

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE

MIDTERM REPORT

October 15, 2009



Submitted to:
the Accrediting Commission on Community and Junior Colleges
and the
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Northern Marianas College

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I. Statement on Preparation of Report

After receiving the January 31, 2008 Show Cause letter from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (the “Commission”), the Northern Marianas College has submitted multiple reports that address the deficiencies noted in the letter. These reports include the *March 15, 2008 Special Report*, the *May 13, 2008 Update to the March 15, 2008 Special Report*, the *October 15, 2008 Show Cause Report*, the *December 31, 2008 Supplemental Report*, the *April 1, 2009 Show Cause Report*, and the *May 29, 2009 Supplemental Report*.

The *May 29, 2009 Supplemental Report* presents evidence that firmly demonstrates the College’s compliance with accreditation requirements, particularly Team Recommendations 1 and 2, which involve the integration of planning, program review, and budgeting, and the institutionalization of program review, respectively.

At its meeting June 9—11, 2009, the ACCJC reviewed the *April 1, 2009 Show Cause Report*, the report of the evaluation team which visited Monday, April 20—Thursday, April 23, 2009, and information presented by college representatives. The Commission took action at the meeting to accept the report, remove Show Cause, and reaffirm accreditation. The Commission also acted to require a visit by Commission representatives following the submission of the *October 15, 2009 Midterm Report*.

As required, this *October 15, 2009 Midterm Report* indicates resolution on team and Commission recommendations made for improvement, includes a summary of progress on College-identified plans for improvements as listed in the *2006 Self Study Report*, and provides a brief summary of substantive change proposals.

We certify that the contents of this *Report* were prepared with considerable input and participation from the College community, including students, faculty, and staff members, including representatives of the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College, the Faculty Senate, and the Staff Senate. The report was adopted by the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) and College Council and subsequently accepted by the Board of Regents on October 15, 2009.



Mr. Charles V. Cepeda
Chairman, NMC Board of Regents



Dr. Carmen Fernandez
President, NMC

II. Executive Summary

In 2009, Northern Marianas College (NMC) is an institution radically different and improved from the one that existed in 2006. While ongoing challenges remain, the College can point to concrete, substantial achievements in all areas that were of concern to the Accrediting Commission on Community and Junior Colleges in its reviews of the last three years.

- Establishment and enculturation of a coherent planning process with a structure in which program review and assessment inform planning and budgeting decisions and link those decisions to the mission, goals and shared vision of the College.
- A focus on student learning as the core activity of the College and the determinant criterion of its planning, program review and resource decision.
- Evidence of strong and effective leadership shared throughout the institution in an evolving governance system.
- An increasingly stable and qualified administrative team marked by ongoing professional development.
- Improved relationships with and support from the government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.
- Execution of a plan to provide the physical and technology infrastructure necessary for the College to achieve its mission. Furthermore, with an anticipated \$3.9 million in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the College will continue to upgrade its physical and technology infrastructure to meet the challenges of the 21st century global market.

Improvement & Sustainability

The College can demonstrate not only real achievements in its organization and commitment to continuous quality improvement, but also the capability to sustain those efforts over time.

- Through two completed cycles of program review, NMC linked planning, program review/assessment, and budgeting.
- It has provided updated student achievement data that correlates with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- The institutional effectiveness/performance report is now used to report to the community.
- In 2008, the College revised its *PROA Strategic Plan* and enhanced it with regular, quarterly updates that fold into the program review process.
- The College has received substantial funding from the legislature and has operated well within its funding levels. One of the reasons for recent success stems from the support of the governor and the legislature, which has sustained NMC's funding level and has even increased funding amidst financial constraints.
- With funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), NMC finances should be stable for at least through September 30, 2011. The College continues to closely monitor its funds and address all audit findings.
- Recent enrollment increases, with 991 in fall 2009, up 25% from fall 2008, will help supplement the College's finances.

Changing the culture of an institution does not happen overnight, but over the last three years NMC has made steady progress in transforming itself into a place where integrated planning and assessment have become the norm. Moreover, this transformation has been embraced by the campus community, as was noted in the April 20-22, 2009 ACCJC Visiting Team Report. We have institutionalized systems for program review to maintain the momentum of the program review process:

- Participation in program review is stipulated in all job vacancy announcements and contracts.
- Program review is embedded into the employee evaluation process.
- NMC continues to provide professional development on the program review process to help everyone at the College understand and embrace the process and see it as a tool for continuous quality improvement for student achievement and institutional effectiveness.

Furthermore, despite a period of challenges and change, NMC was able to report substantial follow through on the 217 plans originally defined in its *2006 Report on the Self Study*.

ACCJC Eligibility Requirements

The Board of Regents' granting of a four year contract for the President is a very clear demonstration of the Board's support and its recognition of the need for continuity and stability in the presidency. Never has an NMC President received a four-year contract. Further, the NMC Board of Regents has written policies regarding the recruitment, evaluation and reappointment of the College's president.

As the Commission recognized in its November 2008 *Show Cause Visit Report*, the College has made significant progress in stabilizing its administration and staff and meets Eligibility Requirement #5.

- Not only has the position of chief executive stabilized, but the current president has been able to assemble a Management Team that consists of qualified individuals. NMC has been able to provide increased professional development opportunities for administration staff.
- Through its program review process, NMC continues to identify key staff needs and allocate funding for these positions. Since Cycle I of the program review process, NMC has hired five staff as a direct result of the program review process.
- Despite the difficulty of recruiting highly-qualified individuals to an island environment, NMC can report that 99 of 117 searches for administrative or staff personnel have been successful since 2008.

ACCJC Visiting Team Recommendations, Commission Recommendations and Action Letters

Since the January 2007 Commission letter placing the College on Probation, and through the subsequent Show Cause reports and visits, the College worked steadily and successfully in responding to ACCJC recommendations and concerns. The net result was the reaffirmation of the College's accreditation in June of 2009. Of the nine original recommendations from the 2006 Visiting Team Report, the three most challenging related to:

- Developing an integrated, participatory planning process that is widely understood and linked to resource allocation;
- Developing and institutionalizing a program review process that is systematic, is based on learning outcomes, and provides data that can be used to effect improvement;
- Developing and instituting a cycle for defining, analyzing and discussing student learning outcomes (SLOs).

The College has linked its planning and program review processes with resource allocation and is in Cycle 3 of program review. It has refined these processes and prepared documentation for them, notably the *Institutional Excellence Guide* (2008) and the *Manual for Planning Program Review and Budgeting* (2009). Both these documents were approved through the College's shared governance system.

PROA and Charting the Course towards 2012

On September 25, 2008, Northern Marianas College's Board of Regents adopted a five year strategic plan entitled the "PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012". The plan identified four strategic goals:

- P**romote student learning and success.
- R**espond to the professional development continuing education, and personal enrichment needs of the Commonwealth.
- O**ptimize financial and human resources.
- A**ccelerate the upgrade of physical and technology infrastructure.

To further define these goals and reinforce the focus of the plan, several priority initiatives were identified for each strategic goal.

Driven by these goals and priority initiatives, Northern Marianas College aims to be "a premiere American institution, recognized as a world leader in the region, with graduates who can compete globally." (NMC President Fernandez)

III. Responses to ACCJC Recommendations & Action Letters

A. Eligibility Requirement #4: Chief Executive Officer

The institution has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board, whose full-time responsibility is to the institution, and who possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies.

The October 16-19, 2006 Visiting Team Report noted, “The Chief Executive Officer of the College is the president who is appointed by the Board of Regents. Commonwealth law specifies the duties of the president whose primary responsibilities are to the college. The former president resigned in August 2006 and the Board of Regents appointed an acting president who was in this position at the time of the team visit.”

The April 20-22, 2009 Visiting Team Report also noted, “The team suggests that the timing and sequence of constituent feedback of the CEO and contract renewal of the CEO needs to be revised by the Board of Regents. As emphasized in Standard IV, the governing board has the sole responsibility for evaluating and determining length of service of the CEO. And the Board of Regents may determine that constituent feedback is part of any process developed for future evaluations. The team strongly suggests that the Board of Regents working with the College President should clarify its procedures for the CEO evaluation process and sequence and timelines of evaluation components as they relate to contract renewal dates to ensure the leadership stability of the College.”

Response: The unsettled scenario described in 2006 no longer exists at NMC in 2009. Furthermore, the Board of Regents has established written policies for recruitment, evaluation and reappointment of the chief executive (President). The current President has served since 2007 and presided over the activities that led to the 2009 reaffirmation of NMC’s accreditation by ACCJC. In 2009, the current president was also evaluated by the Board of Regents, Management Team, and all College governance bodies. As a result, the President was reappointed by the Board with a four-year contract.

The recent four-year contract provided to the president is the longest ever awarded to a chief executive at NMC and suggests a period of stable leadership at the institution. Moreover, based on work conducted at its board retreat on July 5, 2009, the Board of Regents, at its meeting on July 15, adopted four primary goals against which the performance of the President will be evaluated for this annual cycle. These goals will evolve every year to cover other priorities of the College. The four areas for the 2009-2010 cycle are as follow: accreditation, communication, human resources, and meeting the needs of the NMC Rota and Tinian instructional sites. The Board’s goals and objectives were formalized in a document entitled *NMC President’s Goals and Objectives*.

B. Eligibility Requirement #5: Administrative Capacity

The institution has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

The October 16-19, 2006 Visiting Team Report noted, “The executive administration at Northern Marianas College currently consists of an acting president, vice-president (vacant), three deans (two are currently in an acting capacity), and chief officer for financial and administrative services. While the current members of this administrative team are highly dedicated and committed to the college, recent vacancies have placed the college in danger of not meeting this Eligibility Requirement. The acting president and the Board of Regents are aware of this situation and are actively engaged in filling the existing administrative positions with permanent personnel who are fully prepared and experienced for their responsibilities.”

The January 31, 2007 Action Letter noted, “The Commission is concerned that the administrative staffing of the college is insufficient in experience and number to meet the needs of the college. The Progress Report of March 30, 2007 should describe how the college meets Eligibility Requirements #4 and #5.”

The November 7-9, 2007 Team Report noted, “The College has made significant progress in increasing the sufficiency of staff with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purposes, and there is strong evidence that show the College will have sufficient ongoing financial resources to fund its increased staffing levels.”

One year later, the November 3-5, 2008 Show Cause Visit Report also stated, “The College meets Eligibility Requirement #5.”

Response: The College continues to make significant progress on ER#5 administrative capacity. Not only has the position of chief executive stabilized, but the current President has been able to assemble a Management Team that consists of qualified individuals and NMC has been able to provide increased professional development opportunities for administration staff.

Through its program review process, NMC continues to identify key staff needs and allocate funding for these positions. Since Cycle I of the program review process, NMC has hired numerous staff in this manner. Despite the difficulty of recruiting highly-qualified individuals to an island environment, 99 of 117 searches for administrative and staff personnel have been successful since 2008.

NMC is beginning Cycle 3 of its program review process and continues to link allocation of resources to these results. The College has demonstrated its investment in the process of program review and that investment, coupled with stability of the chief executive, promises that the College can continue to meet this Eligibility Requirement in a routine manner. Furthermore, the College anticipates that American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

(ARRA) funding will cover not only critical positions, but also professional development opportunities for all employees to enhance their skills and administrative capacity. The college continues to expedite recruitment for all vacancies.

C. ACCJC Recommendation #1

Northern Marianas College must take appropriate steps to ensure that the delivery system used to provide instruction to Tinian and Rota is completely reliable and works at all times, or discontinue offering classes via telecommunications. The College must also detail how it intends to provide education services, including instruction and support services, that ensure the education obtained on the Tinian and Rota sites is equivalent of that obtained on the main campus and meets all accreditation requirements.

Response: Throughout the spring of 2007, the College undertook a number of initiatives to respond to the Commission's concerns about the sustainability, reliability and equivalency of instruction at the Tinian and Rota instructional sites. Despite these efforts, an exhaustive review (conducted by the new President and Management Team) in Summer 2007 concluded that current resources and likely enrollments would not provide sustained, reliable and equivalent instruction at these sites. On October 8, 2007, at the recommendation of the President, the Board of Regents suspended academic instruction at these sites, effective in Spring 2008. Despite that suspension, however, the College continued to engage the Rota and Tinian instructional sites in its strategic planning and program review processes. As a result, the Rota and Tinian instructional sites participated fully in Cycle 2 of program review and planning by submitting all program review documents. The College is mindful that any initiative to revive academic instruction would place the institution within the ACCJC Policy on Substantive Change.

Currently, NMC Rota and Tinian instructional sites focus on providing the following programs: Adult Basic Education, Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, (Cooperative Research Extension and Education Services) CREES (Agriculture and Aquaculture Extension, 4-H Club, and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), Business Development Workshops, continuing education courses, and Community Services Programs. Furthermore, with the upgrade of video-teleconferencing (VTC) connectivity to 2.5 mbps in 2007, NMC was able to provide the Rota and Tinian communities with opportunities to attend or participate in various activities throughout the CNMI through a VTC connection at Rota and Tinian.

For the first time in CNMI history, the Congressional Delegate Election Debate was held by VTC on all three islands in fall 2008. Other community events held by VTC were the Third Chamorro Conference, the Agricultural Summit, the Pre-Economic Summit, Economic Summit Nursing Programs, and employee complaint hearings by an Administrative Hearing Officer of the Department of Labor. In addition, meetings of NMC governance bodies (Board of Regents, College Council, Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), Budget and Finance Committee, Academic Council, Staff Senate, and Faculty Senate) are now all scheduled with VTC capability. In addition, the Information

Technology, Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, and CREES programs have conducted their meetings by VTC.

D. ACCJC Recommendation #2

The governing board of Northern Marianas College must undergo sufficient training in accreditation requirements of the ACCJC.

Response: Members of the Board of Regents participated in various training activities geared to improve their effectiveness as policy makers for the College. In October 2008, the Pacific Postsecondary Education Council (PPEC)—in partnership with the Northern Marianas College—hosted a two-day boardsmanship training agenda including “Ethical Issues that Accompany a Board Member’s Role,” “What is the Board’s Responsibility with the CEO,” “How does a Board Monitor its own Performance,” and other highly relevant and helpful forums. All Regents (who were members of the Board at the time) participated in this training. The NMC President, newly elected chair of PPEC has once again requested that the boardsmanship be held on Saipan so that new board members can receive the training in a timely manner. PPEC has agreed and the training is tentatively set for December 2009. At this time, two board members still need to receive comprehensive training and are expected to participate in the 2009 PPEC boardsmanship training.

In addition to training opportunities like PPECs boardsmanship, new Board members are also provided orientation sessions that cover a variety of issues upon their appointment to the Board. These sessions are facilitated by the chairperson of the Board and the NMC president.

The chairperson of the board and the president also participated in the Association of Community College Trustees’ Annual National Legislative Summit in February, 2009. The three-day event featured meetings and sessions focusing on the economic and workforce development role of community colleges.

By December of 2009, all current Board members will have completed comprehensive training in accreditation and other matters. Further, such training is part of orientation for all new Board members. Additionally, training and development for Board members is a continuous process.

E. Team Recommendation 1

The college should review existing planning processes in order to establish and implement a shared vision for the future of the college with agreed upon priorities that: (a) develops and implements budgeting and resource allocations guided by institutional needs for human resources and services; (b) includes the two centers on Tinian and Rota in the planning; (c) integrates all aspects of planning, evaluation, and resources allocation; (d) is driven by college mission and goals; (e) relies on faculty and staff participation; (f) is well documented and widely distributed.

(Standards I.B.2; I.B.3; I.B.4; I.B.5; I.B.6; II.A.1; II.A.2; II.B.4; II.C; III.A; III.B; III.C; III.D; IV.A; IV.B - including various subsections.)

Response: The redesign of NMC’s planning and evaluation processes marks one of the most significant achievements of the last several years. In Fall of 2008 NMC revised its PROA Strategic Plan to articulate four main goals that would carry it through 2012, the time of its next comprehensive visit. The revised plan integrates annual planning, program review and budget processes that then inform decisions about resource allocation. The plan was developed following a campus-wide “visioning” process and planning workshops during spring and summer of 2008.

While college-level instruction has been suspended at the Tinian and Rota sites, those sites are now represented on the College Council, which is the main shared governance institution of the College. Tinian and Rota employees participate in all campus wide activities either on site or via VTC.

The Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) and the College Council ensure faculty and staff participation in the planning and evaluation process, and the program review process itself is carried out by every unit of the College. Furthermore, the planning and program review processes have been codified by two documents: the *Institutional Excellence Guide* and the *Manual for Planning Program Review and Budgeting* that have been adopted by the College Council and the Board of Regents. The *Institutional Excellence Guide* specifies the roles of shared governance entities in the planning and program review processes.

The College also adopted the Assessing Student Success design which strengthens our research capacity through the use of validated and standardized testing that can be used for continuous improvement and benchmarking; the design is for immediate implementation and priority funding has been provided in the FY2010 operations (tuition and others revenues) budget. Additionally, \$608,100 from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) State Fiscal Stabilization Funding (SFSF) is dedicated to accreditation work including implementation of this initiative. Implementation status to date includes:

1. ACCUPLACER (math): pilot testing to be done October 2009.
2. ACCUPLACER ESL: pilot testing about 75% complete.

3. Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE): administration complete fall 2009, results expected February 2010.
4. The Community College Learning Assessment (CCLA): to be administered October 2009.
5. Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE): to be administered Spring 2010 (administered only in spring semesters).
6. Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE): to be administered Spring 2010 (administered only in spring semesters).

The College also adopted its *Key Performance Indicators Benchmarks 2005: A Status Report May 2009*. This NMC institutional effectiveness document was based on the 2nd edition of American Association of Community College's (AACC) Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges. The exercise of updating the report was exciting and the results enlightening. For example, the key performance indicator (KPI) on Student Goal Attainment exceeded the 75% benchmark and the KPI for degree completion rate met national average at about 22%. However, the KPI on retention (persistence) was below standard. This revelation led to the recommendation to implement the First Year Experience/Learning Community (FYE/LC) program, with a Student Engagement Manager funded in the FY2010 Operations Budget and immediate consultation for program implementation funded from the FY2009 Operations budget. A contract for consultation and program development for implementation of the FYE/LC program was executed in Spring 2009.

It must also be noted that NMC's ability to obtain and report the longitudinal student achievement data required by ACCJC responded to six of the 15 KPIs established in the 2005 document. These eight data elements which represent the minimum required by ACCJC have been adopted and coined by Pacific Postsecondary Education Council (PPEC) institutional researchers as the "Beno-8."

The May 2009 KPI benchmark update report provides an excellent opportunity for corrective action and refinement utilizing the 2007 edition of Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges. Revision of NMC's KPI/benchmarks should be completed by February 2010 for implementation in the 2010 report.

As of June 5, 2009, NMC has completed Cycle 2 of linking program review, planning, and budgeting when the Board of Regents approved the FY2010 Operations Budget. The budget was driven by institutional priorities established by the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) and adopted by the Budget and Finance Committee (BAFC). The development of institutional priorities incorporated results from program review, 2nd year operational plan, and the 2009 KPI/benchmark update report.

The first phase of TracDat assessment software training was completed on June 2, 2009 and covered the program review component of the system. In September 2009, training for the strategic planning component was completed. Now that the two components are completed, future reports will be able to automatically generate reports that summarize items that require resource allocation. These automated reports can then be used by PROAC to drive budget

priorities. By process, PROAC then forwards approved budget priorities to BAFC. Full implementation is expected for the FY2011 consolidated budget process starting November 2009. The FY2011 consolidated budget process will represent NMCs Cycle 3 of linking program review and planning to financial resources. Additionally, it will be an early budget submission to the Governor and the Legislature by February 2010.

In an effort to document, report, and utilize data and evidence regarding institutional effectiveness and to advance accreditation standards, the College has prepared the first Annual Institutional Effectiveness / Performance Report 2009 and first annual Fact Book 2009. Some of the content featured in the Fact Book follow the agreed upon format set forth by the PPEC Institutional Researchers.

F. Team Recommendation 2

The team recommends again that the college institutionalize a coordinated, systematic process for evaluating program effectiveness. This process should include definitions of learning outcomes for all programs, a determination of program relationships to labor markets, and objective measures of student performance, which can inform and guide decisions to improve programs.

(Standards I.B.1; I.B.3; I.B.4; I.B.5; I.B.6; I.B.7; II.A.1; II.A.2; II.B.4; II.C; III.A; III.B; III.C; III.D; IV.A; IV.B.2.a; IV.B.2.b.)

Response: In the summer of 2007, NMC began a serious effort to undertake a coordinated and systematic program review process. Several initial steps were crucial to this effort. First, the Planning, Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) was established in July 13, 2007 with an appointment memo from President Fernandez. PROAC is the overall assessment guidance and working committee for the institution. The mission of PROAC is to build and sustain a campus wide culture of evidence, which promotes, fosters and improves student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels. Membership in PROAC represents the different constituencies at the College, including faculty, staff, administrators, and students.

To assist PROAC in fulfilling its mission, the *Student Learning Outcomes Comprehensive Implementation Program* (SLOCIP) was drafted in late summer 2007 and presented and discussed during Professional Development Days (PDD) prior to the Fall 2007 semester. With the establishment of PROAC and *SLOCIP*, the College has institutionalized assessment that is focused and sustained through support and training.

As proof of this institutionalized assessment, Cycle 1 of program review was completed in late Spring of 2008, with the results compiled by PROAC in the *2008 Composite Report*, which links results from program reviews to planning and action on program review recommendations. This report also includes a candid evaluation of the program review process, with recommendations for improvement.

As further proof of institutionalized program review, Cycle 2 of program reviews occurred during academic year 2008-2009, with refinements, and culminating in a *2009 Composite Report*. PROAC is currently working on a comprehensive evaluation of Cycle 2 including records of dialogue and an assessment survey as was undertaken in Cycle 1. The College is committed to making the necessary adjustments in Cycle 3 of program review during academic year 2009-2010.

As part of its commitment to further institutionalizing program review, throughout 2008 and 2009 NMC has employed outside consultants and sponsored professional development to provide needed skills and training to faculty and staff. Since the *May 29, 2009 Supplemental Report*, the following training and professional development in the area of program review have been provided:

- TracDat software training on the strategic plan operational plans was provided from September 21 - September 23. TracDat initial training to input data on program reviews and operational plans are now complete. These automated reports can now be used by PROAC to prioritize and recommend to BAFC budget priorities for FY2011.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) training sponsored by PPEC in July 2009 was attended by faculty.
- Community College Leadership Development Institute's (CCLDI) training component on The Leadership Circle sponsored by Pacific Postsecondary Education Council (PPEC) in July 2009 was attended by the Management Team.
- PowerCAMPUS Boot Camp training for the College's new Database Administrator in July 2009.
- In August, the College's Institutional Researcher participated in the Association of Institutional Research (AIR) Foundations Institute in Nashville, Tennessee.
- In August, Drs. Barry Woods and Wilson Hess of Sandy Pond Consultants provided on-site training and professional guidance on institutional assessment with instruments such as ACCUPLACER and SENSE.
- Drs. Mary Allen and Fred Trapp facilitated program review training during the College-wide professional development days in August 2009.
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted program review presentations at the Student Services Retreat on August 7, 2009 and at the bi-annual College-wide professional development sessions in August 2009.
- The Dean of Academic Programs and Services facilitated professional development on the Nichols and Nichols 5 Column Model during the faculty orientations for new instructors, both full time and adjunct, in September 2009.
- On October 8, 2009, the entire Management Team and 20 staff attended the CNMI Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants training on "A-133 Single Audits: Addressing Findings and Questioned Costs."

In addition, participation in PROA activities is listed on all job announcements, position descriptions, employment contracts, employee evaluations, and teaching professional services contracts.

In the April 20-22, 2009 Show Cause Visit Report, the Team stated that the College had achieved the “proficiency” level using the ACCJC rubric for Program Review. The College is currently evaluating Cycle 2 program review and will begin Cycle 3 program reviews in October 2009.

G. Team Recommendation 3

The college should provide quality assurance for instructional programs at distant sites and instruction through distance modalities. If alternative means of delivering equitable access to quality instruction is not available when technology fails, the college should suspend distance education at remote centers until new connectivity is established.

(Standards II.A.1.b; II.A.2; II.A.2.d; II.C.1; II.C.1.a; II.C.1.b.)

Response: An exhaustive review (conducted by the new president and her Management Team) in summer 2007 concluded that current resources and likely enrollments would not provide sustained, reliable and equivalent instruction at the Tinian and Rota sites. As a result, on October 8, 2007, the NMC Board of Regents suspended instruction at these sites, effective in spring 2008. The College decided to fold the issue of operations at Tinian and Rota into its strategic planning process. The College is mindful that any initiative to revive instruction would place the institution within the ACCJC Policy on Substantive Change.

The College now has in place planning, program review and budget processes that ensure studied consideration of these issues, and the current suspension of college-level instruction at Tinian and Rota was ratified by the Board of Regents.

Furthermore, in July, the Board of Regents underscored its commitment to the Rota and Tinian instructional sites by including the sites in one of the four priority areas in its *2009-2010 Goals and Objectives for the President*, the document against which the President’s performance will be evaluated. In the document, the Board specifically stated, “The President will expand the services that are offered at the Rota and Tinian Instructional Sites to help meet the professional and educational needs of those respective islands.”

H. Team Recommendation 4

The team recommends the college complete the cycle of developing, measuring, analyzing, and discussing student learning outcomes, and acting on the findings, as part of a continuous effort of improvement. With regard to Recommendation 4, it is expected that the college will have achieved the Development Level on student learning outcomes as identified in the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness by the time of the Progress Report.

(Standards I.B.1; II.A.1.a; II.A.1.b; II.A.2; II.A.3; II.A.5; II.A.6; III.A.6; III.B.2.b; III.C.2; III.D.3; IV.A.5; IV.B.2.b.)

Response: To assist the Planning, Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC) in fulfilling its mission, the *Student Learning Outcomes Comprehensive Implementation Program* (SLOCIP) was drafted in late Summer 2007 and presented and discussed during Professional Development Days (PDD) prior to the Fall 2007 semester. With the establishment of PROAC and SLOCIP, the College institutionalized assessment that is focused and sustained through support and training. Additionally, participation in PROAC activities is listed on all job announcements, position descriptions, employment contracts, and professional services contracts.

Since fall 2007, the College has continually refined its efforts at developing student learning outcomes (SLOs) and program learning outcomes (PLOs), as well as developing appropriate means for measuring student success in achieving these outcomes. This effort marks a pronounced shift in culture at the institution, but NMC is fully committed to this process.

In an effort to further support the College's commitment to program review as evidenced in the work completed by all its constituents, on October 3, 2008, College Council passed College Resolution No. 2008-01 Relative to Board Operations: Institutional Effectiveness Policy No. 1025. The passage of the resolution memorializes the College Council's 1) acknowledgement of the importance of the continued improvement of student learning, academic programs, and college operations through assessment, planning and monitoring, 2) affirmation of the establishment of SLOCIP as the College's system to ensure institutional effectiveness and a high standard of quality in academic programming, and 3) recognition of PROAC as the official working committee charged to review plans and reports submitted by various departments and units of the College. This resolution serves as institutional recognition of PROAC as the primary assessment and program review body and of the processes developed and implemented by the College.

As part of the College's work to pilot and utilize ACCUPLACER as an assessment instrument, the Management Information Systems working group has identified fields in PowerCAMPUS for ACCUPLACER data. This is the first step towards consolidating student achievement data into electronic databases, such as ACCUPLACER, that can synthesize data in useful reports on student performance.

Likewise, in September, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness worked with a consultant from Nuventive, Inc. to add user-defined fields in TracDat for student achievement data. Since TracDat serves as the electronic database for program review updates, the database will now have student achievement data fields that will help the College track student performance as part of its program review processes.

As a reflection of the College's successes in addressing this recommendation, the Show Cause Visit Report issued by the ACCJC Visiting Team on its April 2009 visit to NMC confirmed that the College had substantially met this requirement and had reached the specified "developmental level" of achievement.

The College has continued its commitment to the program review process through various professional development opportunities. On May 1-2, 2009 the college participated in the workshop, Student Learning and Assessment, conducted by Dr. Mary Allen and Dr. Amy Driscoll. As a follow-up, Drs. Mary Allen and Fred Trapp facilitated program review training during the College-wide professional development days in August 2009. The College has also enhanced its information technology system to allow for better reporting and communication of student achievement data with software such as PowerCAMPUS and TracDat.

With the essential processes in place and approved by the Board, the president has insisted that the College reach the "proficiency level" well before 2012.

I. Team Recommendation 5

The team recommends the college implement the employee evaluation processes that are in place in a timely and formal manner in order to assure the effectiveness of its human resources and encourage improvement.

(Standards II.A.2.a; III.A.1; III.D; IV.A.1; IV.A.4; IV.B.)

Response: On August 23, 2005, a memorandum from the President announced the implementation of the NMC employee evaluation system, following extensive deliberations by the College community. This employee evaluation system introduced the use of nine different evaluation forms that assess the performance of employees in various categories at NMC. All evaluation instruments are comprehensive, objective and specific enough to meet the needs and goals of the College and its employees. Professionalism and professional growth, service to the students, professional competencies, skills, and service to the College and community, and program implementation are some of the elements included for evaluation in the instruments. Defining activities are outlined below each element and are used to evaluate employees in their areas of concentration and expertise. Each evaluation instrument contains a rating scale used to determine areas to be addressed, especially in connection with the employee's professional development.

In July 2007, the President initiated supervisory leadership training in the following areas:

progressive discipline, EEO, sexual harassment, and understanding human resources. A three-day workshop was facilitated by a human resources consultant from July 23 – 25, 2007.

Administrators, faculty and staff are evaluated annually on the anniversary date of employment. The employee's immediate supervisor evaluates the performance of each employee. It is understood that each item on the employee's evaluation form should be discussed by both parties to ensure mutual input into and benefit from the evaluation process.

The Human Resources Office continues to update its listing of all employees and sends a reminder e-mail about three months prior to the employee's anniversary date to the immediate supervisor with a cc to the President and the appropriate direct report. If the anniversary date includes the renewal of the employee's two year contract, the renewal is not processed until such time that the evaluations are completed and submitted to the Human Resources Office.

Overall, all evaluations are up to date and being processed on time. In addition, statistics show that more supervisors participated in the evaluation process for both years, 2007 and 2008. This success stems from the President's commitment to the evaluation process and the heightened level of awareness of the Management Team and Human Resources Office. The evaluation forms identify areas and performance levels expected for contract continuation and professional development. Recommendations from the supervisor for professional development are included in the evaluation forms to help identify areas for improvement or growth.

Furthermore, the Board of Regents completed the President's evaluation on December 31, 2008. In April and May of 2009, the President was also evaluated by the Board of Regents, Management Team, and all constituent groups, including Associated Students of Northern Marianas College, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate.

J. Team Recommendation 6

The college should pursue funding to renovate or replace aging buildings with facilities that are appropriate to meet the current and future needs of the college.

(Standards III.B.1; III.B.1.a; III.B.1.b; III.B.2; III.B.2.a; III.B.2.b; III.D.1.a; III.D.1.B; III.B.1.c.)

Response: Despite limited government funds due to the worsening regional and global economies, since 2007, the College has successfully and resourcefully identified funds to provide long overdue renovations, repairs, and construction for its facilities.

In August 2007, the College's short-term commercial loan application for \$250,000 was approved by the First Hawaiian Bank. This money was used for renovation and repairs of several buildings, including major renovation of Building M that is now the new home for the Language and Humanities Department.

In 2008, the Office of the Governor reprogrammed \$800,000 in Capital Improvement Program funds from the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs for roof and electrical repairs and upgrades on NMC facilities. Additional external funding was also received from the NMC Foundation, federal government, and CNMI Legislature. The College also received \$100,870 from the NMC Foundation to purchase collateral equipment, including computers and computer-related technology for language labs. This funding need was identified in Cycle 1 Program Review as an institutional priority, and was linked with planning and budgeting for resource allocation in the preparation of the FY 2009 Operations Budget.

In April 2008, the College received \$375,000 for a project entitled NMC Accreditation Reaffirmation Plan. This award includes \$225,000 earmarked for the development of a Facilities Master Plan. In September 2008, the College received \$25,000 from the CNMI Legislature for renovation of the NMC Bookstore, and, through the assistance of the CNMI Washington Representative Office, the College received \$800,000 in federal Capital Improvement funding, for facilities renovation and repair, from the Office of the Governor. The funds were made possible through a reprogramming of existing capital improvement projects by the Governor, and approved by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

In 2008, several new Cooperative Research Extension and Education Services (CREES) structures (Saipan, Tinian, and Rota) for research and extension services were constructed or expanded with funding support received from the US Department of Agriculture. The College also received approximately \$54,000 from the Legislature to pave the gravel road leading from the Water Tank/As Terlaje Road entrance into the campus to the CREES Aquaculture Nursery. The College also received approximately \$30,000 as a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement for costs incurred in the repair of the CREES Tinian facility destroyed by a typhoon.

Renovation work on building L was completed towards the end of spring 2008 and now houses the Procurement and Maintenance functions. The project began with funds received from FEMA. The roof sustained heavy damage in a typhoon several years ago. Operations funds were used to complete the renovation, and today Building L has five offices and a large conference room on the second floor. The first floor has a large receiving, processing, and storage area for incoming college purchases. The first floor also provides a small facilities maintenance work area for the maintenance staff. The Procurement staff moved into their new spacious offices in early Summer 2008.

The Library was remodeled in 2007 by breaking down a wall and adding an extra glass door, repainting of the interior and exterior walls of the building, replacing the wooden bookcases with metal ones, and cleaning up the area between the regular library collection and the Pacific collection. A rededication of the Olympio T. Borja Library was held after the renovation in Spring 2008.

Renovations on building S were completed in Fall 2008. The entire building was gutted and the entire roof was replaced, giving the formerly Samoan type dwelling a totally new facelift. Building S is now the new site for the Curriculum Resource Center (CRC). The CRC formerly used one of the classrooms in Building A. Relocating the CRC relocate to Building S added another classroom space in Building A and is being used as a general classroom.

Building Q had serious roof damage caused by termites. In Fall of 2007, the entire roof was removed and replaced with tin materials, and the walls were knocked down and rebuilt. The interior was partitioned to provide 3 new classrooms that are dedicated for the School of Education classes, plus restroom facilities and storage space. The School of Education began to hold classes in Building Q in Spring 2008.

The College commissioned a Restricted Use Appraisal Report that was completed in 2008. This appraisal was a necessary precursor to developing a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan (FMP). A request for proposals (RFP) for a FMP was advertised, and a contractor has been selected, contract signed with Beca International. The FMP completion date is slated for December 2009. The College will use the FMP as a bankable document to seek and secure funding from the Legislature and other sources.

The College has set-aside \$220,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant funds that it can use for modernization, repair, and renovation of its facilities, primarily those used for instructional purposes. The College anticipates getting the ARRA notice of approval very soon.

Please refer to Appendix J, Financial Resources for Facilities Improvements, for a more detailed listing of these funding sources.

NOTE: Team Recommendations 7 – 9

Team Recommendations 7 – 9 are taken from the October 16-19, 2006 Self Study Visiting Team Report and have never appeared in any Commission action letters.

K. Team Recommendation 7

The college should develop and implement a technology plan that evaluates, supports, and plans for the future of instructional, student services and administrative functions across the college's sites.

(Standards III.B.1; III.B.1.a; III.B.1.b; III.B.2; III.B.2.a; III.B.2.b; III.D.1.a; III.D.1.B; III.B.1.c.)

The October 16—19, 2006 Team Visit Report noted, “[The College] has made improvements in technology that supports student learning, online instruction, teleconferencing equipment, and operational systems campus-wide. The success enjoyed in this area could be lost if it is not supported by a broader technology plan. The college lacks policies and procedures to

guide and monitor computer standards, equipment purchasing, and maintenance cycles. There is also a lack of sufficient technical staff to support all these systems.”

Response: In October 2008, the College completed and adopted its Information Technology (IT) Plan FY 2008-2010. This comprehensive plan was developed by a representative group of faculty and staff under the direction of Technology in Education Committee. The plan describes the strategic goals, operational direction, and objectives for technology development at the College. The plan was developed to support Goal 4 of the PROA Strategic Plan 2008—2012: To accelerate the upgrade of physical and technology infrastructure.

Furthermore, on September 28, 2009, the IT Department developed and finalized an IT Resource Guide, which was both published and made available online at the College’s website. The purpose of the IT Resource Guide is to provide NMC employees an overview of the technology resources available across campus as well as guidelines on how to access them. Some of technology available to them that are included in the guide: requesting a network ID: using campus email, CommuniGate and Outlook calendars; using Help Desk, accessing web-base software training, web-conferencing; posting courses on NMC Online (MOODLE); authorizing, taking, and analyzing surveys electronically; tracking data electronically for program review and budgeting purposes; and much more. Also included in the guide are brief overviews of each technology and where or who to turn to for more information or training.

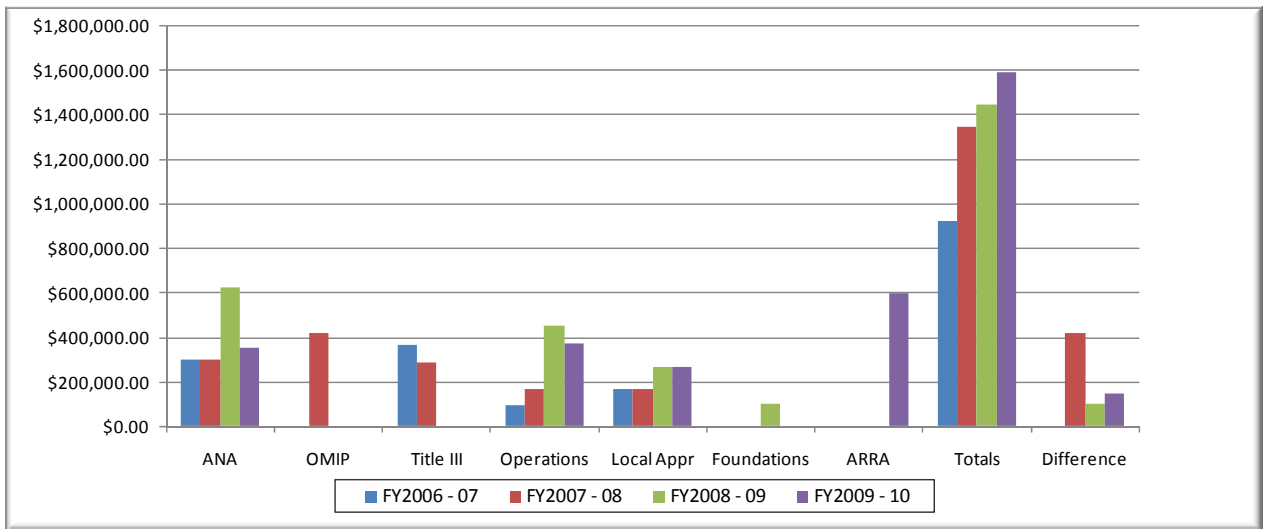
As a result of two cycles of program review, IT has been allocated additional administrative and staffing positions. A Distance Learning Coordinator was hired to support the educational component aspects of IT. This Distance Learning Coordinator has begun working with faculty on MOODLE training in support of integration of technology in their classrooms. As well, a database administrator has been hired to support all the core applications, especially the PowerCAMPUS and Sage Management Information Program (MIP) Fund Accounting systems. In addition to this, a media specialist was hired for additional needed support to the Media Services Unit.

Lastly, the College anticipates that funding from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants will support upgrades to the College’s IT infrastructure as projected in the IT Plan. For example, NMC submitted on August 20, 2009 two applications via electronic submissions to Broadband USA website (www.broadbandusa.gov) for funding from the federal broadband initiatives for broadband adoption and public computer centers. Both applications focus on support of distance learning through the creation of a virtual campus and virtual community center. The solution will serve both the NMC campus and the community as a whole and will include providing hardware to targeted physical community centers for access to the virtual community center. The Broadband Technology Opportunities Program under the Department of Commerce has started the review of the grant applications and will notify the president regarding the next step. The notification of awards is expected around November 7, 2009. The grant requested for the Sustainable Broadband Adoption is \$5,157,918.00 and the Public Computer Center is \$2,890,900.00.

NMC has invested tremendous resources towards the vision to make the college an IT leader in the region and to provide state of the art services to students and the community. The Information Technology budget shows a pattern of increase between FY2007 to FY2009 from \$923,493.00 to \$3,711,274.17 respectively. Moreover, the number of IT staff has steadily increased, almost doubling in size between FY2008 at seven to 12 in FY2009. Increased technical staff in the IT department addresses TR7 concern about the “lack of technical staff to support all these system.” (See Tables below for the summary of budgets and personnel increases.)

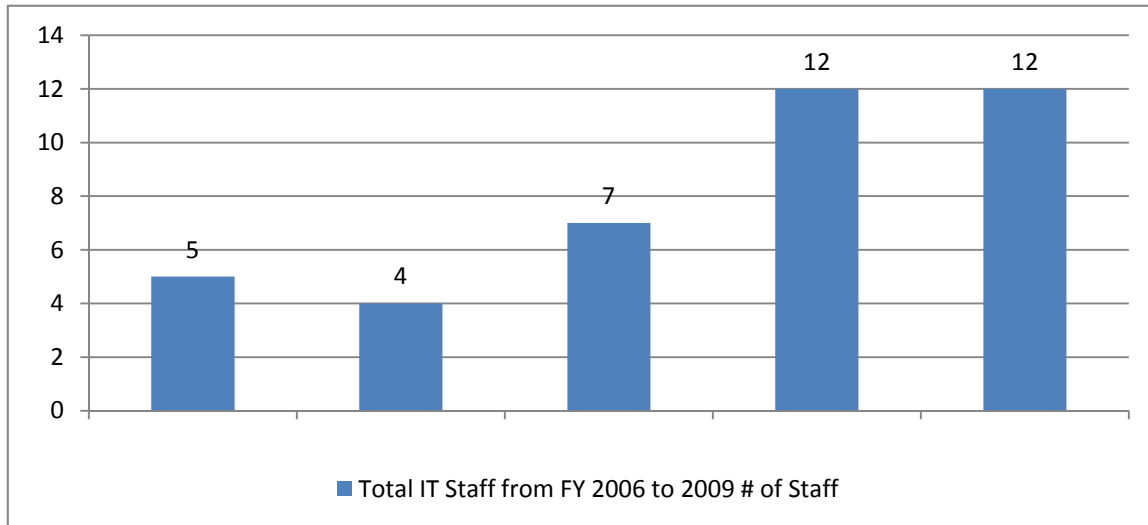
Total Information Technology Budget from FY 2007 - 2010

Year	ANA	OMIP	Title III	Operations	Local Appr	Foundations	ARRA	Totals	Difference	% Increase
FY2006 - 07	\$300,000.00	\$0.00	\$365,000.00	\$92,774.00	\$165,719.00	\$0.00		\$923,493.00		
FY2007 - 08	\$303,100.00	\$417,166.00	\$287,215.00	\$169,652.40	\$165,719.00	\$0.00		\$1,342,852.40	\$419,359.40	45%
FY2008 - 09	\$623,923.77	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$454,555.00	\$266,450.00	\$100,000.00		\$1,444,928.77	\$102,076.37	8%
FY2009 - 10	\$355,340.17	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$371,853.00	\$266,450.00		\$598,763.00	\$1,592,406.17	\$147,477.40	10%



Total IT Staff from FY 2006 to 2009

Fiscal Year	# of Staff
FY2006	5
FY2007	4
FY2008	7
FY2009	12
FY2010	12



L. Team Recommendation 8

The College should develop and implement a governance process that focuses, integrates, and connects the various planning activities into a coherent institutional effort in which dialogue is open and sustained, that focuses on the institutional mission and student learning, and by which there is ongoing assessment of that process. (I.B; I.B.2.4; IV.A.1; IV.A.2.a; IV.A.3.)

Response: This recommendation is addressed by Team Recommendation 1

M. Team Recommendation 9

The college is encouraged to establish sustained channels of communication with the legislature in an effort to enhance its operational budget and capital improvement projects. The college should reexamine and align its budget allocation priorities to retain and competitively recruit high quality faculty and staff to ensure the institution's effectiveness. (III.A.1; III.B.1; III.B.2; III.D; IV.B.1.c; IV.B.2.b; IV.B.2.e.)

Response: After the challenges it has faced since 2006, the College has significantly improved its relationships with the CNMI legislature, as evidenced by sustained funding in 2008 and 2009. The President has developed strong working relationships with the Governor and Lt. Governor and Cabinet; the Legislature; the Public School System; the Washington Delegate Office; the U.S. Department of Interior/Office of Insular Affairs, and many others. These strong working relationships have resulted in the College receiving sufficient funding levels and additional funding levels from the Governor and the Legislature.

The President works closely with the leadership of the education committees of the Legislature and attends weekly cabinet meetings called by the Governor. College personnel also play key roles in a number of inter-agency groups, such as the Workforce Development Committee, the State Epidemiological Outcome Workgroup, and the Special Education Special Advisory Panel, the Development Disabilities Network, the CNMI Autism Commission, and many others.

Please see College's response to Team Recommendations 1 and 2 that addresses "*The college should reexamine and align its budget allocation priorities to retain and competitively recruit high quality faculty and staff to ensure the institution's effectiveness.*"

N. January 31, 2008 ACCJC Letter

The Special Report, due March 15, 2008, should provide the Commission with information about what steps the college has taken to address each of the fourteen findings of the FY 2006 audit. The college should inform the Commission of any increases in staffing assigned to business services, as well as changes to procedures in business operations. The report should include copies of all policies and procedures manuals changed in response to the audit findings. The college is also advised that the Commission will need to receive the FY 2007 audit as soon as it is available.

Response: The college has been working aggressively to correct all audit findings. The audit finding and questioned costs for federal programs are pending determination letters from USDOE and USDA. Many of the issues are likely to be resolved and these shall also reduce the repeat findings in 2008. Since June of 2008, the College has retained the services of a consultant to oversee the entire audit process, including developing and implementing corrective actions, submitting audits to federal agencies, and working with federal agencies to resolve questioned costs. In 2008, the number of findings was reduced to 14 and all should be resolved within the next six months to a year. Additionally, the President has planned a search for a comptroller that is a qualified certified public accountant (CPA). This will help strengthen and maintain the College's financial position.

As noted in the Report of the Show Cause Visiting Team in October of 2008, the College had satisfactorily addressed this recommendation. Furthermore, the president has asserted control over expenditures and audit reports and progress are regularly reported to the Board of Regents. As a result of these efforts, the College has had unqualified financial statements since 2008 and has consistently ended each year since 2008 in a surplus, with excess funds deposited in the College's contingency fund.

The College continued its conservative approach to budgeting and finances in response to concerns raised in 2007 by the Commission regarding the financial health of the College. The College's resolution of these concerns is demonstrated by the strength of the audited financial statements, which have grown at a steady, consistent pace since 2003. The College ended fiscal year 2008 with a net fund surplus of approximately \$1.6 million. This increased

its overall net unrestricted reserve as a percentage of unrestricted revenues approximately 24.12%. This includes approximately \$750,000 in cash reserves, which the institution invested in conservative investments as part of the Endowment Fund to serve as its contingency reserves. In addition, the College has also built significant cash reserves including a Contingency Reserve Cash Fund of over \$300K as of September 30, 2008. This is a significant accomplishment considering that central government revenues continued to decline amidst the current global economic downturn.

While the College's financial statements reflect positive forward progress, the College still is approaching resolution of remaining audit findings and questioned costs aggressively. As again evident in the audited financial statements, the College reduced the level of findings and questioned costs and was able to once again receive an unqualified opinion on its financial statements for fiscal year 2008. The College has now received unqualified opinions on its financial statements for two consecutive years - an accomplishment in itself given that 2007 and 2008 are the first two financial years since the mid 1990's that the College received an unqualified opinion on its financial statements.

To address the remaining audit findings and questioned costs, the College is working proactively with the appropriate federal agencies to institute additional internal controls and bring resolution to the same. The President met with both the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Education on the 2007 audit findings and to date the discussions have been quite positive. Both agencies recognize the progress NMC has made in the past few years and expect the current audit findings will be resolved favorably. The College is currently awaiting the issuance of the agencies' Audit Determination Letters.

O. January 31, 2008 ACCJC Letter

The Commission is also aware of considerable pressure for the college to provide educational services on Tinian and Rota; however, it should be noted that the college will need to submit a Substantive Change Proposal prior to restoring any classes/programs at these two sites and this cannot be undertaken during the time the college is on sanction.

Response: The President stands firm on this decision to suspend academic programs. The institution clearly understands that academic programs cannot be restored unless the sites can provide equal services to those provided at the Saipan campus and only after due diligence and adherence to ACCJC Policy on Substantive Change.

P. June 30, 2008 ACCJC Letter

The Commission also requires the College to include in its October 2008 Show Cause Report its responses to the 2007 external audit findings.

Response: As noted in the Report of the Show Cause Visiting Team in October of 2008, the College had satisfactorily addressed this recommendation, and it has not appeared in

subsequent Action Letters. Furthermore, the President has asserted control over expenditures and audit reports and progress are regularly reported to the Board of Regents.

For other actions reported, please refer to response to: N. January 31, 2008 Action Letter.

Q. April 20-22, 2009 Visiting Team Suggestions

During the visit, the team observed some faculty and staff using the word “grievance” to voice complaints and concerns. This reflects the experience of an institution using a new model of governance and the lack of clarity of what format (governance process, human resources, legal rights, etc.) a concern, complaint and or grievance should be resolved. The team noted that the College is seeking to rectify the situation through training of all constituent groups. An April 2009 draft document entitled Planning, Program Review, and Budget Manual was in the process of being vetted by all the governance groups. The team also suggests the College review its existing grievance policies and practices and make any necessary changes to improve clarification. The team suggest that a distinction be made of when a complaint is operational (resolved through administrative levels) versus governance (resolved through governance channels and groups) to improve lines of communication.

Response: A clarification of the term “grievance” is included in draft revisions to the College’s human resource policies, which are currently being reviewed for final adoption in December 2009. In addition, this matter was referred the College’s legal counsel, who clarified the distinction between a “grievance” and a “complaint.” This clarification has been shared with all concerned parties.

In the November 2008 evaluation team report, the Board of Regents was cited for not having evaluated the College President. In December 2008 the evaluation was completed. At the time of the visit, a survey instrument was distributed to the Associated Students, Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, and management team. As part of a second evaluation of the president, the Board decided to invite input from the constituent groups. The groups were also asked to give input into the president’s goals and objectives for the upcoming year. This input was to be used to help inform the Board’s decision on the president’s contract which is up for renewal in May 2009. The timing of the survey, so close to the renewal of president’s contract, create a political situation where some constituent members perceived they would have direct impact on the outcome of the president’s contract. This scenario occurring one month before the CEO contract renewal could result in unstable college leadership situation, either perceived or real.

The team suggests that the timing and sequence of constituent feedback of the CEO and contract renewal of the CEO needs to be revised by the Board of Regents. As emphasized in Standard IV, the governing board has the sole responsibility for evaluating and determining length of service of the CEO. And, the Board of Regents may determine that constituent feedback is a part of any process developed for future

evaluations. The team strongly suggests that the Board of Regents working with College President should clarify its procedures for the CEO evaluation process and sequence and timelines of the evaluation components as they relate to contract renewal dates to ensure the leadership stability of the College.

Response: On July 15, 2009, the Board of Regents approved the *NMC President's Goals and Objectives: 2009-2010*. This document outlines a clear set of criteria by which the President will be evaluated and adheres to Board of Regents policy.

IV. Responses to Accreditation Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU) Recommendations & Action Letters

A. Team Recommendation 1

The SOE is encouraged to further clarify the specific SLO evidence that supports curriculum changes and to simplify the reporting process for documenting both the evidence and the changes in program design.

In its February 26, 2009 Letter, the ACSCU also recommended that the School of Education (SOE) “Clarify the specific evidence that supports curriculum changes and simplify the reporting process for documenting both the evidence and changes in program design.”

Response:

Evidence from First Cycle Program Review and Assessment

In order to improve the tracking of students within the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Elementary Education program, the School of Education has worked closely with the Office of Admissions and Records (OAR) in identifying entry-level students from upper-level students (Teacher Candidates – TC). This allows the program to track students’ progression throughout the program and also review data on the average number of semesters it takes teacher candidates to complete the program. The changes to the coding of students in the student database system was finally implemented in Fall 2008 by the OAR after the recommendation was made by the program to the Planning, Program Review, Assessment, and Outcomes Committee (PROAC) in the first cycle of program review.

Student achievement data, including job placement, licensure exam, post training, and employer satisfaction data are collected and reviewed as an integral part of program review and assessment. Another key piece of data that has been collected for analysis is the average number of semesters students take to complete the program.

The SOE has engaged in advising and pre-registration sessions that are referred to as “Green Sheet weeks.” Green Sheet weeks are sessions in which junior and senior students receive academic advising and are able to pre-register for upcoming semester course, therefore, ensuring they are better prepared for their next semester as well as program completion. The data results were positive in that the SOE administrative unit outcome showed that the program was meeting its goal of providing over 80% of current and on-going students academic and pre-registration services. As a result of our program review and assessment, SOE has developed and will be implementing a “pink sheet week” for the Fall 2009 semester to offer the same advanced academic advising and pre-registration for freshmen and sophomore program students. The assessment of this administrative unit outcome (AUO) was measured in the first cycle of program review and is being analyzed again in the second cycle with the inclusion of data from entry-level students (freshmen and sophomore students). These assessment pieces will also aid in the planning and projections of SOE course needs, course loads, and faculty workload for upcoming semesters.

For the first time, the SOE budget request submission for FY 2009 included clear and distinct links to recommendations made through the program review process. This also encouraged the program to prioritize requests based on program assessment.

Another recommendation was to improve the collaborative efforts between NMC and the Public School System (PSS) in identifying community needs; specifically the teacher training needs. To date, SOE and the PSS Human Resource Office conducted one brief research study collaboratively and based on this study, the market demand for Secondary, Special Education, and Early Childhood teacher training was revealed. The program is progressively working on other corresponding assessments such as student surveys; an updated PSS-HRO teacher training needs analysis, and a community market demand survey to view collaborative data before plans are finalized for a request for program curriculum development. This particular recommendation also resulted in a closer working relationship between the SOE and the PSS through which monthly meetings have been established. These meetings also include the discussion and sharing of relative data on SOE graduates and current PSS employees, and the tracking of SOE graduates, job placement, and licensure exam data. Each semester, the SOE Student Teacher Coordinator submits to the PSS Human Resource Office a list of program completers and engages in dialogue with school principals on their grade level personnel needs and potential graduate placements as well as future student teacher placements.

As a result of program review and assessment, a recommendation was to finalize policies and a code of ethics/conduct for the program and to ensure a systematic way of disseminating and enforcing both. Policies on attendance and academic dishonesty and the SOE Code of Conduct were developed and finalized in the Summer of 2008. By Fall 2008, all faculty members had made these policies a standard part of all course syllabi. Also a work in-progress is a faculty and updated student handbook that will feature institutional policies and procedures as well as program policies and information. Important to note is that all adjunct faculty members are mentored throughout the semester they teach for SOE. Each adjunct faculty is assigned a mentor from SOE to assist with policy information, course syllabus development that includes course SLO's and calendars, course assessment information, and guidance on administrative matters.

All adjunct faculty are observed in their courses and given immediate feedback on their teaching. After completing a full program review, changes to the curriculum included the development of an alternative capstone experience other than student teaching, the 12 credit practicum ED 493, a capstone project that allows students to opt for work with a variety of community agencies and local initiatives. Prior changes to the curriculum include the integration of community service into the upper level courses such as mother-father read, book mobile, troops to teachers, and service learning. More recent updates include the review and updating of the SOE certificate programs; specifically the Early Childhood Education curriculum and Related Services Technician curriculum. Courses for each program have been reviewed and have been updated to reflect current trends, knowledge, and teaching methods in their respective areas of study. Also a result of program review and assessment, the Early Intervention Certificate program and the Special Education Endorsement have been

placed on inactive status. Both certificate programs had low or no enrollment; therefore, indicating that these certificate programs are not high market demands for the community. All program decisions are documented and reflected upon at monthly department meetings.

Direct evidence of student learning and student achievement are routinely collected and analyzed for program review. They are also made available for new and adjunct faculty in mentoring workshops. Also, the ED 492 (Student Teaching Practicum) course survey allows students near completion of the program to participate in a critical evaluation of the program and courses. Professional development plans that focus on the needs of faculty and staff have been examined and identified in budget requests. This plan is updated annually.

Curriculum Mapping

Each year in May, the SOE faculty gather to discuss, analyze, and map course content throughout program to identify changes necessary to improve services to students and to support student learning. The SOE continues to review course student learning outcomes (SLOs) sequential order (for spiral learning) to determine areas needing inclusion, improvement, and the overlapping of content. All SLOs have been mapped; however, only three to five SLOs are required to be reviewed and assessed for each cycle of program review and assessment.

Assessment meetings are held throughout the year as all faculty and staff are involved in the program review and assessment process. Each faculty member is also assigned a topic to research, review, and write-up on in the assessment process. In addition, every assessment item is discussed and offered for feedback amongst faculty members and staff.

Institutional Processes

In December 2008, NMC finalized and implemented the *Institutional Excellence Guide*. The guide recognizes the constituencies of the college and identifies the roles of each in the governance processes of the institution.

Course Guide Work

The Academic Council requires that all course guides be updated every three years. To date, all SOE course guides have been updated to include updates in texts, learning strands, course outcomes, student learning outcomes, and assessment measures. The template for course guides has also been institutionalized to ensure consistency and uniformity for all programs. o Standardized Curriculum The SOE curriculum has been standardized to ensure consistency of content throughout the semesters, regardless of who the instructor is. This has enabled SOE to identify, gather, and compare data more efficiently and effectively throughout semesters because of the consistency in the curriculum taught. Previously, only full time faculty taught methods courses. During the first cycle of program review and assessment, the practice was reviewed to consider the feasibility of allowing highly qualified and experienced adjunct faculty to teach methods courses after rigorous mentoring. In Fall 2008, one adjunct faculty taught the inquiry based science methods course. Currently, two adjuncts

are teaching methods courses, the inquiry-based science methods course and the upper level math course. These two adjunct faculty continue to participate in continuous mentoring to support their teaching. The SOE also conduct in-class observations to evaluate teaching practices and to offer curriculum support to ensure their success.

Standardized Curriculum

The SOE curriculum has been standardized to ensure consistency of content throughout the semesters, regardless of who the instructor is. This has enabled SOE to identify, gather, and compare data more efficiently and effectively throughout semesters because of the consistency in the curriculum taught. Previously, only full time faculty taught methods courses. During the first cycle of program review and assessment, the practice was reviewed to consider the feasibility of allowing highly qualified and experienced adjunct faculty to teach methods courses after rigorous mentoring. In Fall 2008, one adjunct faculty taught the inquiry based science methods course. Currently, two adjuncts are teaching methods courses, the inquiry-based science methods course and the upper level math course. These two adjunct faculty continue to participate in continuous mentoring to support their teaching. The SOE also conduct in-class observations to evaluate teaching practices and to offer curriculum support to ensure their success.

B. Team Recommendation 2

The institution is strongly encouraged to monitor workload limitations of faculty in the Bachelor degree program by providing adequate faculty resources to deliver the curriculum of the elementary education program.

In its February 26, 2009 Letter, the ACSCU also recommended that the SOE “Monitor the workload of SOE faculty and provide adequate faculty to deliver the baccalaureate program.”

Response: The SOE faculty workload has decreased over the past two years. Faculty workload documents indicate the average faculty workload overload for the following academic years: 2006 4.1, 2007 7.0, 2008 (including Summer) 4.3, and 2009 (Spring only) 8.3.

The average faculty overload has fluctuated over the past few years due to several factors including the resignation of faculty members, the increase and/or decrease of administrative and coordination workload credits (including program review and assessment work), and the faculty teaching courses for other departments as well. NMC faculty do receive compensation for all overloads, with the exception of Independent Studies which are performed on voluntary basis.

In Fall 2008, an SOE faculty member resigned to pursue professional development. This loss of a full-time equivalent (FTE) resulted in three adjunct faculty hires for Spring 2009 and an increase in faculty workload for this same semester.

The SOE continues to mentor and train adjunct faculty on a one-to-one basis to teach certain courses. Mentoring and training includes administrative procedures, course content, course activity scheduling, course assessment, and in-class observations with feedback.

In the summer of 2009, one faculty position was filled and to date, the SOE has one faculty vacancy. Due to the lack of a qualified pool of applicants with high content knowledge of teaching in the post-secondary level on island and the non-competitive salary scale for faculty, this vacancy has yet to be filled. In Spring 2009, one applicant applied to SOE but eventually turned down the job offer due to NMC's accreditation status of Show-Cause, and the low salary offer. Job vacancies are currently being announced online. The SOE FY 2010 budget request submission also includes two additional faculty FTE's. Program review and assessment Cycle 2 also indicates a need for an additional faculty FTE. Ten faculty FTE's are required to ensure a quality, teacher preparation program in the four emphasis areas being reviewed as fields the program needs to expand into.

C. Team Recommendation 3

The institution is encouraged to review workload credit assigned for work on grant proposal preparation and implementation/administration.

In its February 26, 2009 Letter, the ACSCU also recommended that the SOE "Review workload credit assigned for work on grant preparation and implementation/administration."

Response: To support quality teaching and workload credit assigned for work on grant preparation, in the last cycle of program review, the SOE requested an adjustment in faculty contract to indicate a lowered workload for instructional credit (12 instead of 15) and specific grant preparation and maintenance as well as an increase in pay scale to ensure competitiveness and appeal in the qualified faculty market.

D. Team Recommendation 4

The administration and the Board of Regents are encouraged to review the original intent and the current appropriate "fit" of the Bachelor degree program in Elementary Education in the mission of the institution to assure that collegial relationships exist among all faculty in the learning community of NMC.

In its February 29, 2008 Letter, the ACSCU also noted, "The School of Education needed to address its isolation from the rest of the College and improve its relationship with the local school district."

A year later, in its February 26, 2009 Letter, the ACSCU also recommended that the SOE "Review the "fit" of the bachelor's program in Elementary Education with the mission of the institution, and ensure that collegial relationships exit among all faculty in the NMC learning community."

Response: The market demand for classroom teachers in the Elementary Education field continues to be high in the CNMI. Each year, the CNMI Public School System hires a majority of SOE graduates just before or right after graduation. SOE student teachers in the Fall semesters are hired by PSS in the middle of their school year, immediately after completion of the Student Teaching Practicum course. To date, data indicate that over 84% of all SOE graduates from years 2004 to 2008 are currently employed by the CNMI Public School System. After the first cycle of program review and assessment, both NMC and PSS Human Resources Office established regularly scheduled meeting dates between their respective office representatives and the student teachers. These meetings are intended to support the dissemination of information and the job application processes for the program completers.

Recent collaborative studies and continued dialogue between NMC and PSS reveal that the market demand for Elementary Education teachers continues to exist and that other related areas of study are also in high demand, including Special Education, Secondary Education, and Early Childhood Education. The SOE continues to study this demand to determine the feasibility of an expanded program to meet the community's need.

In addition, the *Institutional Excellence Guide*, which was finalized and implemented in December 2008, recognizes the constituencies of the college and identifies the roles of each in the governance processes of the institution. The SOE has representation in each of the following governance bodies: College Council, Planning, Program Review, Outcomes and Assessment Committee (PROAC), Budget and Finance Committee, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Academic Council, Recruitment Team, Registration Committee, Power Users Group, and Technology in Education Committee.

Furthermore, for the first cycle of Program Review and Assessment (2008), Pam Buckingham, a faculty of SOE, volunteered time and offered a series of 12 workshops available to all NMC faculty and staff. This workshop focused on the development of student learning outcomes (SLOs), course scheduling to include those SLO's, and assessment. For the second cycle of Program Review and Assessment (2009), Barbara Merfalen, another faculty of SOE has volunteered time and is facilitating another series of 12 workshops for the entire NMC community on similar topics as well as topics as discussed by the Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC). SOE faculty also teach courses in other departments and offer continued training and mentoring to faculty in other departments.

E. Team Recommendation 5

The administration and faculty of SOE are encouraged to work diligently toward maintaining and building positive and constructive relationships with the PSS to provide a professional dialogue involving both the NMC perspective and the PSS perspective on best practices for preparing and supporting teachers in the Northern Mariana Islands.

In its February 29, 2008 Letter, the ACSCU also noted, “The School of Education needed to address its isolation from the rest of the College and improve its relationship with the local school district.”

Response: NMC documented its responses to the ACSCU Action Letter as part of its October 2007 Progress Report. The February 29, 2008 Action Letter from the ACSCU confirmed that that “problems specific to the School of Education appeared ameliorated.” Today, not only does the President have a strong working relationship with the Commissioner of Education, but so does the School of Education and the Public School System. The School of Education Advisory Council, which includes members from the Public School System, has also been reactivated.

F. Team Recommendation 6

SOE faculty are strongly encouraged to review the adequacy of VTC delivery of courses to Rota and Tinian to develop both criteria for and evaluation of student learning outcomes using this mode of delivery.

In its February 26, 2009 Letter, the ACSCU also recommended that the SOE “Review the adequacy of video teleconferencing (VTC) course delivery to the Tinian and Rota campuses, and develop criteria for evaluation of student learning using this delivery mode.”

Response: Prior to the suspension of instructional services via VTC, the program courses offered to the Rota and Tinian instructional sites were not standardized. Review of course assessments and individual student assessments revealed that complete curriculum coverage was lacking, including teach-back experiences, appropriate classroom management practices, classroom observations, and other basic teaching strategies. As a result, students from these instructional sites had to retake and review course materials through close monitoring and guidance of SOE advisors and faculty members.

Offering courses via VTC would require completed training for faculty in the proper use of technological equipment and the hiring of qualified Rota and Tinian instructional sites faculty to ensure continued course quality. NMC has hired a new Distance Learning Coordinator, who is currently offering training sessions on the use of Moodle, NMC Online, and VTC. SOE faculty have also begun dialogue with the Distance Learning Coordinator in the development of course guides and use of technology in preparation for these needs, in the event that NMC resumes course delivery and instruction at the sites.

G. February 29, 2008 ACSCU Letter

In order for NMC to retain its accreditation from the Senior College Commission for the bachelor's program it will need to address satisfactorily the issues cited by ACCJC and come into compliance with ACCJC Standards.

Response: The College succeeded in gaining reaffirmation of its accreditation in July, 2009. NMC continues to adhere to ACCJC policies, recommendations and reporting requirements.

H. February 29, 2008 ACSCU Letter

Participate in the ACCJC scheduled Show Cause visit in fall 2008. In the report prepared for ACCJC, which is to be submitted also to the Senior College Commission, NMC should add a section or appendix describing any further changes or progress with respect to the School of Education, especially in relation to those issues that were reviewed in the most recent visit with the School.

Response: NMC documented its responses to the ACSCU Action Letter as part of its October 2007 Progress Report. The February 29, 2008 Action Letter from the ACSCU confirmed that that “problems specific to the School of Education appeared ameliorated.” The College has continued its progress on these issues, and has complied with all ACCJC reporting requirements.

V. Responses to NMC's 2006 Self-Study Plans and Actions

The 2006 Self Study produced 217 plans organized around the four *ACCJC Standards for Accreditation*. The College has been able to make steadfast progress on these plans despite changes in College administration, the need to focus on response to accreditation sanctions, and the development of new planning, shared governance and evaluation processes. The following matrix summarizes the status of those plans to date as reported in the *NMC 2006 Action Plan Updates*, which is included as Appendix A to this report.

Standard	Completed	Ongoing	Pending	No Action Required	Total
ACCJC I	9	2	0	3	14
ACCJC II	52	25	4	5	86
ACCJC III	44	19	5	6	74
ACCJC IV	15	4	0	9	28
ACSCU Plans	4	7	0	4	15
Total	124	57	9	27	217

VI. Update on Substantive Change Proposals planned

During the period of its sanction, Northern Marianas College continued to anticipate the future needs of its service population and plan for programs designed to meet those needs. Currently, the College has two Substantive Change proposals in various stages of preparation:

- A new Associate of Arts degree in Rehabilitation and Human Services
- Revisions to the Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education (jointly accredited with ACSCU) to become a Bachelor of Science in Education with emphases in elementary education, early childhood education, and special education.
- A new U. S. Registered Apprenticeship Program

A.A. in Rehabilitation and Human Services

Northern Marianas College is proposing to offer an Associate of Arts degree in Rehabilitation and Human Services. The major program components for the course work required for the A.A. degree include (1) a foundation in the arts and sciences, (2) behavioral sciences (3) rehabilitation and human services courses, (4) fieldwork experience that allows students to integrate their knowledge and skills under the supervision of a qualified supervisor in one or more rehabilitation and human service agencies.

The College has:

1. Reviewed the relationship of this program to the College's mission.
2. Engaged in dialog on the educational purposes of and rational for the proposed change.
3. Engaged in planning for program implementation, including an assessment of the benefits and costs of the program.
4. Reviewed instructional, facilities, and faculty staffing needs pertaining to the program.
5. Assessed the need for resources and obtained funding for the program, equipment, and faculty.
6. Reviewed the proposed change in light of ACCJC accreditation standards and eligibility requirements.
7. Received program approval from internal academic and planning bodies as well as the Board of Regents .

The college anticipates contacting Commission staff with a draft Substantive Change proposal for initial review during the fall 2009 semester.

Revision of B.S. in Elementary Education to B.S. in Education

1. Reviewed the relationship of this program to the College's mission.
2. Engaged in dialog on the educational purposes of and rational for the proposed change.
3. The College has assessed the need for the School of Education (SOE) to address workforce needs in the Commonwealth educational community for program with emphases such as Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Special Education.
4. The SOE is currently reviewing the instructional, facilities, and faculty needs pertaining to the program.
5. The SOE is currently at the stage of researching resources needs and sources of funding.
6. The SOE is still reviewing the proposed change in light of ACCJC and ACSCU accreditation standards and eligibility requirements.
7. Program approval from internal academic and planning bodies as well as the Board of Regents is still pending.
8. The College anticipates contacting Commission staff regarding ACCJC and ACSCU accreditation standards and eligibility requirements during the fall 2009 semester.

U. S. Registered Apprenticeship Program

With the upcoming federalization of the CNMI's labor and immigration system and the impending U. S. military build-up on Guam, the College anticipates an increase in labor market demand for trained and highly skilled resident workers who will replace exiting non-resident workers. The College thus foresees the need to establish a U. S. Registered Apprenticeship program that will enhance appropriate existing programs with certification based on U. S. federal national apprenticeship standards. The Legislature, in recognizing this critical manpower development need, mandated the establishment of the US Registered Apprenticeship program to be located at the Northern Marianas College (CNMI Public Law 15-5).

The purpose of the U.S. Registered Apprenticeship program is to offer employer-driven, best quality adult postsecondary vocational, specialized, and technical education and training opportunities that prepare highly-skilled employees in support of economic development and improved quality of life in the CNMI as provided in the College mission statement.

The U.S. Registered Apprenticeship program is unique in that it combines the classroom instruction of existing NMC vocational/professional programs in Nursing, Business, and Education and vocational/technical and trade programs in construction, electrical, and masonry with on-the-job training in collaboration with employers and the U.S. Department of Labor. The Apprentice program will ensure the individual student's employability and will provide competent workers for industry and businesses by providing training for a complete range of skills needed in the workplace