

**Reaffirmation of Accreditation Recommendation**

**For**

**Northern Michigan University**

**Marquette, Michigan**

**of the 2009-10**

**Academic Quality improvement Program**

**Review Panel on Reaffirmation**

**The Higher Learning Commission**

**A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**

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## **I. Context and Nature of Review**

### **A. Review Purpose, Process, and Materials**

AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation reviews are scheduled seven years in advance, when an institution first joins the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) or when an institution already participating in AQIP is reaffirmed via the AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation process.

In conducting these reviews, the AQIP Reaffirmation of review panel examines the following materials for each institution:

- Current Commission History file of institutional actions
- Current Commission Statement of Affiliation Status
- Current official Commission Organizational Profile
- Annual Updates of year's Action Projects
- AQIP Review Panel Report(s) on Institutional Status Change Requests
- Focused visit report(s) and action letter(s)
- Institutional websites
- Key correspondence between the institution and the Commission
- Last Comprehensive PEAQ Evaluation team report, institutional response, and Commission action letter
- Quality Checkup report(s)
- Quality Program Summary
- Summary of Action Projects attempted
- Summary Update of institutional activity and dynamics since the last Quality Checkup, provided by the institution on September 1 of the review year (also known as Quality Highlights)
- Systems Appraisal Feedback Report(s)
- Systems Portfolio Index(es) (to compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation)
- Systems Portfolio(s), including update provided by the institution on September 1 of the review year
- Any other major reports or documents that are part of the institution's permanent Commission files

Two lead panelists from the AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation draft a recommendation that is reviewed and approved by the entire panel before it is forwarded to the Institutional Actions Council.

## **B. Organizational Context**

The institution was first accredited by the Commission on January 1, 1916. The institution was admitted to AQIP on December 10, 2002. It participated in a Strategy Forum on February 26 to March 1, 2003 and November 13-16, 2007.

Since admission to AQIP the institution has officially declared and attempted ten individual Action Projects, and has provided AQIP with Annual Updates of ongoing projects and received Annual Update Feedback Reports on these. The institution provided its Systems Portfolio for review on June 1, 2006, and received a Systems Appraisal Feedback Report on October 18, 2006.

The institution proposed a change in its relationship with the Commission that was reviewed by staff and approved on October 23, 2007. The change permitted the institution to offer the BS in Loss Prevention via distance learning. AQIP conducted a Quality Checkup visit to the institution on March 25-27, 2009, and provided a report of the findings of the visiting team.

## **C. Organizational Scope and Structure (including extended physical or distance education operations)**

Northern Michigan University is a public, comprehensive Master's I institution, located in the City of Marquette on Lake Superior in the Upper Peninsula of the State, that offers associate, bachelor, master, and specialist degrees. It has off-campus sites for courses in Escanaba and Iron Mountain and offers the BS degree in Loss Prevention via distance learning. Current full-time undergraduate enrollment is 7651 with another 947 part-time students. Graduate enrollment is 222 full-time and 527 part-time. NMU has a significant population of first-generation students (33%) and also a sizable (20%) number of at risk students, so it makes a wide variety of student support services available on campus. It is also developing its outreach to Native Americans in the Peninsula, the largest minority group in the area. NMU has a solid reputation in the State and plays a major role in the local economy and in the intellectual and cultural environment of Marquette and the Upper Peninsula. The campus is located in an attractive natural setting and is seen as a very safer environment.

## **D. Notification of Quality Checkup Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment**

A Quality Checkup site visit to the institution was conducted on March 25-27, 2009. In compliance with Commission requirements, the institution notified its constituencies and the public of this visit, solicited third-party comment to be sent directly to the Commission. The Commission shared all comments received with the institution and the team, and the team discussed both the comments with the institution and reviewed evidence of the institution's compliance with Commission's notification and third-party comment requirements.

## **E. Compliance with Federal Requirements**

The Quality Checkup visit reviewed the institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Federal Compliance Program* in 2008-09, and reported that all issues and practices reviewed at that time were acceptable. However, the Commission's Board of Trustees

adopted additional policies on February 24, 2009 to comply specifically with requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 concerning *Transfer of Credit* and the *Verification of Student Identity* policies. It is essential that the institution become familiar with these new accreditation expectations and take action immediately to ensure that its practices comply with these additional requirements. Detailed information about the new policies is available on the Commission's website and from the Commission's staff.

#### **F. Evidence of the Organization's Responsiveness to Previous Commission Concerns Regarding Fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation**

There were four accreditation issues identified in the 2006 Systems Appraisal (pages 8-10): lack of assessment data (3C), planning not aligned with mission (2D), lack of clarity in goals for student learning (3A), and lack of benchmarks to measure improvement. In three of these cases, the problem simply was that NMU had failed to provide enough information in the portfolio to satisfy the questions that arose during its analysis. Two other issues were more serious. Engagement with institutional Mission was weak and the commitment to AQIP did not appear to be strong. Changes were made in assignments, the Mission was revised, and a great deal of institutional energy was expended in linking quality processes to Mission. So much so that the Quality Checkup team came to the judgment that NMU presented to them satisfactory evidence that it had adequately responded to all these issues. "The institution's approach to the issues, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP expectations" (QCU, p. 4).

## **II. Fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation**

**CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY.** The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

### **A. Evidence that Core Components are met.**

The recent adoption, between the 2006 Systems Portfolio and the 2009 Quality Checkup Visit, of three significant documents has helped NMU establish a new and functional framework for Mission-driven planning. The three documents are a "Roadmap to 2015," a revised University Mission, and the Campus Master Plan. Further, a new President and four other new senior administrators initiated broad discussion and new formulation of the University's identity and direction. (QPS, page 2)

In October of 2008, all units on the NMU campus began a process of aligning their unit mission statements with the revised institutional Mission. This process ensures that the entire university is committed to a common mission. (QH, page 1)

NMU uses its formal committee structure, specific departmental recommendations, and unit retreats to establish goals that align with its mission, vision, and values. (SA, page 33)

Strategic Planning appears to be adequately grounded on institutional Mission and Values Statements, as revised by the Board of Trustees in 2008, using feedback on the 2006 Portfolio. The comprehensive “Roadmap to 2015,” due to the heavy investment of Board and senior administration in it, serves to link resource planning and budget allocation to institutional mission and values. (QCU, page 4)

One prominent and convincing instance of the quality of planning now functioning at NMU can be found in the ways the University handled significant decreases in State funding without weakening educational offerings or increasing deferred maintenance. (QCU, page 8)

**B. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.**

None.

**C. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution’s Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

None.

**D. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None.

**Recommendation of the Panel:**

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up is recommended.

**CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE.** The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

**A. Evidence that Core Components are met.**

NMU has a process in operation whereby unit mission statements are revised in order to align with the revised institutional Mission Statement. The alignment process began with higher levels and progressed to lower levels, to insure that lower levels reflected the mission of higher units—and all statements agreed with the University Mission Statement. (QPS, page 5)

Information used for decision-making includes historical data, projection of trends, current activity levels, risk assessment, and comparative data from peers shared electronically and gathered at regular meetings with administrators from peer institutions. (QPS, page 16)

The Quality Checkup Team found ample evidence that NMU is currently operating in a data-rich environment and making good use of that information to drive decision-making. (QCU, page 3)

The University has a process in operation called “Benchmarking the NMU Roadmap to 2015,” in which specific quality-improvement targets are generated and then used to measure the success of the strategic plan. (QCU, page 4)

The commitment of the NMU Board, President, senior leadership team, and down through the ranks of faculty and staff to AQIP processes and principles is creating a culture of continuous quality improvement. (QCU, page 5)

There is an active office of institutional research that regularly collects, analyzes, and uses “productivity indices” to evaluate internal data on such things as enrollment, retention, academic standing, and graduation rates. (SA, page 37)

NMU’s annual planning process has input from broad areas of the institution. Resource needs for departments, for example, and key initiatives for development are studied with input from the President’s Council, academic departments, the Academic Senate, and the Office of Finance and Budget. (SA, page 41)

**B. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.**

None.

**C. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution’s Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

None.

**D. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None.

**Recommendation of the Panel:**

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up is recommended.

**CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING.** The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

**A. Evidence that Core Components are met.**

Every academic program is required to submit an Annual Outcomes Assessment Report and Plan. These plans list five types of information: congruence between the departmental and the university mission statements, student learning outcomes, means of assessing the outcomes, data collected, and the use of data to improve learning. (QPS, pages 3 and 6)

NMU is making good progress in developing academic outcome measures for each academic program, as well as for the Liberal Studies Core. Evaluation of academic and administrative assessment plans by the NMU assessment committee in 2008 found that 59% are in congruence with the institutional Mission, 85% have clearly identified the outcomes to be achieved, 59% had collected data, and 47% are now well on their way to completing a whole cycle of assessment. (QCU, page 4)

The University has several mechanisms in place to provide individualized assistance and guidance to students in a timely manner. Incoming students, students on probation, and at-risk students are all matched with advisors who have the training to determine the specific needs of the students and to put them in contact with the appropriate support people. (SA, page 20)

NMU uses surveys of employers and graduates to determine to what extent graduates possess the appropriate skills and knowledge upon entering the workplace. (SA, page 28)

Quality processes include the beginning of “meta-assessment,” in that the Assessment Coordinator and the Assessment Committee do an annual review of unit assessment plans to judge their effectiveness and to suggest improvements. (SA, page 39)

**B. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.**

NMU is clearly making progress in the assessment of student learning outcomes and of the achievement of objectives by administrative units. The percentages indicated above (QCU, page 4) clearly show both progress and the need for further progress in fulfilling Core Component 3A. Routine AQIP processes such as the Systems Portfolio, Systems Appraisal, and Quality Checkup provide sufficient oversight, and no specific Commission monitoring or reporting is necessary or recommended.

**C. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution’s Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

None.

**D. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None.

**Recommendation of the Panel:**

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up is recommended.



**CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.** The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

**A. Evidence that Core Components are met.**

NMU clearly indicates to its faculty and staff in its Shared Visions/Shared Expectations document that high performance and innovation are desired and encouraged. Faculty are rewarded by means of Excellence in Teaching Awards, Excellence in Professional Development Awards, and a Distinguished Faculty Award. (SA, page 30)

The University encourages leadership development through identifying leaders to serve as role models, sending staff and faculty to leadership and professional development conferences, promoting from within, and by providing leadership opportunities in the committee structure. (SA, page 33)

The University uses a “Wildcat Incentive Fund” to encourage faculty and staff, with actual funding, to think innovatively and to take the initiative in implementing “good ideas.” A partnership with the regional hospital contiguous to the campus, for example, results not only in strong health-related academic programs, but also provides many research opportunities for students and faculty. (QCU, page 8)

Personnel from NMU made a presentation at the 114<sup>th</sup> annual HLC meeting on “Enhancing the Campus Climate for Scholarship,” in which they shared with that audience what they were doing, and where it was successful, to encourage faculty and others to engage in appropriate scholarly efforts. (QH, page 3)

Just recently, NMU received funding to work with low-income, first-generation, and under-represented groups to prepare these students to gain entrance and to succeed in graduate study. (QH, page 3)

**B. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.**

None.

**C. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution’s Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

None.

**D. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None.

**Recommendation of the Panel:**

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up is recommended.

**CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE.** As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

**A. Evidence that Core Components are met.**

NMU conducts regular meetings with service providers, conducts surveys of students, and conducts other annual reviews to ensure services meet student and stakeholders' needs. In particular, the University designs its course delivery system to meet the needs of its student body, including many non-traditional students who need web-based and evening courses because of job and family responsibilities. (SA, pages 21 and 36)

Service and experiential learning programs are in abundance at NMU, and they are of value both to students in their learning and to many organizations and groups of people in the region who benefit from the work of the students. (QCU, page 8)

NMU builds and maintains relationships with regional and local employers and stakeholders through ongoing communication, inclusion of stakeholders on university committees, enlisting university personnel as members of community organizations, and conducting special events (such as job fairs). (SA, page 28)

Partnerships with local and regional stakeholders—economic, workforce, and service involvement—have earned NMU the Carnegie classification as a “Community Engaged University.” (QPS, page 7)

To assess the value of the institution's engagement and service as perceived by NMU constituencies, the University gathers data on longevity (some partnerships are of 20 years duration), satisfaction, program impact, and program changes based on results of feedback. (QPS, page 17)

**B. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.**

None.

**C. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution's Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

None.

**D. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None.

**Recommendation of the Panel:**

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up is recommended.

**Summary of panel recommendations regarding fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation:**

Although the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report (pages 8 through 10) listed some issues with the Criteria for Accreditation, the Quality Checkup Team (pages 3 and 4) found that additional data from NMU for some of these issues and energetic institutional action on the others had put the University in compliance with all the Criteria. After examination of all of the documentation, this Reaffirmation Panel agrees with the Quality Checkup Team that **Northern Michigan University meets all five of the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation, and no Commission follow-up is recommended.**

**III. Participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)****A. Comments and counsel on specific improvement projects**

That NMU has attempted 10 projects over the past 6 years (2003-2009) demonstrates the institution's desire to improve its crucial systems and processes. All projects are aligned closely to the AQIP categories. The first four completed prior to the submission of their first portfolio included (1) establishing an outcomes assessment program for the fields of study, general education, and student support and service (a response to their last comprehensive accreditation visit), (2) revising the advising services to students, (3) changing the student ID system and providing routine services through online processes, and (4) identifying and implementing ways in which students could become more involved in the life of the community and the life of the university through a value-added program called Superior Edge. The next three projects began at the time that their first AQIP portfolio was being assessed. These projects included (1) promoting the role of scholarship on campus among faculty and students, (2) promoting sustainable and healthy living environments on campus, and (3) improving and expanding online learning through training experiences for faculty and students to encourage the taking of online courses. The online learning project correlates with the University's movement towards increasing its distance learning offerings.

Particularly noteworthy are the three current projects; all of which are related to earlier initiatives and are in response to the systems appraisal report of October 2006 (SA). These projects include the following. (1) The Road Map to 2015 is a comprehensive strategic plan, which involved all levels of personnel and students at the university and members of the regional community in the identification of priorities, goals, and actions to be taken as well as a review process. Further, it has established benchmark measures to assure that the goals are being met and, if not being met, what improvements are needed. (2) The revision of its Mission Statement, which included each unit on campus re-writing its mission statement to reflect that of the University, has provided a focus for the campus as it moves forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. (3) Returning to its original action project related to assessment, NMU has strengthened its outcomes assessment program by

adding appropriate outcomes expectations to its programs, evaluating its liberal studies program, and connecting outcomes to the planning process. (QH, pp. 1-2; QCU)

Further, NMU has effectively used its structure to solicit ideas for and prioritize nine additional potential projects. The institution sought input from its stakeholders on which to focus on and announced its next projects fall of 2009.

In closing, NMU has moved firmly forward with its strategic planning and outcomes assessment, tying enrollment management, budget development, and campus master planning to its strategic planning and outcomes assessment. (QH and QCU)

## **B. Comments and counsel on key institutional processes and systems**

Category 1, Helping Students Learn: NMU utilizes a course approval process that is thorough and deliberate (SA, p.20), provides its students with appropriate support services (e.g. advising, individualized assistance, at risk student programs, etc.) (SA, p.20), provides for mentoring and assistance in identifying future career directions for its students, and utilizes data to assure that its courses and programs are current in content (SA, p.20 with follow up in the QCU). NMU has revised its mission statement and is in the process of having each unit align its mission statement with the revised statement. While NMU has established a learning outcomes assessment program since its last comprehensive review in 1995, further refining it as a result of its Systems Appraisal (2006), it requires further development and implementation. (QPC, p. 9, QCU, p. 4)

Category 2, Other Distinctive Objectives: NMU has achieved status for its “wired” status which allows it to disseminate information to its stakeholders on and off campus, provides students with a laptop for their use, and provides efficient communication internally with faculty and staff. (SA, pp. 24-25). Its FCC license to provide high speed internet access is one of its several distinctive features. (QCU, p. 8) Its student initiatives, including the First Year Experience Program, advising and mentoring of students, and Superior Edge Program have enhanced student learning and retention. Academic Service Learning has been institutionalized and has received the elective Carnegie community Engagement Designation for Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships (QPS, p. 14) The QCU team identified its service and experiential learning program as a distinctive feature of NMU’s programs. (QCU, p. 8) Through its strategic planning process, faculty and staff needs as well as student needs are given serious consideration.

Category 3, Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs: NMU seeks input from the students, alumni, and employers as to the quality and success of their programs in providing appropriate training. As a result, they enjoy a certain status of quality in their surrounding communities. In addition, recognizing the high number of at risk students and first generation college students on their campus, NMU offers programs that support student academic success and retention. (e.g. First Year Experience, ASL, and Superior Edge)

Category 4, Valuing People: In addition to a well defined search and hiring process, NMU offers its employees professional support for training, remaining current in their fields, for advancement, and achievement. (SA, p. 30) The results of a 2006 employee survey identified problems to be addressed. From the results, Human Resources identified 5 priorities (e.g. improving communication, improve training programs) that it is addressing.

Category 5, Leading and Communicating: NMU utilizes its formal committee structure for planning, decision making, and establishing its priorities. Communication is further enhanced through its forums, online, written and oral formats that are both top down and bottom up. The leadership at NMU supports the promotion of leaders from within the institution through mentoring and professional development opportunities. (SA, p. 33; QPS, p. 13)

Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations: NMU provides strong student support services that are centralized in one area which has promoted communication among the services and integrated the various services available (e.g. academic advising, financial services, etc.) NMU makes wide use of the internet and e-mail communication as well as student forums and student government for purposes of surveying student needs, responding to requests, and providing appropriate services. (SA, p. 36; QPS, p. 14)

Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness: The Office of Institutional Management regularly collects, analyzes and uses data to shape the decision making process. (QPS, p. 15; SA, p. 37). Further the Institution uses the ORACLE system for departmental use and the Banner SCT system for integration of data across the campus. The institution has through its most recent action projects for strategic planning and outcomes assessment identified benchmarks to measure their progress to meeting their goals, and measures for collecting data and analyzing results. (QPS, p. 15, 16; QCU, p.4)

Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement: NMU has effectively used the AQIP process to identify action projects related to strategic planning, outcomes assessment, mission statement revision and alignment, student services that have led to improved planning and budgeting, student retention, focused mission, and stakeholder satisfaction. (Section C of this document.)

Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships: NMU has developed a rich and diverse series of partnerships and collaborative relationships that support its academic programs and the communities it serves. The QCU (p.8) indicated that one of NMU's distinctive features is its partnership with a regional hospital next to the campus which provides opportunities for its students enrolled in health-related academic programs and provides many research opportunities for student learning and faculty research.

**C. Comments and counsel on the institution's culture of quality and its quality program or infrastructure.**

The institution was admitted to AQIP on December 10, 2002. It participated in a Strategy Forum on February 26 to March 1, 2003 and November 13-16, 2007. Since admission to AQIP the institution has officially declared and attempted ten individual Action Projects, and has provided AQIP with Annual Updates of ongoing projects and received Annual Update Feedback Reports on these. The institution provided its Systems Portfolio for review on June 1, 2006, and received a Systems Appraisal Feedback Report on October 18, 2006.

NMU's history of AQIP is a history of firsts. They have completed their first Systems Portfolio, received their first Systems Appraisal, received their first Quality Checkup Visit and now are awaiting their first accreditation through AQIP. From the perspectives of the Quality Checkup Team and the Panel of Reviewers, NMU and its leadership are committed to the AQIP process,

taking the responses of the Systems Appraisers seriously. Using their responses and their own assessment observations, they prepared a revised Systems Portfolio that fully reflects upon the data collected and used to direct its planning and assessment project.

The Accreditation Review Team noted the appointment of a new Coordinator for AQIP upon the death of the previous coordinator who had prepared the initial Systems Appraisal. (QPS, p. 1) The new Coordinator led the initiative to revise the original portfolio with the support of the President. This Team noted that the revised portfolio includes the results that support the identified needs for improvement identified by NMU. As identified by the QCU Team, the appropriate information was available at the time the original portfolio was submitted; however, it was initially omitted. Further, “ the Team found ample evidence that the University is currently operating in a data-rich environment and making good use of that information, including using data to drive decision making (QCU, p. 3)

NMU is encouraged to continue its journey towards quality continuous improvement. As noted in the Quality Program Summary, the Quality Checkup Report and the Quality Highlights, NMU is committed at all levels of its institution to use this process to sustain its level of quality instruction and services to its students and its other internal and external stakeholders and to make appropriate adjustments as the results of their benchmarks indicate.

**Summary of panel comments and counsel about the organization’s commitment to continuous quality improvement and its participation in AQIP:**

As evidenced by the Quality Highlights (p. 4), the Quality Checkup Report, and the Quality Program Summary, NMU is not only committed to using AQIP but also is experiencing the positive impact that AQIP has had on its strategic planning process, its outcomes assessment process, and its focused mission. More importantly perhaps, has been how these processes have impacted the accountability of all areas of campus by participating in the annual review process of its fiscal, physical, and human resources and how these resources enhance the quality of the learning experiences of its students. NMU is encouraged to continue to follow the quality improvement initiatives that it has begun, adding additional ones as identified by its stakeholders.