



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
The Higher Learning Commission  
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**CHICAGO—**The Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, is pleased to announce that Northern Michigan University is one of nine new schools approved to participate in its Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP).

Moving beyond the boundaries of traditional accreditation, the AQIP model is designed to align accreditation with an institution's program of continuous quality improvement in order to meet the rapidly shifting needs of educational institutions in the 21st century.

By joining AQIP, Northern Michigan University demonstrates a willingness to identify concrete targets for continuous improvement and to hold itself publicly accountable for re-engineering processes and operations to improve the results and activities for itself, its students and other stakeholders.

As part of its agreement, Northern Michigan University's current accreditation will continue as it participates in a series of planning and review activities to energize and reinforce its internal commitment to improvement. Upon entering AQIP, the date of Northern Michigan University's next formal reaffirmation of accreditation will be set in 2009-10. Annual and other reviews of its quality efforts will enable the Higher Learning Commission and AQIP to monitor progress and support Northern Michigan University's ongoing quality efforts.

Northern Michigan University will attend a Strategy Forum within one year of joining to identify and commit to several strategic Action Projects as part of the AQIP cycle of processes leading to reaffirmation of accreditation. The Action Projects will be entered into AQIP's Web-based Action Project Directory, and updated annually. Over the three years following attendance at the Strategy Forum, Northern Michigan University will create (and continually update) a Systems Portfolio. The Systems Portfolio will convey an accurate representation of Northern Michigan University's internal systems and processes, while tracking improvements and outcomes.