



future oriented



learning-focused



connected



distinctive

**Report to
The Higher Learning Commission
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**



Self
Study
2004

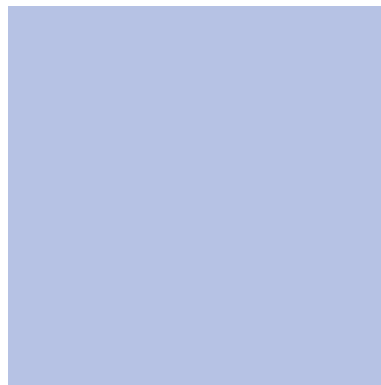


Table of Contents

1	History, Institutional Profile & Accreditation History
1	1. Introduction
2	2. History
3	3. Institutional Profile
3	a. Area IV Demographics
3	b. Northwest Iowa Community College
7	4. Accreditation History
8	a. Audience for the Self-Study
8	b. Self-Study Process
11	c. Responses to Concerns
15	Criterion One: Mission and Integrity
	1. Introduction
15	a. Statutory purposes of the College
16	b. Mission and Vision Statements
17	c. Chart outlining the relationship between the mission statement and other policies and planning processes at NCC
17	2. Core Component 1a: The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.
17	a. Board of Trustees approval for mission statements, vision statements, policies, strategic plans, operational plans and budgets
17	b. College commitment to communication of its mission, vision, values and goals to all constituencies.
18	c. Articulation of academic standards at NCC in published documents
19	d. College mission documents available to the public and prospective students
19	3. Core Component 1b: In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.
	a. Introduction
20	b. Meeting diverse educational needs of residents.
20	c. As the College moves forward to accomplish the initiatives of the new Mission Statement and Strategic Plan, it has determined that NCC can no longer be solely tied to the geographical and ideological boundaries of the previous century.
21	d. NCC’s 2003 Mission Statement provides an expanded basis for the organization’s strategies to address diversity.
21	e. Philosophy of General Education

- 22 **4. Core Component 1c:** Understanding of and support for the mission
pervade the organization.
- 22 a. The board, administration, faculty, staff and students understand and
support the College's mission.
- 22 b. The College consistently prints the mission and vision in internal and
external documents.
- 22 c. NCC's strategic decisions are mission-driven.
- 23 d. The College's planning and budgeting priorities flow from and support
the Mission.
- 23 e. All administrative and academic subunits of NCC are involved in
developing and implementing the mission of the College.
- 24 **5. Core Component 1d:** The organization's governance and administrative
structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes
that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.
- 24 a. Board policies and practices document that the Board's focus is on the
College's Mission.
- 24 b. The NCC Board enables the College's chief administrative personnel to
exercise effective leadership.
- 24 c. The distribution of responsibilities as defined in governance structures,
processes, and activities is understood and is implemented through
delegated authority.
- 26 d. People within the governance and administrative structures are committed
to the Mission and are appropriately to carry out their defined responsibilities.
- 26 e. Faculty and other academic leaders share responsibility for the coherence
of the curriculum, and the integrity of academic processes.
- 27 f. Effective communication facilitates governance at NCC on multiple levels.
- 30 g. NCC evaluates its structures and processes and strengthens them as needed.
- 30 **6. Core Component 1e:** The organization upholds and protects its integrity.
- 30 a. The core of the College Mission is to provide opportunities for people to
learn.
- 31 b. The Board exercises its responsibility to the public to ensure that the
organization operates legally, responsibility, and with fiscal honesty.
- 31 c. NCC understands and abides by all applicable local, state, and federal
laws and regulations.
- 31 d. Clear and fair policies regarding rights and responsibilities of each of its
internal constituencies.
- 31 e. The integrity of cocurricular and auxiliary activities at NCC is guaranteed
by following all Board policies and procedures, and by the integrity of
the administration and the Board of Trustees.
- 32 f. Maintaining a good relationship with the external constituents of NCC is
an essential component of the success of the college.
- 32 g. Presenting the College accurately and honestly to the public
- 32 h. NCC documents timely response to complaints and grievances,
particularly those of students.
- 33 **7. Strengths and Weaknesses**

35	Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future
35	1. Core Component 2a: The organization realistic prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends
35	a. Introduction
38	b. College planning documents reflect a sound understanding of the organization's current capacity.
40	c. NCC's planning demonstrates that attention is being paid to emerging factors.
41	d. NCCs planning documents show careful attention to the organization's function in a multicultural society.
42	e. Effective environmental scanning is part of NCC's planning processes.
43	f. NCC is a future thinking college that is supportive of innovation and change.
46	g. The College incorporates in its planning those aspects of its history and heritage that it wishes to preserve and continue.
47	h. NCC practices the concept of shared governance with limits on governance and has clearly identified structures for decision making about organizational goals.
48	2. Core Component 2b: The Organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.
48	a. The College's resources are adequate for achievement of the educational quality it claims to provide.
49	b. Plans for resource development and allocation document the College's commitment to supporting and strengthening the quality of the education it provides.
49	c. NCC uses its human resources effectively.
50	d. The College is committed to developing its human resources to meet future changes.
50	e. NCC's history of financial resource development and investment documents a forward-looking concern for ensuring educational quality.
51	f. At NCC the planning processes are flexible enough to respond to unanticipated needs for program reallocation.
52	g. Throughout its history, NCC has been proactive in meeting its planning goals.
52	3. Core Component 2c: The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.
52	a. The College demonstrates that its evaluation processes provide evidence that its performance meets its stated expectations for institutional effectiveness.
53	b. NCC has worked to develop and maintain effective systems for collecting, analyzing and using organizational information.
53	c. Appropriate data and feedback loops are available and used throughout the College to support continuous improvement.
54	d. Periodic review of academic and administrative departments at NCC contributes to the improvement of the organization.
55	e. NCC provides adequate support of its evaluation and assessment processes.

55	4. Core Component 2d: All levels of planning align with the organizations mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.
57	a. Coordinated planning processes center on the mission documents that define vision, values, goals and strategic priorities for NCC.
57	b. Planning processes at NCC link with budgeting processes and this is evident in College operations. Evidence from the 1993 Strategic Plan include:
60	c. Long-range strategic planning processes allow for reprioritization of goals when necessary because of changing environments.
62	d. Planning processes involve internal and external constituents

62 **4. Strengths and Weaknesses:**

63 **Criterion Three: Student Learning & Effective Teaching**

63 **1. Introduction and History of Assessment**

- 65 a. Accomplishments of the Assessment Process
- 66 b. Future Plans in the Assessment Area

66 **2. Core Component 3a:** The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

- 66 a. Introduction
- 68 b. Faculty are involved in defining expected student learning outcomes and creating strategies to determine whether those outcomes are achieved through measuring program effectiveness and classroom effectiveness.
- 69 c. Assessment of student learning at NCC includes multiple direct and indirect measures of student learning.
- 70 d. The College integrates into its assessment of student learning the data reported for purposes of external accountability.
- 70 e. Results obtained through assessment of student learning are available to appropriate constituencies including students themselves.
- 71 f. Faculty and administrators routinely review the effectiveness of the organization's program to assess student learning.

71 **3. Core Component 3b:** The organization values and supports effective teaching.

- 71 a. Qualified faculty determine curricular content and strategies for instruction at NCC.
- 73 b. The College supports professional development designed to facilitate teaching suited to varied learning environments.
- 74 c. NCC evaluates teaching and recognizes effective teaching.
- 74 d. The organization provides services to support improved pedagogies.
- 75 e. The College demonstrates an openness to innovative practices that enhance learning.
- 77 f. NCC supports faculty in keeping abreast of the research on teaching and learning, and of technological advances that can positively affect student learning and the delivery of instruction.
- 78 g. Faculty members actively participate in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines that they teach.

78	4. Core Component 3c: The organization creates effective learning environments.
79	a. Assessments results inform improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and Student Services.
81	b. The College provides an environment that supports all learners and respect the diversity they bring.
82	c. Advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success.
83	d. The College employs, when appropriate, new technologies that enhance effective learning environments for students.
86	e. NCC's system of quality assurance includes regular review of whether its educational strategies, activities, processes, and technologies enhance student learning.
88	5. Core component 3d: The Organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.
88	a. NCC provides access to the resources necessary to support learning and teaching.
90	b. NCC evaluates the use of its learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching.
91	c. NCC strives to support students, staff, and faculty in using technology effectively.
93	d. The College provides effective staffing and support for its learning resources.
94	e. The College's systems and structures enable partnerships and innovations that enhance student learning and strengthen effectiveness.
96	f. Budget priorities at NCC have been centered on teaching and learning in the past and will continue to be the priority in the future.
97	6. Strengths and Weaknesses
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99	Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery & Application of Knowledge
99	1. Core Component 4a: The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.
99	a. The Colleges planning and pattern of financial allocation demonstrate that it values and promotes a life of learning for its students, faculty and staff.
102	b. The NCC Board of Trustees has approved and disseminated statements supporting freedom of inquiry for the organization's students, faculty and staff, and honors those statements in its practices.
103	c. NCC supports professional development opportunities and makes them available to all of its administrators, faculty and staff.
104	d. The College publicly acknowledges the achievements of students and faculty in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge.
106	2. Core Component 4b: The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breath of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are

- 106 integral to its educational programs.
- 106 a. NCC integrates general education into all of its undergraduate degree
programs through curricular and experiential offerings intentionally
created to develop the attitudes and skills requisite for a life of learning
in a diverse society.
- 106 b. NCC assesses how effectively its technical programs establish a
knowledge base on which students develop depth of expertise
- 107 c. The College demonstrates the linkages between curricular and cocurricular
activities that support inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility.
- 108 d. Learning outcomes demonstrate that graduates have achieved breadth of
knowledge and skills and the capacity to exercise intellectual inquiry.
- 109 e. Learning outcomes demonstrate effective preparation for continued learning.
- 109 **3. Core Component 4c:** The organization assesses the usefulness of its
curricular to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and
technology society.
- 109 a. Regular academic program reviews include attention to currency and
relevance of courses and programs.
- 109 b. In keeping with its mission, learning goals and outcomes include skills
and professional competence essential to a diverse workforce.
- 110 c. Learning outcomes document that graduates have gained the skills and
knowledge they need to function in diverse local, national, and global
societies.
- 111 d. The College provides curricular and cocurricular opportunities that promote
social responsibility.
- 112 **4. Core Component 4d:** The organization provides support to ensure that
faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge
responsibility.
- 112 a. NCC's academic and student support programs contribute to the
development of student skills and attitudes fundamental to responsible
use of knowledge.
- 113 b. The College creates, disseminates, and enforces clear policies on practices
involving intellectual property rights.
- 114 **5. Strengths and Weaknesses**

115 **Criterion Five: Engagement and Service**

115 **1. Introduction**

- 115 **2. Core Component 5a:** The organization learns from the constituencies it
serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.
- 116 a. Periodic environmental scanning is conducted both informally and formally
to understand the changing needs of College constituencies and communities.
- 116 b. The College's outreach programs respond to identified community needs.
- 119 c. NCC's commitments are shaped by its mission and its capacity to support
those commitments.

120	3. Core Component 5b: The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.
120	a. The College's structures and processes enable effective connections with its communities.
121	b. NCC's cocurricular activities engage students, staff, administrators, and faculty with external communities.
121	4. Core Component 5c: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.
121	a. NCC collaborates with area LEA's and other institutions of higher learning in ways that meet the educational needs of constituents.
122	b. NCC's transfer policies and practices create an environment supportive of the mobility of learners.
123	c. Community leaders demonstrate the usefulness of the organization's programs of engagement.
123	d. NCC strives to provide programs that build effective bridges among diverse communities.
124	e. NCC provides many collaborative ventures, agreements, partnerships, and articulation agreements with Iowa and surrounding states' four-year colleges, area education agencies, public & private elementary schools, middle & high schools and business & industry in the service area that are built on shared educational, economic and social goals.
125	f. Integrity in contractual arrangements are maintained by the guidelines outlined in sections 700 and 800 of the Board Policies.
125	5. Core Component 5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.
125	a. NCC evaluations of services provided by the college involves the constituencies served.
126	b. Service programs and student, faculty, and staff volunteer activities are well received by the communities served.
126	c. NCC's economic and workforce development activities are sought after and valued by civic and business leaders.
127	d. NCC is enriched by the extensive involvement of external constituents in the activities and co-curricular programs that are open to the public.
127	e. NCC takes pride in making College facilities available to the constituency.
127	f. NCC provides on-going training to meet the continuing education needs of licensed professionals in the communities served by the College.
129	6. Strengths and Weaknesses

131	Summary and Request for Accreditation
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133	Glossary
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Introduction **History, Institutional Profile, & Accreditation History**

Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC) is located in extreme northwest Iowa and is **distinctive** for many reasons. Not only was NCC the **first** community college in the state, it is also the **smallest**—serving a very rural population.



NCC is the only public, two-year community college in extreme northwest Iowa. It is dedicated to providing quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities to its residents. The closest Iowa public four-year institution is a four-hour drive from Sheldon. In addition to providing quality Arts and Science transfer and Technical educational opportunities, the College is extensively involved in workforce training and continuing education programs.

The College is located in the geographical center of its four and one-half county service area. Sheldon, population 5,000, is home to NCC's campus and one of the three largest communities in the service area. The State of Iowa is divided into 12 academic areas, and NCC has a mandate from the State of Iowa to meet the needs of citizens in Area IV. This area includes the 4½ counties of Iowa: Lyon, Osceola, Sioux, O'Brien and part of Cherokee.



HISTORY

Northwest Iowa Community College began in January 1964 under the name of Northwest Iowa Vocational School, as a pilot program sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education and conducted by the Sheldon Community School district. During the period 1964–66, three vocational programs were offered to students from 19 high schools in Lyon, O’Brien, Osceola, and Sioux counties. The first classes met in rented facilities in downtown Sheldon.

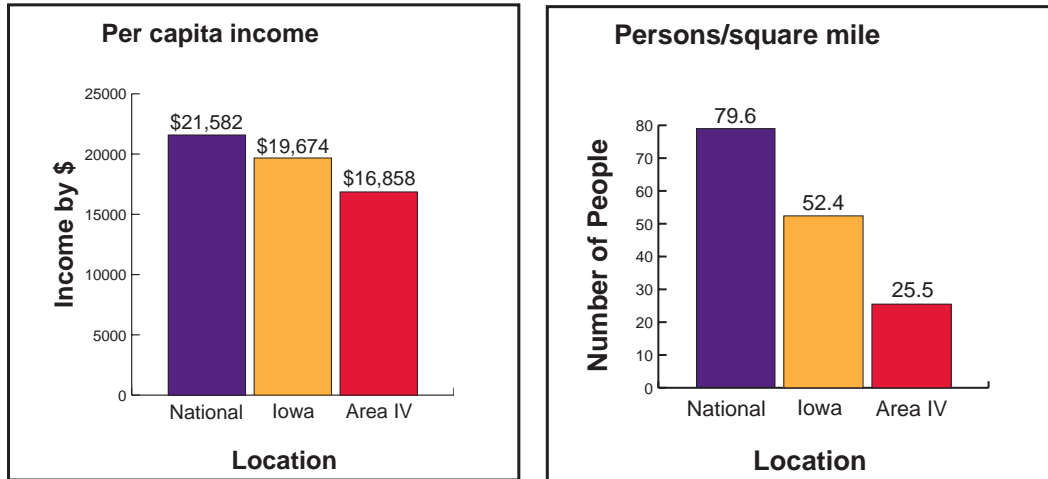
In July 1965 the Iowa State Legislature enacted Senate File 550, a statute which permitted formation of area schools. In January 1966 the State Board of Public Instruction approved an application for Merged Area IV, composed of the same area which had been served in the pilot project. A board of seven directors was elected on April 20, 1966, representing seven districts throughout the four counties of Lyon, Osceola, Sioux, and O’Brien. On April 27, 1966, the Northwest Iowa Vocational School was officially organized. On February 10, 1971, Merged Area IV was expanded when two community school districts in Cherokee County requested that they be included with the area. Merged Area IV was then comprised of 20 community school districts in Lyon, O’Brien, Osceola, Sioux and Cherokee counties and small segments of three adjoining counties. Due to consolidation of school districts, Merged Area IV is now comprised of 13 school districts.

While NCC was originally organized as an area vocational school, it applied for approval to provide a limited Arts and Science program in 1973 and began offering the program in 1975. This limited program, which offered courses in an evening college format, served the needs of area residents including many veterans. As the period of peak veteran enrollment passed, overall enrollment fell to a modest level, and the Arts and Sciences program was discontinued in 1980.

In 1975 the College changed its name to Northwest Iowa Technical College (NITC). In 1988 the College received permission from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and the Department of Education to again offer programs leading to the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees. On July 1, 1993, the name of the College was changed to Northwest Iowa Community College to reflect its status as a comprehensive community college.

AREA IV DEMOGRAPHICS

NCC currently serves the 68,106 people who live in merged Area IV. This area covers approximately 2,526 square miles and has only 25.5 persons per square mile. Here are some charts with general demographic information about the population of the Area IV compared to the nation and the State of Iowa. In general residents of Area IV have less education, earn less, and are ethnically similar. In addition there seems to be a larger number of both people under 18 years old, and those over 65.



2000 US Census Data

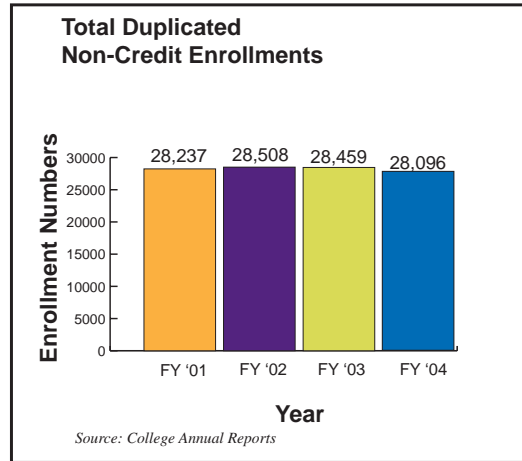
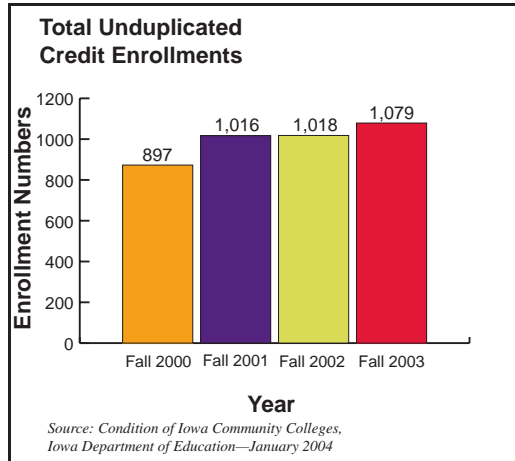
	National	Iowa	Area IV
Population % change, 1990 to 2000	13.1%	5.4%	-1.1%
% of population with a BA or higher	24.4%	21.2%	15.5%
% of population white, not of Hispanic Origin	69.1%	92.6%	97.4%
% of population of Hispanic Origin	12.5%	2.8%	1.5%
% of population under 18 years old	25.7%	25.1%	26.2%
% of population 65 and older	12.4%	14.9%	18.8%

NORTHWEST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The NCC campus is located on 263 acres and has 212,521 square feet of building space. The College has expanded the facilities significantly in the past decade. The campus also includes a power-line practice field, a truck driving range and adjacent farmland acres that are rented to the Sheldon Community School District Future Farmers of America agricultural program. *See the history of building expansion in the Appendix page 13.*

Enrollments

NCC has experienced significant growth in enrollment, particularly in a rural part of the country where total population has decreased in the past decade.



Student Characteristics

Over the past ten years student characteristics have changed significantly in some areas, but less in others. The changes have been less dramatic since 1999, by which time the Arts and Science program was more fully established. One important change to note is the shift in the percentage of female students. This was a concern in the 1994 focused visit. Since then the percentages have been reversed; the College has more female students than male.

Student Characteristics	Fall 1994	Fall 1995	Fall 1996	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003
Full-time	77%	61%	47%	63%	56%	53%	53%	47%	49%	49%
Male	63%	56%	53%	55%	49%	48%	54%	46%	44%	42%
Female	37%	44%	47%	45%	51%	52%	46%	54%	56%	58%
21 years of age or younger	68%	65%	70%	75%	73%	73%	73%	76%	70%	70%
22–34 years of age	20%	21%	22%	18%	17%	19%	16%	11%	19%	19%
35 years of age or older	11%	12%	8%	7%	10%	8%	11%	13%	11%	11%
Worked while in college	76%	80%	80%	89%	89%	88%	89%	91%	87%	88%
Received financial aid	72%	72%	59%	52%	52%	54%	52%	52%	52%	54%
Graduates	277	256	254	271	283	321	257	245	235	251
Graduates employed	95%	95%	94%	96%	97%	96%	94%	97%	92%	94%
Graduates employed in Iowa	77%	80%	71%	68%	78%	64%	74%	77%	85%	85%

Employee Characteristics

Employee characteristics reflect a growth in overall number corresponding with enrollment growth. The statistics also reflect a growth in the numbers of females.

	Fall 1994	Fall 1995	Fall 1996	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003
Full-time Employees	75	84	79	86	89	92	94	98	96	96
Regular Part-time	10	12	12	12	13	14	15	17	16	27
Male	46	47	45	44	45	50	50	52	52	48
Female	39	49	46	54	57	56	59	63	60	75
Trades & . Technologies Div Full-time Instructors	23	25	24	24	24	25	25	25	21	21
Arts & Science/ Health & Business Full-time Instructors	13	13	13	13	13	14	14	14	16	16
Adjunct Instructors*	No information available.					26	24	24	35	33

*Adjunct totals not added to breakdown of male and female.

The College staff has expanded since 1994 to meet the demands of increased enrollments and expanded programming. Full-time instructional staff has not changed significantly during this time. While the use of adjunct has increased, the bulk of instruction is still the responsibility of the full-time faculty.

Approximately 73.2% of all sections are taught by full-time faculty. Adjunct primarily teach in the area of Arts and Science/college transfer courses.

Sections Taught By	Fall 2003	Spring 2004
Full-time Trade & Technology	100	112
Adjunct Trade & Technology	7	4
Full-time Arts & Sciences	40	44
Adjunct Arts & Sciences	50	48

College Revenue & Budget

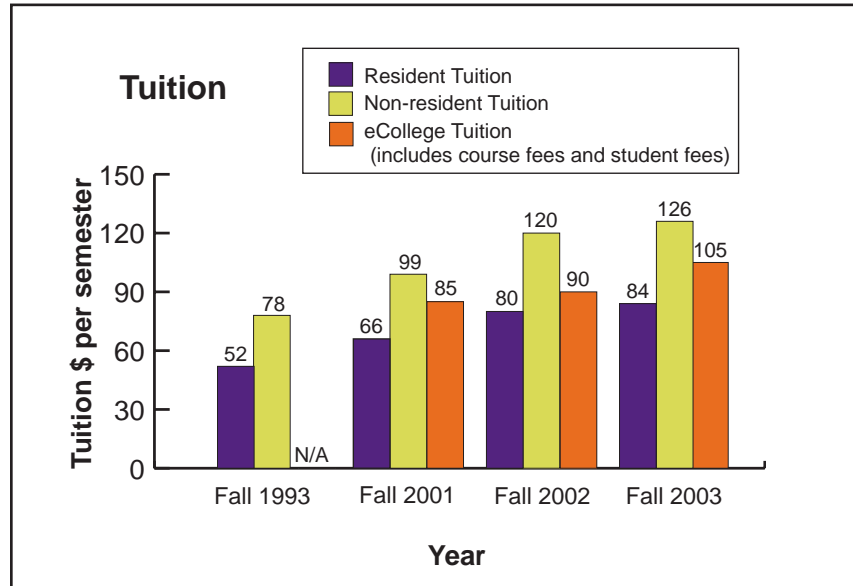
Charts and graphs outlining the college revenues and budget expenditures by category are included in the Appendix. The College is on sound financial standing, with appropriate reserves. This is documented more completely in Criterion Two.

Foundation Endowment

The Northwest Iowa Community College Foundation has assets close to \$1.5 million with an endowment of over \$630,000. This is a significant change that has occurred in the past five years. The growth of the Foundation is included in Criterion One. *See the Foundation financial statement in the Appendix, page 26.*

Tuition/Fees

This chart reflects the tuition at the time of the last focused visit, and the three most recent years.



Additional Fees are applicable for all credits for which students are registered.

	Fall 1993	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003
Application	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10
Student Fee (Per Semester Credit)	\$1.50	\$2.50	\$2.50	\$2.50
Course Fees (Per Semester Credit)	\$4, \$6, \$8, or \$10	\$6, \$9, or \$12	\$6, \$9, or \$12	\$6, \$9, or \$12*
Graduation Fee (Includes First Diploma)	\$12	\$25	\$25	\$25
Each Additional Diploma	\$8	\$15	\$15	\$15
CDL Fee (for Heavy Equipment and Powerline per semester)	NA	\$20	\$30	\$30
GED Testing Fee	\$35	\$35	\$70	\$70

* *Per College Credit by Course Prefix in the catalogs*

In order to support the increased demand by students for information technology, a technology fee of \$5/credit will be charged to students beginning in the fall of 2004.

ACCREDITATION HISTORY

February 18, 1976—NCC Board of Trustees passed a motion to proceed with candidacy status with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

July 1976—North Central Association of Colleges and Schools granted the College candidacy status.

June 1980—NCC received initial accreditation from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

June 1985—Following a Comprehensive Visit, NCC received a continuation of its accreditation status for a ten-year period.

1987—NCC formally requested a change in the status of education programs to include the granting of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees.

December 1987—Focus visit to investigate change of status request.

May 1988—NCC granted authorization to provide programs leading to certificates, diplomas, the Associate of Applied Science, the Associate of Arts, and the Associate of Science degrees, thus providing NCC with community college status.

October 24–26, 1994—NCC received a continuation of its accreditation status for a ten-year period, with the recommendation of a Focus Visit on general education.

November 10 & 11, 1997—Focus Visit concentrating on general education and recommended NCC to have the next Comprehensive Visit in 2004–05. More information on general education at NCC is included in Criteria One and Three.

April 22–24, 2002—NCA reviewed online offerings through the Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCOC) and initially approved NCC to grant associate degrees online.

Fall 2002—Received Readers' Panel comments that stated the need for a Focus Visit within two years to review the ICCOC strategic assessment plans. ICCOC challenged the need for this Focus Visit because the ICCOC does not grant degrees; the individual colleges do.

February 2003—Members of ICCOC attended a review committee meeting to question the HLC Readers’ Panel decision to call for a Focus Visit in two years. The Review Committee upheld the original April 2002 Focus Visit decision that approved NCC to grant associate degrees online without a focus visit.

AUDIENCE FOR THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

The report was written for the members of the evaluation team that will visit NCC October 18–20, 2004. Copies of the report will also be given to College constituents who have had a part in the preparation of this document and NCC Board of Trustees. The document will also be available to faculty, staff, students and the public through the NCC website; and both internal and external constituents will be encouraged to read the document.

SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Since July 2002, the College has been challenged by significant organizational changes. While in the midst of writing the self-study, there has been a change in College presidents, a change in much of the senior staff, and a complete restructuring of the organization. At the same time, the College began a year-long strategic planning process that involved over half of the College staff. The College has also embarked on a two-year project to implement an entirely new, campus-wide management information system. In spite of the limited number of staff members, the change in staff, and the magnitude of the tasks assigned, the College has successfully met these challenges.

In the spring of 2002 a committee structure was established to write the self-study, which would present an in-depth analysis of the College. Alethea Stubbe and Steve Pearce were appointed as co-coordinators and were responsible for planning, coordinating and facilitating all the activities of the committees.

A total of ten committees were established to collect data, to write various sections of the report, to edit the report, and to publish the newsletter. Chairs of these committees made up the steering committee. Eight of the committees were considered “writing” teams and were each responsible for one section of the self-study. The other two committees were responsible for oversight and for editing. All employees were asked to volunteer for committees. This report is a product of an extensive self-study that has directly or indirectly involved virtually every employee of the College. *The list of committees is in the Appendix on pages 9-11.*

Goals of the Self-Study Process

The following goals drove the self-study process at NCC.

1. NCC will follow the approved plan for conducting and writing a self-study.
2. NCC will provide opportunities for staff members to learn about the accreditation process and to participate in the writing of the self-study.
3. NCC will evaluate the College in light of the framework of the new HLC criteria for accreditation.
4. NCC will review the data in the self-study and use it to continue the process of self-improvement.
5. NCC will tie the goals and objectives of the operational plan into the new criteria so that reporting to the HLC will become part of the natural workflow.
6. NCC will use this self-study as a source of information about the college and as part of the planning documents for the future.

Resources for the Self-Study Process

NCC has committed significant resources to the self-study process in an effort to evaluate the College's performance in relation to the criteria set by the Higher Learning Commission. The time spent by College personnel in conducting the self-study process, attending the annual meetings of the NCA/Higher Learning Commission, and in providing outside resources to assist in this project are detailed below.

All College personnel were invited to be part of the self-study process. The College community was kept abreast of the self-study process through the use of the internet and the intranet. Regular newsletters were sent to all College staff, and the working drafts of the documents were made available to everyone through shared folders on the College server.

The College regularly sent personnel to the annual meetings of the HLC to facilitate the self-study process. These personnel were instrumental in the writing of the self-study by taking leadership positions on writing teams. Since NCC chose to use the new criteria, attendance at the annual meetings was instrumental in coming to an understanding of the intent of the new criteria. *The list of those who attended these meetings is included in the appendix on page 11.*

The College also contracted with an outside reader to provide advice and external assessment of the self-study. *This is documented in the Appendix on page 11.*

Third Party Comment

The Self-Study Steering Committee determined the appropriate public constituencies from which to seek third party comments. First, NCC placed a link on the home page of the College website (www.nwicc.edu) that contained the public notice that was also published on June 22, 2004 in the N'West Iowa REVIEW. Additionally press releases were sent to the four county newspapers of record. They were the Orange City Capitol Democrat, the O'Brien County Bell, the Lyon County Reporter and the Sibley Gazette/Tribune. All public notices read:

COMMISSION INVITES THIRD-PARTY COMMENT

Northwest Iowa Community College is seeking comments from the public about the College in preparation for its evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The College will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit October 18–20, 2004, by a team representing The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Northwest Iowa Community College has been accredited since 1980. The team will review the institution's ongoing ability to meet the Commission's requirements and Criteria for Accreditation.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the college to:

Public Comment on Northwest Iowa Community College

The Higher Learning Commission

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400

Chicago, IL 60602-2504

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed; comments cannot be treated as confidential. All comments must be received by September 18, 2004.

Surveys/Research Documents

NCC uses various surveys and research tools as needed for making strategic decisions. *The results of these surveys, conducted between 1994 and 2003, are available in the Resource Room*

1. Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE): Two surveys were included in this study. One was taken in 1999 and the other in 2002.
2. Skills 2000 and Skills 2006: This is a workforce need survey of business and industry in Iowa.
3. ACT Student Opinion Survey: Instructional, student services and demographic information. This is given during the spring exit interviews with graduates.
4. Student Exit Survey: Student perceptions about NCC. These are taken by all graduating students.
5. Student Characteristics Survey: Student demographic information. This is a tool developed by NCC and is taken every fall term.
6. Course Improvement Surveys: Students fill these out at the end of each semester.

RESPONSE TO CONCERNS Identified as a Part of the 1994 Comprehensive Visit

CONCERN 1: General Education requirements are ambiguously defined. It is imperative that the institution clarify, strengthen, and publicize the centrality of general education in its degree and diploma programs.

RESPONSE: A contributing factor to the ambiguity the 1994 visiting team noted in general education was the fact that the College used “related instruction” and “general education” interchangeably. In the three years that followed that comprehensive visit, the College dedicated extensive efforts in researching general education programs and developing a philosophy of general education.

The College has adopted the following philosophy of education:

General education courses will assist you to better understand human relations, social and environmental issues, and to become more competent in communications and mathematics. Additionally, you will acquire knowledge relative to our society/ culture and develop the awareness that your full potential is achieved through a lifetime of learning.

General education is now embedded as a specific and well-defined component in all programs at the College. This includes the Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science, and diploma programs.

The College catalog states that general education requirements are an inherent part of all program curriculum. The Associate of Arts program requires a minimum of 45 semester credits of general education. The Associate of Science degree requires a minimum of 30 semester credits of general education. The Associate of Applied Science degree requires a minimum of 12 semester credits of general education. The diploma requires a minimum of 6 semester credits of general education.

Students throughout the various programs of instruction now have a menu of courses to choose from to satisfy their general education requirements including transfer and non-college transfer options.

General education instruction is delivered by faculty qualified to deliver general education courses. Faculty, both full-time and adjunct, are academically prepared appropriate to the discipline within which they are teaching.

More information on general education requirements at NCC can be found in the College Catalog, on the NCC website (www.nwicc.edu), and under Criterion One of the Self-Study.

CONCERN 2: There appears to be insufficient faculty understanding and ownership of the Student Academic Achievement Assessment plan.

RESPONSE: At the time of the 1994 Comprehensive Visit, NCC was in the early stages of developing an Assessment Program. Since that time, a comprehensive assessment program has been developed and the program is being implemented together with a process of ongoing staff development for all faculty. The four distinct levels of assessment which have been included are as follows:

1. Program Area Assessment
2. Classroom Assessment
3. Course Assessment
4. Institutional Effectiveness

All faculty are now included in annual activities which are a part of the assessment of their programs. The College is half-way through the plan to develop and integrate assessment of student learning. *The Assessment Plan is included in the Appendix, and the activity is more fully described in Criterion Three.*

CONCERN 3: Faculty issues concerning disparity of teaching loads, and evaluation of teaching credentials with respect to compensation, need to be addressed.

RESPONSE: Teaching loads in the state of Iowa are defined by state statute. The maximum instructional load for vocational/technical instruction is 30 contact hours per week. The maximum credit load for college transfer instruction is 16 semester credits. Several NCC faculty are currently assigned instructional loads that include a combination of college transfer and non-college transfer instruction.

With the FY 04 faculty contracts, significant changes were made in the defining of maximum faculty load. Now all faculty, vocational and college transfer, have their load defined in terms of credits. The 2003-2006 collective bargaining agreement with the Community College Education Association states that “the maximum academic workload for all full-time instructors shall average sixteen credit hours between both fall and spring semesters of an academic year and shall be eight credit hours for the summer term.” The president and deans work with the faculty union to resolve differences about these issues, and the changes have been integrated into the master contract.

Compensation based on credentials continues to reflect a variety of variables as a result of the variance in minimum hiring requirements between college transfer and vocational faculty.

CONCERN 4: The female population of the Northwest Iowa Community College's service area appears to be underserved, and there is not an identifiable, concentrated effort to attract and serve female constituents. The College should examine its programs, instructional climate and public image to ensure equitable access.

RESPONSE: Gender balance at the College has reversed since the comprehensive visit in 1994. For the first time in the history of the College, female student numbers now eclipse male students. Much of this change is a direct product of Arts & Science instruction which has shown almost continuous growth together with a significant expansion in Health Occupations programming. These two program areas, in particular, have consistently had female students in significantly greater numbers. *See student demographics in the Introduction on page 4.*

RESPONSE TO CONCERNS Identified as a Part of the 1997 Focus Visit

CONCERN 1: Faculty files, full-time and adjunct, do not contain official transcripts.

RESPONSE: The College now requires all faculty members, both full-time and adjunct, to provide official transcripts. These transcripts are maintained in the Human Resources Office. At the time of the Self-Study, it was noted that significant progress had been made in this area, with 100% of the transcripts on file for full-time instructors and approximately 76% of the adjunct official transcripts on file. Unofficial transcripts are kept in the Dean's office; 100% of current adjunct have unofficial transcripts on file. Maintaining files on current adjunct faculty is a challenge as this group is ever changing. Official transcripts are required upon official employment, and Division Deans have been given the responsibility for follow-through on this issue. Official transcripts are collected by the deans and submitted along with payroll information.

RESPONSE TO CONCERNS

Identified as a Part of the 2002 Online Consortium Visit

CONCERN 1: The team is concerned that the Consortium's rapid success could exhaust the available human resources beyond their effective limits.

RESPONSE:

In general, this has not become an overwhelming problem for the ICCOC. Careful planning, expanding services before they became a problem and an expanding pool of instructors who want to teach online has provided the member colleges with the resources to handle these issues. The student demand for these courses is creating the financial resources necessary to meet these challenges.

Each college in the Consortium has the right to limit enrollment, or to limit the number of classes they offer, thus effectively controlling the available human resources. New instructors are invited to attend the Spring ICCOC annual convention to gain information of the online delivery system and given the opportunity to instruct an online course.

The Consortium has submitted a Title III grant to address additional concerns with the success of the ICCOC. This did not receive funding in the spring of 2003. The Consortium submitted the grant again in 2004. If the grant is not received, the Consortium will set priorities and begin to use reserve funds to accomplish what could be done more quickly with the grant.

CONCERN 2: While the Consortium has been effective in developing a system of creating and offering courses, each college must accept that the awarding of the online degree is the responsibility of the individual college.

RESPONSE: Each college has accepted and does award the online degree upon successful completion to each of the respective students.

Every student must complete the graduation requirements of the institution from which they are receiving the degree.

CONCERN 3: Each college needs to integrate the online program into campus systems, especially planning and assessment.

RESPONSE: Northwest Iowa Community College has integrated the online program into campus systems, which includes a new organizational structure, the College catalog and the College web page. The College is also using the same assessment model for all courses. This includes the online courses.

Criterion One Mission and Integrity

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



Northwest Iowa Community College has served this region of the state with distinction for 40 years, growing from a small technical school into a flourishing community college. Although NCC is the smallest community college in Iowa, that is not the only distinctive quality of the institution. NCC is a vital, community-minded organization that focuses on the needs of students. The future of the College is going to be determined by the integrity with which it seeks to fulfill its mission. The board, administration, faculty, staff and students are all part of an organization that is dedicated to meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

There are several documents that provide the College with the authorization to function as an institution of higher education. The first is Chapter 260C of the Iowa Code, which contains enabling provisions for community colleges.

Board Policy 102 outlines the statutory purposes of the College under the Iowa Code. It states, “Northwest Iowa Community College should provide educational opportunities and services in each of the following, when applicable, but not necessarily limited to:

1. The first two (2) years of college work including pre-professional education.
2. Vocational and technical training.
3. Programs for in-service training and retraining of workers.
4. Programs for high school completion for students of post-high school age.
5. Programs for all students of high school age who may best serve themselves by enrolling for vocational and technical training while also enrolled in a local high school, public or private.
6. Programs for students of high school age to provide advanced college placement courses not taught at a student's high school while the student is also enrolled in the high school.
7. Student personnel services.
8. Community services.

9. Vocational education for persons who have academic, socioeconomic, or other handicaps which prevent succeeding in regular vocational education programs.
10. Training, retraining, and all necessary preparation for productive employment of all citizens.
11. Vocational and technical training for persons who are not enrolled in a high school and who have not completed high school.”

This self-study was conducted under two presidents, during the development of a new mission statement and strategic plan. Throughout this document both the 1998 and 2003 mission statements and strategic plans will be referenced. The older documents provide the foundation for what was done in the past, and the new documents reflect the future-looking nature of the College. It is important that both are discussed in this document because they demonstrate the change in outlook made at NCC since the last visit by the NCA. From 1998–2003, the College worked under the following mission statement:

1998 Mission Statement

The mission of Northwest Iowa community College is to enhance the quality of life by assuring lifelong learning opportunities.

In 2003 the College entered a new strategic planning process that included developing a new mission statement and the first college vision statement.

2003 Mission Statement

Northwest Iowa Community College is a progressive learning college rapidly responding to the changing needs of our global community.

The new mission statement provides the distinctive link between NCC’s past and the forward-thinking leadership of the present. The past was built on the excellent foundation of lifelong learning as the central concept behind all College programs. Now the need for learning is changing rapidly to become global in outlook and application. While NCC is in a rural Iowa, the students attending the college will live and work in a global community. NCC will use this new mission statement to build structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty and students.

2003 Vision Statement

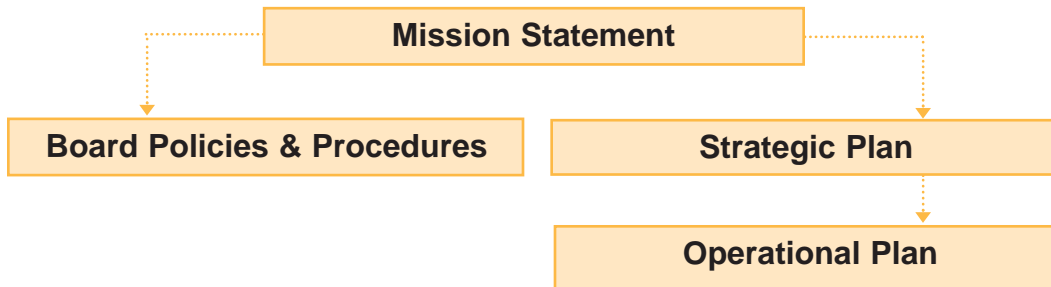
We are driven to be the community college of choice for learning.

As part of the strategic planning process, the College also developed a Vision Statement. This is the first time that the College has had a vision statement, and it is hoped that this statement will become the new byword for the College community.

FUTURE ORIENTED

The new vision and mission statements will be the distinctive link between NCC’s past and the forward thinking leadership of the present.

The following chart outlines the relationship between the mission and the other policies and planning processes at NCC.



Core Component 1a: The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

The College operates from several documents that include the Code of Iowa, Board Policies and Procedures, Guiding Principles (values), Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission Statements, and an Operational Plan. All of these documents are public record and are readily available to the public through published documents, open board meetings, and on the College Web pages. Board Policies are updated as needed, however the guiding principles have not been thoroughly reviewed to see if they reflect the new Mission Statement and Strategic Plan.

As part of their duties, the NCC Board of Trustees must vote to approve all College-wide Mission Statements, Vision Statements, Policies, Strategic Plans, Operational Plans, and Budgets. The Board Policies and Procedures include a Statement of Guiding Principles (Board Policy 100), and a statement of Educational Policy/Educational Philosophy (Board Policy 102-105). In addition, each section of the board policies has a specific statement of guiding principles that pertains to that section of the policies (Board Policies 201, 301, 401, 501, 601, 701, and 801). These guiding principles are broad statements that guide and direct the Board of Trustees as they oversee the operations of the College. The members of the Board of Trustees of NCC adhere to the mission documents of the college, including these Guiding Principles. *Information on the Board of Trustees and the Guiding Principles are included in the Appendix on pages 1 and 16.*

NCC is committed to communicating its mission, vision, values and goals to all its constituencies. The College communicates regularly with these groups through presentations to community groups, the Annual report to the community and by posting the Mission Statement in prominent locations on

CONNECTED

The history of NCC is one of collaboration with both internal and external partners in education.

campus. The history of NCC is one of collaboration with both internal and external partners in education. The College has educational partnerships with 13 public and 4 private schools, area education agencies, area business and industries, and with other institutions of higher education. *See map in the Appendix on page 2.*

Academic standards at NCC are articulated throughout the mission and planning documents and in other published materials given to students. The College communicates to students the graduation requirements for each program. Every program has standards, and all courses have objectives and goals that are communicated to the students

The College Catalog and the Student Handbook outlines the academic standards that measure student success. It also defines the parameters of academic probation, suspension, the appeal process, grade scheme, student classification, credit for military or institutional & experiential learning and Credit by Examination. For example, the catalog and handbook state that in order for a student to be successful they must have the following GPAs.

Degree Programs	Diploma Programs
Must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0	Must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 1.8

Students receive a syllabus at the start of each term that outlines expected student learning outcomes for that course.

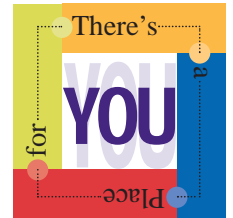
Board Policy 105 commits the College to continuous improvement of academic programs and services.

The 1998 Strategic Plan had two specific strategies that outlined activities that establish the foundation for academic excellence.

- Student Development: We will provide support systems that support student development.
- Staff Development: We will provide for continuous staff development.

The 2003 Strategic Plan puts emphasis on “Enhancing Student Success: Northwest Iowa Community College is dedicated to enhancing student success by facilitating processes where every individual can realize his or her full potential through learning.” As a result, the FY 05 budget has dedicated funds towards the purchasing instructional equipment, and staff development.

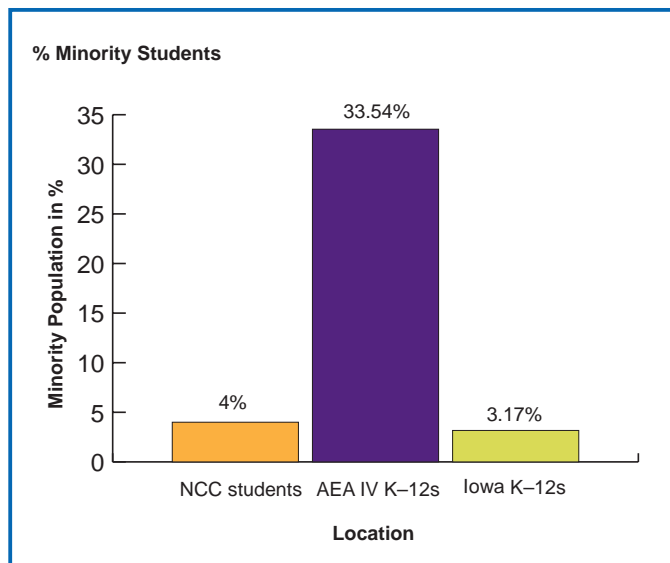
College mission documents are available to the public. Prospective students are provided with catalogs and view pieces that include the college mission and vision statements. In addition, the underlying goals of the College are included in the slogans included in those view pieces. The current College brand is based around the idea that *“There’s a place for you”* which is based on the 1998 mission to provide *lifelong learning*. Students will find the College Mission Statement in both Student Handbooks and on the Intranet. The NCC web page has the Mission and Vision Statements included under “About NCC. The NCC Mission Statement is also predominantly displayed in the lobby, which is the main entrance to the College and is the first place that visitors come in contact with the mission statement.



Core Component 1b: In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

Northwest Iowa has an unusually homogenous population that is more than 98% Caucasian. However, there are a growing number of minority populations which will have an impact on the College within the next decade as elementary school children move into the post-secondary educational arena. While the numbers of students may not seem significant, these students lacking in English language proficiency are having a huge impact on area schools.

According to the 2003 BEDS report, the percentage of increase in students who are non-English proficient has risen more significantly in Area IV than in the rest of the state of Iowa. *This data is included in the Appendix on pages 29 and 30.*



Therefore, although the challenges of ethnic diversity are not significant at NCC at the present time, this is going to impact the College in the next decade. At this time the challenges presented to NCC in the area of diversity include:

- Diverse learning styles,
- Expanding demand by women for education,
- Diverse preparation levels of students for post-secondary education,
- Changing economic base of the population that impacts demand for new and diverse academic programs,
- Rapidly changing technology needs by rural employers and populations, and,
- An aging population.

In order to meet the diverse educational needs of its residents, NCC has expanded programming, expanded delivery options, and addressed the training needs of faculty for increased knowledge of pedagogy and learning styles.

- Expanded programming in credit instruction, non-credit instruction and high school programs continues to address the needs of constituents for life-long learning. As the economic base of the area has continued to shift from farming to industry, the College has expanded its technical programs. *See the Appendix for changes since the last NCA visit on pages 14-15.*
- Expanded delivery options allow students to take courses without having to travel to the College. Internet based instruction provides the opportunity for people who need to continue their education without having to be on campus during traditional class periods. This is particularly useful for non-traditional students. The use of the ICN, or Iowa Communications Network for distance learning opportunities has made it possible for high school students to earn college credit without dealing with the “windshield” time that is a problem in rural communities.
- Faculty development has been provided by the College to prepare instructors to teach diverse learning styles, to integrate changing technology in the classroom and to be able to assess student learning.

FUTURE ORIENTED

Graduates of NCC must be able to live and work in a world that is diverse. Local business and industry partners who hire NCC graduates function in the global economy

As the College moves forward to accomplish the initiatives of the new Mission Statement and Strategic Plan, it has determined that NCC can no longer be solely tied to the geographical and ideological boundaries of the previous century. Therefore, the new mission documents reveal a new way of looking at education and the diversity of the world in which the citizens of northwest Iowa now live and work. Graduates of NCC must be able to live and work in a world that is diverse. Local business and industry partners who hire NCC graduates function in the global economy. Therefore, as the world grows smaller, NCC must expand the way education is delivered and encourage students to embrace diversity. In order to meet this demand, NCC has expanded the focus of the mission statement to include the *“changing needs of our global community.”*

The NCC 2003 Mission Statement provides an expanded basis for the organization's strategies to address diversity. In addition to the 2003 Mission Statement, the Board Policies also address the issue of diversity. Board Policy 609 specifically states that “Northwest Iowa Community College recognizes and appreciates the value of international education and cultural diversity and encourages curriculum and activities that shall facilitate a greater understanding of other cultures.” As a result of these statements of mission, the College included a strategic initiative in the 1998 Strategic Plan to introduce cultural awareness activities and courses that help instruct students in various dimensions of multi-cultural thought. *See evidence of activities in the Resource Room.*

The mission of the College is to provide quality learning opportunities and to help ensure student success. **Therefore the mission documents of NCC include statements of personal and corporate responsibility, ethical codes and educational philosophy.**

The Philosophy of General Education states, *General education courses will assist you to better understand human relations, social, and environmental issues, and to become more competent in communications and mathematics. Additionally, you will acquire knowledge relative to our society/culture and develop the awareness that your full potential is achieved through a lifetime of learning.*

Board Statement of Guiding Principles includes the following:

- *We believe that education is an investment in society.*
- *We believe in accessible, comprehensive education and services which enable people to maximize their potential.*
- *We believe in the dignity and worth of all individuals.*
- *We believe the quality of life is improved through lifelong learning opportunities.*
- *We believe in maintaining high standards through principles of continuous improvement.*
- *We believe that leadership, education and training will enhance community and economic development.*
- *We believe that a variety of partnerships enhance all involved.*
- *We believe that we are at risk without change.*
- *We believe that all people can learn.*

Employees are provided with a handbook that outlines the specific code of conduct for all employees, and students are provided with a Student Handbook that outlines proper student behavior. The policies and procedures in these two documents are built upon the Board Policies. The specific sections of the Board Policies that deal with these issues include the 100s, 200s, 300s, 400s, and 500s. *These documents are in the Resource Room.*

Core Component 1c: Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

College-wide understanding and support for the mission of NCC is driven by well-articulated documents that encourage members of the College community to find ways to develop and implement the mission.

The board, administration, faculty, staff, and students understand and support the College's mission. The 1998 mission statement contained a phrase that became a by-word for the staff, faculty, and administration of Northwest Iowa Community College—*lifelong learning*. NCC worked to accomplish this by adding and improving programs, expanding delivery systems, implementing new assessment strategies, reorganizing the institution to reflect evolving needs, and pursuing external funding through grants and endowments.

FUTURE ORIENTED

The 1998 mission statement contained a phrase that became a by-word for staff, faculty and administration of NCC—*lifelong learning*

The 2003 Mission Statement is built on the previous mission statements, but looks to the future of Northwest Iowa Community College in a global and diverse environment. In order to facilitate the transition from the old mission statement to the new one, the 2003 planning documents are available to all College personnel and students on the NCC Intranet; it is being included in published documents, and in College signage.

According to the 2002 PACE survey the College understands the College Mission and agrees that the actions of the institution reflect its mission. The range of scores was between 3.86 and 4.33. *Page 18 of the 2002 PACE Survey, available in the Resource Room.*

NCC consistently prints the mission and vision of the College in internal and external documents that include, but are not limited to, the catalog, advertising pieces, operational plans, annual reports, and the NCC Web page. The NCC Website is www.nwicc.edu. *Samples of printed documents are available in the Resource Room.*

NCC's strategic decisions are mission-driven. Since the last NCA visit in 1994, the College has made decisions that impacted which programs were offered, partnerships, building projects, and delivery systems. The mission to provide "*lifelong learning*" drove the decisions to expand programs, to pursue alternative delivery systems, and to build and remodel buildings so that programs would have the appropriate facilities to deliver quality instruction.

Constituents informed the College of the need for new or expanded programs that included

- General Machining
- Associate Degree Nursing
- Expanded LPN programs
- Computerized Manufacturing Technology
- Advanced Electrical Technology
- Radiologic Technology

This mission also provided the direction for the College to pursue alternative delivery systems to provide flexibility to students. The two delivery systems are the ICN and the ICCOC. *See the map of campus expansion in the Appendix on pages 12 and 13.*

The College's planning and budgeting priorities flow from and support the mission. The history of planning and budgeting at NCC is more clearly documented in Criterion Two, but these processes do flow from the stated mission of the College. The evidence for this is broad based, but can be summarized by the following examples.

- The five-year plan developed in 1998 led to the budgeting of specific new initiatives that included building remodeling, the expansion of student services, hiring a grant writer, and expanding of the IT infrastructure of the College.
- In the 2004 budgeting process, all new initiative and technology requests were specifically asked to tie their requests to the Operational Plan and to the five NCA criteria.

All administrative and academic subunits of NCC are involved in developing and implementing the mission of the college. The entire college was invited to be part of the strategic planning process, and 46 different people (*or about half the college staff*) participated at different stages of the process.

- 33 participated in environmental scanning
- 32 attended the Implications Workshop
- 28 attended the Strategic planning workshop
- 5 were on the editing committee
- 40 participated on the Operational Planning Committee
- 4 students participated

This information is included in the 2003/2004 Strategic Plan/Operational Plan document in the Appendix on page 132.

Core Component 1d: The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

DISTINCTIVE

...the College has adapted to changing economic demands, changing constituents needs, and changing administrations.

Since the 1994 NCA visit, the College has adapted to changing economic demands, changing constituent needs, and changing administrations. Clearly defined governance and administrative structures have been key to the success of the College through these changes. The Board Policies, the Employee Handbook, the Adjunct Handbook, the Student Handbook, the ICCOC Faculty Handbook, and the Organizational Chart all provide clear lines of communication for all members of the College community.

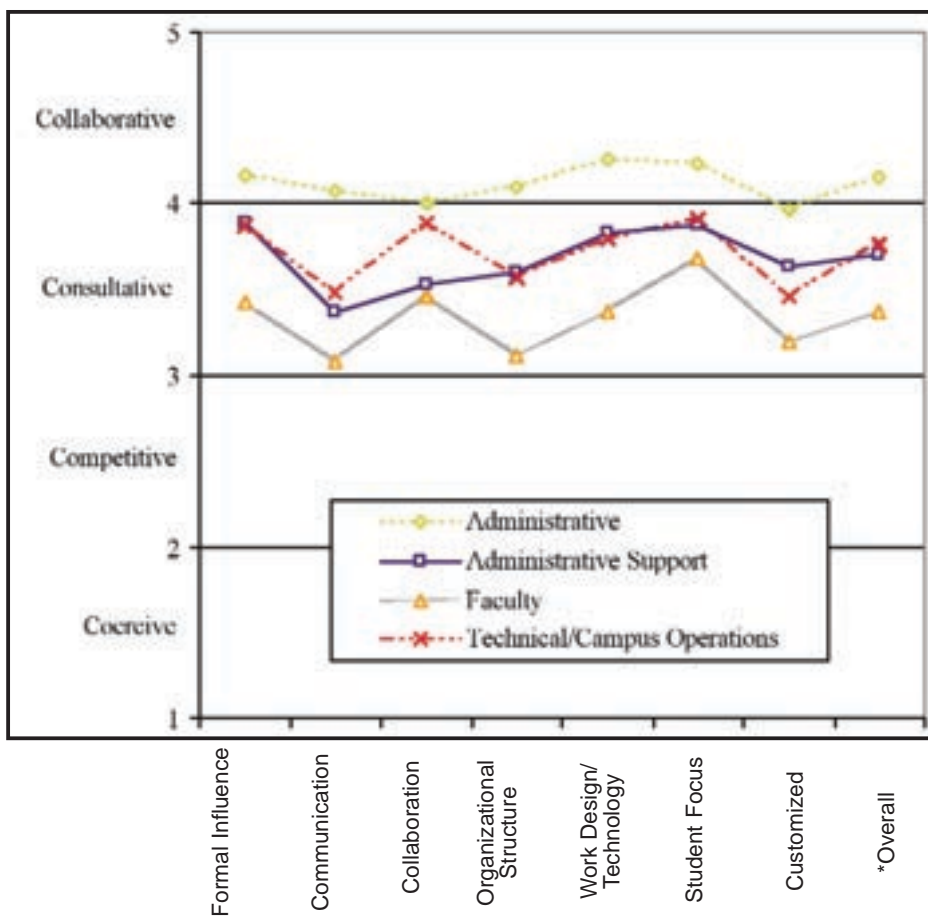
Board policies and practices document that the board’s focus is on the College’s mission. No direct measurement of the relationship between the Board Policies and the Mission Statement has been made. However at the beginning of each section of the Board Policies is a guiding principle for that section that is supported by the broad Statement of Guiding Principles (101). These principles were first written January 4, 1967 as a result of the planning processes and mission statement of the time. The date that the policy was first adopted is included with each policy, as well as the last time it was updated. These policies are updated as directed by the mission of the College, and will be reviewed and updated in the near future.

The NCC Board enables the organization’s chief administrative personnel to exercise effective leadership. The governance and administrative structures at Northwest Iowa Community College are outlined in the Board Policies, and are designed to make it possible for the College personnel to effectively carry out the operations of the institution. All areas of the College are included in the governance of the College and have representation at the Executive Council. Minutes of the Executive Council are distributed to College personnel via email. Any member of the College may approach the Executive Council and ask to address the group. When appropriate, campus individuals and groups are asked to address the Executive Council about campus activities. The Executive Council is made up of the College president, all three vice presidents, and both academic deans. *The organizational chart is in the Appendix on pages 3-8.*

The distribution of responsibilities as defined in governance structures, processes, and activities is understood and is implemented through delegated authority. The entire college community has access to the Board Policies, the Employee Handbook, the Strategic Plan, and the Organizational Chart. This chart not only outlines authority structures, but communication structures.

The aforementioned employment documents also outline governance structures and processes. These are also included in new employee orientation procedures. In addition, new faculty members are mentored by long-time faculty members. The 2002 PACE Survey demonstrates that the College has more of a consultative climate than a collaborative climate. (2002 PACE, pg.19) Faculty as a group reported the lowest scores in this area; however the low number of faculty that responded to the survey (page 8) does raise some concerns about the validity of the data. This is an area that the College will need to continue to investigate and address.

Average Climate Scores as Rated by Functional Roles at Northwest Iowa Community College



Administrative	4.16	4.07	4.00	4.10	4.26	4.24	3.97	4.15
Administrative Support	3.89	3.37	3.53	3.60	3.83	3.88	3.63	3.70
Faculty	3.42	3.08	3.46	3.11	3.36	3.68	3.19	3.37
Technical/Campus Operations	3.88	3.48	3.89	3.57	3.79	3.91	3.46	3.76

* The overall mean does not reflect the means of the customized items developed specifically for Northwest Iowa Community College.

People within the governance and administrative structures are committed to the NCC Mission Statement and are appropriately qualified to carry out their defined responsibilities. The organization's governing body, the Board of Trustees, demonstrates its commitment to the mission of the college by approving the Mission and Vision Statements, and by approving the Operational Plan and budgeting documents. Board members are publicly elected according to NCC policy and further demonstrate their commitment to the College by attending workshops and retreats, attending monthly board meetings, participating in the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (*IACCT*), and by visiting with legislators and attending college functions including graduation.

- Appropriate administrative personnel are hired according to the strict guidelines in the Board Policies. (*Sections 300 and 400*)
- The members of the Executive Council participate in the strategic planning process, and are responsible for seeing that the activities of the Operational Plan are completed.

Faculty and other academic leaders share responsibility for the coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of academic processes. The President of the College is directly responsible for all academic programs. The two academic deans and the Director of Distance Learning report directly to the president. These personnel, along with faculty members, serve on the Curriculum Committee, the Assessment Committee and participate in program review.

LEARNING-FOCUSED

Faculty and other academic leaders share responsibility for the coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of academic processes.

Academic Deans: The College has two deans that oversee the two major academic divisions, and they are directly responsible to the president. The deans are responsible for hiring and evaluating instructors, and for maintaining quality programs through program assessment. The deans serve on all appropriate committees that are tied to curriculum and are members of the Executive Council.

Director of Distance Learning: The deans are assisted by the Director of Distance Learning who also reports directly to the president. This person in this position assists with the distance learning programs that include the online learning program (ICCO) and the ICN programming. As an active member of the academic community, this person also serves on the Curriculum Committee and other appropriate academic teams.

Curriculum Committee: The College also has an active Curriculum Committee that assists in the review of all credit courses and programs. Instructors serve on the committee, along with the Registrar and members of the Student Services office. *See curriculum approval flow chart in the Appendix on pages 33-35.*

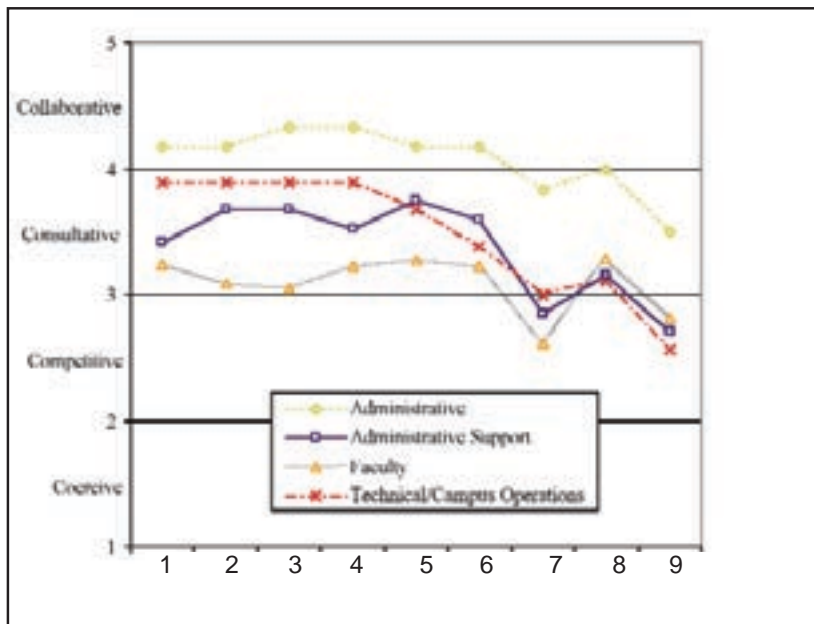
Assessment Committee: This committee is made up of faculty, deans and other appropriate members of the academic community. *See list of committee members on page 18 in the Appendix.*

Program Review: All members of the full-time faculty work with the program review process, and work with their appropriate Advisory Committees to ensure quality curriculum. All programs are part of a five year-cycle. *See Program Review Chart in the Appendix on page 36.*

Effective communication facilitates governance at NCC on multiple levels.

Effective communication is a constant challenge for organizations, and NCC is no exception. According to data collected on two PACE surveys, communication issues at NCC have not changed significantly from 1998 to 2002. (*Note: Dr. Andrew Matonak began as the college president July 1, 2002.*)

In 1998 the mean score for communication was 3.41 and in 2002 it was 3.34 out of 5. The data also reveals that once again the administrative staff has the highest confidence in the communication structure, and faculty has the least confidence in the process. *According to the PACE norm base the national average communication score is 3.39, and NCC scored a 3.34 in the 2002 survey.* The College is close to the national average in this area. While there is room for improvement, this does not indicate a serious problem.



This chart is from the 2002 PACE survey and shows the response of the four academic subunits to the nine questions which are listed on the following page.

		Administrative	Administrative Support	Faculty	Technical/Campus Operations
1	The extent to which I receive information related to my work	4.17	3.42	3.24	3.89
2	The extent to which information I receive is useful in my work	4.17	3.67	3.08	3.89
3	The extent to which the information I generate is shared with others	4.33	3.67	3.05	3.89
4	The extent to which positive work expectations are communicated to me	4.33	3.52	3.22	3.89
5	The extent to which unacceptable behaviors are identified and communicated to me	4.17	3.74	3.27	3.67
6	The extent to which work outcomes are clarified for me	4.17	3.59	3.22	3.38
7	The extent to which open and ethical communication is practiced at this institution	3.83	2.85	2.61	3.00
8	The extent to which I receive adequate information regarding important activities at this institution	4.00	3.15	3.28	3.11
9	The extent to which information is shared within this institution	3.50	2.70	2.81	2.56

Average Scores of the Communication Climate Area as Rated by Functional Roles at Northwest Iowa Community College

However, the College is working to address the disparity between these perceptions, and is working to increase the access to appropriate information by all members of the College community. The College believes that there are several approaches to this issue and is currently reviewing a plan submitted by a faculty member for communication management. *All materials available on this plan will be found in the Resource Room.*

As part of the ongoing work of improving communications across the campus, the following communication tools have been implemented at NCC.

Enhanced Communication Structures

- **Computer Network:** The College has just built a new computer network that allows for shared work folders, and for shared information folders.
- **Intranet:** The intranet has become a tool for sharing information, including official documents like board policies and the employee handbook. The Intranet is also being used to distribute the weekly employee newsletter
- **Outlook and email:** NCC switched from two separate email services (*Groupwise and Outlook web*) to Outlook in January 2004. This has greatly increased the ability of people to communicate on and off campus, to schedule meetings and to keep track of responsibilities. The NCC website was redesigned to offer secure transfer of information.

- ***Datatel Colleague:*** The College is halfway through a two-year project to implement a new management information system that will give faculty, staff and students more efficient access to data necessary for effective communication.

Internal Communications

- ***Board of Trustees:*** The Board meets monthly and the agenda is posted on the bulletin board and complete board packets are shared with appropriate personnel before the meeting. Board actions are published in the NCC Dateline (the internal College newsletter). Board meetings are open to the College and to the public, unless specified by Board Policy #802. Board Policies and Procedures are posted on the NCC Intranet. Board meetings are also covered by local members of the media.
- ***NCC President:*** As part of the 2003 organizational restructuring, the president sought the advice and opinions of all campus personnel. His open door policy is making a difference in the communications process at NCC. The success of this institutional change will be evaluated formally in the next PACE survey scheduled for fall 2005.
- ***Executive Council:*** The Executive Council meets regularly and the agenda for the Council meetings and minutes of those meetings are shared with the College via email. When appropriate, individuals are asked to come to Council meetings to inform, or to help with decision making. Both individuals and groups may ask to address the Executive Council. The Executive Council also convenes “All College Meetings” to discuss the business of the College. All College faculty and staff are expected to attend these meetings and are encouraged to ask questions and express ideas.
- ***Deans/Academic Divisions:*** Deans communicate with the instructional staff in their divisions and encourage communication within the divisions. Instructors know what the agenda will be before the meeting and are encouraged to add their own issues. Minutes of these meetings are maintained in the Division offices.
- ***Departments:*** Non-instructional departments hold regular meetings to deal with activities pertaining to their departments. When appropriate, members of other areas of the College are invited to attend.
- ***Planning:*** The entire College community is invited to be part of the planning and budgeting processes at NCC.
- ***Students:*** Students are involved in the communication processes at NCC. They are welcome to attend Board meetings, be involved in strategic planning, be involved in budgeting and to communicate with the Academic Divisions. Information is shared with students via the Intranet, college email and the student newspaper.

DISTINCTIVE

All activities of the College revolve around that one purpose and are either directly or indirectly involved in providing learning opportunities.

External Communications

- **Advisory Committees:** These committees communicate to the governance of the College through the minutes of their meetings and when involved in program review activities.
- **Media:** Members of the press are welcome to attend the Board meetings, and one area newspaper regularly attends and reports on board activities. By law the College complies with the requirement to publish certain documents through the year, including the certified budget and an annual financial statement.
- **NCC Foundation Board:** This group communicates extensively with external constituencies through its quarterly meetings.

NCC evaluates its structures and processes and strengthens them as needed.

In 2002 the College experienced the retirement of a long-time president and a significant number of management personnel that included two vice presidents and both deans. The new president took six months to evaluate the existing organizational chart, listened to both internal and external constituents, and then with the Executive Council outlined a new organizational structure that is more closely aligned with the mission of the College.

Core Component 1e: The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

NCC is valued by the constituents it serves, and that is a result of the ability of people to trust the College. The good working relationship that the College has with credit and non-credit students is built on the following principles.

The core of the College mission is to provide opportunities for people to learn.

The Vision statement says that “*We are driven to be the community college of choice for learning.*” All activities of the College revolve around that one purpose and are either directly or indirectly involved in providing learning opportunities.

Instructional Activities	Non-Instructional Activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College transfer programs • Career/technical education programs • High school programs • Continuing Education programs • Business and Industry programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Services • Business Office • Physical Plant • Technology and Information Services • Human Resources

The NCC Board exercises its responsibility to the public to ensure that the organization operates legally, responsibly, and with fiscal honesty. As mandated by the Iowa State Legislature, NCC was established and organized to meet the educational needs of the people of Area IV. NCC has a publicly elected Board of Trustees whose responsibility is to ensure that the College functions in a legal, responsible, and fiscal manner. The Board of Trustees employs an attorney for advice as it pertains to legal matters. The Board reviews and approves budgets on a monthly basis and hires an independent third party to perform an annual audit of the College. Board policies and procedures can be viewed upon request or can be found on the College's Intranet web site. The Board of Trustee meetings are open to the public and minutes are available upon request. *Board Policies and copies of Annual Audits are available on the NCC Intranet, the Web page or in the Resource Room.*

NCC understands and abides by all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. NCC, along with other Iowa community colleges, was established under the laws of the State of Iowa, and operates in accordance with Chapter 260C of the Iowa Code, which contains enabling provisions for community colleges. The College operates as a body politic under 281 Iowa Administrative Rules 21.10. NCC complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Visits by the State Department of Education in conjunction with the North Central Association, along with the annual audit performed by an independent third party have verified that NCC is in compliance with state and federal laws.

The Board Policies, Employee Handbook, Student Handbook, ICCOC Faculty Handbook and the Adjunct Faculty Handbook outline **clear and fair policies regarding the rights and responsibilities of each of its internal constituencies** (*Copies of these documents are located in the Resource Room*). In addition, faculty and support staff are protected by their union memberships. Faculty are represented by the Community College Education Association and the support staff by the Support Staff Association.

The integrity of cocurricular and auxiliary activities at NCC is guaranteed by following all board procedures and policies, and by the integrity of the administration and board of trustees. To that end, all non-instructional activities and departments in the College have representation on the Executive Council, follow college administrative practices as determined by the Board Policies and other administrative policies, follow all appropriate hiring and personnel management procedures, and, are part of the auditing and assessment processes. *Personal files are available in the Human Resources Office.*

Maintaining a good relationship with the external constituents of NCC is an essential component of the success of the College. NCC believes that this is accomplished through acting with integrity in all business and operating procedures, communicating with all external constituents, and through participation in community events.

To maintain integrity, the College follows all appropriate Board Policies which outline business and operating procedures, community relations, and communication with external constituents. Key components in the 700 section of the policies outline the way that NCC is going to handle business and operating procedures. Section 800 deals with communication with the public, and the roles and responsibilities of college personnel. Records of all transactions can be seen in the minutes of the Board of Trustees. *Available in the Resource Room*

In order to represent the College accurately and honestly to the public, the College publishes a certified budget, publishes the Annual financial Statement showing receipts and disbursements of funds, posts board agendas, has open board meetings, follows prescribed board policies, and practices ethical standards in advertising and recruiting methods. *Examples of these documents will be found in the Resource Room.*

NCC documents timely response to complaints and grievances, particularly those of students. Students are provided with a Student Handbook which outlines student expectations, responsibilities and rights. The Student Handbook contains the student grievance policy and procedures. This process allows for a student to appeal the decision made as part of the grievance policy.

NCC employees go through a new employee orientation session and are provided with an Employee's Handbook and a Board Policies and Procedures Manual. These documents outline the College's structure, employee expectations, employment policies, employee responsibilities and rights.

We Pride Ourselves

- NCC has a well-established, effective Board of Trustees.
- Annual audits and periodic reviews by the State of Iowa prove that NCC operates with integrity and follows state and federal laws.
- NCC has a clear Mission Statement, Strategic Plan and has developed its first Vision Statement.
- NCC has undergone a major reorganization, while at the same time developing a new Mission Statement, new Strategic Plan, and writing the self-study for the NCA.
- NCC has adopted a new approach to operational planning that includes revising the plan every two years.

We Challenge Ourselves

- NCC needs to continue to increase the number of people involved in collaborative activities.
- NCC needs to continue to improve communications.
- NCC should revisit and revise all Board Policies and Procedures to ensure that they reflect the current Strategic Plan and Mission Statements.

Criterion Two Preparing for the Future

The organization's allocation of **resources** and its process for **evaluation** and **planning** demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, **improve** the quality of its education, and **respond** to future challenges and opportunities.



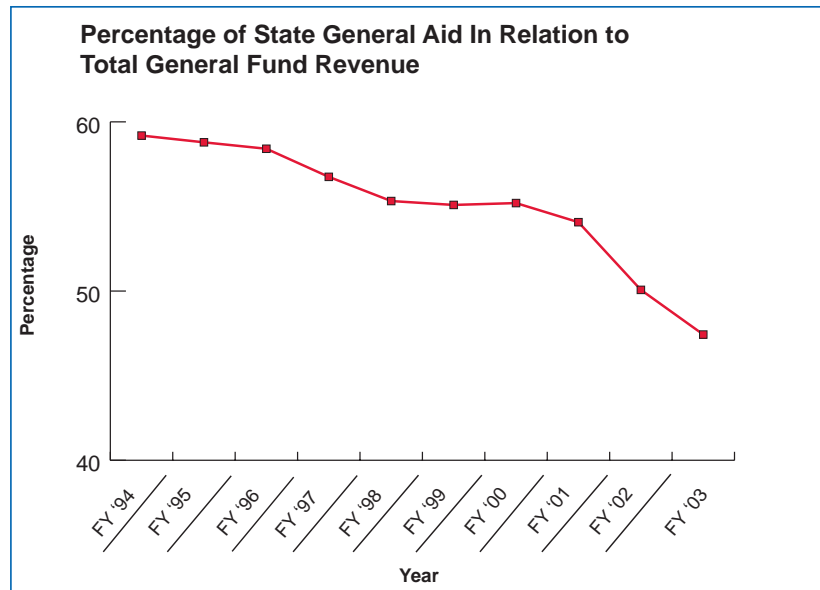
Northwest Iowa Community College is a future-oriented institution that anticipates and responds to challenges and opportunities. The College has a rich heritage of responding to the needs of students and the community by continuously improving the curriculum and educational programming. The College is actively working on plans for future expansion of the new programs and curriculum as well as the plans for building expansion to meet the needs of the students and the community.

Core Component 2a: The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

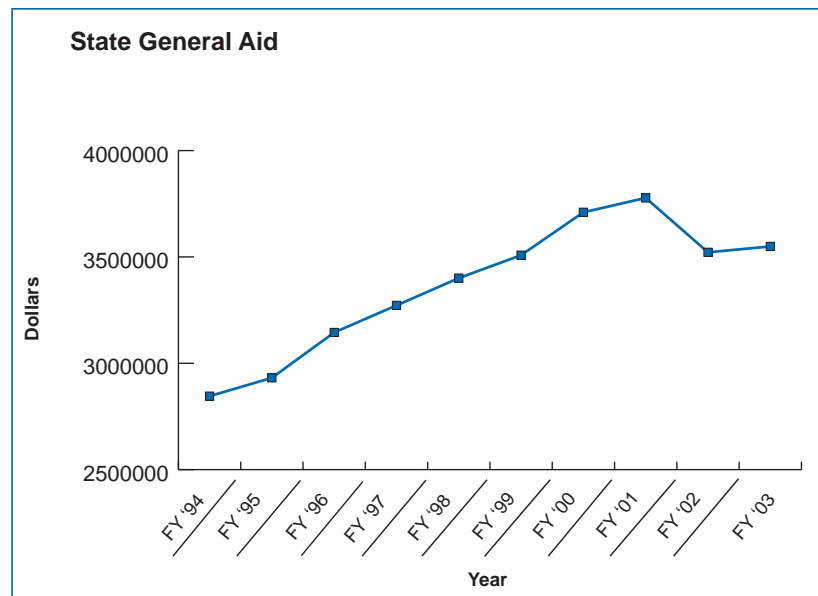
Realistically preparing NCC for the future includes the need to understand the societal and economic trends of northwest Iowa. The major trends faced by NCC include changing funding streams, changing workforce needs, and slight demographic shifts.

Changing Funding Streams: The ongoing decline in State and Federal funding for all Iowa Community Colleges is a major economic trend, and NCC has responded effectively by increasing revenues and decreasing costs. For Iowa community colleges overall, state general aid as a percentage of total revenues decreased from 45.39% in FY00 to 39.69% in FY03. As shown in the graph on the following page, for NCC this percentage decreased from 54.1% in FY00 to 47.43% in FY03. Tuition and fees as a percentage of total revenues increased from 38.74% in FY00 to 45.22% in FY03 for Iowa community colleges as a whole, and from 30.7% in FY00 to 38.43% in FY03 for NCC.

Criterion 2



As shown by the following graph, the College has lost \$301,988 in state general aid, a decline of approximately 8%, since 2001. In order to compensate for the decreased funding the College has closed low enrollment programs, reduced staff through early retirements, trimmed operating budgets, reduced travel, and increased tuition and fees.

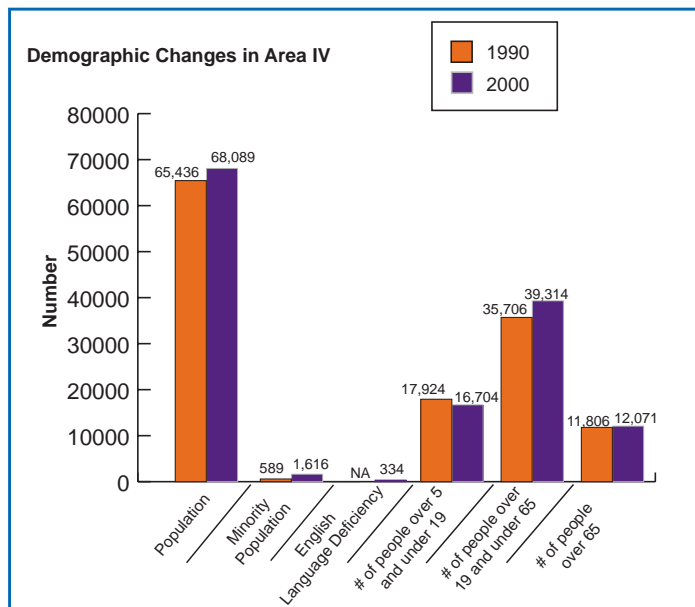


Funding cuts have limited the ability of the College to hire additional full-time staff, and restricted the institution's ability to respond to program evaluation suggestions to remodel some instructional areas. A space needs assessment was conducted in 2003, and the articulation of a long-range Facilities Plan is a strategy outlined in the 2004 Operational Plan to be completed by May 31, 2005. Since 1994 NCC has worked to strengthen its capacity to deliver quality instruction; however it has been challenged in its attempts to do so by changing funding and by shifts in the economic base of the area served.

Changing Workforce Needs: Northwest Iowa is undergoing the shift from an economic base that is largely agricultural towards more industry and services. According to the Skills 2000 and 2006 studies, employers need a workforce that has more formal education. Corresponding to this need is the loss of jobs in the agricultural market and the need of those employees for retraining. NCC is striving to meet the needs of both employers and displaced workers. The implementation of new programs such as General Machining and Associate Degree Nursing are evidence of the College’s commitment to meeting area needs. *This is discussed more fully in Criterion Five.*

Demographic Shifts

In the past decade the area has experienced demographic shifts that have impacted the College. NCC serves a largely rural population that is moving away from farming as the primary economic base and towards advanced manufacturing and service industries. Also, the population is migrating to urban centers, aging and moving towards greater ethnic diversity.



Source: US Census Data 1990 and 2000 & Iowa DOE data from 1992 & 2002

As indicated in this table, the total population in the geographic areas served by NCC has increased only slightly. The important change has been the increase in ethnic diversity due to the influx of Hispanic workers moving into this area. The increase in the Hispanic population has had a direct impact on elementary and high schools in northwest Iowa. NCC is preparing for this trend as evidenced in the current Mission Statement, Strategic Plan and Operational Plan. Over the past ten years, there has been an increase in the enrollment in ESL programs and the development of multicultural units in the curriculum of programs across campus.

College planning documents reflect a sound understanding of the organization's current capacity. The evaluation and planning processes at the College have been utilized to position the organization to meet the challenges of a new decade and a new century by establishing realistic goals. Key components of this expanded capacity include:

Fiscal Stability: Meeting the challenges of changing economic trends, while maintaining fiscal stability is the challenge of all educational organizations—including NCC. In order to meet these needs the College has a multi-pronged approach that seeks support from diverse sources.

- NCC is on sound financial footing with the economic resources to ensure the future of the College, with appropriate reserves for emergency needs as identified in the College audits. *In the Resource Room*. The Board of Trustees implemented a reserve policy approved June 2003. Board Policy 710 specifies “the undesignated reserves within the current operating fund should be greater than or equal to 8% of the fund’s total annual expenditures and transfers.” It also requires an undesignated reserve of 3% of investment in plant for the plant fund and 5% of the auxiliary fund’s annual revenues. The College has fund balances which meet or exceed this policy. The primary sources of funds for the operation of the College are tuition and fees, local support, state general aid, and federal support. *Comparison charts in the Appendix on pages 27-28.*
- The NCC Foundation has expanded the resources of the College to fund scholarships, and to provide technical equipment for instruction. Since 1996, the NCC Foundation has expanded its resources from \$192,628 to \$1,490,000 including an endowment of \$630,000. Additionally, the NCC Foundation currently provides \$120,000 in scholarships. Over the past five years \$50,000 annually has been given in equipment grants for instructional use. The growth of the Foundation is a result of the College meeting the goals set for the Foundation in the 1998 Strategic Plan and this is explained under Core component 2d. *See the NCC Foundation financial chart in the Appendix on page 26.*
- As part of the 1995 strategic planning process, NCC hired a grant writer to pursue additional funding. Since 1999, the grants office has generated nearly \$3 million in additional funding for the College. The major federal grants include Title III Strengthening Institutions, and TRIO Student Support Services.

Expanded/Enhanced Facilities: NCC is committed to providing students and staff with facilities that enhance the learning environment to meet future needs. The focus has been on what students will need to be prepared for the workforce and how to integrate new technology into the system.

- Remodeling of Building B was completed in 1995 to expand and enhance classrooms and provide instructors and the dean with private office space. The instructional area has open classrooms, program specific classrooms and computer labs. The College spent \$402,130 on this project.
- Expansion of Buildings A & D in 1999 involved expanding the cafeteria, providing a walk-in bookstore, more usable space in Student Services, expanded office space for instructional staff, two new science labs and additional student recreation/study space. The College spent \$880,116 on this project.
- Expansion/remodeling of Building C in 2002 provided the Trades and Technologies building with 11,650 square feet additional space for classrooms and offices. All existing classrooms were also remodeled to meet instructor needs and additional student study and recreation areas. The College spent \$1,796,196 on this project.
- The 2004 Health addition will accommodate the expanded enrollment in the health care programs. The expansion included 10,738 square feet to house two classrooms, one lab, two resource rooms, a study area, restrooms, a mechanical custodial room, and six offices. The project bid for the general construction costs was \$1,046,600.

Increased Enrollments: In the past decade, student enrollments have grown due to expanded educational offerings in Arts & Science/college transfer, and technical programs, and expanded offerings with high schools and through Internet instruction. *See enrollment charts in the Appendix on pages 31 & 32.*

Human Resources: NCC has a rich diversity of human resources that include the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, community partners and students. The College uses the strategic planning process, assessment and personnel evaluations to analyze staffing needs. The College plans to serve students by providing quality staff.

- **Instructor Needs:** The College acknowledges that it may need to increase the number of full-time faculty; however the downturn in state funding has made this very difficult. In the fall of 2004 NCC will add a nursing instructor and a social science instructor. When necessary, quality part-time faculty will continue to be used to provide instruction.

Adjunct instructors are invited to be a part of all College activities and responsibilities. They serve on committees and work with full-time instructors on curricular issues. The adjunct faculty at NCC have office space and access to all College services. They are given the NCC Adjunct Faculty handbook and are given an orientation session by a dean or their designee. Online adjunct faculty are mentored by the Director of Distance Learning and given access to all ICCOC faculty resources.

- **Staff needs:** The College hired a grant writer in 1999 to increase revenues as part of the 1998 strategic plan. In 2003 the College created three new positions. They are the Director of Information Technology, Director of Distance Education & Instructional Technology and a half-time Institutional Researcher.
- **Shared resources:** The ICN allows the College to partner with other schools to deliver instruction to multiple sites at one time. The ICCOC allows NCC to participate in sharing the instructional staff needed to deliver associate degrees online.

NCC's planning demonstrates that attention is being paid to emerging factors such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization by changing delivery systems, introducing technology into instruction, by keeping pace with program specific technology, and by exploring new career options.

Changes in Delivery Systems: Today's students are demanding alternatives to the traditional classroom experiences. Students at NCC work, have families, are pursuing second careers and have other life issues that often preclude a student's ability to be on campus at a given time. The College has responded to the demand for diverse learning systems through

- 1994: ICN classes—videoconferencing classrooms
- 1996: 7x7—compressed semesters
- 2000: ICCOC—internet instruction
- 2004: eCompanion—web enhancements to traditional classes

Technology in the Classroom: The demand for information technology by students and faculty has been significant. In 1994 the only classroom with a computer was the computer science classroom. Faculty shared one computer among the entire faculty in a division, or had no access to a computer at all. Classrooms at NCC were equipped with VCRs and television, but not with other computerized instructional tools. Today, classrooms are equipped with a wide variety of up-to-date equipment, including computers for students to use, LCD projectors and computers, and Internet connectivity. In FY04 at least 96 computers were replaced with new units, and in FY05 136 computers were added. Faculty, staff, students, and administration now utilize a total of 531 computers on campus.

In the fall of 2004, 27 classrooms will be outfitted identically with control panels, LCDs, Elmos, VCR/DVDs and lecterns through Title III instructional technology grand funds and College matching funds.

Program Specific Technology: Both students and their future employers demand programs that are technologically advanced. It is necessary for the future of northwest Iowa and the graduates of NCC, to have current technology to learn on because local business and industry partners have entered the global market.

New Programs: NCC is starting a Radiologic Technology program due to the emerging career needs of area hospitals and student interest in the program. Future programs may include other health care programs, biotechnology programs, and pre-professional programs.

NCC's planning documents show careful attention to the organization's function in a multicultural society. Rural northwest Iowa is largely white, mostly Dutch and German, with a population that has a reliance on Christian education and private church affiliated colleges. In addition, Northwest Iowa farmers did not traditionally seek higher education. This is no longer true today as young people today are encouraged to work toward higher education degrees. Today many students who previously would not be college bound are now seeking an education at NCC.

The college-aged population is seeking two-year educational opportunities, and they are often seeking public education. Northwest Iowa Community College is the only public institution of higher learning in the area. The nearest four-year public institution is more than 4 hours away, making NCC the only local public institution. Two private church related schools are located in the service area, but they have tuition rates that are significantly higher than NCC. For a population with increasing economic disparity, NCC is the only viable choice for public higher education.

In addition to a more diverse white population, there is a growing population of ethnic minorities. In the past decade the immigration of Hispanic people into this region has been significant. Local K–12 school districts report a 56% increase in the minority students since 1999, which is a population growth to 3% of the total population. Some towns have seen little or no change; while specific school districts now have 1/3 of their student population is Hispanic. NCC is attempting to respond to these changes by providing ESL and GED programs.

NCC is committed to serving the global needs of the community it serves. In response to the 1994 visit, NCC has been proactive in promoting diversity and multicultural issues across campus. In 2000 a Cultural Diversity Committee was formed to provide avenues for students to learn about different ethnic groups. The mission of this committee is to promote diversity inside and outside of the classroom. Each year the committee has planned a Cultural Diversity Day

DISTINCTIVE

The mission of the Cultural Diversity committee is to promote diversity inside and outside of the classroom.

on campus that featured a specific ethnic group on campus for a presentation and an entertainment event. The committee also asked instructors to incorporate diversity and multicultural segments in the curriculum.

Within the planning processes the College has addressed the need for students to explore diverse cultures. In the 1998 Strategic plan, under Student Development Strategy, it says that NCC will, *“Provide three enrichment activities each academic year (of which attendance at one is mandatory for degree seeking students) that deal with topics such as diversity, health, safety, and/or culture.”* This was accomplished and the results are included in the Strategic Planning Documents in the Resource Room.

Trend statements in the 2004 Operational Plan specifically address diversity, and page 27 of the document outlines specific initiatives to deal with diversity. This plan went into effect in July 2004 and will be assessed annually.

Effective environmental scanning is part of NCC’s planning processes.

It is conducted both formally and informally to enhance the decision making processes at the College. In the fall of 2003, NCC conducted an extensive environmental scanning project as the first step in the strategic planning process. Subcommittee members scanned newspaper/magazine articles, Internet Web sites, and publications.

- The results of the environment scanning were used to formulate the trend statements, which were used to write the mission statement, and operational statements. NCC was able to use the data to anticipate trends and put together an action plan to address these trends.

The College also participated in “Skills 2006: Northwest Iowa Employers’ Assessment of 21st Century Workforce Needs.” This was a followup report by Iowa community colleges to scan local business and industry needs for workers.

- The results will be used to assess validity of existing programs and to help decide on new programs to be developed.

In 2003, the College purchased the CC Benefits strategic planner that uses state, regional and national databases to identify employment trends in northwest Iowa, the state and the nation.

- Results were used by the College to assess program standards and by grant writers in grant development.

In 1996 and again in 2001, the NCC Foundation conducted feasibility studies before undertaking a capital fund drive.

- These studies were used to determine the need for and the level of funds likely to be raised. They were also used to assess the direction that College constituents believe the College should go with educational programs.

From 1991 until 2000, the College subscribed to an environmental scanning newsletter that was produced by Eastern Iowa Community College District for the community colleges of Iowa.

- This was a monthly publication that was used internally and was also shared with area business and industry partners to help the College assess future educational needs.

Program Advisory Committees for all technical programs at NCC meet regularly and are comprised of leaders of the representative fields.

- These Advisory Committees are an essential part of the information gathering process that is used in program assessment and development.

NCC is a future thinking college that is supportive of innovation and change. Several processes drive innovation and change at the College. These processes are both internal and external, and involve not only the College community, but area businesses and industries as well. These innovations include new programs, new delivery systems, new technologies, innovations in student services and a new student information system.

New Programs: The College has made several changes in various programs in the arts and science and vocational technical programs.

- In 1994 NCC began delivering Health Information Technology (HIT).
- In 1999 NCC introduced a program in General Machining
- In 2001 NCC developed Pre-professional programs in the Arts and Science division for Human Resource Management and Journalism.
- In 2001 NCC instituted a Computer Networking program
- In 2002–2003 NCC expanded, remodeled and enhanced the electrical instruction program's facility to allow for more effective instruction.
- In 2002 the College began the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program and expanded the Licensed Professional Nursing program to help meet area demand. This process was aided by Title III Strengthening Institution Grant funds. Through Iowa Accelerated Career Education Physical Infrastructure Assistance Program (ACE-PIAP) dollars, the college was able to build a health occupations wing for these expanded programs.
- In 2004 the College further expanded the nursing programs at NCC by introducing an additional section of Associate Degree Nursing.
- In 2004 the College implemented the Computerized Manufacturing Technology program which was in direct response to area manufacturing firms requesting employees with both drafting and machining skills. A DACUM process held in September for the MET program reinforced the need for a diverse graduate with these skills.

Future Delivery: The College is committed to introducing Radiologic Technology and Advanced Electrical Technology by the start of the fall term 2005.

New Delivery: Nowhere is innovation and change more evident than in the area of Distance Learning. Since the last NCA self-study a decade ago this area of instruction has exploded.

FUTURE ORIENTED

NCC has outstanding technical programs that require significant commitment by the College to provide current program specific technology, which is consistent with industry standards.

- In 1994 NCC became part of the Iowa Communications Network (ICN). This telecommunications classroom network provides synchronous distance learning opportunities for high school students.
- In 2000 NCC became part of the Iowa Community College Online Consortium to be able to deliver online courses and degrees.
- In 2003 NCC hired a Director of Distance Education and Instructional Technology to meet the rapidly changing demands for online instruction and for enhancing classroom instruction with technology, including web based enhancements.

New Program Specific Technology: NCC has outstanding technical programs that require significant commitment by the College to provide current program specific technology, which is consistent with industry standards.

- In 2000–2003 NCC introduced a General Machining program that cost approximately 1 million dollars for building expansion and equipment. NCC is the only college in the region to have this level of computerized and robotic training for General Machining students.
- In 2002–2003 Building C (that houses many of the technical programs) was expanded and remodeled. This \$1.7 million dollar project provided instructors with the academic space needed for the 21st century, including information technology presence in all classrooms. Labs were expanded to provide for increased enrollment and for expanded training centers.
- Over the past decade the total expenditure for technology for instruction was \$5,003,321 or 10.73% of the average total College budget.
- Program specific computer labs are replaced every other year, providing students with the latest in hardware and software. A technology plan is being developed to manage the ongoing need for new computer equipment across campus.

IT for the Classroom: The enhancement of instruction through computer-based technologies is exciting for NCC instructors. Since 1994, the College has

- Enhanced IT presence in classrooms through the introduction of LCD projectors, Internet connections, Elmo systems, and SmartBoards.

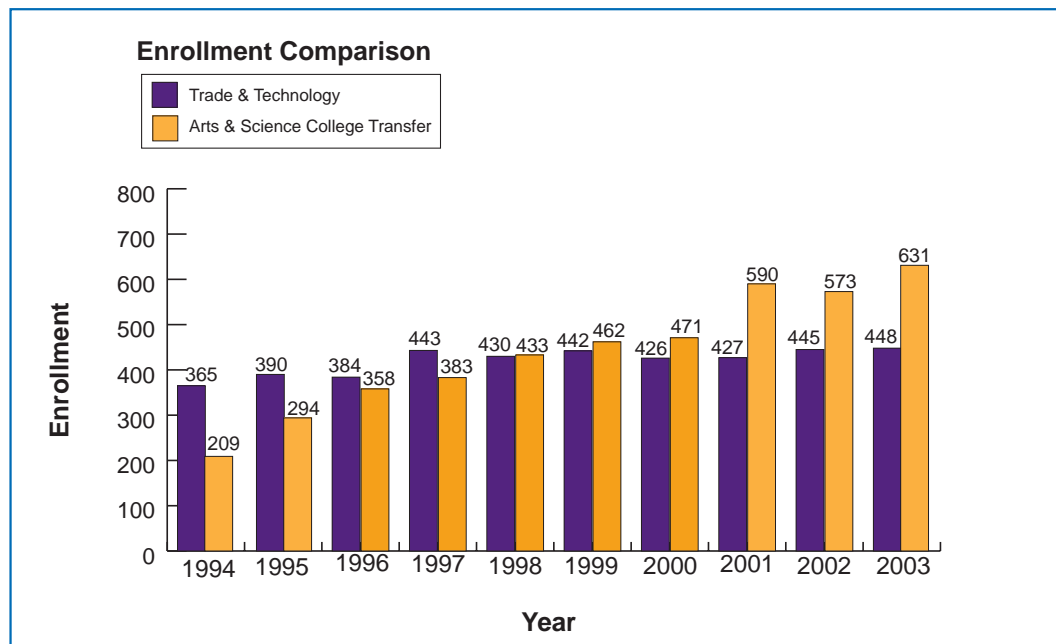
- The College is moving toward web-enhanced courses through the College Intranet and through an online course delivery platform (*eCollege*). The first web-enhanced course was piloted in the fall of 2003 and the spring of 2004 and by the fall of 2004 all classes will have this option available to them.
- Since 1996 NCC has worked to develop a useful web presence. The College is currently working on the third generation of its website. This presence will be more interactive, and will provide current and prospective students with the tools expected by future learners.
- Provided current computers for all College staff.
- In 2004 the College has begun to make classroom technology more user friendly by standardizing 27 classrooms with control panels that allow instructors to easily operate LCDs, Elmos, and other instructional technology.

Innovation in meeting student support needs: NCC supports technology that is student friendly and meets the needs of the students. At this time there are a number of significant changes in the way that students are served organizationally that need to be highlighted. Much of this has been made possible by a Title III grant.

- Computer based pre-enrollment assessment through COMPASS. The computerized assessment provides students and advisors with the data necessary to assess class placement, the need for developmental classes, and for mandatory placement. Program instructors have set minimum test scores for entry into nursing, math and English courses necessary for graduation at NCC.
- The grant also provides the College with a Basic Skills Specialist, a Student Support Specialist and a Computer Design Technician.
- The grant is also providing the College with an Intranet system.
- Students are able to use technology to access library material online and to access email via the Web page. Prospective students are able to use a chat room to contact NCC staff for admission requests.
- Faculty Development in diverse learning styles and technology in the classroom is being provided in the final two years of the grant to all instructional staff at NCC.
- In 2001, Northwest Iowa Community College received a Student Support Services grant from TRIO. This grant has enabled the College to deliver additional support services to low-income, first generation and disabled students. These include tutoring, cultural activities, and ongoing developmental opportunities to ensure that students are able to succeed as they enter the post-secondary educational system.

New Student Information System: NCC is currently involved in a two-year project to change information systems from a legacy mainframe system to Colleague by Datatel. This will enhance the ability of College personnel to manage all student and organizational information. The new computer system will enable individuals within the College to have the data they need from their own desktop computers. This will greatly enhance communication based on information as NCC looks forward to managing an expanding student population. Over \$500,000 has been dedicated to this project, which is part of an ACCES consortium initiative. NCC, along with eight other community colleges, is in the midst of this extensive conversion process.

The College incorporates in its planning those aspects of its history and heritage that it wishes to preserve and continue. The past decade has been one of incredible change for NCC, primarily in the makeup of the student population. A decade ago only 336 students were enrolled in Arts and Science courses; today this accounts for 66% of the total student body. *See chart below.*



However, the College is also committed to preserving, enhancing and expanding the vocational/technical programs that are vital to NCC's constituents and are historically the foundation for the College.

- Since 1994 these technical programs have been added: General Machining, Auto Body Service Technology, Computer Networking, Marketing, Administrative Office Management, Computerized Manufacturing Technology, Production Welding, Extended PN degree in Nursing, Associate Degree in Nursing, Radiologic Technology, Health Information Technology.

- The College has continued to preserve the technical instruction options by working with area K-12's to deliver jointly administered programs. These have included Carpentry, Auto Body, Automotive, General Machining, Industrial Instrumentation and Control, Health Occupations, EMT, Secretarial and Welding.

NCC practices the concept of shared governance with limits on governance and has clearly identified structures for decision making about organizational goals. The Board Policies, individual job descriptions, strategic and operational plans, committee and team policies and minutes, and the organizational structure of the College all work together to outline the decision making authority of individual personnel or groups within the College structure.

Board Policies: The policies are publicly available on the NCC Intranet and outline the duties and responsibilities of the board, the president and other administrators, faculty, staff and students. *Available in the Resource Room and on the NCC Web page - www.nwicc.edu.*

Job descriptions: Every position at the College has a job description that includes the department that the job is tied to and the appropriate person the employee reports to. Tied to the chart of the Organizational Structure, communication lines to the president are clear.

Strategic & Operational Plans: At every level of the planning process the person responsible for the activity is identified. *Available in the Resource Room.*

Committees and Teams: One benefit of the CQI process at NCC was to make the distinction between committees and teams. At NCC, committees must report their decisions to the Executive Council for approval, while teams are free to make recommendations and to take action without Executive Council Approval. *CQI documents will be available in the Resource Room*

Organizational Structure: This is the most recent organizational structure chart. It was developed in the summer of 2003. All College personnel and the appropriate person to whom they are responsible are identified.

Core Component 2b: The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

At the heart of the current Mission Statement at NCC is its commitment to being a learner-focused institution responding to the global community. NCC has been proactive in the use of its human resources and physical resources. As consistent with its mission statement, NCC has realistic plans that ensure the quality of its educational programming. The College’s resource base supports its educational programs by providing adequate funding for educational endeavors *See the Annual Reports in the Resource Room.*

The College’s resources are adequate for achievement of the educational quality it claims to provide. Northwest Iowa Community College receives revenue from five different sources. The five sources are: (1) State General Aid, (2) Tuition and Fees, (3) Property Taxes, (4) Federal Support (Carl Perkins, Adult Basic Education, Federal College Work Study, Title III and TRIO), (5) Other Income (interest income, rental of college facilities). In addition the NCC Foundation provides financial assistance through scholarships and instructional equipment grants.

Some of the College funding sources are increasing, and some are not. There is an inverse relationship between the decrease in State funding and the increase in tuition and fees. Local funding is fairly constant as required by the State of Iowa. However, careful planning and management of these funding sources has enabled the College to continue to deliver quality programs. Each year an operating budget is created that reflects the immediate funding sources. This is reworked as the need for change becomes evident. The budgeting process is in alignment with the Strategic and Operational Plans. The College undergoes annual audits that demonstrate that the College is fiscally responsible and has reserves to handle unexpected financial needs. *Documentation is in the Resource Room.*

It is important to note that the ability of the institution to deliver quality instruction will be challenged by ongoing budget reductions by the State of Iowa. The major recourse is to raise tuition, but that places a bigger burden on the student. Students do not succeed for a variety of reasons, and the lack of financial resources is one of the major reasons they fail. NCC is working to provide additional scholarships to help overcome this reason for student failure.

CONNECTED

Administrators, faculty and staff at NCC generally take on multiple responsibilities in order to support the mission of the College.

Plans for resource development and allocation document the College’s commitment to supporting and strengthening the quality of the education it provides.

The plans for supporting and strengthening the quality of education are driven by the Mission statements, vision statement, and the strategic initiatives. Included in College operating systems are funds for faculty and staff development, advanced educational funds for faculty and staff, a new quality faculty plan, a regular schedule for program assessment, classroom assessments, training for assessment and faculty development through the Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant.

Plans for the resource development are developed through a teamwork approach. Instructors and staff are encouraged to request budgetary items and present their requests to the Planning Advisory Committee whose responsibility it is to evaluate the requests presented in the budget hearing process. Faculty and staff also participate in budget hearings to present their requests. This committee makes recommendations to the Executive Council and priorities are set. This process provides maximum input from all areas of the College.

NCC uses its human resources effectively. Employees in a small rural community college are expected to play many roles and assume various duties. Administrators, faculty, and staff at NCC generally take on multiple responsibilities in order to support the mission of the College. The organization also increases efficiency of its personnel by providing new technologies to improve efficiencies. Effective uses of NCC resources include:

- An adequate number of instructors to teach the courses we offer each semester.
- Faculty carry average teaching loads of between 15 and 16 credit hours, while serving on committees.
- NCC’s employees are interested in their professional development. The College provides funding for staff development to aid employees in their professional growth.

In the 1998–2003 Strategic Plan, NCC made the decision to go towards a paperless campus in order to increase efficiencies. That goal has not been fully achieved—much paper is still in use. However, the College has provided tools, which have become essential to the efficient use of human resources. Computers, shared document space on networked servers, and email capability are available at all employees’ workspaces. This enables people to communicate with one another without having to always meet face-to-face. Additional changes in the communication structure include the use of the NCC Intranet (intra@nwicc.edu) to share information and reduce the use of paper and production time.

The College is committed to developing its human resources to meet future changes. Board Policy 447-A,B,C,D states: *“Northwest Iowa Community College is committed to the development of its human resources. Employees have a need to continue learning for effective and efficient performance, to keep up with changing technology, and for professional growth. It is, therefore, the policy of the College to assist employees in reaching short-term and long-term educational goals.”*

- As part of the annual employee evaluation process, each person must do a self-evaluation and set their professional development goals. Then, in conjunction with the supervisor, the employee seeks out developmental activities ties to meet those goals.
- The College provides financial resources each year for these activities, including paying for all or part of post-secondary education (employee assistance/staff development)
- In 2003 the College began offering NCC employees the opportunity to take classes at NCC at no charge.
- In addition, the College has intentionally set up a staff development process to encourage personnel to seek advanced degrees. The Employee Educational Assistance Plan provides all or part of college tuition for all full-time employees seeking additional degrees.

Each year select College personnel are invited to participate in state-wide leadership training programs. Participation in Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium (CLIC), Iowa Academy for Organizational Development (IAOD), and Leadership Institute for a New Century (LIN) encouraged by the College, as is participation in the Great Teachers Workshop. Faculty and staff members are also encouraged to participate in local, state and national professional organizations.

CONNECTED

One of the benefits (*of being a small college*) is the flexibility that comes from not being encumbered by multiple layers of bureaucracy. No one is more than one step away from their representation on the Executive Council.

NCC’s history of financial resource development and investment documents a forward-looking concern for ensuring educational quality (e.g. investments in faculty development, technology, learning support services, new or renovated facilities). The College has consistently shown a pattern of commitment to ensuring educational quality through the budgetary decisions that have been made. The following chart shows substantial investments over the past ten years for staff development, technological equipment, library books, and new or renovated facilities. Money varies from year to year based on state funding.

	Staff Development	Equipment	Library Books	New or Renovated Buildings	Maintenance of Equipment & Buildings	% of Total Budget
FY'94	33,987	233,408	95,728	194,541	121,287	12.75%
FY'95	39,145	275,566	69,581	204,640	121,601	13.32%
FY'96	37,567	352,349	68,902	309,412	114,358	15.39%
FY'97	40,918	515,028	84,283	86,858	85,245	13.14%
FY'98	40,244	374,555	101,647	309,254	73,910	13.71%
FY'99	48,629	430,473	94,209	444,463	199,370	16.26%
FY'00	51,311	764,581	59,114	877,156	246,267	20.72%
FY'01	32,281	491,462	86,885	335,078	243,784	14.67%
FY'02	16,712	383,928	50,262	1,514,497	146,912	19.21%
FY'03	26,261	539,2917	48,832	247,817	177,441	9.46%
FY'04	50,127	729,737	53,634	794,886	223,211	16.06%
TOTAL	417,182	5,270,378	813,077	5,318,602	1,806,964	

Taken from NCC financial statements.

At NCC the planning processes are flexible enough to respond to unanticipated needs for program reallocation, downsizing or growth. Being a small college has both challenges and rewards. One of the benefits is the flexibility that comes from not being encumbered by multiple layers of bureaucracy. No one is more than one step away from their representation on the Executive Council.

This flexibility allows the College to respond more quickly when change is required. The Strategic Plans and Operational Plans have deadlines for assessing the effectiveness of the activities and are reviewed annually by the Executive Council and the Board of Trustees.

In the past decade the College dealt successfully with the following changes. De-appropriation mid/year in 2000 and 2003 led to changes in academic programming. Three programs were closed, primarily due to low-enrollments, and one program was expanded because of student demand.

- NCC expanded Nursing programs
- Carpentry, Automotive Machining, and Natural and Propane Gas were discontinued.
- Radiologic Technology, Computerized Manufacturing Technology, and Advanced Electrical Technology are being introduced because of industry demand, although it was never part of a specific planning initiative.

LEARNING-FOCUSED

NCC is working to systematically collect data and then interpret that data to institute change.

Throughout its history, NCC has been proactive in meeting its planning goals. Each year members of the Executive Council have participated in strategic plan reviews. As indicated in these documents, NCC has met the majority of operational goals listed in the plans. Through the assessment process, unmet goals were identified and why. Revised goals and were added and assessed. *The documentation for this is located in the Resource Room.*

Core Component 2c: The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Through formal and informal evaluation and assessment, NCC is working to systematically collect data and then interpret that data to institute change. The Assessment Plan initiated in 2000 provides evidence that the College is embracing strategies for continuous improvement. The assessment feedback loops quantify outcomes, states means of assessment, obtains results, and use results. This assures the institution that there is continuous improvement.

NCC’s Assessment Plan is another avenue to evaluate its planning goals. The following are comprehensive assessment indicators of Institutional effectiveness. These indicators are being assessed using aggregate data and will be monitored by the Assessment Steering Committee.

The Institutional Effectiveness Plan as demonstrated in the NCC Assessment Program handbook outlines all the purposes of the above and the timelines for completion. Program evaluations conducted on a five-year rotation have a feedback loop whereby the dean and instructor provide a plan of action to address the recommendations listed in the evaluation. Thus, each program is able to address the concerns listed in the report and use the feedback to plan for the future.

The College demonstrates that its evaluation processes provide evidence that its performance meets its stated expectations for institutional effectiveness.

Since 1994 the College has published a series of institutional effectiveness reports. The most recent report was published in March 2002. These plans are available in the Resource Room and demonstrate the movement of NCC towards a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the College community. This plan measures the effectiveness of:

- Course/Program Completion
- Program Evaluation
- Student Opinion Survey/Satisfaction
- Student Characteristics
- Organizational Climate Survey (PACE)
- Strategic Plan
- Curriculum Evaluation.
- Student Retention/Withdrawal
- Placement Rates

NCC has worked to develop and maintain effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using organizational information. Since 1995 the College is a member of the Alliance of Community Colleges for Electronic Sharing (ACCES). This nonprofit entity provided administrative computing services to the College. However, the processes of strategic planning, program assessment and the writing of the NCA self-study have revealed a significant problem with data collection. NCC has identified three key components to solving this problem

1. Integrated Database—Colleague from Datatel: The conversion to the new integrated database began in the summer of 2003 and will be completed by the fall of 2005. As part of the conversion process the College has looked at the ways that it has been collecting and storing information. Some processes were clear and good, others needed improvement. Through process mapping the College identified approximately 30 shadow databases (information kept on individual computers or in paper form) that were not integrated into the student information system.

2. Institutional Research Director—At the current time there is no central area on campus for survey information. An Institutional Research Director was hired in July 2003 to collect, utilize, and house all data acquired from surveys. This newly created position will be in charge of delivering surveys, analyzing the surveys, and distributing them to appropriate personnel.

3. Information Storage—NCC has two new systems for storing information. First the College Intranet is used to store data for both students and faculty. It is accessible on campus. Second, the IT staff has reworked the College computer network to include servers that provide document storage for individuals (H drive), document storage for public viewing (N drive), document storage for shared work (O drive), and document storage for programs (P drive).

Appropriate data and feedback loops are available and used throughout the College to support continuous improvement. Continuous improvement of all College activities involves a variety of assessment tools in order to ensure that personnel have the tools needed for improvement. Three broad areas of assessment include the Nichols Assessment Feedback system, program evaluation and the Student Characteristics and ACT surveys.

Assessment Feedback: Assessment feedback loops identify outcomes, means of assessment, results and the use of results. This process is used throughout the College. *It will be described more completely in Criterion 3 and the results are located in the Resource Room.*

Program Assessment: All academic programs undergo a rigorous assessment process every five years that involves multiple assessment tools and both internal and external constituencies. This process is described more completely in Criterion 3.

Student Characteristics and the ACT Survey: Student Characteristics and the ACT surveys are given annually. This information is used to establish base line data and identify variances. Aggregate data is given to president and deans. Program data is given to program instructors as requested for program evaluations. Appropriate data and feedback loops are available and used throughout the organization to support continuous improvement.

Periodic review of academic and administrative departments at NCC contributes to improvement of the organization. Every academic program on campus is evaluated on a five-year rotation plan. The information is reviewed by a Program Review Team, the Executive Council, and the Board of Trustees. Administration, Student Support Services and academic personnel are all actively involved in the assessment process. Every year all areas of the College are formally assessed. Each division or department is responsible for setting objectives, gathering data, and using the results for improvement. *The Assessment plan is included in the Appendix beginning on page 37.*

The aim of the Community College Program Review and Evaluation System (CCPRES) is to assist Iowa's community colleges in developing, implementing, and maintaining a systematic program assessment process for the continued improvement of career option and vocational-technical programs. Outcomes of this process will provide assurance to the department, the legislature, business/industry/labor, and the public that quality, access, and accountability are evident in community college instructional program offerings. The legislative authority for this requirement is the Code of Iowa, Chapter 260C.47.

Performance evaluations are conducted annually on all staff by their immediate supervisor as outlined in Board Policy 416-A, B, C, D, E. Personnel evaluations are used by the College to promote two-way communication, to promote professional excellence, to ensure employee growth, to improve employee skills, to affirm employee strengths, and to encourage professional growth opportunities.

While the College expects all employees will actively participate in activities that enhance student learning and institutional effectiveness, employee evaluation is a comprehensive process separate from student assessment and program evaluation.

NCC provides adequate support of its evaluation and assessment processes.

There is an assessment budget provided by the institution to insure that assessment is a top priority on campus. The purpose of the assessment budget is to pay for the various academic tests across campus such as the College BASE test and student satisfaction survey. Money is also available to promote assessment activities across campus.

Here are examples of how these funds have been spent in the past decade:

- Internal leadership staff attended an Assessment Workshop in July of 2000 conducted by Dr. Jim Nichols and entitled “Developing a Comprehensive Program of Institutional Effectiveness Implementation Including Assessment and Improvement of Student Academic Achievement and Services in Administrative and Educational Support Units.”
- A two-day Assessment workshop was held on campus at NCC in November 2000 with Dr. and Mrs. Jim Nichols presenting their plan.
- Each fall since the above activity, an Assessment workday is conducted by the Assessment Chairperson updating all staff on work that needs to be completed and release time is then given for completion of that data. All areas of the College are included in one of two assessment areas, Educational Programs or Educational Support Programs. Through these annual workshops faculty are better equipped to assess their program through developing program outcomes, collecting and analyzing data, and making recommendations for improvement.
- New faculty members are required to participate in a new instructor work shop conducted over a five day time span. During this time, instructors are trained in using NCC’s assessment plan. An assessment training video is shown and discussed; and instructors learn the assessment process and are instructed how to use the assessment forms.
- Adjunct faculty members are encouraged to see the assessment video and meet with their respective deans concerning assessment procedures at NCC. The Adjunct Faculty Handbook also covers the essential components of the assessment plan.

Core component 2d: All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

With an orientation towards the future, Northwest Iowa Community College is committed to assuring lifelong learning opportunities throughout all divisions of the College. Since the 1994 five year plan, the College has moved away from a K-12 model for planning and towards a higher education model of planning.

Mission Statement

1994 College Plan *(Approved by the Board of Trustees on July 22, 1994)*

Northwest Iowa Community College is committed to provide the citizenry with lifelong learning opportunities to enhance the quality of life.

1998 Strategic Plan *(Approved by the Board of Trustees on September 21, 1998)*

The mission of Northwest Iowa Community College is to enhance the quality of life by assuring lifelong learning opportunities.

2004 Strategic Plan *(Approved by the Board of Trustees on November 17, 2003)*

Northwest Iowa Community College is a progressive learning college rapidly responding to the changing needs of our global community.

Vision Statement

2004 Strategic Plan *(Approved by the Board of Trustees on November 17, 2003)*

We are driven to be the community college of choice for learning.

Strategic Initiatives

1994 College Plan

- Instruction
- Student Services
- Communications
- Economic Development
- Administration

1998 Strategic Plan

- Student Development
- Staff Development
- Partnerships
- Public Awareness
- Technology
- Funding Resources

2004–2006 Strategic Plan

Approved by the Board of Trustees on March 15, 2004

- Enhancing Student Success
- Expanding Learning Opportunities
- Developing Alternative Resources
- Expanding Enrollment Management
- Embracing a Collaborative Culture

Additional

1994 College Plan

Nine Guiding Principles/Values

1998 Strategic Plan

The Nine Guiding Principles/Values were simplified in this planning process.

This is evidenced in several planning procedures and documents that support a forward thinking organization. The College uses a variety of planning documents and processes all of which reflect a forward thinking institution. As the College goes forward with this method of strategic planning, the Planning Advisory Council will review the guiding principles and values of the planning group and make recommendations for changes to the NCC President.

At NCC, coordinated planning processes center on the mission documents that define vision, values, goals, and strategic priorities for the College. In an effort to position the organization for the future, Northwest Iowa Community College began a formalized planning process in 1994. Since that time, the College has implemented two organizational plans and completed the third plan for implementation. The chart on the next page gives an overview of the strategic planning processes at NCC since 1994. *Further documentation is in the Resource Room.*

Planning processes at NCC link with budgeting processes and this is evident in College operations. The 2004–2006 Operational Plan directly supports the strategic initiatives that were identified in the 2004–2008 Strategic Plan through measurable goals, objectives and strategies. For purposes of assessment and to align more efficiently with the College’s budgeting process, the Board of Trustees approved the 2004–2006 Operational Plan on March 15, 2004. The 2004–2006 Operational Plan aligns with the FY05 and FY06 budgeting process and requests that support the strategic initiatives and operational goals will be given priority consideration for funding.

Since 1994, Northwest Iowa Community College has supported initiatives identified in the planning documents within the College’s budget. The following are samples of evidence over the past ten years that support linking both the budget process and the planning process. The initiatives in the 1998 Strategic Plan were handled in the same way. The following bulleted items are examples of the initiatives and objectives in that plan.

The 2004-2008 Strategic Plan is new and has just begun being implemented. Data is not yet available about this plan. *A comprehensive assessment of all previous strategic initiatives is located in the Resource Room.*

- **Student Development:** We will provide support systems that will assist in student development.

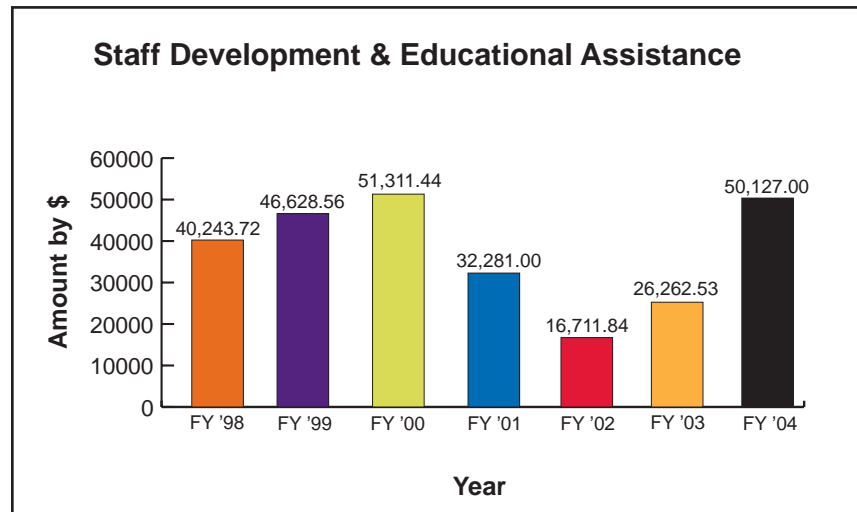
Objective 7: Remodel cafeteria without major structural changes to create a more inviting, warm atmosphere and build an outdoor courtyard area, which can be accessed from the dining room and which is partially covered.

Results: In the fall of 1998 the College requested input from all staff regarding the expansion and remodeling of the cafeteria. After the input from staff, an architect was employed and blueprints were developed with bids opened on the project at the February 15, 1999, Board of Trustees meeting. The Board of Trustees reviewed the bids and let the general contract to M& D Construction of Sheldon with completion of the cafeteria/lounge/walk-in bookstore to be completed by August 1, 1999, and the science addition to be completed by October 1, 1999. Cost: \$880,116.

LEARNING-FOCUSED

NCC has a history of commitment towards staff development and educational assistance for College administration, faculty and staff.

- **Staff Development:** We will provide for continuous staff development
- **Objective 3:** Enhance the resources necessary for Staff Development. Northwest Iowa Community College has a history of commitment towards staff development and educational assistance for College administration, faculty and staff.
- **Results:** The negative change in the state and local economy at the turn of the century precipitated an administrative decision to trim budgets. Funding for Staff Development was significantly reduced during that time. However, the new administration restored staff development dollars in FY04.



- **Partnerships:** We will develop and enhance partnerships to provide educational and other opportunities.

Objective 1: Provide the leadership to further implement the School to Work/Tech Prep Initiative with Area IV Local Education Agencies.

Results: A General Machining program specifically developed to accommodate high school students began in fall 1999. Significant financial support came from the industry partners with \$55,000 in cash and \$153,401 in instructional equipment donated. The College expended \$410,209 in remodeling costs for Building C, which housed the General Machining program.

•**Public Awareness**—We will increase public awareness and support of the opportunities and services offered by the College.

Objective 4: Implement plan to heighten awareness among area professional educators/trainers.

Results: Northwest Iowa Community College and AEA4 partnered to offer a one-day, area wide instructor in-service for NCC, K–12 educators, AEA4 and business & industry trainers/HR personnel. The IV Career Education Conference was held on October 9, 2001. The College budgeted \$5000 for the joint initiative with AEA4.

•**Technology:** We will maintain and develop the effective use of technology.

Objective 2: Encourage staff and students to incorporate technology in their NCC experience.

Results: In an effort to develop new methodologies for delivering instruction more effectively and /or efficiently Northwest Iowa Community College was an initial member of the Iowa Community College On-line Consortium. The purpose of the consortium was to offer a complete Associate Degrees online.

•**Funding Resources:** We will aggressively pursue funding resources.

Objective 5: The Foundation will head a steering committee to target annual fund drives, charitable events, estate planning, matching grants for employee contributions with a goal of \$50,000–\$100,000 annually within Area IV. Campaign pledges will be in excess of \$100,000 through FY00 due to pledges receivables coming in through the Charting Futures Campaign.

Results: A committee, consisting of Foundation Board members, formulated a Mission Statement and Strategic Plan for the Foundation. These were approved by the full Board at the July '00 meeting. The Strategic Plan identifies the following strategy and objectives:

Strategy I: Pursue an aggressive resource development plan.

Objective 1: Initiate a planned giving effort.

Objective 2: Enhance annual campaign.

Objective 3: Explore potential entrepreneurial activity.

Objective 4: Partner with business and industry.

Objective 5: Launch “NCC Foundation Initiative II” of which the College budgeted \$100,000 to contract with an external consultant to lead campaign activities.

A half-time Community Relations Coordinator has been hired to assume community relations responsibilities from the Executive Director of Institutional Advancement. This will allow the Executive Director to spend additional time on development issues.

In addition, to support activities identified as priorities in the planning processes over the past decade, Northwest Iowa Community College realized the need to become aggressive in resource acquisition outside the traditional funding streams. Northwest Iowa Community College was successful in obtaining two Federal Grants that assisted in financial support to Strategic Initiatives:

- **Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant:** This five-year grant added an additional \$1,745,447 million dollar in resources for increasing student success, and strengthening fiscal stability through developing new academic programs and through endowment
- **TRIO Student Support Services:** This grant is providing an additional \$200,000 per year for additional services for at-risk students. The College is in the fourth year of this grant and the 2004 Operational Plan identifies reapplication as a priority.

Long-range strategic planning processes allow for reprioritization of goals when necessary because of changing environments. Comprehensive assessment of the planning processes at NCC is ongoing. Quarterly, the Executive Council is engaged in an assessment process where strategies, goals and objectives are reviewed. Rationale is provided in the assessment based on whether or not the College was meeting its goals and objectives. In the past five years the College had to adjust to rapidly changing technology demands, changing student demands, and changing funding streams.

Changing Technology Demands

- In the 1998 Strategic Plan the Technology Strategy did not mention online education; but in the fall of 1999 the College became a member of the ICCOC and is now heavily involved in online instruction.
- The 1998 Strategic Plan did not identify the need for an IT Director, but one was added to the staff in the summer of 2003 to begin the development of a formalized technology plan and deal with the expanding demand by staff and students for Internet access both on and off campus

Changing Funding Streams: In the past decade the amount of funding from the state and federal governments has decreased significantly. However, local bond issues have been passed

- 1994**—A renewal of the 20 1/4 cent physical plant fund levy was passed. This tax levy will provide \$471,000 for FY05 for utilities, maintenance and equipment.
- 1999**—A 6 cent levy was passed to provide the College with additional revenues for equipment. These funds are dedicated funds and net the institution approximately \$139,615 each year.

On an annual basis a 3 cent levy is approved by the Board of Trustees which generates approximately \$69,808.

Changing Student Demands: Student demands for technology, additional support services, new programs, and alternative delivery methods require NCC to think more about the future of education than the past. In order to meet the needs of students, the College is

- Developing and implementing a technology plan to handle the demand for technology in the classroom, including a replacement plan and a plan to educate staff and faculty about these new technologies.
- Enhancing student services to include a robust Web page with an online application and registration process, online catalog, and online communication with student services. Students interested in taking courses online still require significant support from the College.
- Student demand often drives program implementation project. High demand for nursing courses has resulted in an expanded Nursing program. Other high demand areas of instruction are dealt with in small groups, or in larger cohorts.
- Student demand for alternative delivery methods has been a driving force behind the success of the online classes. In the fall of 2000 the ICCOC began delivering courses online. NCC delivered one online course to 28 students and had 14 students enrolled online. In the spring of 2004, NCC delivered 29 courses/sections to 855 students and had 297 students enrolled. The Consortium delivered 209 courses/sections to just under 5,000 students. *See the Appendix on page 31 for ICCOC statistics.*

Planning documents give evidence of the organization's awareness of the relationships among educational quality, student learning and the diverse, complex, global, and technological world in which the organization and its students exist. NCC is growing in its understanding of the relationship between educational quality and the global context in which students live. The change in focus from the 1998 Mission statement from being focused on life-long learning to learning in a global community is evidence that the College is preparing for the future and the educational needs of the 21st century. While northwest Iowa is a rural area of the country, NCC's constituents are linked to the world through technology.

The 2003 Strategic Initiatives were outlined more fully earlier in this Core Component, but it is important to note that the activities under Expanding Learning Opportunities largely deal with distance learning and distance learning support services. The College is committed to reaching beyond its own geographical region to deliver education any time and any where over the Internet.

Planning processes involve internal constituents and, where appropriate, external constituents. Since 1992, Northwest Iowa Community College has a strong history of inclusion in its planning process. The 1994, 1998, and 2003 Strategic plans have included significant involvement from both the internal and external constituencies. All three plans had core members of the College community involved in the planning process. This is evidenced in each of the plans by the list of participating members. Upon the development of each of the draft plans the entire College community has been involved in review of each of the documents prior to finalization. *This is clearly documented in the Strategic Plans which are available in the Resource Room and in the Appendix on page 61.*

We Pride Ourselves

- NCC continues to improve the institutional planning process.
- NCC has a history of solid fiscal stability based on careful planning and budget management.
- The planning process is inclusive of both the internal and external constituencies.
- The College has identified an individual to be responsible for the planning process and its assessment. In addition, an Institutional Research Coordinator has been hired to assist with the process.

We Challenge Ourselves

- NCC will need to deal with diminishing resources and declining population bases; planning will remain a priority. Data collection and analysis will become more critical for the College to make informed decisions.
- NCC should integrate Datatel Colleague and find ways to collect and retrieve data in a format that is usable by the College for assessment and planning.
- NCC should continue to integrate facilities planning and technology planning into the Strategic/Operational Planning process.
- NCC should more closely align the College planning process with assessment.

Criterion Three Student Learning & Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of **student learning** and **teaching effectiveness** that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational **mission**.



NCC is a future oriented institution that emphasizes the importance of student learning and teaching effectiveness. This philosophy is reflected in NCC's 1998 mission statement—*“to enhance the quality of life by assuring lifelong learning opportunities.”* NCC is dedicated to providing excellence in education and to providing the services necessary for students to succeed. In 2003 the Mission Statement was expanded to include the concept of a *“progressive learning college.”*

The College is committed to providing support systems that encourage student success. Faculty are available to provide assistance to students; tutoring and counseling sessions are offered to students as needed; buildings and instructional equipment are well-maintained and provide appropriate learning environments; and other ancillary services (bookstore, library, student services) are all geared towards student success. To further support the assessment process, NCC has an Assessment budget that is used to pay for standardized tests, to provide training for the Assessment Steering Committee and to provide training for staff and faculty.

HISTORY OF ASSESSMENT

Northwest Iowa Community College's mission is central to the operation of every department and program. The assessment process is the outgrowth of the mission and goals of the College as well as the goals of each program.

1992—Members of NCC staff attended several state and national workshops focusing on the measurement of student achievement.

November 1992—The appointment of an Assessment Committee was NCC's first initiative toward the development of an assessment program. The purpose of this committee was to research student assessment and determine a potential course of action.

1993—Co-chairpersons were appointed by the president. After researching multiple models, the committee developed the first assessment plan for NCC.

1994—The Institutional Effectiveness and Student Academic Achievement Plan was submitted to NCA and received full approval.

1995–1996—The assessment plan was pilot tested by a select group of faculty and staff.

September 1996—The assessment plan was revised, based on input by faculty and staff.

1997—There was College-wide participation in submitting individual assessment plans to the Assessment co-chairs that included collection of data and use of results.

March 1997—After a review by the assessment steering committee, the assessment plan was revised.

1997–2000—The Assessment Program continued to develop campus wide. However, there was a lack of documented changes that occurred due to assessment and a lack of faculty and staff commitment to the assessment process.

April 2000—These concerns were also identified by the Iowa Department of Education accreditation visit in April of 2000. While some areas of the Assessment Program were commended, the team suggested increasing the amount for faculty/staff education on assessment and review of the current format of assessment.

August 2000—Eight members of the NCC staff attended a three-day assessment workshop. As a result of that workshop, the Assessment Committee made the decision to invite the presenters of the workshop (Nichols & Associates) to provide an intensive two-day workshop for the entire campus.

November 2000—All NCC faculty and staff participated in a hands-on workshop that included the development of a new assessment plan for all departments. The process included identification of assessment indicators, criteria for measurement, and use of results components.

2000–2001—Each program reviewed the College's Mission Statement and developed institutional goals for assessment. In the fall, each program submitted a plan that details the mission, outcomes, and means of assessment. At the end of the academic year, the faculty and staff recorded results of assessment and use of results.

2001—The general education committee piloted assessment plans using standardized tests for mathematics and communications.

2002—The assessment plan was validated and reviewed by the Assessment Steering Committee.

March 2002—Mandatory placement policy was put in effect for students taking math classes. The general education assessment committee piloted the use of standardized tests for science in addition to mathematics and communications.

2003—The steering committee reviewed the flow chart of assessment procedures and updated the process.

September 2003—Mandatory placement policy was put in effect for students taking English classes. The general education plan was reviewed and assessment plans were made for social sciences and humanities.

Fall 2004—A new Strategic Plan was adopted and the institutional effectiveness matrix was updated.

Since the new assessment plans was adopted in 2000 using the Nichols model, staff members have worked to write, implement, and evaluate their plans each year. Documentation of results is much more apparent in this five-column model. *See the Appendix on page 37 for materials on the Nichols Assessment model.*

Accomplishments of this assessment process are as follows:

- Assessment is now an institutional priority.
- Assessment is continuous, not sporadic.
- Assessment of student learning provides evidence at multiple levels: course, program, and institutional.
- Faculty members collect, examine, and interpret the results of assessment to determine the degree to which the fit between faculty expectations for student learning are met and the level of learning is achieved.
- The information obtained through assessment is used to document present student learning and suggest areas where improvement is needed.

Since the new assessment plan has been in effect for three years, the Assessment Steering Committees and assessment subcommittees are working on reevaluating the learning outcomes and assessment processes. Challenges of this assessment process are as follows:

- Since several programs have small enrollment, the data collected lacks statistical significance.

- There is a need to examine learning outcomes strategies for consistency and variety across campus.
- Due to the new Strategic Plan and Operational Goals (which includes a new Mission and Vision Statement), the assessment plan has been adjusted to include additional goals for institutional effectiveness.
- NCC needs to establish a stronger link with assessment data and program evaluation in order to improve the entire assessment process.

Future Plans in the Assessment Area

2004—Reevaluate learning goal outcome strategies and work for consistency in programs across campus. Provide additional training for full-time and part-time instructors in assessment.

2005—Assess the effectiveness of the entire assessment plan. Review the general education assessment plans to assure that basic learning outcomes are achieved across disciplines.

2006—Review institutional effectiveness assessment plan.

Core Component 3a: The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Northwest Iowa Community College’s educational philosophy is based on outcomes assessment. According to Board Policy 105, “Northwest Iowa Community College is committed to the continuous assessment of programs and services and the use of the results to enhance student learning and institutional effectiveness.”

NCC’s Assessment process is guided by the following general principles:

1. The primary reason for assessment is to improve student learning and teaching.
2. The development of effective valid Assessment Program is a long term dynamic process.
3. There should be a linkage between the Assessment of Learning, Institutional Effectiveness, and NCC’s mission.
4. Assessment must involve “multiple methods” approach.
5. Assessment is most beneficial when used primarily for making internal decisions that seek to improve programs, instruction, and related services.
6. Assessment initiatives must include training and related support for faculty and staff who are responsible for assessment activities.
7. Assessment must be conducted with reliable valid methods and instruments.
8. Assessment objectives/goals should be stated in terms of observable student outcomes.

All areas of the College are included in one of two assessment areas: Educational Programs or Educational Support Programs. Each of these two program areas identify outcomes—student outcomes in the case of career and academic departments or objectives in the case of support services—and create the means of assessment. Most importantly, when the results of the assessment activities are available, the staff in each program interprets and decides the use of these results, and provides the Assessment Chair with a summary report of these activities. The process of assessment begins and ends with these program areas.

The College clearly differentiates its learning goals for programs by identifying the expected learning outcomes. NCC prepares students not only for a specific career path but endeavors to enhance the quality of students' lives. A degree or diploma awarded from NCC includes program specific courses as well as general education requirements. General education courses at NCC assist students in better understanding human relations, social, and environmental issues and aid students in becoming more competent in communications and mathematics. Additionally, students are able to acquire knowledge relative to their society and realize that their full potential is achieved through a lifetime of learning.

Under the section in the NCC catalog entitled “Eligibility for Graduation,” the expected learning outcomes are clearly differentiated for students in diploma, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Arts, and Associate of Science programs. These learning outcomes have evolved over time as the requirements for these programs have changed. The Arts & Science section of the catalog lists all transfer courses available and addresses general transfer information. A copy of the College Catalog is available in the Resource Room.

Assessment of student learning provides evidence at multiple levels: course, program, and institutional. NCC has established a comprehensive on-going assessment program that assesses student learning from pre-admission through graduation. This plan includes concrete measures to assess course, program, classroom, and institutional effectiveness. The goal of this assessment is to substantiate the level of student learning so that improvement is made in both teaching and learning.

Classroom Assessment: Faculty members select exercises and activities to ascertain if students are learning what was intended. The instructor evaluates the results to decide if changes are to be made in future class meetings. A question addressed by the assessment is

- Did my students learn what I intended them to learn today? *Evidence of classroom assessment is found in the classroom assessment notebooks in the Resource Room.*

DISTINCTIVE

NCC prepares students not only for a specific path but endeavors to enhance the quality of students' lives.

Course Assessment: Faculty members select an activity or test to discover if students are learning what those faculty members intend as a result of taking that course. Instructors decide if the results require changes in the course to improve student learning. Questions addressed by this assessment are

- Did students taking the course learn what we, the faculty who teach it, intend for them to learn?
- Did students acquire the skills, attitudes, and competencies which we intend for them to have at the end of the course?

Evidence of course assessment is found in the general education notebooks in the Resource Room.

Program Area Assessment: Faculty or staff members at NCC identify activities in a program to measure learning outcomes or objectives. Questions addressed by assessment of educational programs or educational support areas are

- Can most of NCC graduates find employment in the field?
- Are employers satisfied with the graduates' knowledge, skills, and attitudes?
- Are students/graduates competent in their chosen field of study?

Evidence of program level assessment can be found in the assessment notebooks in the Resource Room.

Faculty are involved in defining expected student learning outcomes and creating strategies to determine whether those outcomes are achieved through measuring program effectiveness and classroom effectiveness.

Program assessment starts with the faculty development of the “long list” of program specific student learning outcomes. These selected outcomes are assessed regularly by various classroom and laboratory activities. The program assessment planning and reporting tool used is the Nichols' five-column model.

At the beginning of the fall semester, faculty initiate the assessment process by selecting their intended learning-focused educational outcomes from the long list and the means of assessment and criteria for student success for each outcome selected. Each program's outcomes and means of assessment are then reviewed by the program instructor and division dean and adjusted if needed.

The following fall, data is collected and analyzed to ascertain if the outcomes were met. Faculty are responsible for this analysis. Changes in curriculum, including syllabi revision and methods of instruction are made based on the results of these assessments. The Assessment Steering Committee requires each supervisor to meet with his/her employees to discuss assessment results. *Binders containing program assessment plans and reports can be found in the Resource Room.*

The Assessment Steering Committee (comprised of faculty representatives and others) and assessment chairperson oversees this process to ensure that plans are developed, assessment activities are carried out, and results are generated. This committee is also responsible for communicating the results to the appropriate constituencies.

Assessment of student learning at NCC includes multiple direct and indirect measures of student learning. This is in recognition of the diversity of learning styles of students, the diversity of instructional styles of teachers, and of the variety of instructional programming at NCC. Multiple measurements are used in order to see learning outcomes across groups in diverse settings.

Direct Measures

Direct measures of student learning include pre/post exams, performance reviews, standardized exams, juried competition, national licensure or certification, comprehensive class projects, student interviews, essay questions, and Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs). For example, all students in vocational and technical programs must take a locally developed math pre- and post-test to measure their learning in mathematics. For 2003, 90 diploma students took the math pre and post test with 76 of them (84%) showing gain on the test. In that same year, 70 AAS students took the math pre and post test with 65 of them (93%) showing gain on the test.

Indirect Measures

Indirect measures of student learning include employers' surveys, student satisfaction surveys, and student self-evaluation. For example, Nursing and Health Information Technology programs used clinical surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of student clinical experiences. The Arts and Science program assess the transfer program by comparing students of NCC to native university students. *The assessment tools and techniques being used, as well as results, will be in the Resource Room.*

Online students are also assessed using the same direct and indirect tools as on campus classes. In 2004, assessment results were collected for College Composition class and posted on a Web page sponsored by the Iowa Community College Online Consortium. The results of these assessment activities are shared with all instructors in the consortium. The goal of assessing online courses is to measure student growth, examine student retention, and compare the academic progress of online and face-to-face students. The results of this assessment will be used for possible changes in courses and instructor pedagogy. The Web page may be viewed at www.iowaconline.org.

The College integrates into its assessment of student learning the data reported for purposes of external accountability.

NCC uses placement rates, graduation rates, demographic surveys, the program evaluation process, employer satisfaction surveys, successful transfer to higher education, course improvement surveys, alumni surveys, and ACT student satisfaction surveys to assess student learning in credit programs. Course improvement evaluations are used to assess non-credit classes. Data reported for external accountability like program accreditation reports and grant reports supports success in assessing student learning.

Some specific programs require passage of state and/or national certification and licensure exams (i.e. nursing—NCLEX). These results are also used to assess program success. Documents containing placement and graduation rates, transfer information, and results from the ACT student satisfaction survey can be found in the Resource Room. *A list of programs requiring national licensure or certification can also be found in the Resource Room.*

Results obtained through assessment of student learning are available to appropriate constituencies including students themselves.

Assessment reports are given to advisory committees, the Executive Council, and the Board of Trustees. Other assessment reports also available for review include program evaluation reports, Perkins reports, NCC Annual Reports, and the assessment newsletters.

Students: The results of course assessments are communicated to students at NCC. Instructors have frequent feedback in the classroom through the use of classroom assessments. Many faculty share the results of these classroom assessments with their students, often to help clarify a topic or readdress a muddiest point. Beginning in the spring semester of 2002, all full-time faculty members are required to turn in at least one short report of a classroom assessment activity that was completed during that semester. Adjunct faculty also have turned in classroom assessment reports. *Notebooks containing classroom assessment reports are available in the Resource Room.*

Faculty can refer to the intranet and the College NCA newsletter, The NCA Alert, to keep abreast of assessment developments. All self-study documents are available to the College on the N-drive in a public folder, and in the College Library. *Additional information about the assessment process including assessment committee minutes and annual assessment reports can be found in the Resource Room.*

Program Evaluation: As part of the NCC program evaluation, all programs are on a five-year review cycle. Instructors prepare the materials to be reviewed by the Program Review Team that includes assessment reports pertaining to individual programs. A final report is presented to the Executive Council and Board of Trustees.

Faculty and administrators routinely review the effectiveness of the College's programs to assess student learning. The Assessment Steering Committee consisting of faculty representatives, the chief academic officer, and division deans meet on a regular basis to supervise assessment activities and student learning. The program assessment plans are reviewed by the division deans and faculty members in the fall. The classroom activities are collected every semester and reviewed by the assessment chair. The steering committee evaluates the entire assessment procedure at the end of the academic year and makes recommendations for the next year.

Each year the Assessment Steering Committee uses the level of implementation survey to review the effectiveness of the assessment plan. The results from this survey show steady progression in implementing the assessment plan. The focus of the Assessment Steering Committee is to evaluate the assessment process and address the areas of weaknesses identified in the annual assessment report.

Core Component 3b: The organization values and supports effective teaching.

At the heart of any education institution is teaching; and for that institution to be successful, teaching must be effective. Teaching is one component of an equation, an equation that ultimately results in student learning. Other components of this equation include student support services, facilities and technology, and student motivation.

Qualified faculty determine curricular content and strategies for instruction at NCC. The College currently employs 37 full-time faculty. Until July 1, 2003, all full-time faculty members had to meet post-secondary teaching licensure requirements as specified by the Code of Iowa.

Teaching credentials for current full-time faculty can be reviewed in the Human Resources Office. All full-time faculty members have been required to obtain, maintain or make progress toward completing the licensing requirements as dictated by the state.

However, as of June 30, 2003, the Iowa Department of Education discontinued its licensing function and Iowa law now requires all community colleges to develop their own Quality Faculty Plans (QFP). During the fall of 2002, Northwest Iowa Community College formed a committee consisting of four administrators and four faculty members to create the quality faculty plan for this institution. The plan was finalized during the spring of 2003 and was implemented July 1, 2003.

The purpose of this new plan is to ensure quality faculty for Northwest Iowa Community College through effective hiring and orientation of new faculty and continuous professional development of current faculty. For instructors to teach effectively, they must have adequate training in the disciplines they are teaching. *The plan, as well as specific faculty documentation, will be in the Resource Room.*

LEARNING-FOCUSED

The purpose of the new plan is to ensure quality faculty for NCC through effective hiring and orientation of new faculty and continuous professional development of current faculty.

Full-time faculty members are given teaching assignments within their discipline or a related discipline. The College also employs approximately 50 adjunct faculty members each semester, primarily in the college transfer area. Adjunct faculty members are required to have 12 graduate credits in the curricular area in which they are teaching. The list of adjunct faculty and their educational backgrounds can be found in the deans' offices.

New adjunct faculty meet with the division dean and are given an Adjunct Faculty Handbook. When possible, adjunct faculty are given opportunities to interact with full-time faculty in the program or related subject area. Both formal and informal interactions between adjunct and full-time faculty are encouraged in the faculty offices, during faculty meetings, and during social gatherings.

Faculty, with input from the deans and advisory committees, are responsible for what is to be taught and how it is to be taught. Effective teaching begins by presenting clear expectations of courses to students. In order to maintain consistency in courses across campus, a uniform syllabus standard is given to faculty. All syllabi are required to conform to a syllabus template and must follow the syllabus review process. All syllabi that do not meet the guidelines are returned to faculty for revision. *The syllabus template and guidelines as well as examples of current course syllabi can be reviewed in the Resource Room.*

Networking with colleagues and peers is an important factor in promoting effective teaching. Formal and informal networking opportunities exist for both full-time and adjunct faculty at NCC. During faculty orientation, new full-time faculty

are assigned a mentor. This mentor is responsible for acquainting the new faculty member with college processes and procedures through review and discussion. The mentor and new faculty member sign off on the prescribed checklist as understanding is reached. *See a copy of this checklist in the Resource Room.*

The mentor is also encouraged to have lunch with the new faculty member to develop a more informal relationship. This process, although somewhat changed, remains in effect in the quality faculty plan implemented July 1, 2003.

Additional opportunities for full-time faculty interaction are supported by the College through faculty meetings, division meetings, and social gatherings.

The College supports professional development designed to facilitate teaching suited to varied learning environments. Faculty members are encouraged to participate in in-service programs on campus, in professional teaching groups, and in state and national programs related to their own professions.

- Training for alternative delivery classes. Faculty members attend internal training sessions for teaching on the Internet and Iowa Communications Network (ICN) delivered by the Director of Distance Learning and ICN Coordinator, respectively. A statewide Internet conference is sponsored by the Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCO) on an annual basis. Approximately 20-30 full-time and part-time faculty from NCC attend this conference each year.
- Training workshops for specific programs. Staff development funds have assisted faculty members in attaining access to courses related to teaching, teaching methods, and learning styles. Staff development and program funds are used to allow faculty members to attend seminars, workshops and classes that focus on varied learning environments such as field work for heavy equipment operators and powerline technicians, and computer-based learning for specific technical software such as CAD or Mitchell Estimating.
- Professional development opportunities. On-campus faculty workshops and in-service activities have been offered to assist faculty in remaining current with educational trends. Some in-service activities that have been held in the past 10 years include Elmo training, a learning styles workshop, critical thinking skills workshops, and ICN training. The quality faculty plan specifies a minimum of 12 hours of instructional training each year will be offered by the College. This plan also requires faculty to acquire and maintain competency in the area of instruction. *See the Quality Faculty Plan in the Resource Room for more information.*

NCC evaluates teaching and recognizes effective teaching. Helpful feedback regarding teaching is given to faculty during classroom visits by the division deans. This is especially true for new faculty as their classroom visits tend to be more frequent and of longer duration. Every full-time and adjunct faculty member is evaluated on an annual basis using a standard faculty evaluation form. There is a desire on the part of the faculty to review the form to include more categories relating to teaching ability and effectiveness. *A copy of the evaluation form can be found in the Resource Room.*

Students complete course improvement surveys at the end of each semester on a rotating basis. Once completed, results are compiled by the dean's office and returned to the appropriate faculty member sometime during the following semester. These results can provide the faculty member with some insight into his or her teaching effectiveness for that particular course. *The schedule for the amount and frequency of student course evaluation, as well as a copy of the form, can be found in the Resource Room.*

An Outstanding Faculty Award and Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award are typically given annually. These awards are given for excellence or innovation in teaching, performance beyond the average, commitment to personal and professional development, and team/committee participation. Innovative classroom activities are occasionally reported in NCC's weekly employee newsletter, *Dateline*, as they happen.

NCC provides services to support improved pedagogies. Improving pedagogy involves support in two primary areas. First instructors need to have the opportunity to learn about teaching and about teaching in their specific curricular areas. Secondly, instructors need to have the equipment and facilities to implement improved pedagogies.

First, NCC strives to provide instructors with staff development funds to assist in the pursuit of knowledge. Due to the severe budget cuts of the past three years, general college funds have been limited. However, the funds required for the training of faculty and staff have not been decreased. The College continues to support staff development at the highest level possible and is committed to doing all it can to support faculty development.

The College library also assists with staff development by subscribing to periodicals and by providing books that contain information about advances and practices in teaching. Periodicals available at the NCC library include *The Teaching Professor*, *Assessment Update*, *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Community College Review*, *Curricular Update* and others.

NCC is committed to supporting new initiatives to improve pedagogy. In 2004 the College piloted hybrid classes which included the use of eCompanion which helps instructors integrate Web based instruction with face-to-face instruction. This pilot study was completed, and plans are being made to offering a variety of classes campus wide that include web enhancements.

Secondly, providing instructional equipment and curriculum is a challenge due to the same budget restrictions; however, the College does spend a significant portion of the annual budget for instructional equipment. Due to the funding provided by the Title III grant, NCC is able to purchase technology in the classroom. Faculty are able to apply for special NCC Foundation Equipment Grants to supplement their program technology budgets. Each year for five years the Foundation provided an additional \$50,000 a year to vocational programs.

The College demonstrates an openness to innovative practices that enhance learning. Innovative teaching practices are important to improving teaching effectiveness and promoting student success. NCC's support for innovative practices is evidenced in several different ways.

Accelerated Courses: NCC offers a variety of accelerated courses (7 X 7) for students who are motivated to finish their degree at a faster pace. These courses offer flexibility for students who are working and are place bound. The curriculum is the same as the face-to-face courses offered during the academic year.

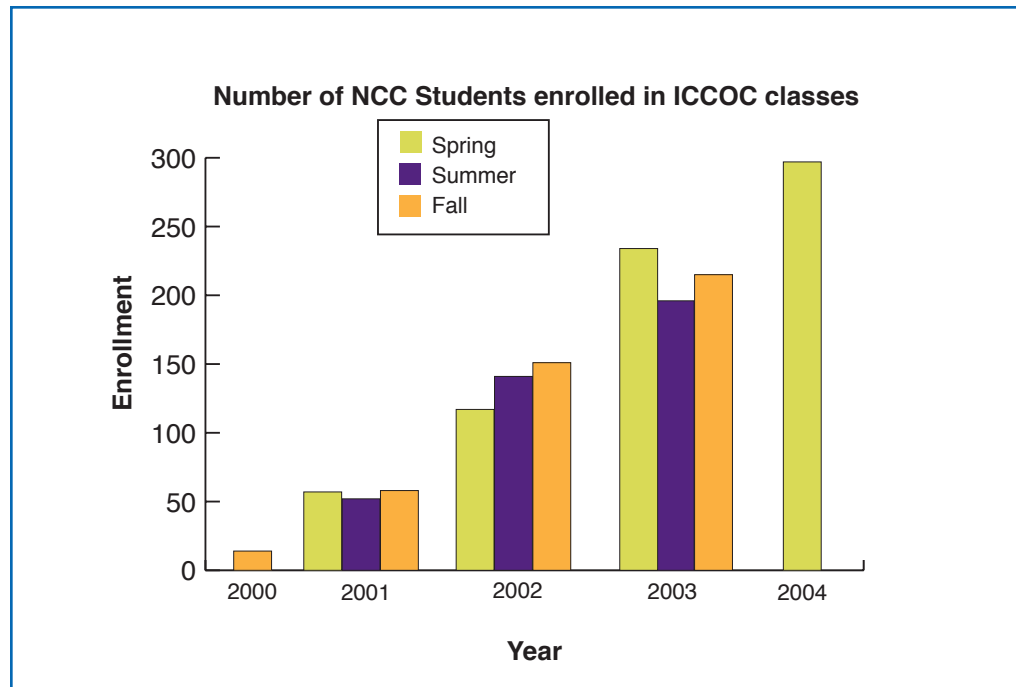
PSEO: NCC offers courses in the high schools for Post Secondary Educational Options (PSEO) students. Instructors teach the courses off campus, over the ICN and via the Internet, for those students who may have difficulty taking classes on campus.

Alternative High School: NCC has a successful alternative high school on campus and at a site in a local community. At risk students are able to finish their GED through an innovative program that supports student success.

Distance Education: NCC has been a frontrunner in distance education by offering courses via the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) and via the Internet. NCC offers Internet courses as a part of a seven-college consortium of Iowa community colleges (ICCOC). This consortium supports a faculty trainer, an annual on-line conference, regular best-practices sessions, and other training materials that can help new Internet faculty learn how to design, prepare and teach over the Internet. ICN courses have enabled instructors to deliver courses to area high school students and working adults. *See chart of NCC enrollments in ICCOC courses on the next page.*

LEARNING-FOCUSED

Innovative teaching practices are important to improving teaching effectiveness and promoting student success.



Web-enhanced Classes: NCC also offers classes using eCompanion and other innovative delivery systems to enhance student learning. In the Fall of 2004 there will be approximately 20 new courses that will be introducing web-enhancements for face-to-face classes.

Industry Sponsored Training Equipment: NCC has a long history of working with industry to help provide students with training equipment that is current with industry standards. Instructors participate in this process, and even build labs and trainers with materials supplied by industry. Examples of these trainers and labs are available across the campus; however, some of the most recent are found in the Industrial Instrumentation and Control Lab in Building C and were built with industry support by program instructor Tim Floen.

Internships and Research Projects: Pedagogical processes used to engage students in learning visible to external sources include research projects, internships, lab/clinical, and program open houses. Students also have the opportunity to participate in student organizations such as SkillsUSA, Student Government Association, and an international honor society, Beta Lambda Pi. Through these organizations, students showcase their technical and leadership skills for business and industry. *Minutes for these organizations are in the Resource Room.*

Off-site programs: Non-credit business and industry classes are conducted at various sites which offer flexibility in location, length, and times offered.

NCC supports faculty in keeping abreast of the research on teaching and learning, and of technological advances that can positively affect student learning and the delivery of instruction. Campus wide inservice programs in the area of learning styles and critical thinking have been given to faculty to promote continuing education in college teaching and learning. The College is committed to offering more in-services to help faculty to keep faculty members current in teaching and learning practices.

Instructional equipment in classrooms is currently inconsistent. For example, a faculty member teaching a course in Room A may use PowerPoint because a computer and projector are available in that room. If a second section of that course is taught in Classroom B, the instructor may have to resort to overhead transparencies. Because of these inconsistencies, preparation for classroom instruction is difficult and may require double effort. Instructors cannot make use of the latest multi-media available because the required equipment is not available in all classrooms. The College recognized the need to provide standardized equipment in all classrooms and has budgeted for this in FY05.

Much of the classroom technology problem is due to the lack of a campus-wide technology plan. Before the need for a plan was identified, classroom equipment including TVs, VCRs, projectors, lab computers, laptop computers for PowerPoint, and Internet presentations, was haphazardly replaced, poorly maintained, and were typically funded out of individual program budgets. These budgets were already limited and usually did not have room for this kind of instructional technology. As a result of the campus-wide Technology Plan process, and with increased funding from Title III, technology in all instructional areas will be enhanced by the fall of 2004.

The NCC Foundation also provided money each year for five consecutive years (FY99-FY03) for equipment grants. These equipment grants were often given for innovative instructional technology including Smartboards, Elmo projectors, and laptops for clinical instructors in the nursing area. The equipment grants were suspended for the 2003–2004 academic year but may be reinstated in the future.

NCC does much to support faculty and effective teaching. Processes and procedures have been implemented to ensure courses are offered by qualified faculty who are current in their respective fields and who have information about advances in learning and teaching. Although tight budgets and the lack of a campus-wide technology plan have limited improvements in instructional technology, strides are being made to address these issues. NCC is committed to student learning and effective teaching and continues to plan and complete activities to improve these areas.

Faculty members in the Trade & Technologies Division use off-site training opportunities to give students real-world experience. Examples are Heavy Equipment students contracting jobs in the surrounding area; Powerline students trimming trees, and retiring/building overhead lines in town; and Residential Wiring Technology students running wire in a spec house. Unique faculty-developed strategies such as Heavy Equipment Operators bidding and accepting jobs in local municipalities, and the Health Information Technology students working with actual medical records from healthcare providers, are accepted practices by the College.

Faculty members actively participate in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines they teach. Examples of memberships in professional organizations include National Business Education Association, Iowa Business Education Association, Iowa Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges, Teachers of Accounting at Two-Year Colleges, Iowa Utilities Electrical Safety Training Association, Iowa Auto Instructors Association, and many others. Several faculty members have held positions as board members or officers of these organizations. Many of these organizations are directly related to instruction in a given discipline and others include a component that focuses on improving education in their technical/subject areas. *A complete listing of faculty involved in professional organizations is on page 20 of the Appendix.*

CONNECTED

NCC faculty and staff are able to communicate effectively between departments and divisions...to ensure that student needs are met.

Core Component 3c: The organization creates effective learning environments.

As members of a small college and academic community, NCC faculty and staff are able to communicate effectively between departments and divisions, working to ensure that student needs are met. It is less complicated at NCC to dovetail services or to change services to create the best possible learning environment. College personnel rarely serve in just one institutional capacity, and the result is an academic community that communicates with one another to provide an effective learning environment for all of the students served.

Students also have a part in the creation of an effective learning environment in a variety of contexts such as cohort groups and assorted learning communities. NCC supports student learning and development by encouraging students to develop skills and abilities through small group interaction.

Assessment results inform improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and Student Services. The campus wide assessment plan includes all divisions of the College and places a priority on using the results of the data collected to make improvements. Results of these assessments are used to make improvements in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources and student services.

Curriculum and Pedagogy: Instruction at NCC is improved through assessment of student learning, student satisfaction surveys, faculty evaluations, program evaluations, and research of best practices. In order to accomplish this goal, faculty work to improve instruction. The following are examples of how pedagogical changes are addressed.

Assessment results are used in decisions regarding curricular issues. All faculty members are involved in putting together the curriculum in their respective departments and make recommendations concerning the addition and deletion of courses for their programs. Working with their respective advisory committees, faculty members are empowered to review and revise the curriculum to meet students' needs.

Assessment of Student Learning

- **Standardized testing:** Instructors change instructional methods and content based on student performance on national/standardized tests. Some of these tests include CISCO, MOS and NCLEX.
- **Classroom assessment:** Instructors have always worked to assess student learning at the classroom level. All programs at NCC have a list of goals and objectives or competencies to meet in order to successfully pass a class. In addition to testing, members of the academic community also rely on projects, portfolios and other assessment strategies. Examples of classroom assessment activities can be found in the assessment notebooks in the Resource Room.
- **Course Improvement Surveys:** Each semester, instructors receive feedback from students which can then be used to self-evaluate teaching effectiveness and to improve content and delivery.
- **Faculty evaluation:** Each year the deans visit classrooms to assess teaching effectiveness. Class visit forms are used by the deans to evaluate a single class visit, while Faculty Evaluation Forms require a more indepth analysis by both the dean and the individual faculty member.

- **Program evaluation:** Every five years each program undergoes a thorough evaluation process. As part of this, the program instructors, deans, and advisory committees assess the academic criteria of the program, the technology in the classroom/labs, and how it was used by the instructor. Recommendations for improvement are used to improve the curriculum.
- **Best practices:** The College community learns from the research of others. In the past decade there has been campus wide training in learning styles, assessment, and information technology use. When funding permits, faculty and staff are encouraged to attend conferences and pursue appropriate staff development opportunities.

Instructional Resources: Instructional resources are an integral part of creating an effective learning environment. This includes the instructional resources provided through the Library, Learning Center, Title III, TRIO, IT Services, and the ICCOC Faculty Trainer. According to the Institutional Assessment Plan, each area assesses specific outcomes by division.

- **Library:** The need by faculty for information on assessment and instructional methods has been used to expand library offerings. Currently there are publications (handouts, periodicals, databases, books) regarding assessment and teaching available in the NCC library. Some of these publications include: *Qualities of Effective Teaching, Nursing Outcomes Classifications, Classroom Assessment Techniques, Assessment Update Periodical, Assessment Case Studies, and the Assessment Debate.*
- **Learning Center:** NCC provides students with free tutoring services and developmental classes through the Learning Center. Students are referred to the Learning Center by Admission counselors based on COMPASS scores, by instructors based on class performance, and by the counselors as needed. Surveys are given to students to assess services rendered by the Learning Center.
- **Title III:** In 2000 the College received its first Title III Strengthening Institutions grant. As part of this grant, COMPASS testing was introduced to provide advisors, programs and individual instructors with the data necessary to establish prerequisites, and to assess student readiness for college work.
- **TRIO:** In 2001 NCC received its first Student Support Services grant. Funds from this grant enabled the College to provide additional tutoring, advising and cultural activities to enhance the ability of first-generation, low income and/or disabled students to be successful in meeting their educational goals.

- IT Staff: In 2003 the College addressed the expanding need for IT instruction and support by faculty, staff and students by introducing the position of Director of Technology and Information Services. This new position is responsible for coordinating IT staff, developing a technology plan, providing help desk services, and assisting with IT training and purchases.

Student Services: Assessment is an important part of Student Services. Student Opinion Survey and the Exit Survey are two tools used to assess the effectiveness of the Student Services office.

The Student Opinion survey is a comprehensive survey of the College as a whole. This survey is filled out by students at the exit interview sessions. The results are then compiled by American College Testing and compared with other community colleges in the nation. Some items included in the survey include: demographics, parking, housing, courses offered, campus size, success rate, and overall college impression.

The Exit Survey is given to students during their exit interview and is used to evaluate Student Services. Items included in this survey are: admissions, counseling services, financial aid, housing, orientation, publications, and student activities. For example, for the 2001–2003 fiscal year, students gave a low rating to the orientation process. During the summer of 2003, the orientation sessions were revamped to meet the students' wishes for more information. As a result, students, staff, and instructors held a panel session to answer student questions.

The results of both of these surveys are used by the Enrollment Management Team to establish long-term data for future enrollment strategies. For example, the data may be used in determining which programs of study should be offered, if recruiting efforts should be focused more on a certain age group, or if a certain process needs to be reassessed to better serve students.

The College provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring. Students at NCC are ethnically similar; however, there are other characteristics that require the College to provide services to diverse learners.

- According to the 2003 Student Characteristics Survey, full-time students at NCC are both traditional and nontraditional. Fifty-seven percent of the student population is comprised of traditional students while forty-three percent of the students are non-traditional students. Over 25% of NCC students work over 30 hours per week.

DISTINCTIVE

Students at NCC are ethnically similar; however, there are other characteristics that require the College to provide services to diverse learners.

- NCC is an open-door college and the students have widely diverse levels of preparation for postsecondary education.
- Students at NCC have diverse learning styles. On occasion, instructors have used a learning style inventory to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of students with differing learning styles.
- The College also meets the demands of special needs students, including those who are wheelchair bound, deaf, blind or who have identified Individual Educational Plan (IEP) requirements. For example, signers for deaf students were hired to aid students in the classrooms, and books on tapes have been used by special needs students.
- Students who need to work also require different delivery methods in order to continue to go to school while working. The College delivers programs that are face-to-face, over the ICN, from remote sites and over the Internet.
- The TRIO grant provides academic and personal support for first generation college students.
- NCC has a cultural diversity day to introduce students to different cultures and different ways of thinking.
- NCC provides off campus library services whereby students are able to research projects using online databases and work on projects at home.

Advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success. The advising systems at NCC assist many constituents at various stages of life: high school students, community members who are in search of a career change or who are suddenly unemployed, traditional college students, and community members who want to expand their knowledge through continuing education opportunities. NCC provides the following advising systems that support the mastery of skills required for academic success.

- Career Center Coordinator Advising
- Academic Advising by Student Services and Faculty

Career Center Coordinator Advising and Assessment Lab

Academic success begins with assessing an individual's interests and abilities. The Career Center provides the Choices assessment, a computerized tool for individuals who want to explore career options based upon interests. The Choices assessment is available to NCC students and to the community, including partnerships with the Iowa Workforce Development Agency and with Human Resources Departments in Business and Industry. The Career Center Coordinator assists Choices participants with the profile of career options and educational needs for the various careers. This assistance (advising) guides Choices participants towards career paths that match academic levels determined by past educational records and by COMPASS, an entrance assessment.

In addition to the Choices opportunity at the NCC Career Center, the Career Center Coordinator provides a career exploration program, Putting Your Career In Gear, to students at the middle schools and high schools. The program includes a paper/pencil interest inventory assessment and correlating careers. This is an opportunity for NCC to work with the community school districts and to provide the youth with initial career and educational assistance/advising.

Academic Advising by Student Services and Faculty

Students are assigned a student service advisors and faculty advisor. The Student service advisors are available for advising by appointment or by walk-in during office hours. Student Services in cooperation with faculty initiate an intervention-advising plan. Within the first 10 days of a new term, faculty is in contact with Student Services regarding at-risk students. At-risk students are encouraged to meet with faculty or Student Services to discuss the issues that are affecting the student's progress towards academic success. These students continue to be monitored by faculty and Student Services. This is a way that NCC helps to ensure all students are on track with successfully completing their degree requirements and career goals.

The goals of the counseling and academic advising services are to

1. Assist students and faculty in coordinating services that assist in helping the student become successful.
2. Assess COMPASS Scores to establish placement in math and English classes, or to help ascertain why students are not succeeding. By knowing where students need additional instruction, the College is better able to address student learning problems.
3. Enhance the communication between faculty and student services to aid students in the advising process.
4. Intervention at midterm to help students with D and F grades to succeed.
5. Work with outside agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Human Services, and the Commission of the Blind.
6. NCC coordinates services with AEA4 for the fifth year secondary program known as SPAN.

The College employs, when appropriate, new technologies that enhance effective learning environments for students. Since the 1994 NCA visit the College has undergone significant changes in the technologies and facilities used to create effective learning environments. At NCC the word technology has undergone a significant change in the past decade. Ten years ago it would have referred almost exclusively to the technology used by industry specific programs to prepare students for employment in trades and technologies. The College has a 40 year history of providing quality technical programs that all have program

specific equipment. However, the word technology has also come to mean computer technology. NCC provides students and faculty with quality instructional technology—from earth moving equipment for the Heavy Equipment program to laptop computers.

An effective learning environment varies among students due to students' learning styles, distance from NCC, and individual student needs. NCC has been proactive by providing various technological learning opportunities to meet the educational needs of the students such as Internet classes, ICN classes, and hybrid classes.

Program Specific Computer Software Enhances Learning

Every program at NCC incorporates computers and computer software for more effective learning. Many textbooks have supplemental resources for students on CDs, which can enhance the learning process for students. A few software tools include self-paced learning CDs, tutorials, quick labs, and Internet video.

Expanded student access to computer labs and IT support has been necessary to ensure student success with these tools.

FUTURE ORIENTED

NCC provides students and faculty with quality instructional technology—from earth moving equipment for the heavy equipment program to laptop computers.

- The Nursing program utilizes individual software programs for the multitudes of nursing areas; pediatrics, geriatrics, medical surgical, obstetrical, and psychiatric. The NCLEX software prepares the student nurses for the national board exam. The benefit of the NCLEX software is the immediate feedback of the practice exam.
- The Automotive programs employ both software and the Internet for instructional effectiveness. Students are provided with opportunities to problem solve through the use of software performance analyzers, lab scopes, scanners, and special testers. The Internet is the Automotive students' technological tool of choice for technical assistance and for verifying vehicle calibrations.
- The Industrial Instrumentation and Control program bases the curriculum on quick lab software, which includes simulation programs that chart instrument processes and a network system that tracks instrument calibrations.
- The Administrative Secretarial program develops students' technical and interpersonal skills through office simulation software such as the Walkabout Write Dictaphone (for machine transcription and dictation) and the Skills Assessment Manager software that measures computer applications knowledge.

Instructional and Presentational Tools Enhance Learning

In addition to enhancing learning with computer software, the mathematics faculty requires students to learn the functions of a graphing calculator in some classes. The calculator has a built-in statistical function, which allows students to develop a deeper understanding of concepts.

NCC classrooms are equipped with LCD projectors connected to computers and there are four portable LCD/computer systems on mobile carts. Instructors have easy access to VCR/DVD/Televisions. Additionally, NCC student learning is enhanced by two presentational technologies: Elmo Visual Presenter and SmartBoard Interactive Whiteboard. The Elmo Visual Presenter captures video and all types of 3D objects, slides, transparencies, and opaque presentation materials. Several rooms are equipped with the SmartBoard Interactive Whiteboards. This technology combines an interactive whiteboard, computer and projector allowing access and control of any application projected on the whiteboard with the use of a SMART pen or by touch.

Distance Learning Technology

NCC strives to provide enhanced learning opportunities for all students, which includes students who may be at a remote location or students who do not have flexible schedules. Students are able to take classes through the Iowa Communication Network (ICN) and the Iowa Community Colleges Online Consortium (ICCOG).

The ICN is the nation's first and only two-way, full motion (DS-3) interactive fiber optic network reaching every county in the state. The network provides all Iowans with nearby access to geographically distant resources such as education and training. The ICN infrastructure provides data, voice, and video services to authorized users. These users include public and nonpublic school districts, public and private institutions of higher education, public libraries, area education agencies, state and federal agencies, state and federal courts, the Iowa National Guard, hospitals and physician clinics for telemedicine applications, and the U. S. Postal Service for demonstration projects. NCC provides instructional opportunities to 24 ICN sites within the NCC service area, the majority of which are in area high schools.

NCC is one of seven Iowa Community Colleges that are cooperating together to offer Associate degrees completely online. The Iowa Community Colleges Consortium (ICCOG) uses today's Internet technology to deliver courses to students. On-line course offerings and NCC student enrollments continue to increase. Since the first class of 14 in the fall of 2000, enrollment of NCC students online has expanded to 780 in the spring of 2004.

CONNECTED

NCC is one of seven Iowa community colleges that are cooperating together to offer associate degrees completely online.

NCC's system of quality assurance includes regular review of whether its educational strategies, activities, processes, and technologies enhance student learning. NCC has multiple mechanisms in place to assure the quality of education of its students. All programs are reviewed on a five-year cycle. Committees such as the advisory committee and curriculum committee review programs and courses. The comprehensive assessment plan is geared toward continuous quality improvement. Data is also collected through various surveys that assess specific courses as well as programs of study.

Program Evaluation Model

Programs at NCC are reviewed on a five-year cycle using the Program Evaluation model. The purpose of the program evaluation is (1) to identify strengths and weaknesses of curricula/programs and recommend needed improvements, (2) collect data for program development activities, staff development activities and equipment needs, and (3) suggest modifications to programs that no longer serve the needs of the student, institution, community and industry.

Instructors from the programs are involved in the process of assessing their program. Using current and past student surveys, employer surveys, and feedback from advisory committees, instructors review all areas of their program. A Program Review Team made up of faculty and staff read the report and list strengths, weaknesses, areas of consideration, and recommendations. This report is presented to the Executive Council and the Board of Trustees.

The division dean gives feedback to the instructors and a plan of action is developed. As a result of the program evaluation process, improvements have been made in the curriculum and updating equipment needs.

Advisory Committees

Advisory committee members play an active role in assuring quality for programs at NCC. Advisory committees are generally composed of area representatives from business and industry.

The purpose of this committee is to give input on program direction, outcome needs and equipment recommendations. Many programs have benefited from the recommendations of this committee. The input of this committee is instrumental in developing the curriculum and giving advice concerning industry needs. The Advisory Committees meet at least once per year.

Student Surveys

Course improvement surveys are another method used to assure the quality of classroom instruction. At the end of each semester students complete a Course Improvement survey on selected courses. This information is compiled and shared with the instructor/administrator. This process is intended to facilitate the pursuit of excellence in classroom instruction.

Students are encouraged to rate specific areas and write comments regarding the course, curriculum, and instructor. The results are used by the instructors to judge the effectiveness of their course and make the improvements if necessary.

Students at NCC have a voice in evaluating the quality of instruction and services. Before graduation, the students are given an exit survey. The data that is collected provides feedback on the educational programs and the College as a whole. This information is then shared with the program instructors and administrators to support the continuous process improvement system.

Curriculum Committee

Another committee that assures quality at NCC is the curricular review committee. This committee is made up of a cross section of administrators, staff, and faculty. The purpose of the committee is to maintain academic standards campus wide. NCC's curriculum committee regularly reviews the educational soundness of the curriculum. This committee oversees changes to course syllabi, verifies the course format, and validates the general content of every credit course offered at NCC as well as addresses other curricular issues.

Educational Program Assessment

NCC assures the quality of its education by embracing a comprehensive assessment plan. The program assessment plan is set up as a cyclical process. In the fall, assessment plans and the data that had been collected throughout the year are reviewed. Recommendations for improvements or changes are prepared based on the collected data. The feedback loop is completed when the supervisor and employees use the results of the data to evaluate their effectiveness and make a new or revised plan for the next year.

Core Component 3d: The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

NCC is committed to providing students and faculty with the resources necessary for learning and teaching. The close working relationship between all areas of instruction, support and administration help ensure that students have access to appropriate resources to enhance learning. Faculty members are encouraged to seek advanced degrees and certifications as well as participation in professional and staff development opportunities.

The College also has a history of working closely with area business and industries and with members of the Program Advisory Committees which contributes to the quality of resources available at NCC. In addition, the College Board of Trustees and administrators support these endeavors through budgetary support.

NCC provides access to the resources (e.g. technical laboratories, scientific laboratories, libraries, clinical practice sites) necessary to support learning and teaching. Providing students with academic resources is a perpetual challenge for NCC. Rapid changes in the world of business and industry, as well as expanding needs for informational technology challenge College resources. Here are some examples of the ways that the College is dealing with these resource needs.

Technical Laboratories

With the recent remodeling that was completed in the fall of 2003 in Building C, NCC Computer Programming and Networking programs each have their own lab areas. This remodeling also improved the lab space for NCC electrical and instrumentation programs. NCC's Truck & Diesel, Welding and Auto Body programs are all limited for lab space. The space problem is compounded in the fall semester by the lack of classroom space available for Welding and Auto Body. This is a cause for concern as classroom instruction must sometimes take place in the lab area. A campus-wide facilities plan will be completed in 2005.

Nursing Laboratories

The students in the Practical Nursing program and the Associate Degree Nursing program have access to a nursing lab on campus where they can practice and test their clinical skills throughout the course of their program. There is also a computer lab within the nursing lab equipped with software geared toward nursing. It allows the students to test their knowledge in a variety of nursing areas, such as obstetrics, pediatrics, medical/surgical nursing, and psychiatric nursing. In addition, there is software that specifically helps them prepare for the state board of nursing exam.

The lab equipment and software are inspected and evaluated every year by the Nursing department and new equipment and software are purchased and updated as needed.

Science Labs

The science department has two fully equipped science labs that serve the needs of students taking a variety of science courses such as anatomy & physiology, chemistry, and microbiology. The labs provide the students with hands-on learning opportunities such as dissection and microscopic examination which helps students understand the concepts presented in the lecture. Students gain a basic understanding of how the sciences affect their everyday lives and the world around them. The students have access to the labs at scheduled times during the week throughout the course of the semester. Evening science classes are offered to provide access for students who work during the day or have full schedules.

The students have the opportunity to evaluate the course through the use of a course improvement survey designed to evaluate the students' perception of their lecture and lab experience. The science department then reviews the evaluations and uses that information to assess the effectiveness of the course and make the necessary changes or improvements.

Off Campus Clinical Sites

The nursing students have the opportunity to take the skills they have learned in lab on campus and utilize them in the clinical setting during their various clinical rotations. The College has a cooperative relationship with several of the surrounding community hospitals and nursing homes, as well as a few of the larger hospitals in Sioux City, IA and Sioux Falls, SD.

Students evaluate the clinical sites after every rotation and personnel at the clinical sites have the opportunity to evaluate the nursing program annually as well. The nursing department reviews the student and clinical site evaluations yearly and makes the necessary changes or improvements.

The Health Information Technology students have the opportunity to utilize the knowledge and skills they learn in the classroom through their Professional Practice rotations in the health care setting. The HIT program works in cooperation with over 40 hospitals in the region to provide professional practice training for the HIT students in areas such as collecting, validating, and analyzing health-care data, assigning code numbers to diagnoses for indexing health data and processing bills, and maintaining healthcare records consistent with medical, administrative, ethical, legal, and regulatory requirements.

At the end of each professional practice rotation, the HIT students complete an evaluation form regarding their experience and the health care setting also completes an evaluation of the students' performances. The HIT instructor reviews the evaluations and makes the necessary changes to enhance the effectiveness of the learning experience.

Computer Labs

Computers are available for NCC students in a number of locations. The Library has 10 computers, the Learning Center has 14 computers, Building B has three labs with 21, 13, and 23 computers respectively. Building C lab has 20 computers, and Building D lounge area has 5 computers. The student to computer ratio is roughly 7:1 for open lab areas. The computers are available in the Library and Learning Center from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday through Thursday and from 8 am to 4:30 pm on Fridays. The other computer labs are available whenever classes are not in session, which is roughly 7 am to 9 pm, Monday through Friday.

Library Access

The library is available to students Monday through Thursday 7:30 am to 8 pm and Fridays 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. The library hours provide access to students taking day and evening classes as well as the off campus students taking ICN and online classes.

The library's computer system keeps statistics on how many items are checked out daily and the library staff tallies statistics throughout the day on how many people are using the library's services. The online databases collect statistics including information about how many students from the College are utilizing the online services. The library uses student surveys to assess student needs.

The library staff also communicates with the College faculty several times throughout the year asking for input regarding the status of the current library inventory and whether the faculty would like any new items added to the inventory or any items removed. *Statistics are included in the Appendix on pages 23-25.*

NCC evaluates the use of its learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching. All programs and departments have an assessment plan that follows the Nichols model. Both internal evaluations and external evaluations are used to monitor the effectiveness of these resources. The program evaluation process provides input for evaluating the quality and efficiency of learning resources within specific disciplines. Recommendations are made to the Executive Council and Board of Trustees.

The technology planning committee was formed to evaluate the technology needs of the College. Recommendations are made to the Executive Council about upgrades and replacements.

Northwest Iowa Community College strives to support students, staff, and faculty in using technology effectively. This is one area of the College that has changed dramatically since the last NCA visit in 1994. At that time there were only a handful of computers available for faculty and students to use, and now there are 531 computers on campus.

New Technology Positions

The rapidly changing demands by faculty for technology led the College to create two new positions in 2003. NCC now has a Director of Technology and Information Services who is responsible for coordinating all IT support and infrastructure. This person is also responsible for developing a campus wide technology plan. The second position is that of Director of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology. This person is responsible for managing online learning and for assisting the College in meeting the needs of staff for training in information technology software.

Training for Technology

NCC sends representatives to the League for Innovation to learn new ways to use technology in the infrastructure and the classroom. Present at these conventions are many companies, such as Microsoft, Compaq, IBM, Lotus, Apple, and AT&T. NCC has participated for many years in these conferences. Attendees return with many new ideas and strategies on dealing with new technology and share these ideas with their colleagues.

Student Email Training

An e-mail account is provided to every student, giving them access to another way of communicating with instructors. Training students to use their College email is done through an instruction sheet during sign-up. Students may get personal training if they desire and are given the names of two staff members to assist them at any time.

Distance Learning through ICN and Internet Classes

Faculty teaching distance learning classes are given support. The ICCOC informational website (www.iowaconline.org) provides a weekly newsletter, filled with technical FAQ's, Troubleshooting techniques, test-taking tips for students, and a student orientation tutorial. Online students at NCC are provided with both face-to-face orientation sessions and an online tutorial.

Staff and faculty use the ICN classrooms and Internet for classes relating to staff development and training. NCC IT staff and Director of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology provide technical training classes, on a yearly basis or as requested, on various topics such as computer file management, anti-virus software, and using email.

Technology in the Classroom

College computer labs are available to students at various times during the day. Two of these labs are available to students all day long. Classroom labs have an LCD projectors connected to computers, while others may have a VCR, DVD, Receiver, and SmartBoard Whiteboards. Dictaphone transcription software/hardware is available in the Secretarial and Health Information Technology labs. All computer labs have the latest business and technical software.

Due to the Title III grant, additional LCD projectors, control panels, computers, and ELMO units will be purchased to standardize technology in the classroom campus wide. The goal for the future is to ensure that every classroom is equipped with standardized units.

FAFSA

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the free online application for federal financial aid. The College's website has a direct link to the online form, along with school code and other pertinent information. NCC offers free assistance to students in filling out these forms.

Learning Center Resources/Programs

The open lab in the Learning Center has 14 student computers, each available with necessary campus software loaded. The Learning Center labs also contain adding machines, tape recorders, VCRs, laser disc players, and typewriters, available for student use at no charge. Software and videos for review of basic skills and tutorial work are also available.

Library and Computer Resources

Checkout and access to materials owned by the library is provided by a computerized library system. NCC's library has many technical resources available to assist students in their research.

These include:

- 10 computers
- Online catalog-used to locate materials in the library's collection
- 2100 videotapes
- Special mechanics library and several databases on CD-ROM including PhoneDisc, Scribner's Writer's Series, Columbia Granger's Poetry, American Business Directory, Books in Print, and Encyclopedia Americana.

- Inter-Library Loan Services give students access to several information databases not held by NCC's library. They include EBSCOhost, Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe, Encyclopedia Britannica, Electric Library, and CQ Researcher on the Web. These databases are available through NCC's web site.

Also available in the library are a small room for viewing video tapes, a DTN (Data Transmission Network) terminal, a laser printer, and a photo copier.

The College provides effective staffing and support for its learning resources. As enrollment at NCC has grown, the need for qualified staff has increased. Over the past ten years, NCC has increased the number of staff working in the area of enrollment management. Due to the Title III grant, we have increased student support staff that has been a benefit for students needing additional tutoring and counseling and advising.

Computer Labs

The Learning Center has a lab area that is opened by a work-study student in the mornings. This student ensures that all the computers are running appropriately and that any inappropriate materials that may have been put on the system are removed. If there are questions from students, the Learning Center staff would answer those; or computer technicians would be called if the computers were experiencing problems.

Open labs in Building B and C and D are not monitored. Computer classrooms in Building C are monitored two days a week. Students use these labs as needed and computer technicians are called to repair computers as needed.

Learning Center

One full-time director and three part-time Learning Center instructors staff the Learning Center. Staffing is adequate and the individuals have diverse backgrounds. The educational backgrounds of the Learning Center staff include expertise in most subject areas such as Math, English, Science, and Business. The Learning Center staff has a good working relationship with faculty. This is evident by the number of referrals and working relationship to the Learning Center by faculty. NCC supports the Learning Center through adequate budgeting, but in 2004 additional resources were added for students with special needs and by providing laptops for proctoring Internet tests.

TRIO Student Support Services

The STARS program at NCC is part of the federally funded TRIO grant. The grant was written to have a director, developmental education specialist and secretary position. With the amount of advising and tutoring the program does, STARS was approved to hire an additional part-time staff advisor/tutor called Student Support Services Academic Advisor. This position will provide more effective staffing and support to the students in this program. The program also has money budgeted for peer tutors. Peer tutors have been hard to find in the area of nursing especially, but overall it has been successful and beneficial to the students receiving help. If students are unable to get the help they need, they also can use the Learning Center.

Title III

The Title III grant has funded staff to oversee the COMPASS assessment testing and funded a Basic Skills specialist that meets with students that need developmental course work. This grant has allowed NCC to have the staffing needed to develop mandatory entrance assessment scores and provide the advising needed after testing. This grant works with other current positions on campus to assist in the advising process.

Library

A director and a library coordinator staff the library. The library uses work-study students to assist with busy times and for additional coverage. Work-study students work about 13 hours per week. This has worked well in 2002–2003, but some years it is hard to find work-study students with the hours or adequate work-study eligibility to fill these roles. The busiest times in the library are usually from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The director and coordinator need to both be there during this busy time, which means additional hours of work beyond the normal schedule to cover evenings if work-study are unavailable. NCC is exploring possible schedule changes to provide adequate support and staffing.

The College's systems and structures enable partnerships and innovations that enhance student learning and strengthen teaching effectiveness. As a comprehensive community college that meets the needs of the community, NCC actively seeks avenues to partner with other organizations in the community. NCC is committed to finding innovative ways to work with other entities to offer outstanding programs and courses.

Job Seeking Skills Seminars

The Career Center Director and Dean of Trade and Technologies work together to provide job-seeking skills to students in the trade and technologies programs. Area human resource managers or specific business people in a given field are

brought in to share what they are looking for in prospective employees. Students are given resume and cover letter writing tips. Students in the business/health and technical programs benefit from mock interviews given by advisory committee members, college administrators, and English faculty as a requirement for their communications course.

Coops/Internships/Preceptorship

NCC has worked to enhance student learning by partnering with many organizations to provide coop or internship experiences for NCC students. Currently the Automotive, Electrical, Powerline Technology, Nursing, Health Information Technology, and Administrative Office Management programs all have these opportunities or requirements. These partnership experiences for NCC students give them the opportunity to use the skills they have acquired in the classroom and also lead to possible employment. Faculty are able to get feedback from the places providing the internships and can use this information to strengthen their programs and evaluate their teaching effectiveness.

Partnerships

The Electrical Program at NCC was able to partner with a local lumberyard to give Electrical students practical hands on experience in wiring a house. NCC also contracts with area hospitals for services rendered in conjunction with the nursing program.

Industry Sponsored Education

In response to industry need for qualified employees, local business and industry partners provide educational assistance to students who will work for that company when they have completed their educations. *Lists of the agreements are available in the Resource Room.*

Advisory Committees

All programs have advisory committees. Advisory committees are composed of individuals from area businesses and industries that are in or familiar with that given field. The purpose of the advisory board is to give input on program direction, outcome needs and equipment recommendations. These partnerships help strengthen the programs and teaching effectiveness by ensuring that students learn the needed skills to be successful in their chosen field.

Contracts with Outside Agencies

The Heavy Equipment program at NCC bids for jobs with non-profits such as cities, counties, and the DNR. These jobs provide hands on experience for the students and assist these non-profits in getting the work done more economically. These jobs reinforce what was taught in the classroom and on-site.

Donations from Industry

Local general machining industries have partnered with NCC to provide over \$400,000 in equipment for the General Machining program. This state of the art equipment enables students to get the experience and skills they need on the actual equipment they would use on the job. These industries benefit by getting highly skilled workers and also have a place to send workers to get update training or learn new skills. This updated equipment also strengthens the instructor's effectiveness.

Budget priorities at NCC have been centered on teaching and learning in the past and will continue to be the priority in the future. For FY04 NCC has a new process for budgeting. A Planning Advisory Council that consists of faculty and staff reviews equipment budget requests. They prioritize these requests and make recommendations to the Executive Council. This process will give an opportunity for faculty and staff to recommend money for the areas they feel are necessary to support teaching and learning. The Executive Council reviews the strategic plan each year and budgeted accordingly to meet those objectives. Currently \$4,157,528 (59.63%) of the \$6,972,055 college budget is reserved for instruction. *2002-2003 Annual Report—pg 14.*

Equipment Budget

Equipment is a top priority at NCC, but it is a continuous challenge to keep the equipment up-to-date. Equipment must be at the level industry is using so that NCC students are being taught the skills they will need when they enter the workforce. NCC is fortunate to have great industry support and receives many donations. The College receives donations from business and industry that are passed through the NCC Foundation to the instructional staff. The students have benefited from donations worth \$376,705 in FY04, \$75,957 in FY 03, \$314,285 in FY02, \$27,413 in FY01, \$207,606 in FY00, 94,065 in FY99 and \$113,280 in FY98.

The NCC Foundation has also allocated \$50,000 for equipment to the College each year for five years. Faculty from technical and career programs present to the Foundation Board as to why their program should be funded and what items they need funded. The Foundation Board then determines what items will be funded. This equipment is crucial to effective learning and teaching.

NCC's equipment budget for FY04 was \$642,000. Ninety three percent of the College equipment budget goes to instructional programs.

Staff Development

NCC's staff development had been approximately \$25,000 per year for a number of years. This amount was reduced in FY02 and FY03 due to State of Iowa fund-

ing cuts. Then in FY04 the staff development budget was increased to \$50,000/yr. NCC sees the need for faculty and staff to keep their skills current for effective teaching and learning.

State Funding Cuts

Since 2001, NCC has had state general aid cut by \$301,988. This has resulted in some reductions in staff, elimination of the Carpentry Program, and major increases in tuition. While NCC continues to ensure that teaching and learning is budgeted adequately, this will continue to be a challenge as the State of Iowa struggles financially. In addition to state general aid reductions, state work-study funds were eliminated in 2001–2002. Along with these reductions, Iowa’s community colleges continue to receive unbalanced funding when compared to Iowa’s private and regent universities. *See 2002-2003 Annual Report—pg 15 in the Resource Room.*

We **Pride** Ourselves

- NCC has a high caliber faculty.
- NCC has quality support staff.
- NCC has quality facilities.
- NCC is committed to assessment and using assessment results to improve student learning.
- NCC supports professional development for its faculty and provides opportunities and funds for faculty development.

We **Challenge** Ourselves

- NCC should continue to evaluate and recognize effective teaching.
- NCC will develop a consistent campus-wide technology plan that addresses technology needs in the classrooms.
- NCC will continue to communicate assessment results to staff and faculty.
- NCC will review and revise assessment feedback loop to ensure all groups receive appropriate assessment data.
- NCC will revise the faculty evaluation instrument.
- NCC should better utilize survey data for decision making and planning.
- NCC will increase IT training for staff.

Criterion Four **Acquisition, Discovery, & Application of Knowledge**

The organization promotes a **life of learning** for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by **fostering** and supporting inquiry, **creativity**, practice, and social **responsibility** in way consistent with its mission.



Northwest Iowa Community College promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its 2003 mission statement.

“Northwest Iowa Community College is a progressive learning college rapidly responding to the changing needs of our global community.”

Core Component 4a: The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

Northwest Iowa Community College values a life of learning for its students and staff. Students develop cognitive skills so that following their course completion, they will continue to learn. Staff and faculty are encouraged to keep current in their field of expertise and related fields. Thus the acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge is a highly valued, ongoing process. This is supported by Board Policy 101, which articulates the Educational Policy of the College.

The Colleges planning and pattern of financial allocation demonstrate that it values and promotes a life of learning for its students, faculty, and staff. The planning and financial documents of the College demonstrate the organization’s commitment to learning. Board Policies, the 1998 Strategic Plan, and the new 2003 Strategic Plan all refer to activities that encourage life-long learning. In addition to the planning documents, there is a record of financial allocation for these initiatives.

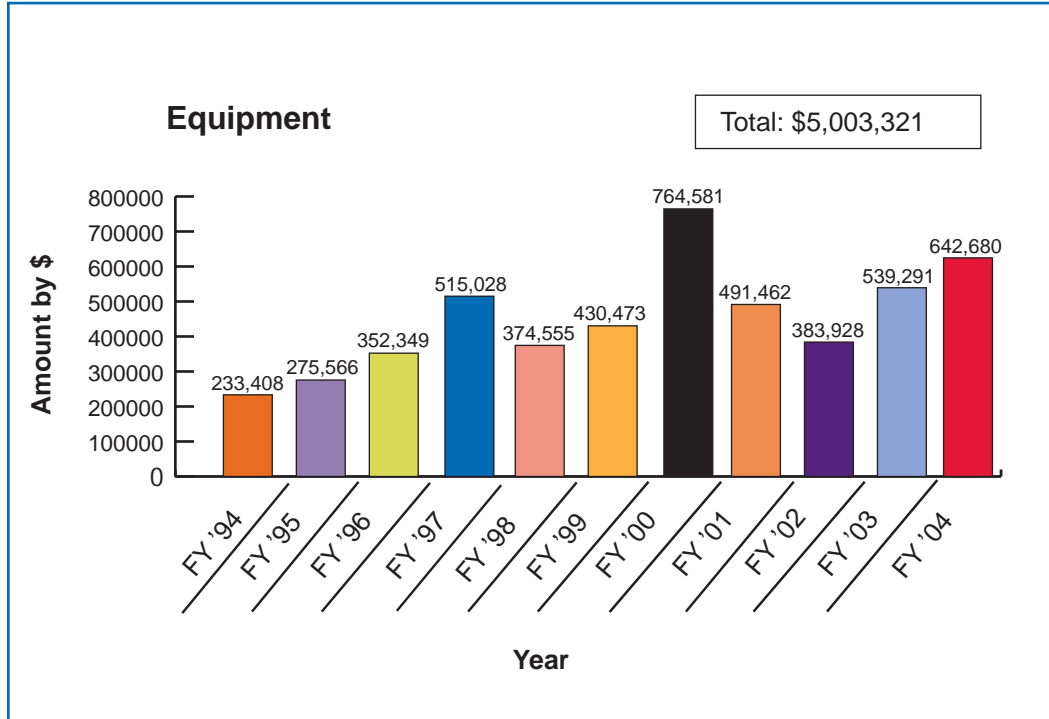
FUTURE ORIENTED

The 1998 Strategic plan has a strong focus ***Student Development***.

The 1998 Strategic Plan had a strong focus on ***Student Development***. The activities of this strategy included the expansion and remodeling of buildings and facilities to enhance student learning, the enhancement of student services, and the support of student organizations and enrichment activities.

- The NCC campus has undergone many physical changes in the past ten years. In order to best meet the educational needs of students and constituents of Area IV, the College has shown a commitment to building expansion and renovation projects. This has been documented in the history and in the appendix.
- Future plans to meet our increasing space needs are under review. During the spring 2003 semester, all faculty and staff had an opportunity to meet with Neumann, Monson, Wictor Architects who were brought on campus to help NCC with a Campus Master Plan to determine the future space needs of the entire college. At that time, the architects received input from all concerned faculty and staff about the present and future use of existing facilities. Potential additions that have been discussed are a new building with a student center and an enlarged library.
- As the College grew and expanded over the years, a commitment was made to develop a library collection appropriate for a community college of our size and with our offerings. For many years the annual library budget was \$100,000 for books/videos and \$30,000 for serials (i.e., newspapers, magazines, yearbooks, directories, handbooks, online subscription databases). This money allowed the NCC library to grow and become a very important part of the education of both credit and non-credit students. (Refer to library tables). As of FY '02 the library has had a decline in funding brought partially by the fiscal difficulties experienced statewide but also a recognition that an excellent core collection is now in place. The annual library budget was decreased to \$50,000 while the serial budget has remained at the \$30,000 level. The present budget of \$50,000 should be sufficient in the near future to continue to develop and maintain a quality library collection which meets the needs of our patrons. Primary customers of the library include students, faculty, and staff and also community members from business and industry, health facilities, and Area IV.
- Acquiring and updating equipment is a major commitment, particularly for the career programs at NCC. The goal is to keep the various programs up-to-date and provide students with the experience with different technologies they will need after program completion. Equipment requests are greater than the money available each year. Money is now being allocated through a process that allows for input from the Planning and Advisory Council, a diverse committee of staff, faculty, students, and administrators formed to make recommendations to the president. Through the equipment allocation

process the College uses the available dollars in the best way possible to meet the prioritized needs. In addition, equipment is acquired through industry donations and through NCC Foundation grants.



Northwest Iowa Community College values professional development for its staff and faculty. Providing continuous *Staff Development* was a separate strategy in the 1998 Strategic Plan. Staff development funds are available for faculty and staff to utilize to continue learning, to keep up-to-date with changes in technology and with changes in their field of study, and for personal improvement. Staff development funds enable faculty and staff to attend conferences, workshops, seminars and classes to fulfill the goals of each individual's professional development plan. New faculty members are required to make annual progress to achieve proficiency in key areas listed in the Quality Faculty Development Plan. Other faculty must maintain classroom and professional proficiency and achieve certain milestones every five years. Faculty members submit an annual plan to set required goals. Activities to enhance staff development included:

- A staff development committee was established to survey needs, develop uniform guidelines, and streamline the process.
- Supervisors incorporated personal staff development plans into the evaluation process for every employee.

LEARNING-FOCUSED

NCC values professional development for its staff and faculty. Providing continuous Staff Development was a separate strategy in the 1998 Strategic Plan.

- A commitment was made to provide adequate resources and to dedicate time for professional development activities. From 1994–2004 a total of \$380,610 has been budgeted specifically for staff development besides the other travel funds already included in individual budgets.
- In addition to staff development, Northwest Iowa Community also provides Educational Assistance opportunities for its full-time employees to meet long-range staff development goals. In this program, the College provides tuition assistance to individuals seeking a degree beyond the degree the individual employee currently holds. NCC provides financial incentives for all permanent faculty and staff to seek additional degrees. The College either provides tuition reimbursement for completed courses or a salary increase for completed academic work. From 1994–2004 a total of \$73,835 has been spent for educational assistance.
- In 2004 and 2005 the total budget for staff development and educational assistance was increased to \$50,000 annually, and a new leadership development category was added.

Even in the best of financial times the revenue generated through tuition, state and federal aid along with the low tuition and fees charged to NCC students are insufficient to accomplish all the goals of the College. As a result of the 1998 Strategic Plan, a grant writer was hired to help NCC to actively pursue grants and other sources of funding to supplement and enhance the services and programs offered and to develop and create new classes, programs, offerings and services. Additional revenues are being sought through the activities of the NCC Foundation and by the Coordinator of Grant Development.

- In February 2000 the College applied for and was awarded the federal Dept. of Education Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant in the amount of \$1,745,155. Activity I of that grant focused on Increasing Student Success. The third component of Activity I provided faculty development that included the integration of proven teaching strategies for diverse learners, and the enhancement of instruction through the incorporation of technology in the classroom. These were activities that the College identified as a need, but did not have the funding to support without this grant.

The NCC Board of Trustees has approved and disseminated statements supporting freedom of inquiry for the organization’s students, faculty, and staff, and honors those statements in its practices. The College encourages all members of the College community to learn and to grow as individuals and as members of the College. At this time the College does not have a specific statement regarding the freedom of inquiry. *This is identified as one of the challenges at the end of the chapter.*

However, the Board does have policies that cover civil rights, academic property rights, and public inquiry. Three Board policies do have a connection to this issue.

Board Policy #103 ensures that all educational and employment opportunities ties at NCC comply with federal and state civil rights requirements.

Compliance with Civil Rights; Title VI, Higher Education Act (Revised); Title IX, Rehabilitation Act, 1973, Section 504; Chapter 601A of the Code of Iowa:

Education and employment opportunities at Northwest Iowa Community College are offered without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status or disability; and no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or position offered by the college or be subjected to harassment occurring as a result of membership in a protected class. The Board of Trustees shall monitor progress on this policy through the President's appointed Affirmative Action Officer and/or committee.

Board Policy 613 refers to intellectual property rights for curriculum, software or inventions.

Curriculum, Software and Inventions Developed:

It is the responsibility of the College to determine the curriculum for all programs. All curriculum, software and inventions developed using College facilities or equipment, or developed by a faculty/staff member as a part of their employment by the College, shall be the property of the College.

Board Policy 617 provides for student need for special courses that are not part of the regular curriculum.

Special Courses:

It is the policy of the College to provide an opportunity for students to pursue a course of study not included in the regular curriculum, to do independent work or to explore in greater depth a topic covered in a course through the development of a Special Course. Regular tuition charges will apply.

NCC supports professional development opportunities and makes them available to all of its administrators, faculty, and staff. The College supports professional development through processes of self-assessment, staff development and the Quality Faculty Plan. These were discussed more completely in Criterion Three, but the following are further examples of the commitment by NCC to the process of professional development for all members of the academic community.

Many of NCC's faculty and staff are involved in professional organizations relating to their field of expertise. Several have held offices in these organizations. Presentations at state and national conferences have also been given by administrators, faculty, and staff. *See list in the Appendix on page 21.*

Each year the College encourages a member of the faculty or staff to participate in one of three state-wide leadership training opportunities. LINC (Leadership Institute for a New Century), CLIC (Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium) and IAOD (Iowa Academy for Organizational Development) are year-long professional development programs. Each of these professional development programs also provides participants within the opportunity to pursue graduate hours. NCC has traditionally had participants in both LINC and CLIC, and has a member of the first IAOD cohort.

College employees are members of and participate in activities or state and local organizations, and industry specific organizations. *A list of these organizations is included in the Appendix on pages 19-20.*

The Board of Trustees at NCC is active in the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (IACCT). Each year members of the Board attend the conference in Iowa. Other members of the Board attend the national ACCT conference if possible.

The College is also committed to participation in national associations for community colleges to maintain professionalism and to enhance the knowledge of College leadership. These include the American Association of Community Colleges, The Council for Resource Development, the League for Innovation, National Council for Marketing and Public Relations, and National Council of Student Development.

Each year staff and faculty attend the ICCOC Spring Conference. Members of the academic community also regularly present at this conference, as well as serve as part of the planning team.

CONNECTED

NCC utilizes a number of methods to recognize students and staff for their academic and work-related achievements.

The College publicly acknowledges the achievements of students and faculty in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge. NCC utilizes a number of methods to recognize students and staff for their academic and work-related achievements. *Examples of this are available in the Resource Room and on the college website at www.nwicc.edu.*

- The weekly Intranet newsletter, NCC Dateline, describes the various awards that staff or faculty may receive. This web link to the newsletter is e-mailed to all staff when it is released.

- Students are eligible to participate in honors organizations at NCC. They are Beta Lambda Pi (the local chapter of Phi Theta Kappa) and Sigma Kappa Delta. At graduation students are recognized for academic achievement in the program and by wearing gold honor cords.
- Press releases to area newspapers and radio stations are distributed every term for honor roll students. There are frequent news releases recognizing Who's Who, Academic All American team, Skills USA, and various other achievements.
- The Collegian, the College newspaper, is published five times a year. This newspaper is distributed to all staff, students, and college alumni. Awards and special achievements by students and staff are included in the articles. News releases are also sent to area newspapers and to the hometown news paper of the individual being recognized.
- NCC gives an award annually to the each of the following categories: Outstanding Faculty, Outstanding Employee, and Outstanding Part-Time/ Adjunct Instructor. Peers submit nominations for this honor and a committee selects the recipient from those nominations. Outstanding Faculty and Adjunct Instructor award recipients are honored at graduation, while the Outstanding Employee is announced at a recognition ceremony open to the entire staff.
- Each year the college honors an alumnus for their contributions to the College. This is included in the Annual Report, and the award is presented publicly at graduation.
- The College Annual report articulates success of students, faculty and staff.
- Student success is also displayed in academic areas throughout campus. Award and trophy cases, banners and projects are on display for the entire community to see.
- The College Recognition Team consists of seven employees and is responsible for awarding the annual Employee Longevity Awards in the fall and the Traveling Trophy for college committees and teams that have done an outstanding service to the institution. The Recognition Team is responsible for maintaining and updating the Wall of Fame, which recognizes achievements of staff and faculty members.
- "Making a Difference" program gives students the opportunity to honor faculty members who have influenced them while at NCC.

Core Component 4b: The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

Community colleges serve students at the undergraduate level delivering associate degrees in both arts and sciences college transfer, and technical programs. Instructors at NCC are committed to their disciplines, and are encouraged to continue to learn.

NCC integrates general education into all of its undergraduate degree programs through curricular and experiential offerings intentionally created to develop the attitudes and skills requisite for a life of learning in a diverse society.

NCC believes in the value of general education for all of its students. The College has expanded course offerings in the general education areas in all of NCC's undergraduate degree and diploma programs since the 1994 NCA visit. General education courses at NCC assist students in better understanding human relations, social, and environmental issues and aid students in becoming more competent in communications and mathematics. Additionally, students are able to acquire knowledge relative to their society and realize that their full potential is achieved through a lifetime of learning.

LEARNING-FOCUSED

NCC believes in the value of general education for all of its students.

The College Catalog outlines the general education requirements for each program of study. The Associate of Arts degree requires 45 credits of general education, the Associate of Science degree requires 30 credits, the Associate of Applied Science degree requires 12 credits, and the Diploma programs require 6 credits.

NCC assesses how effectively its technical programs establish a knowledge base on which students develop depth of expertise. Program evaluations are reported to the Executive Council and the Board of Trustees. These two administrative bodies assess the effectiveness of the technical programs based on data gathered through the following processes.

- In the five year program evaluation model, employers of NCC graduates are surveyed about skills needed by students to succeed in the workforce. Advisory committee members and graduates are also surveyed during the program evaluation process, and curriculum is reviewed at advisory committee meetings held at least annually.
- Trade & Technology programs at NCC establish a foundation in fundamental classes that allow students to pursue careers, not simply jobs, in their chosen fields of study. Many programs prepare students to take standardized tests granting necessary certifications. For example, graduates of the Associate Degree in Nursing program are eligible to write the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX) given by the National Council of State

LEARNING-FOCUSED

NCC assesses how effectively its Technical programs establish a knowledge base on which students develop depth of expertise.

Boards of Nursing. The Welding program offers certification of structural pipe using mild steel, stainless steel, and aluminum in AWS (American Welding Society), ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers), and API (American Petroleum Industry) Codes. Administrative Secretarial and Administrative Office Management students are given the opportunity to test for Microsoft Office User Specialist MOS certification here on NCC's campus.

- State, national and international student competition results also portray the depth of expertise students develop in their programs. NCC students have consistently placed high in outside competitions. Recently NCC students were successful in receiving the first place gold medal in Robotics and Automation Technology at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in June 2003.
- Program advisory committee members or partners in business and industry willingly volunteer to assist with capstone projects in programs. Machining and Mechanical Engineering Technology are two programs where advisory committee members critique final projects by industry standards for students.
- NCC students are introduced to professional organizations in their career fields and how involvement in those organizations will keep them up-to-date following their formal education. Students are also made aware of the professional journals and publications relating to their career fields, which will help them to keep current in the world of work.

The College demonstrates the linkages between curricular and cocurricular activities that support inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility.

NCC students enter into society well-prepared in their chosen disciplines, but while still in college, they also have opportunities to develop personal skills. Students may participate in a number of clubs and associations. Some examples of these are SkillsUSA, Phi Theta Kappa, Student Government, ISA (Instrumentation Systems and Automation) and SME (Society of Manufacturing Engineers). All full time students have the opportunity of becoming members in the Student Government Association and Skills USA. The Student Government Association provides entertainment and cultural awareness activities for all students. Skill USA provides students with leadership opportunities and competitions challenging their technical knowledge and skills. Students competing nationally consistently place in the top 50% of the nation.

- Students in the Accounting program provided tax assistance to low-income and the elderly through the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program beginning in spring 2004.
- Automotive students drove to North Dakota during floods and worked on cars, and Powerline students assist in hanging the Christmas lights down town Sheldon each year.

CONNECTED

NCC students enter into society well-prepared in their chosen disciplines, but while still in college, they also have opportunities to develop personal skills.

Learning outcomes demonstrate that graduates have achieved breadth of knowledge and skills and the capacity to exercise intellectual inquiry. There are opportunities for students to participate in internships, coops, directed observation, clinicals and preceptorships as part of their program of study. These offer the students on-the-job training working under supervisors in area businesses. In some cases students also receive wages for their work in addition to the experience they receive.

Many programs require on-the-job training for their students, including Industrial/Commercial Wiring, Automotive Service Technology, Health Information Technology, and Nursing. An on-site supervisor supervises students. Most of the internships require a weekly evaluation and a time sheet. At the end of the internship, the supervisor and the student's primary faculty member work together to evaluate, rate and grade the student's performance. Nursing students are required to take 144 hours of preceptorship and 224 hours of clinical work. And, as another example, the Associate of Arts program for Pre-Professional Education requires 30 hours of directed observation.

Some programs offer optional internships which enable the student to apply knowledge in a subject beyond class projects. Powerline Technology and General Machining have optional internships. Administrative Secretarial and Administrative Office Management program students can earn 3–6 credit hours for 200–400 hours of work. There is also directed observation that takes place in the pre-professional education program.

And again, programs at NCC are evaluated every five years. The evaluation team includes the program instructors, other faculty, deans, and other administrators. The Program Evaluations reinforce NCC's commitment to learning by ensuring the quality of current curriculum.

An email survey was sent to 33 full-time faculty members at NCC in an attempt to gather information concerning the mastery of the knowledge and skill necessary for independent learning. Of the 33 faculty members, ten members responded to how these skills are taught in the classroom. Of the ten respondents, nine have been employed at NCC for more than one year and so are able to fully respond to the statement above.

Of the nine respondents, eight indicated they apply learning in the classroom through a variety of ways and methods. Term papers and class projects were the two methods that occurred most frequently. The time spent on the class projects varied from an hour a day, to 10 hours per project, to several weeks in preparation for a final project. Also, small group and individual projects are completed in an attempt to apply learning to the classroom/lab setting.

Learning outcomes demonstrate effective preparation for continued learning.

The long standing mission of NCC is to provide life-long learning opportunities. In order to do that it is necessary to make sure that graduates of the College are prepared for continued learning.

- Graduates from technical programs advance quickly in their fields. Technical programs lay groundwork for that and student success is documented during program evaluations, and Institutional Effectiveness research.
- Students who pursue a four-year degree after leaving NCC have a success rate higher percentage than those who start at the four-year universities.
- Graduates in the health field successfully earn their licenses and the college is active in providing them with ongoing licensure through continuing education courses.

LEARNING-FOCUSED

The long standing mission of NCC is to provide life-long learning opportunities. In order to do that it is necessary to make sure that graduates of the College are prepared for continued learning.

Core Component 4c: The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

NCC is increasingly aware of the importance of preparing students for work and life in a global, diverse and technological society. This is reflected in the new Mission Statement of the College, and in the strategic initiatives.

Regular academic program reviews include attention to currency and relevance of courses and programs. Northwest Iowa Community College is committed to the continuous assessment of programs and services and the use of the results to enhance student learning and institutional effectiveness (Board Policy 105). NCC evaluates its program offerings on an ongoing basis. For example, at the March 15, 2004, board meeting, a new Computerized Manufacturing Technology AAS Degree Program was approved, which combined courses from the current MET and General Machining programs to give students another option. This program request was in direct response from area manufacturing firms requesting employees with both drafting and machining skills. A DACUM process held in September for the MET program further reinforced the need for a diverse graduate. Again, the program evaluation model also closely monitors curriculum and its relevancy.

In keeping with its mission, learning goals and outcomes include skills and professional competence essential to a diverse workforce. Most occupations now require an employee to complete additional job-related training. NCC offers a variety of educational offerings to meet the needs of a diverse workforce. The Continuing Education Department has coordinators assigned to various areas of education and technical trades. Classes are offered to those customers who need to

maintain their current licenses or certifications in their occupations. Nursing, Real Estate, Business and Industry, Cosmetology, and Emergency Medical Technicians are examples of occupations in which educational offerings are covered.

Graduates of NCC are made aware of the continuing educational requirements for their personal occupation prior to leaving. Lifelong learning does not stop at NCC, but continues throughout their professional careers. Continuing education offers classes to meet renewal requirements for real estate, farming, insurance, health occupations, and other professions. Several non-credit public education courses are offered in addition to the recertification programs. NCC Continuing Education provided 2,223 courses in fiscal year 2003 with 1,441 of those classes held off campus in the surrounding communities. Total enrollment figures were 28,459 with unduplicated head count of 13,478 people served in continuing education programs in fiscal year 2003.

LEARNING-FOCUSED

Graduates of NCC are made aware of the continuing educational requirements for their personal occupation prior to leaving.

NCC offers a wide variety of programs, from health related occupations to business programs to the trades. NCC offers college transferable classes as well as competency based programs. Three of NCC's programs are unique in the fact that they are the only program of its kind offered in the state of Iowa: Powerline, Industrial Instrumentation & Control, and Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance.

As industry requirements have become more technical, NCC realizes that College programs need to become more and more advanced. An assessment of the interest of special needs students in these programs may need to be conducted.

NCC's Heavy Equipment and Powerline programs recommend and encourage their students obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Currently, nearly 100% of the students in these programs with valid/unsuspended driver's license obtain a CDL. Those who do not are not allowed to operate any equipment that requires a CDL.

Learning outcomes document that graduates have gained the skills and knowledge they need to function in diverse local, national, and global societies.

Curricular evaluation involves alumni, employers, and other external constituents who understand the relationships among the courses of study, the currency of the curriculum, and the utility of the knowledge and skills gained.

Each program has an advisory committee that meets at least annually to evaluate the learning outcomes of these programs in light of industry needs and standards. The advisory committee consists of some past graduates and employers in the field of study. Assessment of the program is also done through student and employer surveys.

All program-learning outcomes are developed and updated with the help of several sources. One of these sources is the advisory committees. Another source is the program evaluation, which is completed every five years. During this evaluation NCC surveys current students, past graduates, employers of the college's graduates, and general industry representatives. These survey results are tabulated and assessed, and with the assistance and advice of the advisory committees changes are made to improve the quality of the program. In many of the program areas, the students will achieve a level of licensure or certification whose requirements are set by various certifying agencies. And the most important measure is that NCC graduates become employed in the field of study they have been trained in. *See Program Evaluations and Advisory Committee reports in the Resource Room.*

The College provides curricular and cocurricular opportunities that promote social responsibility. Many student organizations on campus perform service projects.

- Annually SGA (Student Government Association) collects and distributes Christmas gifts to children in the Head Start program.
- 2004 was the third consecutive year that the Health Information Technology Students participated in the “Valentines for Veterans” program. Nearly 100 handmade valentine cards were sent to the Royal C. Johnson Veterans’ Memorial Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota to be delivered to the hospitalized veterans during the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.
- The SkillsUSA chapter also collect donations for the food pantry and participate in Adopt-a-Family at Christmas time by providing clothing and food items for a needy family.
- One of the four hallmarks for Phi Theta Kappa chapter is service. In 2003 their graduation project was called “Feed a Body - Feed a Mind.”
- Campus Crusade for Christ sponsored a nursing trip to Haiti, and the collection and delivery of toys to needy children at Christmas.
- Sigma Kappa Delta sponsors community projects, including reading to special needs residents at Village Northwest.

DISTINCTIVE

Curricular evaluation involves alumni, employers, and other external constituents who understand the relationships among the courses of study, the currency of the curriculum, and the utility of the knowledge and skills gained.

NCC realizes there is potential for growth in student life on campus. However, most NCC students are employed 20–40 hours per week while attending college, leaving little time to participate in student activities. The 2003 Strategic Plan identified this and included an initiative in developing a more collegiate atmosphere on campus.

Core Component 4d: The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Academic integrity is an important part of collegiate life. The College provides faculty, staff and students with the resources and frameworks necessary for acquiring, discovering and applying knowledge responsibly.

NCC's academic and student support programs contribute to the development of student skills and attitudes fundamental to responsible use of knowledge.

Professionalism and safety are incorporated into all academic programs at NCC. Course syllabi reflect training in safety measures, compliance with governmental regulations such as EPA, confidentiality, and ethical conduct. Programs demand adherence to codes such as electrical codes for electrical students and ethical codes of conduct for Accounting students.

NCC has several ancillary programs in place to aid students in their acquisition of knowledge.

- All students, including on-line students, have access to the College's library and Learning Center. The Learning Center provides free tutoring services, developmental classes, and a student computer lab.
- Through the Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant, the College has piloted developmental programs and has increased the amount of software for student use. Title III is also piloting an advising system for students. The Career Center assists the students from the beginning to the end of their academic career. The Center offers interest assessment, COMPASS testing that measures their current knowledge, workshops on resume writing and job seeking skills, and assistance with college transfer by providing information about other colleges.
- NCC was awarded a Trio Student Support Services Grant in September of 2001. The STARS program is part of this grant. The purpose of the grant is to aid in student retention, in graduation, and in the transfer of students to four-year colleges. The purpose is accomplished through providing services which include counseling, advising, academic support, and cultural and enrichment activities.

In order to obtain a college education students require more than classroom instruction; they need a variety of support programs to help them succeed. Students are assisted in obtaining an education through financial assistance in the form of scholarships, work study and financial aid applications.

- Scholarships are an integral part of helping students to succeed in obtaining a degree. As the cost of attending college continues to grow, the College has becoming increasingly involved in assisting students with scholarships. The NCC Foundation handles the scholarship process and each year awards approximately \$120,000 in scholarships.
- Eligible NCC students also have many opportunities for work-study. The College has work-study opportunities, many of which complement and reinforce each student's educational program or career goal. In order to be eligible for work-study, the student must meet all the general eligibility requirements for Title IV financial aid. Jobs are made reasonably available to all eligible students on their award letter, as well as having pamphlets listing work-study opportunities available both on and off campus. It is the student's responsibility to contact the appropriate person referenced in the job listings, and to arrange interviews for the position. Once the student is employed, a school official or an off-campus agency supervises them.
- Financial Aid counseling is provided free-of-choice to all students at NCC.

The College creates, disseminates, and enforces clear policies on practices involving intellectual property rights. The issue of intellectual property rights is being addressed by Northwest Iowa Community College. The College is committed to following the spirit and the letter of the law.

- The College Library carefully purchases materials, including performance rights videos for instructional use. Library personnel also assist the students and staff in understanding copyright and plagiarism issues. The librarians also participate in state and national organizations that promote proper use of intellectual property rights.
- Information technology is a big issue, and the campus purchases appropriate software and pays for licensing as needed for the entire campus, or for specific program use.
- Online faculty are instructed in the proper use of intellectual property. The ICCOC informational website (www.iowaconline.org) has extensive information for students and faculty. The library pages have specific links to information about plagiarism and copyright laws. The faculty pages include the faculty handbook which addresses the issue of copyright responsibilities of the instructor. Also, at the annual ICCOC conference there are discussions of intellectual property rights.

We Pride Ourselves

- NCC has demonstrated its commitment to learning through expanding and renovating its facilities.
- NCC's library collection has continued to grow.
- NCC faculty and staff are provided with staff development opportunities.
- NCC demonstrates a commitment to having up-to-date equipment in the classrooms for technical programs.
- NCC places a high importance on internships to provide students with real-life experiences that they will encounter following course completion.

We Challenge Ourselves

- NCC is faced with escalating technology needs.
- NCC is experiencing high equipment costs for some technical programs.
- NCC's Board of Trustees needs to develop policies concerning freedom of inquiry and academic property.
- NCC has challenges in meeting student life needs.
- NCC has challenges in meeting the need for data collection.
- NCC needs to continually seek other sources of funding for upgrading equipment and adding building space.
- NCC needs to track students after leaving the college to monitor their success in pursuing advanced education or licensure.

Criterion Five Engagement and Service

As called for by its **mission**, the organization identifies its **constituencies** and **serves** them in ways both **value**.



Northwest Iowa Community College serves a broad spectrum of constituencies that includes both credit and non-credit students, local and distant students, high school and undergraduate students, alumni and business partners, local K–12’s as well as post-secondary educational entities in a four state area. This is a challenge for a small college, especially in an era of economic and political uncertainty. The people of Area IV—taxpayers and citizens—depend on NCC.

In order to meet the needs of this diverse group of partners and learners, the College must continually assess its relationships with both current and potential stakeholders. NCC uses many tools to assess the future of these relationships, and to determine the best course forward. The College understands the importance of including the people who depend on NCC for life-long learning to be part of the decision making process.

Core Component 5a: The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

NCC is intent upon optimally serving its constituents, and through multiple processes, learns from its constituents their needs and interests. This information forms the basis upon which the College takes steps to analyze its capacity to meet these needs and expectations. The goal is to have the process of improvement to be a conversation between partners. While strides have been made, these collaborations need to be expanded, to grow, and to come to maturity. NCC will be challenged as the new mission drives the College to focus not only on the northwest Iowa, but on meeting the global needs of people in northwest Iowa.

This is reflected in the current Strategic Plan that says, “*Northwest Iowa Community College will pursue, strengthen and expand learning opportunities for our students and communities through partnerships and new initiatives,*” and “*Northwest Iowa Community College faculty, staff and administration are devoted to embracing a collaborative culture that will serve as the foundation for quality in student and community learning.*”

FUTURE ORIENTED

The data garnered from these sources has helped the College to assess the value of existing programs and to plan for the future based on the identified needs of the constituents it serves.

Periodic environmental scanning is conducted both informally and formally to understand the changing needs of College constituencies and communities.

The kind of scanning regularly performed by the College includes surveys, literature review, interviews and focus groups. The data garnered from these sources has helped the college to assess the value of existing programs and to plan for the future based on the identified needs of the constituents it serves. There have been a number of scans since 1994 that provided the College information from a broad base of constituents.

- The Skills 2000 Survey encouraged the college to develop a computer networking program to meet the needs of area businesses and industries.
- A feasibility study conducted in preparation for the last NCC Foundation Capital Fund Drive, gave the college the tools to develop and conduct a successful campaign.
- The environmental scanning process completed by the College staff as part of the Strategic planning process helped to define the 2003 Mission and Vision Statements, strategic initiatives and the 2004 operational plan.
- The expansion of the technology programs to include Computerized Manufacturing grew out of the input gathered from area manufacturing partners.
- A career interest survey is completed on an annual basis by 8th and 11th grade students in Area IV. Student responses are reviewed to determine career and professional areas in which the College may wish to pursue program development. The creation of the Pre-Professional Education Option was the direct result of such an analysis.
- Area hospitals contacted NCC about their needs for more nurses and for radiologic technicians.
- Requests from area community newspapers led to the development of the Pre-professional Journalism program.

NCC recognizes the accuracy of the saying “actions speak louder than words”.

The College’s outreach programs respond to identified community needs.

Enrollments trends have been analyzed throughout the decade, and used to make decisions about the programming needs of the College. *The enrollment chart by program is listed in the Appendix on page 32.*

High School Programs:

- NCC has added offerings as the result of increased interest or demand for a specific instructional area or delivery format.
- The College has also addressed the needs of other entities/organizations of the area. Needs not being met by area high schools are being addressed by NCC through PSEO and Jointly Administered programs.
- In 1994 NCC developed the Northwest Iowa Alternative High School which provides an opportunity for at risk students to complete their diploma or GED requirements in a format and at a location other than their regular high school. This was in response to a need determined to exist by the College as it pooled information from multiple high school districts. A satellite site was established in Ireton in 2002.

Expanded Programs on Campus

- Expansion of nursing programs due to demand by area hospitals and health care providers.
- Computerized manufacturing technology in response to advisory committees
- Computer Networking in response to Skills 2000 survey
- Radiologic technology in response to demands by area hospitals and health care providers
- General machining in response to area business and industry partners
- Production welding in response to advisory committees.
- Automotive service technology in response to advisory committees

Changing Demographics:

- As area demographics have change the College has noted the changing needs of residents for English language instruction. This is apparent in the history of ESL /ELL classes offered to area adults. *See chart in the Resource Room*

Continuing Education: NCC continues to serve its constituents with educational opportunities for *life-long learning*. In recent years, non-credit enrollments have annually totaled between 27,000–29,000, with 12,000–14,000 being the average unduplicated head count. This means that on average one out of every 2.5 people in northwest Iowa take a course from NCC each year. Enrollments have expanded slightly in the past decade, while at the same time the population of the area has decreased.

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NCC recognizes the accuracy of the saying **“actions speak louder than words”**. The College’s out-reach programs respond to identified community needs.

Continuing Education/Business & Industry Enrollment over the Past Decade

FY Year	ABE/ HSC/ DEV	State Recognized/ Mandated	Leisure Recreation	EMT	Continuing Education/ Bus & Ind	Total
1993	880	509	2,336	0	23,612	27,337
1994	1,153	826	1,553	34	21,790	25,356
1995	1,162	698	1,183	56	22,988	26,087
1996	1,008	535	961	75	22,663	25,242
1997	1,658	764	733	42	24,696	27,893
1998	599	830	849	49	26,388	28,715
1999	1,421	818	750	49	24,168	27,206
2000	1,512	862	711	40	25,153	28,278
2001	1,347	791	435	43	25,621	28,237
2002	2,217	798	342	29	25,122	28,508
2003	2,356	820	140	59	25,084	28,459

(Continuing Education Annual Report—2002–2003, pages 4 & 5)

The flexible delivery approach taken by the College is well received by constituents with two-thirds of the courses being held beyond the NCC campus. This approach provides industry employees the opportunity to utilize their own equipment and facilities for a “hands on” application of skills they require to stay current in their fields of expertise. Training is sometimes offered in the evenings, on the weekends and in the early morning hours to enable second and third shift employees to obtain training. NCC also offers courses over the ICN and on-line. An example would be the 16-week licensure program for those desiring to become Real Estate Agents.

The College is proactive in providing local industries with training in technical areas, quality control, management, communications, teamwork and course planning. A few of the technical courses include Blueprint Reading, Computer Numeric Control, computer software applications, and Programmable Logic Controllers. Many of the companies have national as well as international customers and they value the College’s services which is evidenced by the ongoing utilization of NCC in technical and soft skills training to assist them in remaining competitive in the global economy. A recent example was the Quality Management System training the College provided to Diamond Vogel Paints in Orange City. This training enabled them to receive their ISO9001 certification, which they stated has opened markets for them among Fortune 500 and other large scale international companies.

NCC has a significant impact on the communities by providing Emergency Services Training to over eighty fire departments in northwest Iowa. This training includes initial and continuing education for the paramedics and firefighters who are volunteers in the rural area served by NCC. Over the last 10 years, NCC has provided Emergency Medical Technician training to an average of 47 EMTs per year.

The College enables individuals to earn their high school diploma. This is accomplished through multiple programs: Alternative High School, General Education Development Tests (GED) and a college-issued high school diploma. The number of GED students over the past few years has averaged 50 participants. The training provided has enabled 100% of those participants to successfully pass the GED tests. Over 2,000 individuals (or approximately 3% of the population of Area IV) have benefited from these high school completion programs.

NCC's commitments are shaped by its mission and its capacity to support those commitments. Two key terms from the 2003 Mission Statement that drive these commitments are that NCC is a *learning college* and that that NCC is responding to *community needs*. A learning college is a place where learning is placed first and where the educational experiences take place anywhere, anytime. (Terry O'Banion, 1997)

- The College has commitments to meet the needs of area students for two year programs in college transfer and vocational technical programs in northwest Iowa.
- The College has commitments to the ICCOC to deliver quality online courses, assess student learning, and participate with the other six members of the consortium to meet the needs of distance education learners.
- The College has commitments to area life-long learners who need ongoing credit and non/credit professional development.
- The College has commitments to area K–12's, particularly area high schools to deliver PSEO and Jointly administered programs
- The College has committed the necessary financial, human and physical resources to accomplish the educational goals of the institution.

NCC enjoys these commitments, but at a time of decreasing state and federal funding, it will depend on the guidance of the mission Statement and planning documents to determine the best way to meet these commitments.

- The equipment budgeting process at NCC is a college wide process and includes participation by all academic and non-academic areas. In 2004, eleven faculty and staff members participated along with the 6 members of the Executive Council. This inclusive process helps the organization to achieve a more global perspective.

DISTINCTIVE

NCC is a learning College and that that NCC is responding to community needs.

- Additional funding through grants and the NCC Foundation help fund NCC initiatives.
- Programs that do not meet a local need, programs for which there is no demand for employees, and programs with extremely low enrollments due to low student demand will be reassessed by the Board of Trustees, the Executive Council, Advisory Committees, program faculty and area partners.

Core Component 5b: The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

NCC exists because of the constituents and the communities to be served. NCC's mission is interwoven with and dependent upon continually satisfying local needs. This can only be accomplished through a pro-active engagement strategy. The commitment is embedded in our Mission Statement and evidenced by the close working relationship the College has with the communities it serves. The question of capacity is another issue. While resources are well managed, changing funding streams and a downturn in the local economy are presenting new challenges to the College.

The College's structures and processes enable effective connections with its communities. Multiple College staff stay well connected to subgroups of constituents through visits to their facilities, phone calls, surveys, advisory meeting and, when appropriate, detailed partnerships.

- Technical faculty members remain in direct contact with employers in their field; and business & industry and well as continuing education staff interact with area business.
- NCC also has staff identified which work directly with the area high schools.
- The College maintains good communication with the ICCOC. Two members of the academic community are members of the ICCOC Oversight committee. Monthly telenet meetings, and three face-to-face meetings of this committee are attended by these NCC personnel. In addition, the ICCOC Faculty Trainer is a member of the NCC Staff and as such participates in monthly telenet staff meetings. The ICCOC also publishes a faculty newsletter, has an annual face-to-face conference, and conducts site visits and training for member colleges. The ICCOC also maintains an informational website at www.iowaconline.org.

NCC's cocurricular activities engage students, staff, administrators, and faculty with external communities. The concept of engagement and cooperative/ collaborative initiatives is simply a way of life at NCC. This strength was specifically noted in the Iowa Department of Education State Accreditation Visit in April of 2000 which noted the following:

Partnerships at Northwest Community College occur at every level possible, both within the college itself and between the community college and external partners. Because NCC is a rural area, remote from larger cities, thus NCC's approach to partnerships is to maximize all resources for the benefits of the community college, its partners, and the citizens of the merged area.

A review of that report provides multiple pages detailing the partnership within NCC, as well as the College's involvement with K–12s, employers, other post-secondary institutions, organizations and communities at large. *The report is located in the Resource Room.*

NCC has memberships in 14 area community chambers of commerce, hosts the Northwest Iowa Economic Developers Coalition and has both students and faculty involved in work-study programs in local businesses. Through the NCC Speakers Bureau a number of NCC faculty and staff have offered their experience to local communities to speak to groups about a wide variety of topics.

Although the engagement with the constituents and communities has been exemplary, it is recognized that the size of the College is a limiting factor. Most individuals have multiple responsibilities which thus limits the time available for even further engagement with the communities.

Core Component 5c: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Responding to constituents is a long-standing and ongoing process at NCC. The organization is deeply aware of the mandate that community colleges have to serve constituent needs. Listening to constituents, assessing needs and responding quickly is a way of life at NCC.

NCC collaborates with area LEAs and other institutions of higher learning in ways that meet the educational needs of constituents.

- Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCO) is a successful collaboration of seven Iowa community colleges to deliver associate degree programs online. Consortium colleges enroll students at their own institutions and students earn degrees from that institution. The ICCOC is not a degree

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NCC collaborates with area LEA's and other institutions of higher learning in ways that meet the educational needs of constituents.

granting organization; it is a cooperative arrangement to share the resources necessary to deliver online instruction. Each college provides courses to students at the other consortium schools through internet based instruction. Partners collaborate to ensure high academic standards and to ensure student success through support services.

- The College works closely with area high schools to deliver PSEO and Jointly Administered programs, Tech Prep programs, and entrepreneurship programs.
- NCC regularly participates with the area high school guidance counselor groups and high school administrative groups.
- The College is currently involved in establishing a career academy with the high schools in northwest Iowa.
- NCC has a 2+2 arrangement with Buena Vista University (BV) for business majors. Classes are delivered by BV via distance learning technologies and on campus at NCC.
- Franklin University has entered into a partnership with NCC which will enable students with AAS degrees to finish a bachelor's degree. Bridge courses will be delivered on campus at NCC, and the rest of the courses will be delivered via the internet from Franklin University.
- The College has articulation agreements with 16 colleges and universities. *See the Appendix for this list on page 17.*

NCC's transfer policies and practices create an environment supportive of the mobility of learners. As an accredited member of the NCA, the College is able to establish articulation agreements with other institutions. Likewise, NCC accepts the credits that students earn at other accredited institutions. This allows students to move from one institution to another.

NCC has also entered into an agreement known as LACTS or Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students. This is an agreement between the Iowa Community Colleges and Iowa State University, The University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa. This allows for the seamless transfer of credits for students who are covered by the following areas:

- Associate of Arts degree Articulation Agreement
- Vocational/Technical Credit Agreement
- Common Grading symbols and Definition Agreement
- Credit by Examination Agreement
- Vocational-Technical Programs in Electronics/Electronics Based Technology Agreement
- Awarding and Transferring College Credit for Educational Experience in the Armed Forces Agreement
- Evaluating international Student Academic Credential Agreement.

Community leaders demonstrate the usefulness of the College’s programs of engagement.

As a community college, NCC is privileged to have the support of community leaders in the area. Community members serve the College on advisory committees, on the NCC Foundation Board of Directors, as campus volunteers, and as business and industry training partners. Here is a quote from NCC supporter that was published in the Skills 2000 report.

“We are certainly going to have to look for some creative solutions to the challenge concerning the workforce. In addition to seeking ways to expand the population base of this region, retention must improve, skills must be advanced, and we must find ways of becoming productive. I think the community college will play a vital role in these solutions.” Denny Michels, CEO Maintainer Corporation of Iowa/Link Manufacturing.

- The community demonstrates that it values the College through financial contributions to the NCC Foundation. The College is the recipient of donations to specific programs by business and industries, and through capital fund drives.
- The healthcare industry values their partnership with the College nursing program. Not only do they provide nurses with clinical and preceptor opportunities, they also provide scholarships for nursing students.
- The College also receives support from the community through the passing of tax levies to support the programming at NCC. At this time Ken Hengeveld from Iowa State Bank is the finance chair for the upcoming 20¼ levy campaign. Marla Toering (CEO, Sioux Center Hospital) and Jackie Kibbie-Williams (CEO, Village Northwest Enterprise) are serving as Co-chairs for the entire levy campaign.

Northwest Iowa has little ethnic diversity. The College is doing what it can to help students to understand the ideas and cultures that they will encounter as members of a global community. **NCC strives to provide programs that build effective bridges among diverse communities.**

ESL and GED: The College is the place for immigrant populations in northwest Iowa to learn English, to earn a high school diploma and to learn the skills necessary to be successful.

Credit Instruction: Since the 1994 NCA visit, the College has added several courses that deal with cultural diversity. World Religions deals with the living religions of the world and is offered both on campus and online. It has also been delivered to high school students for dual credit. In addition, the College offers a two semester course in Indian History and Culture. Ethics is another course that exposes students to the diverse world of ideas. This course is taught on campus and on the internet.

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“We are certainly going to have to look for some creative solutions to the challenge concerning the workforce. In addition to seeking ways to expand the population base of this region, retention must improve, skills must be advanced, and we must find ways of becoming productive. I think the community college will play a vital role in these solutions.”

Denny Michels,
CEO Maintainer
Corporation of
Iowa/Link
Manufacturing.

Cultural Experiences: As part of the 1998 Strategic Plan the College began cultural awareness activities to introduce students to the diversity of cultures in America and around the world. TRIO students are also introduced to cultural activities. Each year students are able to participate in trips and cultural events which are often the first time that low-income and first generation students have these opportunities.

NCC provides many collaborative ventures, agreements, partnerships, and articulation agreements with Iowa and surrounding states' four-year colleges, area education agencies, public & private elementary schools, middle & high schools and business & industry in the service area that are built on shared educational, economic and social goals. In all cases, these partnership agreements and collaborative ventures are focused on sharing educational, economic, and social goals of the northwest Iowa communities. NCC believes this demonstrates NCC's responsiveness to those constituents that depend on us for servicing their needs which enable them to achieve their socio-economic goals. Some examples are as follows:

LEARNING-FOCUSED

In all cases, these partnership agreements and collaborative ventures are focused on sharing educational, economic, and social goals of the northwest Iowa communities.

- NCC has developed ongoing formal and informal articulation agreements with four-year colleges throughout the State of Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska and Missouri.
- NCC collaborates with area LEAs to hold an annual 8th grade Career Day program and an annual College Fair/Junior Career College Day that attracts 1,100 students.
- NCC responded to industry needs for a General Machining program in 1999. This was a cooperative effort between local industry, the Iowa Department of Economic Development and the College. Additionally NCC responded to industry requests for the Computerized Manufacturing, and Electrical Technology Advanced Standing Degree programs.
- The College cooperates with area health care providers who provide clinical opportunities for nursing and radiologic technology students.
- In response to the need for varied delivery systems, the College became a member of the ICCOC.
- NCC Powerline instructors partner with energy and cable companies throughout the State of Iowa to provide training. Instructors and students also do community service projects in tree trimming and also various electrical distribution systems at campgrounds and parks in the local communities.
- Students in the Heavy Equipment program participate in projects requested by communities and schools. For example NCC students performed site preparation for the Le Mars Industrial Development Park and site preparation for soccer fields for the Denison Community Schools and Unity Christian School.

- The College partners with area K–12 institutions. One example was an in-service day for 700 K–12 teachers connecting teachers with area industries to see firsthand what workforce skills were needed by these industries.
- NCC partners with high schools to deliver a Tech Prep program. Involvement includes 13 public and 4 private high schools and 450 students. NCC hosts an annual meeting for Industrial Education Instructors involving 24–30 instructors.
- NCC has written grants for area schools, resulting in funding to meet local needs.
- Over 250 northwest Iowa industry representatives serve on 18 advisory committees. These committees are responsible to ensure that NCC remains responsive to the constituents that depend on the College for service.
- NCC has established Accelerated Career Education agreements (Iowa Code 260G) with many local industries and health care facilities in the area. These partnerships provide financial support to programs that provide employees in nursing, machining, and electrical fields. These agreements support the Iowa Department of Economic Development’s focus to provide the education Iowa’s industries need to continue economic growth.

NCC has many partnerships—some are formal arrangements with contracts, while others are agreements between like minded groups. **Integrity in these contractual arrangements are maintained by the guidelines outlined in sections 700 and 800 of the board policies.** *Board Policies are available in the Resource Room.*

Core Component 5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

NCC is valued by the constituencies it serves. That value is demonstrated through the participation of constituencies in credit and non-credit enrollment, participation in volunteer opportunities at the colleges, through financial commitments to the College, and through publicly articulated statements of support.

NCC evaluations of services provided by the College involves the constituencies served. Evaluation includes quality of instructor, usefulness of content, and application of content.

- Attendees upon conclusion of the learning activity evaluate each forum, workshop or program. NCC staff promptly review the evaluations to make sure that all three criteria have been achieved.

DISTINCTIVE

Evaluation includes quality of instructor, usefulness of content, and application of content.

- The College also follows up with surveys to the companies served. A recent survey dealing with the success attained in area industries that received the “Lean” Manufacturing training that assisted industries in remaining competitive in the pricing strategies of their products. These programs were very positive and included the following:
 - o \$13,000,000 reduction in finished inventory
 - o 20% reduction in floor space utilization
 - o 15% increase in employee productivity
 - o \$7,000,000 investment lost avoidance
 - o 30% reduction in work-in-process inventories

NCC credit program evaluation is inclusive of both internal and external stakeholders and includes a comprehensive review of the following: curriculum, recruitment/admissions, educational resources, advisory committee, student achievement, completion/graduation, placement, student satisfaction (current student & graduate), employer satisfaction, staff recruitment/development. This was covered more extensively in Criterion 3. *Examples of these documents and their results are in the Resource Room.*

Service programs and student, faculty, and staff volunteer activities are well received by the communities served. NCC faculty and staff volunteer activities are numerous in the communities the College serves which are most reflective of the culture in Northwest Iowa. Over 40 College faculty and staff members are involved in more than 70 volunteer activities and more than 100 church-affiliated volunteer activities. The NCC Recognition Team surveys the College community regarding the level of volunteer involvement every two years.

Service learning opportunities for students enrolled at NCC include the following: Adopt-A-Highway through the Department of Transportation, Adopt-A Family, Clothing Drive, and the Canned Food Drive through the Upper Des Moines Opportunity Council. These were outlined more completely in Criterion Three. *Examples of these activities are in the Resource Room*

NCC’s economic and workforce development activities are sought after and valued by civic and business leaders. The College has provided strategic planning sessions for the Northwest Iowa Economic Developers and Workforce Development Coalitions. In addition, the College has been instrumental in providing assessment, career counseling, and retraining for displaced workers. The civic and business leaders in the 14 communities value this service. In addition, NCC has completed two extensive surveys, Skills 2000 & Skills 2006, in which area business and industry assessed the level of skill needed to retain a competitive workforce. These studies concluded that NCC was an important partner in this process.

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Over 40 college faculty and staff members are involved in more than 70 volunteer activities and more than 100 church-affiliated volunteer activities.

NCC is enriched by the extensive involvement of external constituents in the activities and co-curricular programs that are open to the public.

Here is evidence of this participation:

- The NCC Board of Trustees is made up of seven individuals who are elected to serve three year terms. Board members represent seven director districts in the 4 ½ counties served by NCC.
- Every College program has an Advisory Committee that provides assistance in program development and review. These volunteers meet at least twice a year, and are an invaluable part of the learning teams at NCC.
- The NCC Foundation Board is made up of 25 volunteers. Not only do they advise the Foundation Director, but work on fund raising activities and in representing the College to their respective communities.
- One group that is valued by all the College staff is the group of senior volunteers who come to the College to serve as ambassadors, help with special projects and help with graduation activities.
- Whenever the College has called upon the community to participate in external scanning or strategic planning, there has been no shortage of people ready to donate their time and expertise to the project. *The list of all participants is included in the 2003 Strategic Plan on pages 132-137 Appendix.*

NCC takes pride in making College facilities available to the constituency.

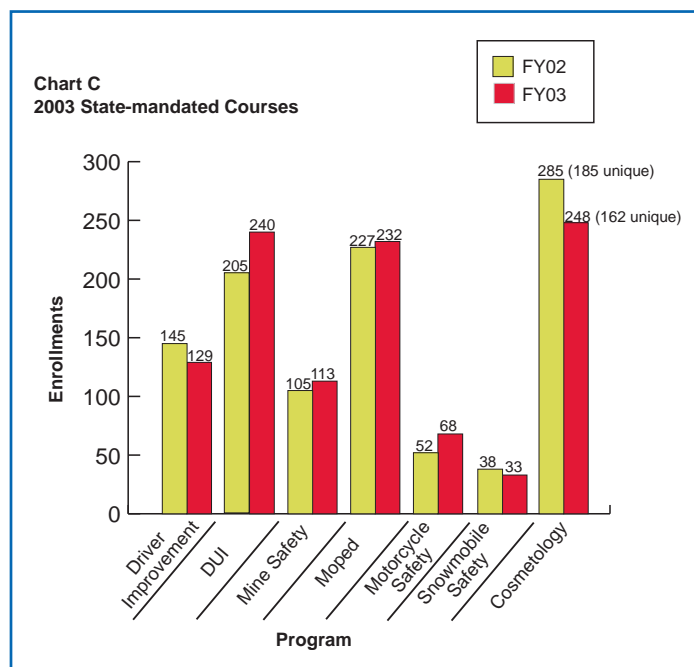
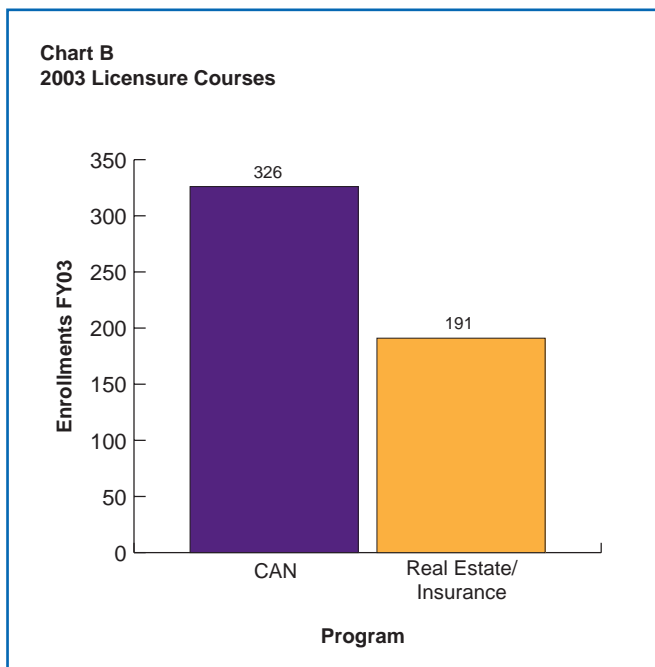
Organizations eligible to utilize the facilities are citizens and organizations that contribute to the educational, social, economic, cultural, and recreational life of the community and do not duplicate College programming or are in competition with NCC. The College facilities provide the constituency with meeting rooms, audio-visual equipment and the availability of a cafeteria for coffee breaks and lunches.

A rental fee may or may not be charged for the use of College facilities. The rental schedule is established by the President and approved by the Board of Trustees. The procedures policy tied to Board Policy 718 outlines the guidelines for making this decision.

As previously outlined in this criterion, **NCC provides on-going training to meet the continuing education needs of licensed professionals in the communities served by the College.** Nurses, social workers, public/private health administrators, childcare providers, dental assistants, insurance/real estate professionals, and funeral directors have been able to satisfy their lifelong learning and certification needs through the many workshops offering CEU's and certification.

NCC continues to be actively involved in providing licensure courses to numerous professionals such as nurses, social workers, and real estate and insurance brokers and agents. In addition, entry level and continued training is provided for health care aides.

The College also provides several state-mandated programs: Driver Improvement, Driving Under the Influence, Mine Safety, and Moped, Motorcycle and Snowmobile Safety. NCC also serves the constituents of the area by providing licensure courses to numerous professionals as outlined in Chart B, and by providing state-mandated courses as shown in Chart C. *See charts below.*



We Pride Ourselves

- NCC provides students with the opportunity to engage in learning opportunities that meet constituent needs.
- NCC has strong mutually supportive agreements with area high schools in AEA IV.
- NCC supports industries with high quality offerings that enhance their abilities to compete in a global economy.
- Every year approximately two out of three AEA IV residents come to NCC to take advantage of an educational opportunity.

We Challenge Ourselves

- NCC needs to continue and expand relationships with area high schools.
- NCC needs to continue to work with higher education partners to ensure students a seamless transition in education.
- NCC needs to expand and enhance relationships with area business that would enhance both the business and the College.
- NCC is challenged by economic and political uncertainties that threaten the economic stability.
- NCC needs to continue to work with high schools on preparation for and transition of students into higher education.
- NCC needs to find ways to collect and organize data related to partnership effectiveness.

Summary and Request for Accreditation

Northwest Iowa Community College is a progressive learning college whose mission is to rapidly respond to the changing needs of our constituents for education in a global community. The College has a rich heritage of providing quality credit instruction and non-credit instruction. For the past 40 years the College has grown and developed into a thriving community college. Since 1994 the College has made progress in all areas of collegiate life. NCC will continue to progress with the commitment of an excellent faculty and staff, the financial stability of the institution, and the support of our constituents. This Self-Study presents evidence that Northwest Iowa Community College fulfills the five criteria for accreditation set forth by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Northwest Iowa Community College respectfully requests continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association for a period of ten years.

Glossary of Terms

7x7: The name for the accelerated courses at NCC. They occur at different times during the summer and between the fall and spring terms.

AACC: American Association of Community Colleges

ACCES: Alliance of Community Colleges for Electronic Sharing.

ACE-PIAP: Accelerated Career Education Physical Infrastructure Assistance Program.

AEA4: The local Area Education Agency.

API: The American Petroleum Industry.

Area IV: The 4 1/2 counties served by NCC.

ASME: American society of Mechanical Engineers.

AWS: American Welding Society.

BEDS Report: Basic Educational Data Survey collected by the State of Iowa from K-12 schools.

Beta Lambda Pi: The NCC chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, an international honors student organization.

CAD: Autocad drafting software.

CCPRES: Community College Program Review and Evaluation.

CDL: Commercial Drivers License.

Choices: A computerized career options assessment program available to students through the NCC Career Center.

CISCO: Computer software/hardware certification available at NCC.



CLIC: Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium.

COMPASS: ACT program for assessment of student learning.

CQ Researcher: Online database available in the NCC library and through the NCC webpage.

CRD: The Council for Resource Development, a national association of community colleges.

DACUM: Developing A CURriculuM. The DACUM process brings together individuals with expertise in an academic area to evaluate curriculum and identify the competencies that ought to be included in the curriculum of a program.

Datatel/Colleague: Management Information System being implemented at NCC.

Dateline: NCC's weekly employee newsletter.

DTN: Data Transmission Network.

EBSCOhost: online library database.

eCollege: The online learning platform used by NCC and the other members of the Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCOG).

eCompanion: The learning platform from eCollege that provides web-enhancements for face-to-face classes.

ESL/ELL: English as a second language/English Language Literacy.

Executive Council: The administrative team at NCC made up of the president, all three vice-presidents and the two deans.

FAFSA: Free application for Federal Student Aid.

HIT: Health Information Technology.

IACCT: Iowa Association of Community College Trustees.

IAOD: Iowa Academy for Organizational Development.

ICN: Iowa Communications Network.

IEP: Individual Education Plan developed for and used by students with special needs.

LEA: Local Education Agency.

The League for Innovation: A National organization for Community Colleges, dedicated to encouraging innovation in education.

Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe: An online Library Database.

LINC: Leadership Institute for a New Century.

Merged Area IV: The 4 1/2 most northern counties in Iowa that NCC is mandated to serve by the State of Iowa.

MET: Mechanical Engineering Technology.

Mitchell Estimating: Business software used by the NCC parts department.

MOS: National Microsoft Specialist certification. Online certification tests in Microsoft applications software offered on the NCC campus.

NCLEX: National Nursing Exams.

Nichols Plan: Assessment plan used by academic programs at NCC.

PACE: Personal Assessment of the College Environment.

Planning Advisory Council: A group of NCC staff and faculty members that hear budget requests and help set budget priorities each year.

PSEO: Post-Secondary Educational Opportunity.

QFP: Quality Faculty Plan developed by NCC to ensure quality instruction. This was mandated by the State and replaces the Iowa Licensure requirements.

Sigma Kappa Delta: English national honor society.

Skills 2000 & 2006: Assessments of the business and industry climate in Iowa conducted by Iowa Community Colleges.

SkillsUSA: Formerly known as VICA, this is a national student association of technical students.

SmartBoard: An interactive whiteboard linked to a computer so that information written on the whiteboard is captured by the computer, and computer generated information is displayed on the white board.

SME: Society of Manufacturing Engineers.

STARS: the Trio Student Support Services program at NCC. The acronym stands for **ST**udents **A**chieving **R**emarkable **S**uccess.

The Collegian: The NCC student newspaper.

Title III: This is a five year federal grant program also known as the Strengthening Institutions grant. NCC is in the fifth year of their grant.

TRIO: A federal grant program for first-generation, low-income and/or disabled students.

VITA: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program.