Categories.
- Verify any issues identified in Action Project Reviews, Systems Appraisals or HLC actions.

- Validate process level development and deployment as described in the Systems Portfolio.
- Identify actions taken to minimize identified strategic issues and to alleviate potential accreditation issues.
- Review CQI priorities and progress, including how Action Projects are integrated into the institution's overall performance improvement strategy.
- Review distance and/or correspondence education delivery, if applicable (Year 8 only).
- Evaluate distributed education (multiple campuses), if applicable (Year 8 only).
- Develop an initial recommendation regarding Pathway eligibility (Year 8 only).

B. Purpose of Visit and Institutional Context

Include a statement that indicates the primary purpose of the evaluation. Include all the elements of the visit. Example: "The team conducted a comprehensive evaluation visit that included a multi-campus review and an embedded change review."

The team conducted a comprehensive quality review visit to Northern Michigan University (NMU) in Marquette, Michigan. NMU is a state-supported, public comprehensive university with approximately 7,500 students, offering 156 programs through vocational certificates and diplomas, associate, baccalaureate and masters degrees, and one doctoral program. There are 5 separate unions representing the various employee groups. The current president has been with NMU since July 2014 and the Provost since July 2015.

C. Unique Aspects or Additions to the Visit

List the specific additional evaluations conducted as part of the visit. These may include an embedded change request, additional location confirmation visit, campus evaluation visit, etc. Separate documents for these evaluations are available at hlcommission.org/team-resources.

There were no additional evaluations conducted as part of this visit. The meeting with four of the eight board members occurred via Zoom. This distance technology was also used to meet with the Vice President of Finance and Administration.

D. Additional Locations or Branch Campuses Visited (if applicable)

Not Applicable

E. Distance Delivery Reviewed

If applicable, summarize the distance and correspondence education reviewed as part of this evaluation. Reviewers are required to evaluate an institution's distance and correspondence education as part of the comprehensive evaluation and to ensure that the institution's stipulations on distance and correspondence education are accurate. Review HLC's [Protocol for Reviewing Distance Education and Correspondence Education](#). Do not include the team's commentary or evaluation findings in this section; these belong in the Criterion section. See the Criterion section for more information.

The team conducted a review of NMU's Distance Education program, including a meeting with the Distance Education team—the Vice President for Extended Learning and Community Engagement, the Director of Learning Management Systems, the Dean of Academic Information Services, support staff, and some faculty who teach online. The team also reviewed syllabi from online courses and compared them to their traditional delivery counterparts.

F. Notification Related to Third-Party Comments

A notification related to third-party comments was posted at: <http://www.nmu.edu/mc/news-releases?articleID=173836>.

Seventeen comments were reviewed, eleven of which responded negatively to NMU's "self harm" policy. These comments seem to have been generated by and in response to an article on a website *Popehat*: <https://www.popehat.com/2016/09/22/fire-attacks-northern-michigan-universitys-shocking-wanton-rule-against-students-sharing-suicidal-thoughts/>, which included a comment that provided both the NMU third-party comment page as well as the HLC third-party comment URL. The eleven posting these comments in response to this site visit seem to have no affiliation with the University. No students, faculty or staff who spoke with the team during the visit raised any concerns regarding this policy. When asked, the Director of Academic and Career Advisement Center provided the background and explained that the University is looking to revise its policy to protect those students whose lives were being disrupted by other students who had a habit of threatening self-harm as a means of getting attention rather than seeking actual help from qualified counselors.

II. Compliance with Federal Requirements

See the separate [Federal Compliance Overview](#) in preparing this section. The team's completed Federal Compliance and Credit Hour worksheets should be submitted with this report.

III. Fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation

Determining a Core Component is Met, Met with Concerns, or Not Met

The team conducts its review and determines whether the Core Component is Met, Met with Concerns, or Not Met. The team incorporates its review of the Subcomponents into the review of the related Core Component. Beneath each Core Component, the team provides its findings in evidence statements. Evidence statements are typically 2–3 sentences in length and include the context, the evidence and the finding of team. Some evidence statements may need further support with bulleted evidence sentences that address the Core Component and include the subcomponents as appropriate to the institution. Each evidence statement should address only one topic.

Evidence for Each Core Component. Following the determination of each Core Component, the team presents evidence that supports its determination. Evidence should be provided in evidence statements as defined above.

Determining a Criterion is Met, Met with Concerns, or Not Met

Criterion Is **Met**. If all of the Core Components are met, the Criterion is met.

Criterion Is **Met with Concerns**. If any Core Component is met with concerns, the team must find that the Criterion is met with concerns. In Part V of the team report, the team will recommend monitoring appropriate to the concerns. If the team identifies serious concerns with one or more Core Components or finds that multiple Core Components are met with concerns, the team chair should consult with the HLC staff liaison to determine whether the team should recommend that the institution be placed on Notice.

Criterion Is **Not Met**. If any Core Component is not met, the Criterion is not met. In these instances, the team will recommend either probation or withdrawal of accreditation.

Summary Statement on Each Criterion. Following the determination of each Criterion, the team summarizes its findings and observations on the overall Criterion, including strengths, opportunities for improvement, and advice. If the Criterion is met with concerns or the Criterion is not met, the team summarizes its rationale and evidence. The team's recommendation is made in Part VI of the team report.

Criterion 1. Mission

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

Core Component 1.A: The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

Subcomponent 1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

Subcomponent 2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Subcomponent 3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

Beginning in 2014 with the appointment of a new president, the institution mission statement has been thoroughly reviewed through a university-wide process of consensus built on shared values. All university constituency groups and bargaining units were represented. External constituents, including alumni and community members, were consulted. A set of seven core values was developed. Based on these values, a draft of a new strategic plan was developed and, during fall of 2015, about a dozen discussion sessions were held to gather input regarding the plan. The Board of Trustees approved the strategic plan in December 2015. The revised institution mission and vision are expected to be approved in May 2017 after a thorough multi-year process of vetting and shared decision-making.

The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission as a regional, public, comprehensive university serving the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The institution offers a range of programs, certificates, and degrees from one-year diplomas to a Doctorate in Nursing Practice. Student enrollment reflects the demographics of the institution's region.

The Strategic Planning and Budgeting Advisory Committee, created in winter 2016, meets monthly during the academic year. This group provides feedback to the president and VPs regarding university strategy including uses of resources. The University Alignment Plan, dated January 11, 2016, was developed to ensure that university resources, structures, and processes are in alignment with the outcomes of the strategic plan. The AQIP Action Project initiated in 2015, *Transparency Project: Communication, Collaboration, Process, and Procedure in University-wide Decision-making*, was developed to foster an environment where stakeholders have easy access to information and opportunities to be involved in efficient, collaborative university-wide decision-making.

Core Component 1.B: The mission is articulated publicly.

Subcomponent 1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

Subcomponent 2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

Subcomponent 3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

The University's mission and vision statements are articulated on a number of pages throughout the institution's website, including "About NMU"; "NMU Strategic Plan" and through a link from the "Office of the President" page. In addition, the mission statement is a link in the current bulletins (course catalog). Different offices and divisions of the university, however articulate their own interpretation of the mission through the lens of their scope of their responsibilities, such as an "Academic Mission" and a "Student Services and Enrollment Statement" neither of which is particularly linked to the University's mission statement. It is expected that there will be more consistent articulation of the mission across units of the university with the adoption of a new mission and vision, which is predicted for May 2017.

Documents related to the mission and strategic plan are current. A set of seven core values was developed in 2014 through engagement of a wide variety of university stakeholders. During fall 2015, NMU held a campus-wide initiative to create a new strategic plan based on the core values. Once an initial draft was created, about a dozen discussion sessions were held with a variety of constituents to gather input regarding the plan.

The mission clearly identifies the nature, scope, and its intended constituents as students and employees who are challenged to think independently and critically to develop lifelong learning habits, acquire career skills, embrace diversity, and become productive citizens in the region and throughout our global community. Based on information on the university website, student bulletins, and the 2017 AQIP Quality Highlights report, the institution embraces its role as a

regional, public, comprehensive university, serving the educational and economic needs of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Core Component 1.C: The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

Subcomponent 1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

Subcomponent 2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

The institution publicly articulates a broad diversity statement in alignment with its mission and vision on the university website. The institution strives to be "an inclusive community where differences are recognized as assets of the institution, respected attributes of the person and a valuable part of the university". Through university-wide consensus, *Inclusion* was identified as one of the seven institutional core values. One of the current strategic focus areas is *Domestic and Global Outreach and Engagement*.

The institution demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusion that is appropriate within the scope of its mission and for the constituencies it serves. The relatively-new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer position reports directly to the President and serves on the President's Leadership Team. Diversity enrollment targets have been set for the next five years. The Faculty Director of International Initiatives identified the development of a more integrated approach to international partnerships and professional relationships. The President's Committee on Diversity meets monthly during the academic year with the primary responsibility of making recommendations to the president on ways to promote diversity within the framework of the mission and strategic plan. The Gender Work Group meets monthly during the academic year with the primary responsibility of making recommendations to the president regarding gender-related issues and opportunities on campus and in the community. Finally, student comments during the visit and a review of the student newspaper reflect an understanding of and comfort with diverse people and perspectives.

Core Component 1D: The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

Subcomponent 1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

Subcomponent 2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

Subcomponent 3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

The institution demonstrates an understanding that it serves the public and not solely the institution. The mission and core values reflect the institution's relationship to regional and global communities. For example, by sharing its wireless network across the Upper Peninsula, NMU will demonstrate its commitment to the core values of *Connections, Community, and Opportunity*. In addition, the Office of Continuing Education and Workforce Development works with academic deans and departments to address the regional needs of employers and employees.

The university-wide Strategic Planning and Budgeting Advisory Committee vets and prioritizes proposals for institutional investment based on the potential for return on investment and positive impact on core values, strategic focus areas, and the university's mission and vision. Initiatives of the strategic plan are reviewed using common success indicators by which to evaluate progress. The University Alignment Plan began the process of ensuring critical aspects of the university are in alignment with the strategic plan. *The Planning for Distinction* initiative, currently underway, seeks to evaluate all academic and non-academic programs and to prioritize limited university resources. In addition, the Board of Trustees Bylaws "reaffirms its obligation to the people of the State of Michigan to provide high quality education to people from all walks of life." It pledges itself to the wisest use and distribution of resources at its disposal to meet this major objective.

The institution demonstrates that it engages in collaborative relationships with external constituents and communities of interest in ways that align with the university mission. A variety of external constituents attended the luncheon for Community Leaders and Workforce Development, providing examples of numerous ways that the university collaborates and supports educational and economic development in the Upper Peninsula. Examples of this engagement include: 1) the recent creation of a Manufacturing Production Technician certificate in response to the needs of regional manufacturers; 2) *Invent@NMU*, an entrepreneurial program that provides students with real-world experience as they develop products from concept to market; and 3) The Center for Native American Studies (CNAS), which responds to tribal student needs in the areas of tribal health, wellness, and social services.

Team Determination on Criterion 1:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Criterion is met with concerns
- ☐ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:

After the site visit, the team has concluded that Criterion 1 is "met."

The institution's mission has undergone a very public and deliberate review and revision over the past two years, beginning with the development of seven core values that have served as the foundation for university-wide discussion and consensus building. All bargaining units and constituent groups, including external stakeholders, have been included in the process through listening and feedback sessions and through advisory committee input. A final draft of the mission and vision is expected to be approved in May 2017.

The institution demonstrates an understanding between its mission and the diversity of society. The institution has demonstrated a heightened commitment to increasing the diversity of its student population through the addition of a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Through the Faculty Director of International Initiatives, there is an increasing awareness of the opportunities for developing international relationships and partnerships beyond the traditional study abroad offerings.

The institution's mission demonstrates a commitment to the public good. As a regional, comprehensive, public university, the institution demonstrates a commitment to the educational and economic well-being of the Upper Peninsula through numerous collaborative relationships and strategic partnerships. The academic offerings of the institution provide a variety of workforce and educational options, ranging from vocational certificates to masters' degrees and a doctoral program. Several co-curricular offerings provide relevant experiential opportunities for students in the community and workplace. In addition, a strategic planning and budgeting process is underway that includes a review of all academic and non-academic programs relative to university priorities and the allocation of resources.

Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

Core Component 2.A: The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

A system of mandated checks and balances, including internal and external audits, is in place. Employees participate in appropriate ethics training, and the personal policy manual includes employee standards and conduct, as well as human subject research, intellectual property issues, FERPA regulations, and a computer network acceptable use policy. Upon hire, full-time faculty read the Intellectual Property Policy and sign an acknowledgment card. NMU has contracted with a third part vendor, The LawRoom, to administer some of the compliance training online to all employees, and completion can now be tracked by HR. These trainings include HIPAA (for Health Center employees) and sexual misconduct. The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources recognizes that NMU is in “build mode” for staff development. Beyond compliance trainings, they use home-grown employee surveys to select training topics (e.g., Change Management, Communications) and to measure the impact of the trainings. They plan on expanding the training piloted with Mission, Vision, Values to include Ethics in all new employee orientations.

Core Component 2.B: The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

A variety of NMU web pages (found through www.nmu.edu) lists degree requirements, admission and academic policies, accreditations, costs, financial aid toolbox, and faculty names and titles. Most of this information is also available online, in print, and communicated face-to-face.

However, according to the faculty, students, and staff, a recent increase in all Student Fees, including new fees for online courses, does not seem to have been clearly presented to the student body before the fees were applied, resulting in misunderstanding as to the total cost for an online class. This included a change in the “flat rate” tuition moving from 12 - 18 credits down to 12 - 16 credits, with any additional credits costing \$378 each. These changes were implemented in August, and the students were notified first by an email from the President and then via their e-Bills shortly before the start of the fall semester. The students had signed up for courses in the spring, and many found themselves owing for the additional 2 credits as well as an additional \$50 per online credit. The lack of inclusion, planning, and communication of these changes was the focus of many negative comments in the HLC Student Opinion Survey as well as from the students who met with the team during the visit.

Another communication discrepancy the students alerted the team to involves the NMU undergraduate bulletin, used by students for selecting their major and choosing their courses. At first glance, most Associate Degrees appear to build on a 60-credit program with the Bachelor Degrees requiring 120 credits.

However, when random selections of Associate Degrees were checked, actual credits needed to graduate ranged from 60 to 89, but no indication as to why these extra credits are needed appears on the website. When a random selection of Bachelor’s Degrees was examined, actual credits needed to graduate ranged from 120 to 150. The apparent excessive credits in some of these programs is concerning. In addition, some of the Bachelor’s Degrees that require credits higher than 120 appear to require only 120 credits in the Bulletin, but when adding all the specific required courses, they actually exceed the published 120 credits. Students voiced concerns about these planning documents when complaining about “filler” classes while waiting to take requirements in their majors. Faculty also expressed concerns about “credit creep” in a number of programs, suggesting the problem may not be just in the communication but the actual number of credits required. An audit of all program credits could help the University find gaps in information provided to the students as well as identify areas where additional credits could be eliminated, which could in turn promote student success.

Core Component 2.C: The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

Subcomponent 1. The governing board’s deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

Subcomponent 2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution’s internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Subcomponent 3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

Subcomponent 4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

The eight-members of the independent NMU Board of Trustees are selected by the Governor of Michigan with staggered appointments to their eight-year terms. The Board of Trustees Bylaws includes a conflict of interest clause, including abiding by the State Constitution to this effect. All members bring an interest in and knowledge of NMU's unique location, its students, and measures for success in higher education. Several times a year, Trustees meet with faculty (informally) and staff (formally through Focused Discussions) for input on topics that will be central to their annual retreat. These meetings help the Board prioritize the annual Retreat Agenda. The Board delegates day-to-day campus management to the president, executive management, senior administrators, and department heads in each of the four divisions, and to the faculty regarding academic issues.

Core Component 2.D: The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

NMU's mission statement highlights freedom of expression and pursuit of truth. NMU challenges its students and faculty to think independently and critically and to develop lifelong learning skills. The "Faculty Master Agreement" entitles faculty to full freedom in research and other scholarly or creative activities. NMU clearly outlines the academic and learning responsibilities of faculty and students in the Master Agreements and department bylaws (for faculty) and the Student Handbook (for students).

Core Component 2.E: The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by its faculty, students, and staff.

Subcomponent 1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

Subcomponent 2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Subcomponent 3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to “think independently and critically, [and to] develop lifelong learning habits.” They are provided the freedom of expression to examine and discuss all topics of interest, but must be tolerant of diverse opinions.

The “Acceptable Use Policy” and “Copyright Violation Policy” from Academic Information Services must be acknowledged before a student gains campus Internet access. Faculty are encouraged, but not required, to refer to these policies in their syllabi. In appropriate disciplines, student guidance is required for ethical use of information resources, research integrity, and IRB or IACUC regulations. Other programs include a code of ethics in their programs (e.g., nursing, education). The Library offers research/reference assistance in person at the reference desk as well as via email and online chat that can include and/or demonstrate synthesizing data and correct use of citations. The online Student Handbook describes its expectations for academic honesty and integrity.

Team Determination on Criterion 2:

- ☒ Criterion is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:

After the site visit, the team has concluded that Criterion 2 is “met.”

Overall, the team found evidence that the institution acts with integrity and its conduct is ethical and responsible regarding its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions. The evidence shows that the governing board is autonomous to make decision in the best interest of the university, and policies and procedures exist to ensure freedom of expression, the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning, and the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by all stakeholders.

However, the university should review its bulletins and other academic publications to ensure that it clearly and completely presents its degree programs with regard to the number of credits required for completion. This audit could also focus on “credit creep,” which seems to have increased the number of credits required for some Associate and Bachelor’s programs.

In addition, the administration should learn from the communication problems they encountered and the negative reactions they received regarding the most recent increase in student fees to improve their processes for both decision making and communicating those decisions.

Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

Core Component 3.A: The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

Subcomponent 1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Subcomponent 2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Team Determination:

- ☐ Core Component is met
- ☒ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

Program Learning objectives are determined by faculty members with a defined process flow including several steps of overview from the department and assessment committee. This process was addressed during the Integrating and Advancing Campus-Wide Assessment of Student Learning Action project completed in April 2017 and was affirmed by academic leaders. A defined assessment schedule was provided as well as an example of feedback given to academic leaders as part of the assessment review process.

Learning outcomes are assessed using an approved rubric and defined process. Faculty indicate that rubrics are used and data from rubrics is used for course improvements. 400 level courses that grant undergraduate and graduate credit must clearly differentiate learning outcomes for both levels. Curriculum processes are defined in undergraduate and graduate Guidelines for Submission of Curriculum Proposals. Program outcomes are tagged in a database to monitor assessment progress and to offer models to faculty developing assessment plans. An assessment committee provides feedback to each school after reviewing outcomes during a formal assessment process. Reports from the assessment review process were provided as evidence.

NMU completed a 2012-13 Action Project on *Enhancing the Distance Education Infrastructure*. Implemented in 2014, distance education support services now include web-based student services, online orientation, technical support provided by phone, chat and video, and online academic advising. However, students indicate that online courses are not consistent in terms of rigor or expectations. These inconsistencies appear among online offerings as well as when comparing a traditional class to its online counterpart. Some students complain that there was little or no interaction with their online faculty until late in the semester. Interviews with faculty and curriculum designers at NMU indicate that processes for development, delivery, and supervision of content, expectations, and communications in online courses vary by discipline and faculty members. They are piloting Quality Matters for a limited number of faculty, and there is a

Teaching Fellows Program; however, at this time there remains no evidence of an inclusive, systematic processes to ensure quality, consistency and rigor in the online environment.

Core Component 3.B: The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

Subcomponent 1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

Subcomponent 2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

Subcomponent 3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Subcomponent 4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

Subcomponent 5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

General education outcomes were reviewed and assessed from 2012-2014. The General Education Council was formed with representation from all colleges and provides oversight and decision making for program content related to general education. The 2014 Systems portfolio outlined an AQIP Action Project to revise general education outcomes, which was affirmed by the General Education Council website and during interviews with general education faculty. The completion of the Action Project was validated by a review of the document AQIP Comprehensive Quality Review Current and Closed Action Projects.

In January 2013, Phase II of the general education reform was launched as an AQIP Action Project to define new measurable common general education learning outcomes and an assessment plan for general education. The completion and results of this Action Project were provided as evidence and faculty indicate that student work as well as objective assessment data was used to measure mastery of general education outcomes. Specific examples were provided by nursing faculty of methods used to improve mastery of general education outcomes that facilitated an improved rate of success in courses in the nursing program. The Library Instruction:

Assessment of Student Learning, Persistence and Retention Action Project included a rewrite of EN 111 and initial data suggest this was a positive change.

NMU defines general education competencies that are appropriate to the institution's mission: Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis, Social Responsibility in a Diverse World, Imaginative Thinking, Human Expression, Perspectives on Society and Scientific Inquiry. NMU has recently hired a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer ~~Director of Diversity~~ who provides co-curricular activities to support cultural diversity, and students indicate there are numerous opportunities to engage in organizations and activities that support a number of diversity definitions.

NMU provides opportunities for study abroad, grants, fellowships, internships and practicums. Additionally, international students attend NMU. An example of an internship program in construction programs was provided by faculty and validated during interviews with local employers. Additionally, faculty are provided professional development opportunities as well as release time for research. In several interviews, faculty affirm that sabbaticals opportunities are provided by NMU. Students are also provided opportunities to engage in the local community as evidenced by the publication Career Technical Education (www.nmu.edu/cte).

Core Component 3.C: The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

Subcomponent 2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

Subcomponent 3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Subcomponent 4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Subcomponent 5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Subcomponent 6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

NMU reviews targets for faculty on an annual basis and includes current student population and enrollment trends. The Educational Policy Committee (EPC) consists of academic administrators and an equal number of faculty representatives and reviews the faculty composition, including the numbers of tenured/tenure earning faculty, term faculty, continuing faculty, adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants. Student interviews indicate that faculty are not often available for advising due to teaching conflicts. Faculty interviews affirm that academic advising is sometimes challenging due to teaching loads.

For faculty positions, minimum qualifications include four areas of knowledge, skills, and abilities indicating an emphasis on teaching: domain expertise in the discipline, oral and written communication skills, time management skills, and interpersonal orientation. Faculty credentials are verified by obtaining transcripts from the degree-conferring institution(s) listed on an application and/or CV. Although a random sampling of faculty files revealed that faculty are qualified for course assignments, a number of transcripts were missing from faculty files, particularly part-time faculty. The Associate Provost for Academic Affairs provided an audit of faculty files, discovering that 23 full-time faculty files and 28 part-time faculty files are missing transcripts of any type. He indicated that improvements are in place to ensure that appropriate documents are located and included in all faculty files and their own processes for verifying faculty credentials will be enforced.

NMU has been approved for an extension by the HLC for compliance for faculty teaching in dual enrollment programs. On average, the Northern Promise concurrent enrollment program engages less than twelve high school instructors per year in the concurrent enrollment program, some of whom currently have faculty credentials.

Faculty are evaluated annually at the assistant and associate rank and every five years at the professor rank. Evaluations include currency in discipline, scholarship and teaching. Student feedback is included in the review process.

Faculty are provided the opportunity for professional development as well as sabbaticals for research and professional development, all of which was validated during faculty interviews. As a result of the *Professional Development Strategies to Enhance the Student Learning Environment* Action Project, changes in the new faculty orientation, which is mandatory for full-time faculty, were implemented and are being assessed with initial positive results as noted by the Action Project chair.

Teaching assistants are available for office hours and tutoring assistance. Faculty are also available for office hours and are available by email for student inquiries. Student surveys indicate that faculty advising is, at times, inconsistent. Students who met with the team suggest that faculty are very knowledgeable and provide valuable guidance, and more often it is the faculty in the classrooms who are available to assist in addition to student's assigned faculty advisor.

Although faculty office hours are posted, as seen during the team's tour of the campus, students indicate that it can be challenging to schedule meetings with faculty due to availability.

NMU has established minimum and preferred qualifications. Specific positions qualifications, including required credentials, education levels, minimum experience, skills, abilities, are established based on the needs of the department, expected work tasks and the university's

strategic direction. During staff Interviews, it was affirmed that performance evaluations exist, but that they are inconsistently used across the various divisions and areas of the college.

Core Component 3.D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

Subcomponent 1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Subcomponent 2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Subcomponent 3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Subcomponent 4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Subcomponent 5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Team Determination:

- ☐ Core Component is met
- ☒ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

Referrals for student support services occur in the Academic and Career Advisement Center (ACAC). ACAC advisers make referrals after meeting with students one-on-one. Student transcripts and placement scores are reviewed. Additionally, teaching faculty make referrals after communicating with students, reviewing academic progress, and observing students in the classroom environment. Students also have the ability to self-refer to receive services. Interviews indicate that ten student advisors are assigned to first-year students who participate in a freshman seminar.

NMU also conducts research on various student subpopulations to assess learning support needs. For example, the Office of Institutional Research recently conducted a study of Pell Grant recipients, students of color, and first-generation students. Data suggest that services for first-generation students need to be enhanced, and the Dean of Students Office developed a first-generation program to better meet the needs of these students. Additionally, Starfish retention software has been purchased and will be implemented in 2017, and the decision to purchase was a result of the data obtained in the 2015 action project, *Improving Student Success and Retention*.

Each student support program submits an annual assessment report and plan. Both documents are reviewed by the Service Unit Assessment Committee and posted on NMU's intranet. The

university has a committee and advisory board process to review data related to infrastructure and resources and make appropriate recommendations.

The Centralized Advising process began with the 2015 Fall freshmen cohort. Prior to the new advising model, all students were advised by the department of their major/program except those on freshman probation and undeclared majors, who were advised by the ACAC. Currently, all students are advised by the ACAC for the first two semesters and are then handed off to the respective faculty adviser. Initial Fall 2015 Cohort data (FTFT freshmen) indicate that first, second and third semester retention rates have improved as the new model has been implemented. Students responded positively in the focus group to the centralized advising model.

However, both faculty, ACAC advisors, and students share that the “hand off” of students from the ACAC to faculty advisors needs attention. Faculty also indicate that they have had no formal training in advising. This supports evidence found in Criteria 3.C.1 & 5 that faculty are not available for formal advising outside the classroom. When faculty are not available for advising, offer inadequate advising, and/or don’t feel prepared to advise, it negatively impacts student success. NMU may benefit from conducting a “check” with stakeholders in its Plan-Do-Check-Act process to address these concerns within their overall advising processes.

Students have discipline-based opportunities for academic service learning, graduate assistantships, research grants and awards, internships and practicums. The library and help desk are available to students in person, as well as email and chat. Students indicate that technical support is a strength and that support services were available and sufficient. Students also indicate that there were opportunities to engage in learning experiences in their discipline of study.

Core Component 3.E: The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

Subcomponent 1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution’s mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

Subcomponent 2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students’ educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

The Center for Student Enrichment (CSE) and Intercollegiate Athletics & Recreation Sports are the central providers of the majority of co-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities map to mission and curricular learning objectives. Students also indicate that there are number of activities and clubs available through the Multi-Cultural Resource center, and this was validated on the NMU website. The Superior Edge program provides students the opportunity to participate

in co-curricular activities related to the NMU's mission. Students indicate that there are many co-curricular activities available and these were evidenced on campus in a number of buildings, the student paper, and by interviews with alumni, students and members of the community.

Team Determination on Criterion 3:

- ☐ Criterion is met
- ☒ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:

After the site visit, the team has concluded that Criterion 3 is "met with concerns."

Assessment processes have been improved, formalized, and implemented across all disciplines and programs as evidenced by documents provided and interviews. General education outcomes are appropriate for NMU's mission and are assessed in programs as evidenced by assessment reports. Assessment results have resulted in programmatic improvements. Faculty have appropriate qualifications for courses.

3.A.3 NMU has developed a robust support system for distance education students; however, limited training for faculty is available to develop and deliver online courses, resulting in inconsistency for online courses as indicated by students and affirmed by staff and faculty.

3.D.3 Although faculty affirm that sabbaticals and professional development opportunities are provided, they also indicate they are not provided enough release time nor do they receive training for academic advising. This has had a negative impact on student success as students are too often self-advising themselves into the wrong courses, costing them time and money toward their degree completion.

Criterion 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Core Component 4.A: The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

Subcomponent 1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

Subcomponent 2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

Subcomponent 3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Subcomponent 4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Subcomponent 5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Subcomponent 6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

NMU maintains a 7-year cyclical schedule of academic program review that was improved through a 2012 AQIP Action Project to align programs with students' and employers' needs. The process includes a standard template with prescribed steps and content. The timeline for review is published on the Educational Policies Committee website.

Transfer of course credit is verified on an ongoing basis that appears on the Admissions website. These include articulation agreements and course-by-course equivalencies. Other processes include an internal evaluation for study abroad and third party evaluation for international students. NMU accepts credit for experiential learning through the Advanced Placement policy – Advanced Placement via Departmental Evaluation.

Discipline faculty recommend prerequisites that are reviewed by the department curriculum committee. To maintain rigor, the course scheduling database rejects enrollment when the prerequisite is lacking. Expectations of student learning are required in the course syllabus. Student Affairs and Academic Information Services coordinate campus-wide learning support. NMU offers and maintains control over dual-credit courses through its "The Northern Promise" and "Middle College" programs.

NMU maintains 22 specialized accreditations that are appropriate to its degree, licensure, and certificate programs. Among these are Association to Advance Collegiate School of Business (AACSB), National Council for Accreditation of Teachers (NCATE), Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), National Accreditation for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NACLS), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and State of Michigan Licensure.

Readiness for employment is ensured through methods that include juried performance, licensure and national exams, supervisor evaluation of student teaching, clinical placement, and internships. Other evaluation of student readiness is provided by employers who interview students at institutional job fairs. After graduation indicators of success include job placement and graduate admission statistics.

Core Component 4.B: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Subcomponent 2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

Reported in the 2014 Systems Portfolio, NMU used an AQIP Action Project to revise its general education program over three phases that included development of common learning outcomes and a plan to assess them. The assessment plan of the goals beginning Fall 2017 was confirmed by a review of the General Education Council website.

Program goals are developed by the department faculty who follow a process prescribed by the Academic Assessment Committee to ensure alignment with discipline related trends and that accreditation and advisory boards, and peer institutions are considered in the process. A rubric for attributes of effective learning outcomes ensures effective assessment of outcomes. A sample of assessment reports provide evidence of this practice.

NMU has used several Action Projects to improve assessment of learning outcomes. Members of the *Integrating and Advancing Campus-Wide Assessment* project were invited to present their work to the HLC Conference by project reviewers. Assessment reports are included in the overall academic program review process overseen by the Educational Policies Committee. Faculty confirmed that the AAUP contract requires faculty to complete course level assessment, rubrics, and capstone courses for program assessment of student learning.

Co-curricular learning aligns with the seven general education goals and is assessed by rubrics in the Center for Student Enrichment, Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation, International Programs, etc. Documentation of assessment reports for academic programs, co-curricular programs, and learning support services such as the Academic and Career Advising Center supports this alignment.

The Systems Portfolio provided examples of using information to improve learning achievement. These included a greater course focus on identified areas of weakness, setting a higher

achievement target, and shifting more time to application of concepts. A review of reports provided by the Assessment of Learning (AoL) Committee revealed that some programs are learning that better methods and measurements are needed to provide them with better measures. The AoL Committee provides assistance in that process. Nursing faculty presented a closed loop process in which they used initial data to identify areas of low performance, implemented protocols to address those areas, and subsequent measures showed an increased pass rate to over 90%.

NMU developed its revised learning goals using the good practices of consulting AAC&U and LEAP guidelines and a standard assessment rubric that includes a measurable and observable accomplishment, an action verb, defined criteria, and expected level of attainment. The process included program faculty and two committees, the Committee on Undergraduate Programs (CUP) and the Graduate Program Committee, to oversee the development and assessment of learning goals.

Documents provided by the AoL Committee show a regular process of assessment by programs in triads. Specific program reports are reviewed by the AoL Committee and returned with feedback for improvements for attaining best practices.

Core Component 4.C: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

Subcomponent 2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.

Team Determination:

- ☐ Core Component is met
- ☒ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

The team did not find evidence that NMU has clear and accountable processes that reflect good practices related to the systematic collection and analysis of student retention, persistence, and completion data at the institutional level. Although various academic program reports show persistence and completion goals for their students and the need to improve retention was mentioned in several interviews, there is little evidence that the institution has set retention, persistence, and completion goals. A goal of increasing a retention rate from 72% to 75% was noted in a 2014 Action Project; however, when asked, staff report that the administration has not

set nor defined specific numerical goals for retention, persistence, and completion.

Each fall new undergraduate students are segmented into study populations whose retention, persistence, and completion are monitored annually through graduation. A key segment of analysis is admission status. The *Improving Student Success and Retention* Action Project data showed that 15% of incoming freshmen do not meet regular admission standards. Data are organized into a dashboard for university leaders to analyze at the program and university levels. These data are also analyzed as part of academic program review. The University's Strategic Plan includes retention initiatives for implementation of and faculty training in *Starfish* Retention Software Fall 2017 to identify areas of improvement for retention.

Analysis of program-specific retention, persistence, and completion data have resulted in program-specific improvements such as a support program that assists first-generation, low-income students and those with disabilities; changes in the large lecture instructional setting to embed peer tutors who provide early intervention tutoring services in select courses, and offering a technical mathematics course respective to vocational curricula.

NMU regularly collects and analyzes third and fifth semester retention rates for full-time first time new freshmen by admission status segments and FTFT 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates for bachelor degrees and 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-year rates for less than bachelor degrees.

Team Determination on Criterion 4:

- ☐ Criterion is met
- ☒ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:

After the site visit, the team has come to the conclusion that Criterion 4 is "met with concerns."

NMU demonstrates its responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through a regular practice of program review and an evaluation of all credit that it transcripts and policies that assure quality of the credit it accepts. Quality is ensured through faculty recommendations for prerequisites and reviewed by department curriculum committees; a course scheduling system that rejects registration if prerequisites are missing; and evaluation of graduate success.

The University is to be commended for its campus-wide efforts in assessing its student learning outcomes. The process includes objectives, measures, analysis of results, and using those results to improve student learning. Assessment includes student support services. The Assessment Committee provides feedback and support to faculty. NMU now has the opportunity to begin following trend data for its learning outcomes.

4.C.1 & 4 NMU has recognized that enrollment, retention, and completion rates are areas for improvement, as noted in their strategic planning documents. While some programs set goals for these areas and some data are used when deciding where to improve retention processes and actions, the institution as a whole has not defined specific goals and timelines for achieving them. Goals do not appear on the web page in connection with the Strategic Plan, and when questioned about the absence of goals, staff members verified that defined goals for persistence, retention, and completion have not been set or articulated. Setting these specific goals could help the university develop strategies and make greater gains toward those goals as well as affect resource allocation decisions in the future.

Criterion 5: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness.

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

Core Component 5.A: The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Subcomponent 2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

Subcomponent 3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

Subcomponent 5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

As shared by faculty and administration, NMU has experienced annual budget cuts since 2002. Previously, budget short falls have been addressed by across-the-board cuts. NMU has begun the *Planning for Distinction: Strategic Resource Allocation* project to conduct an assessment of all of NMU's academic programs and support functions. The process aims to assist NMU with the reallocation of resources away from programs not performing as well as others and toward programs with the greatest opportunity for enhanced services and benefits to NMU's stakeholders. Two taskforces – Academic and Support – are establishing criteria for programs assessment. The Strategic Resource Allocation Task Force Charter specifies the two principles that the members must follow: First, the criteria must be holistic (assessment considerations include both qualitative and quantitative, financial and nonfinancial and other relevant measures of performance) and second, the criteria must result in a fair assessment of all programs or functions. The work of the task forces will continue through December 2017 and will culminate with the submission of a written report with academic and support functions assigned to one of five quintiles defining the viability options. A database will be developed through this process, which will be maintained and updated annually. NMU leadership anticipates the strategic resource allocation process will be conducted again in five years and integrated into its strategic planning process.

In November 2015, the AQIP Action Project team for *Transparency Project: Communication, Collaboration, Process and Procedure in University-Wide Decision-Making* administered a survey

to assess employees and students' attitudes, preferences, and perspectives about campus-wide decision making and communication. The team was charged with developing mechanisms to enhance trust and communication between decision-makers and campus stakeholders. One outcome of the Transparency Action Project (TAP) was the creation of guidelines of NMU's decision-making process for campus wide decisions, including academic-related, financial, purchasing, personnel, space allocation, and construction and renovation decisions. The "Decision-Making at NMU" website is close to being launched.

The University Alignment Plan, dated January 11, 2016, was developed to ensure that critical aspects of the university are aligned with the outcomes of the strategic plan in a fiscally responsible way.

Core Component 5.B: The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

Subcomponent 2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

Subcomponent 3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

The Board of Trustees, an eight-member governing board, is appointed by Michigan's governor and has general supervision of the institution, the control and direction of all expenditures from the institution's funds, and such other powers and duties as prescribed by law including authority to hire and evaluate the president.

NMU's governance and administrative model promotes shared governance. The faculty collective bargaining agreements facilitate faculty input on most academic issues. Faculty and staff are given opportunity to assume leadership roles, which enables the institution to fulfill its mission. President's advisory committees include the Executive Council, Leadership Council, President's Council, and President's Committee on Diversity. In winter 2016, the president created the new Strategic Planning and Budgeting Advisory Committee (SPBAC). Members are presidential appointees serving one-two-and three-year terms. The primary responsibility of the SPBAC is to provide feedback to the president and vice presidents regarding university strategy, including strategic use of resources.

NMU leadership has committed to holding a minimum of one university forum each fall and spring semester, which is an outcome of the Transparency Action Project (TAP). Currently, the president and vice presidents are following this schedule.

Other examples of leadership sharing knowledge include attending faculty and staff meetings for each academic department and service departments to provide budget overview. The Provost and Associate Provost visited each academic department during 2015-2016; however, the faculty expressed concerns to the team that these visits were merely perfunctory as neither administrator took notes during the meetings. Members of both the faculty and staff also expressed concerns that Shared Governance is not fully implemented on campus because although listening sessions are held, leadership often seems to have already decided upon a course of action, leaving those in attendance feeling “unheard.”

Core Component 5.C: The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

Subcomponent 1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

Subcomponent 2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

Subcomponent 3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

Subcomponent 4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution’s sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

Subcomponent 5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

Since the arrival of President Erickson in July 2014, NMU has engaged in a comprehensive and collaborative effort to develop new core values, a five-year strategic plan and a new mission and vision. Previous strategic planning efforts were incorporated into the new planning process. *Investing in Innovation: The vision and courage to lead transformation change* plan was approved in February 2017. Strategic focus areas are Academic Excellence, Student Success, Domestic and Global Outreach and Engagement, and Investment and Innovation. Action Steps are linked to each strategic focus area with outcomes and success indicators provided.

Leadership committees and ad hoc task forces use relevant data to develop and implement new initiatives. Task forces lead new initiatives, investigating feasibility and making recommendations to the appropriate administrator. NMU also has a number of advisory and planning committee involved in decision-making efforts. Examples of leaders using collective input are (1) no-mow

areas, (2) new residence hall complex, and (3) plans to share NMU's wireless network across the Upper Peninsula.

Budget and Performance Transparency Reports, available on the university website, provide data on capital outlay, performance dashboard, annual operating budgets and expenditures, current collective bargaining agreements, audit reports, general fund revenue and expenditure projections, and debt service obligations.

Core Component 5.D: The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

Subcomponent 1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

Subcomponent 2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Team Determination:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Core Component is met with concerns
- ☐ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

Three AQIP Action Projects in the last five years focused on building sustainable knowledge management, data systems, and Key Performance Indicators. These were designed to provide data to analyze performance and enable evidence-based improvement decisions. NMU has invested in technology and management systems. These are used to improve coordination of user needs and to disseminate various data through an intranet sharing system, newsletters, and campus emails.

NMU has recently launched a new AQIP Action Project to address key programs and processes to support greater employee retention and engagement. The goals of the *Enhancing Employee Retention and Engagement* Action Project are to develop a new employee orientation and onboarding processes, update the NMU's Employee Recognition and Reward Programs, and to improve performance feedback and evaluation processes for non-union employees.

NMU continues to invest in technology and information management systems.

Team Determination on Criterion 5:

- ☒ Core Component is met
- ☐ Criterion is met with concerns
- ☐ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:

Since the arrival of President Erickson in July 2014, NMU has engaged in a comprehensive and collaborative effort to develop new core values, a five-year strategic plan and a new mission and vision. Even so, challenges of making shared governance a fabric of the University culture are evident. Faculty and staff shared concerns of a lack of trust with the President and his administration in decision-making. Eighty-three percent (83%) of employee respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement “I believe there is a climate of trust on our campus” in the Transparency Project survey. Further, faculty feel that processes for communication are not effective. Faculty in attendance stated that there had not been an official communication regarding the results of the listening sessions. Faculty acknowledge that enrollment declines are driving some of the negativity and low morale. Concerns were also expressed regarding the timeline for the Strategic Resource Allocation project.

Although the president utilizes a number of advisory committees, NMU leadership acknowledges that the University does not currently measure the effectiveness of its committees and councils in meeting respective charges or in meeting the institutional goal of employee engagement and shared governance.

IV. Commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

Levels of Organizational Maturity in Relation to the AQIP Pathway Categories.

Please provide a brief paragraph or two that captures the team’s perception of the institution’s overall level of maturity (and the relevant challenges and strengths) and how the institution might further advance its quality agenda.

Category 1, Helping Students Learn: Overall, NMU is Systematic in its Processes and Results. The University has made progress in its Program Assessments of Student Learning, but the evaluation and use of the data continues to be inconsistent. The lack of institutional-wide goals for student success metrics including retention, completion and graduation perpetuate the siloed nature of their work.

Category 2, Other Distinctive Objectives: NMU remains Systematic in its Processes and Results. In particular, their level and focus on Community Engagement is a strength.

Category 3, Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs: NMU appears to be Systematic in both its Processes and Results. Although their data collection has become more systematic in the past few years, the use of homegrown surveys and other satisfaction tools could be a barrier to establishing comparisons and setting targets.

Category 4, Valuing People: NMU appears to be Systematic in its Processes and Reacting in its Results. The university has invested in technology to assist with compliance training and tracking; however, this appears to be limited to staff for compliance and supervisors. The commitment to Faculty Development could be more intentional and aligned with the University’s strategic goals and mission.

Category 5, Leading and Communicating: NMU appears to be Systematic in its Processes and Reacting in its Results. A Transparency Project has helped the lines of communication throughout the University; however, the lack of data and “transparency” regarding institutional goals and this particular action project goals could be hindering these efforts. Internal stakeholders suggest that there are multiple Listening Sessions but that concerns are not being heard or responded to.

Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations: NMU Systematic in both its Processes and Results, with meaningful measures and targets being used to implement change.

Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness: Overall, NMU seems to be Systematic in its Processes and Reacting in its Results. The new collaborative intranet and a set of Dashboards help document and share their processes. However, the lack of clear goals for most of the measurements, including assessments for most of their internal processes, including committee work, may be holding the University back from developing and articulating appropriate strategies.

Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement: Overall, NMU is Systematic with its Processes and Results. The University has robust processes for developing, deploying, and reviewing its mission, vision, and values. Identifying targets/benchmarks and assessing the effectiveness of its committees and councils could move the university to a more mature level as well as setting specific goals for its Action Projects.

Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships: NMU appears to be Systematic in its Processes and Reacting in its Results. NMU has strong relationships with its educational and community partners. However, it remains unclear as to any systematic and repeatable processes for ensuring that the relationships are meeting the needs of the various stakeholders,

Evidence of Principles of High Performance Organizations

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

Northern Michigan University has a **FOCUS** on the needs of their students, stakeholders, and community based on their newly articulated values. However, the faculty, staff, and students expressed concerns that the focus of the administration may be at odds with the stakeholders as they are being listened to but the general consensus is that they are not being heard. The Administration advocates for broad-based **INVOLVEMENT**, collaboration, and consensus for decision making. The university draws on the expertise and practical experience of those of those stakeholders closest to a situation through cross-disciplinary committees. Yet, no clear, shared definitions of collaboration and consensus have been developed and shared by the Administration. NMU **LEADERSHIP** supports a quality culture and clearly communicates a compelling vision of the future. The university is completing a long, inclusive, and robust revision of its mission and vision, and will have many future opportunities to embed its core values, and new mission and vision into the university culture and structures through the active engagement of leadership at all levels of the university and by employing a variety of media and communication tools. At the Programmatic level, **LEARNING** remains at the center of everything the university does. Program Assessment of student learning outcomes is strong, consistent and data-driven, with multiple examples of improvements made to find and employ more effective ways to enhance student achievement. The university invests in its **PEOPLE** through training and development programs. In particular, its Supervisor Training provides a robust system for managers acquire, practice, and use new skills and knowledge to better serve students and other stakeholders. **COLLABORATION** between the university and the local community is strong. Employers and civic leaders praise their partnership with NMU to provide well-prepared citizens with approximately 30% of graduates remaining in the area. Community members serve as advisors to many of the academic programs. The university is developing its ability to be **AGILE** and responsive in today's environment. This can be seen in the development of their Distance Programs, International outreach, and innovations in the Upper Peninsula. The university's "Planning for Distinction" project is an example of their **FORESIGHT** as they prepare for the future. The project seeks to identify areas in which they may improve efficiencies and create or add value to services, all with an eye to the trending economic and demographic realities of their area. NMU's commitment to diversity and their place in an ever-shrinking global culture and economy speaks to the **INTEGRITY** of the institution and their responsibility to graduate global citizens.

V. Commitment to the AQIP Pathway

Actions That Capitalize on Systems Appraisal Feedback

- Establishing a campus-wide advisory group “Strategic Planning and Budgeting Advisory Committee” that recommended revisiting mission, vision, and values
- Including Mission, Vision, and Values in day-to-day operations and processes
- Deciding to focus on Category 5: Leading and Communicating at subsequent Strategy Forum
- Contracting with third-party vendor to administer and track employee online trainings
- Piloting of Ethics Training course
- Creating Transparency Action Project
- Moving toward more sophisticated data collection techniques
- Adopting an assessment management system as goal for current Action Project that provides an opportunity to compare performance objectives between the support units on campus
- Adding the position of Data analyst to the Office of Institutional Research

The Systems Appraisal identified four strategic issues that addressed various aspects of using appropriate measures to determine effectiveness and make decisions based on those measures. NMU has provided some examples of where this has been accomplished, especially regarding technology services. However, these appear to be particular cases rather than a systematic approach by the university. The Appraisal noted that targets were often vague and missing. The team found this still to be true regarding some of the Action Projects and with university-wide concerns such as retention and completion.

Actions That Capitalize on Strategy Forum Participation

- Targeted Category 5: Leading & Communicating
- Filled an identified gap of a mechanism for campus community to share input with university leadership with an “idea forum” database to track communication from stakeholders.
- Began the Action Project “The Transparency Project”

Actions That Capitalize on Action Projects

The team met with current and former Action Project team members and co-chairs. The faculty and staff involved are enthusiastically engaged in the projects, but recognize the challenges of integrating the projects fully into the fabric of the culture. The following is a summary of the major Action Projects reviewed:

- *Integrating and Advancing Campus-wide Assessment of Student Learning*
A Retired Project. This was, by all accounts, extremely successful, as they will be presenting their work at the HLC Annual Conference and the Michigan Technical Learning and Assessment Conference. Their assessment processes are robust and data-driven, and various faculty were able to articulate specific program improvements based on their assessment data.
- *Understanding and Addressing the Student Mental Health Needs of Students*
A current project. Focusing on using both national and NMU data to “know what they didn’t know” about the needs of their students. They are comparing themselves to national and Michigan cohorts and will begin that comparison this summer.

- *Enhancing Employee Retention and Engagement*
A current project. Although NMU has low employee turnover rates, they hope this project will help them understand why their employees stay and that will also directly impact their focus on employee engagement and recognition. They are broadening their recognition program and linking performance management directly to the Mission, Vision, and Values.
- *Transparency Project*
A current project. This has thus far resulted in clearly defining, codifying, and communicating a number of procedures and policies. A searchable database now helps employees find information more easily on the website and the processes used for decision making are presented in a step-by-step manner. The project is focusing on both the tools for transparency as well as the more elusive cultural component. A new Transparency website will launch soon, and this is in conjunction with a created shared calendar (Campus Pulse), an electronic faculty and staff newsletter as well as one for the students. The use of data to set and benchmark goals, however, is still not transparent.
- *Library Instruction: Assessment of Student Learning, Persistence and Retention*
A retired project. This project tried to understand the impacts on students who receive library instruction taught by a librarian compared with those who don't receive librarian support. They discovered there was no real difference in student success. However, they did see improvement with their remedial learners in this model. This became one of their interventions for first-year, first-general students.

Commitment to Active Engagement in the AQIP Pathway

In this team's opinion, NMU is highly committed to and engaged in the AQIP Pathway. Under the Director of Assessment and Accreditation, the Action Projects are well-focused and the teams are inclusive and effective. The philosophy, if not always the tools, of continuous improvement can be found throughout many areas of the institution. In some ways, the team found NMU to be more engaged with AQIP than with HLC as the understanding of the AQIP Categories is apparent and championed throughout the University. However, the HLC Criteria do not seem to have a champion and the accountability of these criteria, particularly 3 and 4 as related to teaching and learning, does not seem to be a priority for the provost and academic deans.

VI. Team Recommendation

A. Affiliation Status

1. Recommendation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The evaluation team confirms that all the Criterion have been met, and recommends that NMU be Reaffirmed with follow up for the Core Components that were "met with concerns."

2. Recommendation for Eligibility to Select Next Pathway

Indicate whether the institution is eligible to select its next pathway, or if, in the judgment of the team, the institution should be limited to the Standard Pathway.

The evaluation team recommends that NMU be eligible to select its next pathway. Although there was an indication from the leadership team that NMU may move to the Open Pathway, the team cautions that removing the Action Project process and culture that has served them well in getting things done may hinder their quality journey. Instead, the team suggests that the AQIP Pathway and subsequent work be utilized to meet the HLC Criterion as the University becomes more intentional with their use of data to enhance systems for student success.

3. Criterion-Related Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):

Monitoring:

An Interim Report due July 31, 2018 is recommended in which NMU provides evidence of the following:

1. The establishment of Distance Learning criteria and expectations for teaching. These criteria should address training for faculty, evaluation of online courses, and consistency of course rigor, including standardized syllabi, both among all online courses and among the same courses taught in both traditional and online delivery modes. (3.A.3)
2. A plan for training faculty in Advising. In addition to faculty training, this plan should include specifics as to how faculty workloads can accommodate advising as well as a more efficient and effective system to “hand off” students from the first-year advising system to faculty advising. (3.D.2)
3. A new process for setting, sharing, and using student success metrics, specifically persistence and/or retention, completion, and graduation results and future goals/targets. The process should include identifying who is responsible for generating, posting, and then using the data. (4.C)

Rationale: (Provide a holistic rationale for this recommendation.) The evaluation team recommends this Interim Report so that NMU continues its quality journey while also addressing gaps identified in their Criterion for Accreditation.

4. Federal Compliance Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):

Monitoring:

None

Rationale: (Provide a holistic rationale for this recommendation.)

B. HLC Sanction or Adverse Action

None.

VII. Embedded Changes in Affiliation Status

If the team reviewed a substantive change request in the course of its evaluation, indicate the type of change below. Complete the Embedded Change Report, available at hlcommission.org/team-resources.

Type of Change: Not Applicable

Appendix A

Interactions with Constituencies

Day 1

President

Executive Council

President
Provost and VPAA
CEO, NMU Foundation
Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives
Assistant VP, Dean of Students

President's Leadership Team

President
Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives
Dean, College of Health Science & Professional Studies
Dean, College of Business
Director, Athletics
Director, Admissions
Director, Risk & Internal Audit
Dean, Academic Information Services
Assistant VP, Budget & Finance
Assistant VP, Dean of Students
Director, Public Safety & Police Services
Director, Government Relations
Interim Dean, College of Technology & Occupational Sciences
Interim Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Associate Provost & ALO
Director, NMU Foundation
Provost & VPAA
Vice President, Extended Learning & Community Engagement

Tour of Campus

Director, Facilities
Provost and VPAA

Luncheon with Community Leaders/Workforce Development

Interim Superintendent, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
Ex. Director, UPWARD Talent Council Michigan Works
County Administrator, Marquette County
Branch Manager, Manpower
Owner, Swick Plumbing & Heating
Project Manager, Closner Construction
HR Manager, Cliffs Natural Resources
Owner, Border Grill
City Commissioner, Marquette
President, Bell Financial

Retired, Community Organizer
Ex. Vice President, Range Bank
Superintendent, NICE Community Schools
President, 40 Below
CEO, Innovate Marquette SmartZone
Realtor, Select Realty
Township Manager, Chocolay Township
VP, Upper Peninsula Power Company
President & CEO, Range Bank
President, Great Lakes Ctr. For Youth Development
CEO, Checker Transport
Superintendent, MARESA
CEO, Northern Initiatives

Federal Compliance Team

Assistant VP, Budget & Finance
Director, Institutional Accreditation & Assessment
Associate Athletic Director
Interim Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Director, Financial Aid
Registrar
Director, Public Safety & Police Science
Director, Risk & Internal Audit
Associate Provost & ALO

Distance Education Team

VP, Extended Learning & Community Engagement
Faculty, English
Admin Assistant, Extended Learning & Community Engagement
Director, Learning Management Systems
Director, Broadcast & Audiovisual Services
Dean, Academic Information Services
Faculty, Nursing
Concierge, Global Campus Concierge Services
Associate Dean, Technical Education/ Director, School of Education, Leadership & Public Service
Faculty, Education, Leadership & Public Service
Faculty, Clinical Sciences

Institutional Research

Director, Institutional Research and Analysis

Finance & Administration

Vice President, Finance and Administration (via ZOOM)
Director, Auxiliary Services
Assistant VP, Budget & Finance
Assistant VP, Human Resources

Board of Trustees (4 of 8)(via ZOOM)

Alexis Hart
James Haveman
Steve Mitchell
Scott Holman

Day 2

Transparency Action Project Team

Director, Financial Aid
Director, Risk and Internal Audit
Associate Provost
Assistant to the President
ASNMU President (student rep)
Assistant Vice President, Human Resources
Faculty, Communication
Faculty, Biology
Dean, Academic Information Services

Centralized Advising Administrator

Director, ACAC

Student Advisors

Faculty, Accounting
Asst. Director, ACAC
Asst. Director, ACAC/Director of Orientation
Academic and Career Counselor
Academic and Career Adviser
Faculty, Nursing
Faculty, Communication
Faculty, Sport and Exercise Science
Faculty, English/Director English Education
ACAC Coordinator of Academic Support Services
Faculty, Construction Management
ACAC Coordinator of Academic Support Services
Director, Student Support Services

Meeting with Staff Members (excluding administration)

13 full-time staff members attended

Luncheon with Students

Student, Major – Secondary Education
Student, Major – Biology
Student, Major – Fish and Wildlife Management
Student, Major – Economics
Student, Major – Philosophy/Political Science
Student, Major – Public Relations
Student, Major – International Studies
Student, Major – Management

Student, Major – Physics, Native American Studies
Student, Major – Native American Studies
Student, Major – Fish and Wildlife Management

Assessment & Completion Project

Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Associate Dean, College of Clinical Sciences
Associate Dean, School of Art and Design
Associate Dean, Director, School of Nursing
Interim Dean, College of Health Sciences and Professional Studies
Associate Dean/Director School of Health and Human Performance
Interim Director of Graduate Studies/Interim Director of Comp.
Director, Institutional Research and Analysis
Associate Dean for Teacher Education/Director School of Education, Leadership, and Public Service
Associate Professor, Library/Chair, General Education Council
Dean, College of Business
Director, Institutional Accreditation and Assessment
Coordinator, Assessment of Learning Academic Programs, School of Education
Director, NMU Center for Native American Studies, College of Arts and Sciences

Current & Past Action Project Chairs

Director, Institutional Accreditation and Assessment
Coordinator Assessment of Learning, Academic Programs, School of Education, College of Health Sciences and Professional Studies
Director, NMU Center for Native American Studies, College of Arts and Sciences
Head of Public Services, Professor, Library
Dean, College of Business
Assoc. Professor, Library
Asst. VP, Human Resources
Registrar
Director, Counseling and Consultation Services
Dean, Academic Information Services
Asst. VP, Dean of Students
Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Director, Instructional Design

Diversity

Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Director, Marketing
Faculty/Director of International Initiatives

Mission/Values/Strategic Planning Team

President
Provost and VPAA
Assistant to the President
Professor, Biology
Professor, Biology
Executive Director Alumni Relations and Annual Giving
Dean, Academic Information Services

Faculty Meeting (3/21/2017)

5 full-time faculty members attended

Day 3

Faculty Meeting (3/22/2017)

13 faculty members attended

Exit Meeting

President
Provost and VPAA
CEO, NMU Foundation
Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives
Assistant VP, Dean of Students
Vice President, Finance and Administration
Vice President, Extended Learning & Community Engagement (via phone)

Appendix B

Principal Documents, Materials and Web Pages Reviewed

Syllabi

CLS 420 Clinical Education Practices
EN 110 Good Books: Narrative and Community (Campus and Web-based)
PL 100 Introduction to Philosophy (Campus and Web-based)
JXJ 2213 Intermediate Algebra (Campus and Web-based)
HP 200 Physical Well Being (Campus and Web-based)
EN 111 College Composition I (Campus and Web-based)
CLS 190 Microscopy and Laboratory Techniques
CLS 200 Urine and Body Fluid Analysis
CLS 109 Introduction to Diagnostic Sciences
CLS 100 Obtaining a Blood Specimen

Accreditation Documents

Systems Portfolio 2014
Systems Appraisal 2014
Quality Highlights Report 2017
Federal Compliance Report
Credit Hours Worksheet
HLC Student Survey
Third-Party Comments

Institutional Documents:

Administrative Organizational Chart
Northern Michigan University: 3rd and 5th Semester Retention Rates
Northern Michigan University Graduation Rates by Year FT, FT New Freshman
Public Safety and Police Services Annual Security Report and Annual Fire Report 2016
AQIP Action Project Reports
Library Instruction: Assessment of Student Learning, Persistence, and Retention
Improving Student Success and Retention
Integrating and Advancing Campus-Wide Assessment of Student Learning
Understanding and Assessing the Mental Health Needs of our Students
Faculty Personnel Files for Credentials
NMU AQIP Action Project Declaration. Transparency Project: *Communication, Collaboration, Process and Procedure in University-wide Decision-making*
Academic Advisement at NMU
Centralized Academic Advising Data at a Glance
Implementing the Strategic Plan (February 2917)
Planning for Distinction Project, Northern Michigan University 2017
2016 Survey of IT Used in Financial Reporting
NMU All Employee Climate Survey December 2013
An Adventure in Education (for International Students)
Student Newspaper: *The North Wind*, March 16, 2017, Issue 8, Volume 91

Webpages

Graduation Rates: <http://www.nmu.edu/institutionalresearch/graduation-rates>
Career Technical Education: www.nmu.edu/cte
Diversity Committee: <http://www.nmu.edu/diversitycommittee/committee>
Online/Distance Education/Global Campus: <http://www.nmu.edu/online>

Strategic Planning and Budgeting Advisory Committee: <http://www.nmu.edu/president/strategic-planning-and-advisory-committee>

Events Calendar: Transparency Project public forum: <http://www.nmu.edu/calendar/index.php?eID=117441>

President Advisory Committees: <http://www.nmu.edu/president/presidential-advisory-committees>

Mission and vision: <http://www.nmu.edu/mission>

University Marketing and Communications – Statements regarding NMU practice concerning self-harm:

www.nmu.edu/mc/university-response-self-harm-email; www.nmu.edu/mc/current-mental-health-communication; www.nmu.edu/boardbook/.../KKlawes%20-%20Addendum%201.pdf, and www.nmu.edu/.../mental-health-communication-students-faculty-staff

President/Strategic plan: <http://www.nmu.edu/president/strategic-plan>

Links to multiple PDFs and websites including:

- Strategic Plan
- University Realignment Plan, January 2016
- Strategic Planning and Budgeting Advisory Committee – including charter, members, meeting schedule, minutes, and materials
- Budget Reduction Proposals 20160815 (Aug. 18)
- Budget Reduction Proposals 20160908 (Sept. 7)
- Budget Proposals – Questions Concerns - 20160907

Budget and Performance Transparency Reporting: <http://www.nmu.edu/finance/transparencyreporting>

Links to other documents including:

- Five Year Master Plans
- Joint Capital Outlay Subcommittee (JCOS Reports), total 8 reports
- Use and Finance Reports
- NMU Performance Dashboard
- FY17 Operating Budget
- 2015-16 Personnel Expenditures
- 2015-16 All Expenditures
- NMU Human Resources – Contracts
- NMU Finance – Annual Reports
- Cleary Act Requirements
- Crime Statistics
- Daily Activity Log
- FY17 Employee Listing
- FY 2016-2017 and FY 2017-2018 Projections
- Debt Service Obligations
- NMU Transfer Credit Policy
- Community Colleges with Reverse Transfer Agreements
- Opportunities for Earning College Credit

Board of Trustees: <http://www.nmu.edu/boardoftrustees/home>

Links including:

- Meeting dates
- Meeting notices
- Bylaws
- Meeting materials
- Annual reports
- Committees



FORM

Institution under review: Northern Michigan University

Please indicate who completed this worksheet:

☒ Evaluation team

☒ Federal Compliance reviewer

Federal Compliance reviewer

To be completed by the Evaluation Team Chair if a Federal Compliance reviewer conducted this part of the evaluation:

Name: Steve Lewis, Christine Manion, Connie Johnson

☒ I confirm that the Evaluation Team reviewed the findings provided in this worksheet.

Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition

(See FCFI Questions 1–3 and Appendix A)

1. Complete the [Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours](#). Submit the completed worksheet with this form.
 - Identify the institution's principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level (see the institution's Appendix A if necessary). The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:
 - Associate's degrees = 60 hours
 - Bachelor's degrees = 120 hours
 - Master's or other degrees beyond the bachelor's = At least 30 hours beyond the bachelor's degree
 - Note that 1 quarter hour = 0.67 semester hour.
 - Any exceptions to this requirement must be explained and justified.
 - Review any differences in tuition reported for different programs and the rationale provided for such differences.

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

- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
- ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

Federal Compliance review included the credit worksheet as well as syllabi provided to the reviewer prior to the CQR visit. Additionally, during the CQR visit, course syllabi for distance education courses, compressed 4-week, 1-credit and weekend courses were reviewed and additional validation of credit awarded was provided by Department Chairs for 3 credit, 1 credit and courses over the weekend.

Federal compliance requirements were resolved by email explanations provided by the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs regarding incomplete syllabi.

NMU's standardized syllabi should be modified to reflect accurately credit awarded for each course as well as all classroom and hybrid components of classes.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Records of Student Complaints

(See FCFI Questions 4–7 and Appendixes B and C)

1. Verify that the institution has documented a process for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints, as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.
- Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints, its complaints policy and procedure, and the history of complaints received and resolved since the last comprehensive evaluation by HLC.
 - Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.
 - Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into improvements in services or in teaching and learning.

- Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.
 - Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

NMU completed an AQIP action project in 2016 to develop a student inquiry and complaint tracking process, which the institution finds successful. A new policy is in place for a large variety of formal student complaints, and the website and a database is established to receive, track, and process these complaints. A log of student complaints provided appears to follow the university's policies and process.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Publication of Transfer Policies

(See FCFI Questions 8–10 and Appendixes D–F)

1. Verify that the institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies should contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.
- Review the institution's transfer policies.
 - Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and for specific programs and how the institution publicly discloses information about those articulation agreements.
 - Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its website) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.
 - Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. The information the institution

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

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

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

- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
- ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The university has clearly detailed transfer policies published in its bulletins and on its website. These policies encompass various statutes for enrollment and means for transferring credit, including testing for credit (CLEP, AP, etc.), transferring from accredited and non-accredited institutions, transferring from Michigan institutions, international institutions, and military service schools, among others. Articulation agreements are honored with several community and technical colleges in Michigan, plus a statewide Michigan Transfer Agreement. These policies and processes are within good practice.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Practices for Verification of Student Identity

(See FCFI Questions 11–16 and Appendix G)

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

- Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.
 - Check that any costs related to verification (e.g., fees associated with test proctoring) and charged directly to students are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance or correspondence courses.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

Student identity is verified through a secure login and passcode to access NMU EduCat, the online course management system used by the institution for online courses. A fee of \$50 per credit hour is assessed for all online courses; this fee is published for students in the "Tuition and Fees" section of the bulletin and as a reminder on the Add/Drop Classes screen online. Student records within an online course remain secure among student, faculty member, and system administrator. Additionally, security measures for student identity, back up procedures, vendor management and IT controls are outlined in a comprehensive survey of IT security used in financial reporting conducted in July, 2016.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Title IV Program Responsibilities

(See FCFI Questions 17–24 and Appendixes H–Q)

1. This requirement has several components the institution must address.
 - The team should verify that the following requirements are met:
 - **General Program Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities.
 - **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits.

It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 5 if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)

- **Default Rates.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its three-year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note that for 2012 and thereafter, institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact the HLC staff.
- **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.
- **Student Right to Know/Equity in Athletics.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 2, Core Component 2.A if the team determines that the disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)
- **Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically in the course catalog or student handbook and online. Note that HLC does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance unless required to do so by state or federal regulations but does anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.
- **Contractual Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Contractual Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)

- **Consortial Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Consortial Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)
 - Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.
 - Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution's compliance or whether the institution's auditor has raised any issues in the A-133 about the institution's compliance, and also look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.
 - If the institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the Federal Compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with the corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.
 - If issues have been raised concerning the institution's compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution's ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity (*Core Components 2.A and 2.B*).
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The institution provided a comprehensive portfolio of evidence to support its compliance with Title IV Program responsibilities. NMU is in compliance with federal guidelines regarding Title IV funding, and all past audit findings have been resolved. The university's policies and procedures as they relate to Title IV funding are appropriate, accessible to students and the public, and followed by university personnel. The university's default rate is below the threshold that would require DOE monitoring, yet the financial aid office is responding to an increase in default rate in reasonable ways.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Required Information for Students and the Public

(See FCFI Questions 25–27 and Appendixes R and S)

1. Verify that the institution publishes accurate, timely and appropriate information on institutional programs, fees, policies and related required information. Verify that the institution provides this required information in the course catalog and student handbook and on its website.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☒ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (See 2.B regarding credits for degrees).

Rationale:

The undergraduate and graduate bulletins, student handbooks, and the university website include required information for students and the public as defined by this federal compliance requirement. During student interviews, students affirmed that they were aware of the sources for university information. However, some discrepancies were found between the 60 or 120 credits listed and the actual number of credits needed to complete a particular program. An audit of the Bulletins has been suggested by the Team in relationship to Criterion 2.B.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

(See FCFI Questions 28–31 and Appendixes T and U)

1. Verify that the institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with HLC and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.
 - Review the institution's disclosure about its accreditation status with HLC to determine whether the information it provides is accurate, complete and appropriately formatted and contains HLC's web address.

- Review the institution's disclosures about its relationship with other accrediting agencies for accuracy and for appropriate consumer information, particularly regarding the link between specialized/professional accreditation and the licensure necessary for employment in many professional or specialized areas.
 - Review the institution's catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, website and information provided by the institution's advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate, timely and appropriate information to current and prospective students about its programs, locations and policies.
 - Verify that the institution correctly displays the Mark of Affiliation on its website.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The university provides accurate information about its programs, locations, and policies. It discloses its accreditation status with HLC, and the Mark of Affiliation is correctly displayed and active. Relationships with accrediting bodies are available on the Academic Affairs website.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Review of Student Outcome Data

(See FCFI Questions 32–35 and Appendix V)

1. Review the student outcome data the institution collects to determine whether they are appropriate and sufficient based on the kinds of academic programs the institution offers and the students it serves.
 - Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about planning, academic program review, assessment of student learning, consideration of institutional effectiveness and other topics.
 - Review the institution's explanation of its use of information from the College Scorecard, including student retention and completion and the loan repayment rate.

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

- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
- ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The Federal Compliance Filing Report provided a lengthy narrative of how student outcome data are collected and used at the program level. During the CQR visit, evidence demonstrated a robust academic assessment process as well as extensive data review by student advising, which is shared with academic leaders. Specific examples were provided about the use of data for improvements in nursing, associate programs and general education during meetings with academic leaders and faculty.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Publication of Student Outcome Data

(See FCFI Questions 36–38)

1. Verify that the institution makes student outcome data available and easily accessible to the public. Data may be provided at the institutional or departmental level or both, but the institution must disclose student outcome data that address the broad variety of its programs.
 - Verify that student outcome data are made available to the public on the institution's website—for instance, linked to from the institution's home page, included within the top three levels of the website or easily found through a search of related terms on the website—and are clearly labeled as such.
 - Determine whether the publication of these data accurately reflects the range of programs at the institution.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

- ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The web link provided in the Federal Compliance Filing report is the Institutional Research page. Within that page is listed "Performance Outcomes," including grade point averages, retention and graduation rates for certain programs, degrees granted, trend data, and gainful employment certificates. Additionally, the site lists "Academic Departmental Measures," which include enrollment reports, credit hour reports, class size reports, grade reports, and trend data.

After additional review of the retention and graduation data included on the website, the institutional research office confirmed that the last dates for university graduation and retention data was 2014.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Standing With State and Other Accrediting Agencies

(See FCFI Questions 39–40 and Appendixes W and X)

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

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

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

- Review the list of relationships the institution has with all other accreditors and state governing or coordinating bodies, along with the evaluation reports, action letters and interim monitoring plans issued by each accrediting agency.
- Verify that the institution's standing with state agencies and accrediting bodies is appropriately disclosed to students.

- Determine whether this information provides any indication about the institution's capacity to meet HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. Should the team learn that the institution is at risk of losing, or has lost, its degree or program authorization in any state in which it meets state presence requirements, it should contact the HLC staff liaison immediately.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The Academic Affairs web page lists all academic accrediting agencies affiliated with the university, with links to the accreditors' websites and a summary document listing the cycles for visits and contact personnel. Documentation provided to the compliance reviewer reflected additional documentation requested by the FAA and during the visit, additional documentation was provided to the team by the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs that indicated NMU had addressed FAA concerns.

Additional monitoring, if any:

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

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

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

- Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including copies of the institution's notices, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public and seek comments.
- Evaluate the comments to determine whether the team needs to follow up on any issues through its interviews and review of documentation during the visit process.

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

- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
- ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The institution provided the opportunity to comment in a timely manner, the announcements being published in September, 2016.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Competency-Based Programs Including Direct Assessment Programs/Faculty-Student Engagement

(See FCFI Questions 44–47)

1. Verify that students and faculty in any direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution have regular and substantive interactions: the faculty and students communicate on some regular basis that is at least equivalent to contact in a traditional classroom, and that in the tasks mastered to assure competency, faculty and students interact about critical thinking, analytical skills, and written and oral communication abilities, as well as about core ideas, important theories, current knowledge, etc. (Also, confirm that the institution has explained the credit hour equivalencies for these programs in the credit hour sections of the Federal Compliance Filing.)
- Review the list of direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution.
 - Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty in these programs regularly communicate and interact with students about the subject matter of the course.
 - Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty and students in these programs interact about key skills and ideas in the students' mastery of tasks to assure competency.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
- ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

NMU offers no competency-based programs.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list of materials reviewed here:

Federal Compliance Filing report
 Undergraduate Bulletin
 Graduate Bulletin
 Northern Michigan University website
 Sample syllabi
 List of recent student complaints/grievances and associated policies
 Letters of accreditation standing
 Transfer policies
 Articulation agreements
 Student identify verification evidence
 Correspondence related to Title IV compliance
 Title IV audits
 Campus crime publications
 Financial aid and athletic aid policies and evidence
 Student athlete drug testing policy
 NMU Financial Aid Factbook
 Published graduation rates
 Published tuition/fee structure
 Student handbooks
 Advertising and recruitment materials
 Notices of Opportunity to Comment
 Interviews with student advising and academics during CQR visit



FORM

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

Institution Under Review: Northern Michigan University

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

Instructions

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

Responses

A. Answer the Following Question

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The institution identified 26 different term lengths between the standard semester and summer terms; however, the instructional time and work involved in each term appears to be within good practice in higher education and in accordance with the institution's stated policy on awarding credit.

B. Recommend HLC Follow-Up, If Appropriate

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

Rationale:

The institution follows its stated policy for credit hour allocation, which is within standard practice of higher education institutions and accepted by federal guidelines.

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

Part 2. Policy and Practices on Assignment of Credit Hours

Instructions

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

1. **Format of Courses and Number of Credits Awarded.** Review the *Form for Reporting an Overview of Credit Hour Allocations and Instructional Time for Courses* (Supplement A1 to the *Worksheet for Institutions*) completed by the institution, which provides an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats.
2. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution (see Supplements B1 and B2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, as applicable).
 - At semester-based institutions courses will be typically be from two to four credit hours (or approximately five quarter hours) and extend approximately 14–16 weeks (or approximately 10 weeks for a quarter). The descriptions in the catalog should reflect courses that are appropriately rigorous and have collegiate expectations for objectives and workload. Identify courses/disciplines that seem to depart markedly from these expectations.
 - Institutions may have courses that are in compressed format, self-paced, or otherwise alternatively structured. Credit assignments should be reasonable. (For example, as a full-time load for a traditional semester is typically 15 credits, it might be expected that the norm for a full-time load in a five-week term is 5 credits; therefore, a single five-week course awarding 10 credits would be subject to inquiry and justification.)
 - Teams should be sure to scan across disciplines, delivery mode and types of academic activities.
 - Federal regulations allow for an institution to have two credit-hour awards: one award for Title IV purposes and following the federal definition and one for the purpose of defining

progression in and completion of an academic program at that institution. HLC procedure also permits this approach.

3. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course (see Supplement B3 to *Worksheet for Institutions*). Pay particular attention to alternatively structured or other courses completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor that have particularly high credit hour assignments.
4. Sampling. Teams will need to sample some number of degree programs based on the headcount at the institution and the range of programs it offers.
 - For the programs sampled, the team should review syllabi and intended learning outcomes for several courses, identify the contact hours for each course, and review expectations for homework or work outside of instructional time.
 - At a minimum, teams should anticipate sampling at least a few programs at each degree level.
 - For institutions with several different academic calendars or terms or with a wide range of academic programs, the team should expand the sample size appropriately to ensure that it is paying careful attention to alternative format and compressed and accelerated courses.
 - Where the institution offers the same course in more than one format, the team is advised to sample across the various formats to test for consistency.
5. **Direct Assessment or Competency-Based Programs.** Review the information provided by the institution regarding any direct assessment or competency-based programs that it offers, with regard to the learning objectives, policies and procedures for credit allocation, and processes for review and improvement in these programs.
6. **Policy on Credit Hours and Total Credit Hour Generation.** With reference to the institutional policies on the assignment of credit provided in Supplement A2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, consider the following questions:
 - Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?
 - Does that policy address the amount of instructional or contact time assigned and homework typically expected of a student with regard to credit hours earned?
 - For institutions with courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy also equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the time frame allotted for the course?

- Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)
 - If so, is the institution's assignment of credit to courses reflective of its policy on the award of credit?
 - Do the number of credits taken by typical undergraduate and graduate students, as well as the number of students earning more than the typical number of credits, fall within the range of good practice in higher education?
7. If the answers to the above questions lead the team to conclude that there may be a problem with the credit hours awarded the team should recommend the following:
- If the problem involves a poor or insufficiently detailed institutional policy, the team should call for a revised policy as soon as possible by requiring a monitoring report within no more than one year that demonstrates the institution has a revised policy and provides evidence of implementation.
 - If the team identifies an application problem and that problem is isolated to a few courses or a single department, division or learning format, the team should call for follow-up activities (a monitoring report or focused evaluation) to ensure that the problems are corrected within no more than one year.
 - If the team identifies systematic noncompliance across the institution with regard to the award of credit, the team should notify the HLC staff immediately and work with staff members to design appropriate follow-up activities. HLC shall understand systematic noncompliance to mean that the institution lacks any policies to determine the award of academic credit or that there is an inappropriate award of institutional credit not in conformity with the policies established by the institution or with commonly accepted practices in higher education across multiple programs or divisions or affecting significant numbers of students.

Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours

A. Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team

DNP – Doctor of Nursing Practice

NU801 (3 cr) Foundations of Nursing Theory

NU820 (3 cr) Health Care Policy

NU710 (3 cr) Research Utilization

Ed.S.in Administration and Supervision

ED 621 (3 cr) Curriculum Evaluation

ED 650 (3 cr) The Superintendency

PY554 (3 cr) Adult Learners

MS in Biology

BI589 (1-4 cr) Research in Biology

BI595 (2 cr) ST: Biology TA Training

MA in Higher Education in Student Affairs

ED516 (4 cr) Intro to Student Affairs

ED531 (4 cr) College Student Development

BA – Liberal Studies core

EN110 (4 cr) Good Books

EN111 (4 cr) Coll Composition 1

HP200 (1 cr) Physical Well Being

HP272B (2 cr) SCUBA – Advanced

MA100 (4 cr) Intermediate Algebra

PH202 (5 cr) College Physics II

PL100 (4 cr) Intro to Philosophy

Wildland Firefighting Certificate

RE176 (3 cr) Wildland Fire Chain Saws/Pumps

RE376 (2 cr) Advanced Firefighter

B. Answer the Following Questions

1. Institutional Policies on Credit Hours

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The institution's policy on credit hours specifies that credit is awarded on the basis of the Carnegie Unit. The Form for Reporting an Overview of Credit Hour Allocations confirms that the Carnegie Unit is largely followed, with only 3 exceptions, such as a 2 credit FTF course meeting for a total of 15 hours.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

Comments:

A general statement of equivalency for distance courses is included in the credit hour policy.

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

Comments:

2. Application of Policies

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

Comments:

As a general rule the university's programs and syllabi do reflect the institution's policy on awarding credit. A handful of exceptions exist in which it is not clear how a course's credit may be calculated according to the Carnegie unit.

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

Comments:

While in general, outcomes are appropriate for courses and programs, it should be noted that among the handful of syllabi reviewed, some inconsistencies occurred with course learning outcomes among multiple sections of the same course.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The courses and programs offered in compressed format and alternate delivery appear to be appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

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

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

As a general rule, the institution does award credit reflective of its policies and according to common practice in higher education. However, some of the graduate programs and the certificate program reviewed award credit in ways that are not clearly explained in the program literature or in the course syllabi.

The courses in the Ed.S. program are offered in a compressed format, and some of those program's syllabi do not indicate how an equivalent of 3 credits is being awarded when the course meets a total of 16 hours (equivalent to 1 credit). An example is ED650: The Superintendency. Further clarification is necessary to determine that time spent outside of the classroom (either online or otherwise engaged in meeting student learning outcomes) maintains an equivalency of 3 credits. Additional clarification provided by the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs clarified that there are additional course meetings not reflected in the syllabus and that the course also has a hybrid component.

No actual course syllabi were made available for the MS in Biology program. Syllabi were provided to the site team reviewer and class time was appropriate.

The Wildland Firefighting Certificate syllabi also were not able to clearly illustrate how the Carnegie Unit is being used to award credit. In one instance, 3 credits are being awarded for a weekend class that meets a total of 17 hours, half of which is in lab. No further explanation as to how students might be working outside of class to account for the credit awarded was provided. The Associate Provost of Academic Affairs provided additional clarification and the course meets two full weekends and the second half of the course covers additional subjects and topics.

C. Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate

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

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

Rationale:

Additional verification and review was necessary for the team to resolve issues raised by the Federal Compliance Reviewer. The institution should ensure that all syllabi have complete information and include the number of credits awarded as well as what is included in the hybrid component of a course.

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

None.

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

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

Identify the findings:

Rationale:

Part 3. Clock Hours

Instructions

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

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution’s requirement for student work outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour includes at least 20 semester hours.

Worksheet on Clock Hours

A. Answer the Following Questions

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

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

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

C. Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

Rationale:

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



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	Northern Michigan University, MI
TYPE OF REVIEW:	AQIP Comprehensive Quality Review
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	Comprehensive Evaluation to include a Federal Compliance Reviewer. The institution was granted an extension until September 1, 2022 to become compliant to the faculty qualification requirement. HLC will review that the institution is in compliance with the faculty qualification requirement at the comprehensive evaluation following the extension date.
DATES OF REVIEW:	3/20/2017 - 3/22/2017
<input type="checkbox"/> No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements	

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: no change

Degrees Awarded: Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Specialist, Doctors

Recommended Change: no change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2009 - 2010

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2016 - 2017

Recommended Change: 2026-2027

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

Doctoral degrees are limited to the Doctor of Nursing Practice.

Recommended Change: no change



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Additional Location:

Prior HLC approval required.

Recommended Change: no change

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

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

Recommended Change: no change

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway

AQIP Pathway

Recommended Change: Eligible to Choose Pathway

Upcoming Events

Systems Appraisal: 06/01/2024

Recommended Change: no changer

Strategy Forum: 2021 - 2022

Recommended Change: no change

Systems Appraisal: 06/01/2020

Recommended Change: no change

Strategy Forum: 2017 - 2018

Recommended Change: no change

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Recommended Change: Interim report on distance learning, faculty advising and student success data. Due: July 31, 2018.

Institutional Data

Educational Programs		Recommended Change:
Undergraduate		
Certificate	19	_____
Associate Degrees	18	_____
Baccalaureate Degrees	107	_____
Graduate		
Master's Degrees	10	_____
Specialist Degrees	1	_____
Doctoral Degrees	1	_____

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

None

Recommended Change: no change

Additional Locations

Delta-Schoolcraft ISD Career Technical Center, 2525 3rd Avenue South, Escanaba, MI, 49829 - Active
 K I Sawyer, MSDC Building, 411 Avenue A, Gwinn, MI, 49841-3002 - Active
 Lake Superior State University, Ashwaubenon Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI, - Inactive
 Lake Superior State University, Ashwaubenon Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI, - Inactive
 Macomb Community College, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township, MI, 48038 - Inactive
 Northern Michigan University - Escanaba, 2001 N. Lincoln Road, Escanaba, MI, 49829-2511 - Inactive
 Northern Michigan University - Iron Mountain, 2801 North U.S. 2, Iron Mountain, MI, 49801-0130 - Active
 Northern Michigan University - MGHS, 420 W. Magnetic, Marquette, MI, 49855-2705 - Active

Recommended Change: no change

Distance Delivery

13.0404 - Educational, Instructional, and Curriculum Supervision, Master, Educational Administration and Supervision
 13.1011 - Education/Teaching of Individuals with Specific Learning Disabilities, Master, Learning Disabilities
 13.1315 - Reading Teacher Education, Master, Reading
 13.1315 - Reading Teacher Education, Master, Reading Specialist



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

13.1316 - Science Teacher Education/General Science Teacher Education, Master, MS in Science Education

43.0109 - Security and Loss Prevention Services, Bachelor, Bachelor of Science in Loss Prevention

43.0199 - Corrections and Criminal Justice, Other, Master, Criminal Justice

Recommended Change: no change

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change: no change

Contractual Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: no change

Consortial Arrangements

51.0812 - Respiratory Therapy Technician/Assistant - Associate - Associate - 51.0812 Respiratory Therapy Technician/Assistant (Respiratory Therapy) - Marquette General Hospital

51.0909 - Surgical Technology/Technologist - Associate - Associate - 51.0909 Surgical Technology/Technologist (Surgical Technology) - Marquette General Hospital

51.0911 - Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer - Associate - Associate - 51.0911 Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer (Radiography) - Marquette General Hospital

Recommended Change: no change
