5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

1. Northwest College (NWC) has sufficient infrastructure to support its operations. Infrastructure and human resources to support academic programming are detailed in 3.A., 3.C., and 3.D. Infrastructure for other areas is detailed below.

Fiscal Resources

NWC is funded from state appropriations, local mill levies, student tuition and fees, and auxiliary operations. NWC engages in an annual audit and reports to the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) as statutorily required. Recently NWC has started to analyze various financial ratios in relation to its operations. The composite financial index score (Excluding GASB 68) for 2016 is 4.1643 which BKD Advisors suggests that NWC has resources for future planning.

As funding sources fluctuate or most recently decline, NWC has reallocated resources to minimize the effect to students and campus. When student enrollment decreased in 2013-2014, impacting tuition revenue, the Vice President of Administrative Services and Finance (VPASF) worked with campus constituent groups to find ways to adjust budgets.

Through work with the Financial Aid Scholarship Office and the Foundation Executive Director, operating fund scholarships were reduced, and additional Foundation scholarship funding was increased. The net result was the same scholarship dollar amount available for students, but the funding source shifted to the Foundation instead of the operating fund. This same strategy was utilized in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 to reduce athletic, activity and talent general fund scholarships and replace with Foundation funded scholarships.

NWC maintains reserve balances which provide financial flexibility for operational stability during economic downturns and serve as resources for specific projects or one-time only needs. In FY 2017, state and local funding was reduced due to the economic downturn in Wyoming. In Spring 2016, the President and the Vice Presidents implemented a broad-based participatory budget development process. The process maintained proportional funding levels while moving forward with overall campus reductions. Reserves were utilized to aid in the transition during FY 2017 and FY 2018.

Historically, NWC has not had significant long term capital financing debt. Capital facility projects have been infrequent and largely funded through a mix of state and local sources. NWC maintains a capital lease with the Northwest College Building Authority that finances a 2008 residence hall addition.

The NWC Foundation is an active and well-funded partner. NWC has $12,902 in endowment assets per FTE compared to $4,842 per FTE for NWC's IPEDS comparison group (see Figure 25). In FY 2016, the Foundation provided $855,434 in scholarship support. The NWC Foundation provided $514,125 in grants for strategic projects, professional development, and equipment. This endowed revenue stream helps ensure sufficient support for NWC's operations.

Human Resources

NWC continuously reviews its operations to ensure adequate human resources for its operations. The IPEDS Data Feedback Report (see Figures 24, 26) demonstrates that NWC allocates its human resources in areas that support its mission, e.g. instruction, institutional support, and student services.

During the FY 2017 budget process, the Facilities Director compared custodial and grounds staffing levels to national APPA: Leadership in Educational Facilities standards. The results showed that staffing levels were slightly below the recommended standards but adequate for campus needs.

Physical Resources

NWC's physical resources support operations. In 2014, a campus-wide steering committee and A&E Architects updated the 2008 Facilities Master Plan. The final report identified and organized campus projects into immediate projects, ongoing projects, major projects, and remaining priority projects.

The 2014 Master Plan update included analysis of space utilization and concluded that physical space is more than sufficient for instructional purposes. The update identified spaces that were in need of improvement. The Planning Committee, consisting of the President, VPASF, Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), Vice President for Student Services (VPSS) and the Foundation executive director, was created to address the items in the plan. The committee set project priorities and funding strategies to implement various phases of the Facilities Master Plan. The VPASF commissioned supplemental planning reports to guide the prioritization of residential halls, landscaping, hardscaping, and academic and support buildings projects. For planning and tracking purposes, the VPASF maintains a Facilities Project Report which documents projects currently in process and future projects. This report is provided to the Board of Trustees at their monthly meetings.

A special focus has been given to the Major Projects identified in the 2014 Facilities Master Plan. Level One reports for the Visual and Performing Arts building and the Student Center were commissioned and completed in Spring 2017 for submission to the WCCC and the Wyoming State Construction Department. This process included community and college input sessions, steering

committees, and architectural and engineering assessment. Both capital projects were approved by the WCCC and forwarded to the State legislature for Level Two approval and funding. Subsequent to Level Two approval, Level Three approval and funding would be required.

Several projects such as the Multi-Sports Court, Hardscape phase I and II, and the DeWitt Student Center Exterior Improvement Project, have been completed since 2013. Various projects continue to be scheduled as state maintenance funding and adequate reserves allow. A new updated Facilities Master Plan is scheduled for completion in Fall 2017.

The previous evidence demonstrates that NWC has sufficient physical resources and engages in forward thinking planning as stated in the Mission Statement.

Technological Infrastructure

NWC's technological infrastructure is sufficient to support its operations. Staffing levels for technology services are slightly higher than NWC's median peers (see Figure 26). Network and database managers, programmers, analysts, and technicians provide 24/7 coverage through on site and help desk support.

The Computing Services Director completes staffing assessments and technological resource planning. The Computing Services Director works with the VPASF, the Academic Computing Committee, state agencies, campus staff, and students to assess and maintain adequate resources. Prior to Vision 2020, the Computing Services Director maintained an operational plan and carried out projects according to priority level. Bring Your Own Device, campus-wide WiFi improvements, VMware conversion, and virtual servers are projects recently completed. Vision 2020 Key Performance Indicators now serve as drivers for technological project prioritization. Localized surveys were completed last fall for wireless improvements and serve as a resource for minor system adjustments to improve campus-wide functionality.

The Dean of Student Learning oversees the instructional technology department which provides support for faculty and ensures technological infrastructure is sufficient to support satellite campuses and online courses.

In FY 2017, the Budget Committee recommended that no reductions occur in technology. The preceding evidence demonstrates that NWC has sufficient technological resources.

2. As a publicly funded college, NWC has no financial obligations to superordinate entities. All resources are allocated to fulfill NWC's mission.

3. The goals incorporated into NWC's Mission Statement and Vision 2020 Key Performance indicators are realistic in light of NWC's organization, resources, and opportunities. Because NWC's mission is educational and student-centered, academic performance measures indicate sufficiency of fiscal, physical, technological, and human resources.

NWC's ranking in statewide comparisons of retention and completion rates demonstrate that our goals are realistic and NWC has sufficient resources to achieve them as discussed in 5.A.

4. NWC staff are appropriately qualified and trained. Staff positions have a wide range of educational and experience requirements. Position descriptions describe characteristics and requirements of the employee's role including the essential duties and responsibilities, type and degree of expertise or training needed, decision making required, physical requirements, the amount of time spent

performing each function and the corresponding skills, abilities, and knowledge necessary to effectively perform the role. Access to staff job descriptions will be available to reviewers during the visit.

NWC hiring processes ensure that candidates are properly qualified. During candidate selection, search committees recommend candidates based on job-related criteria. Search committees develop job-related interview questions. Professional references are contacted to provide information, e.g. prior employment experience, quality of performance, interpersonal skills, and other job-related criteria. Criminal background reports are performed. Motor vehicle records are reviewed for candidates for positions that require operation of a college vehicle. Official transcripts are required to verify education. Required professional certifications and licenses are verified upon hire and tracked to ensure that employees remain current with their conditions of employment.

If substantial changes in the duties or responsibilities are made to a role, a formal position reclassification review is performed. The position reclassification review may result in an updated position description and a different compensation band placement for the position.

If an employee needs additional education or training to enhance their skills or maintain various certifications relative to their role, there are many avenues through which staff at NWC can engage in professional development.

Funds are budgeted annually for professional development. Employees request funds through their supervisors and/or constituency groups. Funds may support specialized training, online courses, workshops, conferences, programs, and continuing education.

Supervisory training is provided by Human Resources (HR) to all managers and supervisors. Topics include supervisory skills, legal/compliance/regulatory training, performance management, employee engagement, coaching, effective selection processes/interviewing techniques, communication, and leader development. HR provides access to the Employee Assistance Program and AI Pro, an online training program for all employees.

Departments, committees, and work groups sponsor training events and provide learning opportunities for employees including:

- Residence and Campus Life provides monthly training sessions to student residence life employees.
- Financial Aid and Scholarships staff utilizes webinars for training and policy adherence in areas such as federal student aid, veteran affairs, and state sponsored programs.
- Computing Services provides access to training to enhance employee knowledge of technology.
- Library staff provide employee training on Internet use and finding quality information.
- Facilities staff provide programs on safety related subjects and general cleaning practices.
- Campus Security provides training to employees on emergency procedures, campus safety and security, and fire response training for building captains.
- The Title IX Coordinator provides educational opportunities for the campus regarding sexual misconduct prevention and education.

All employees are required to complete online training modules on anti-harassment and discrimination and Title IX/Campus Save Act to ensure their understanding of important college policies and legal compliance.

All fully benefited employees enjoy tuition waivers for up to seven credit hours each semester

through Northwest College and up to three credit hours per semester through the University of Wyoming. From 2011-2015, 176 employees have utilized NWC tuition waivers, and 24 received University of Wyoming tuition waivers.

The Center for Training and Development provides skills-based classes, leadership classes, and supervisory training courses which employees attend, often at free or reduced rates.

5. NWC has a well-developed process in place for budgeting. NWC has resource allocation processes in place to ensure that resources are apportioned properly and that revenue is not dispersed to a superordinate entity inappropriately. Campus constituencies, budget managers, employee meetings, and a Budget Committee serves in various capacities to enhance transparency.

The Budget Committee is composed of the President, VPASF, VPAA, Vice President for College Relations (VPCR), VPSS, the Finance Director, a faculty member, a professional staff member, and a classified staff member.

The Budget Committee discusses, reviews and disseminates ongoing national, state, and local activities that affect college operations and budgets. Revenue projections are created, and other data are collected as needed to assist with the budgeting process. The committee utilizes this information for budgeting. NWC's educational purposes, regulatory requirements, and the strategic priorities of Vision 2020 are given priority.

In 2014, NWC received a one-time allocation from the state and used it to purchase educational equipment. Proposals for educational equipment were evaluated based on fit with the strategic plan and how the proposal met program outcomes assessment goals. In 2015, a similar state reallocation resulted in a bonus distribution to our employees. These actions aligned with Vision 2020.

In Spring 2016, the budget development process expanded to include the budget managers, whose goal is to make recommendations within their budgets that align with NWC's priorities and available resources.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) reviews budget assumptions in a study session in April. The BOT reviews the preliminary budget in May. The first reading of the full budget is reviewed by the BOT in June with a budget hearing and final budget approval in July. The budget books are made available electronically to all employees as part of the emailed Board package. Once approved, the budget is posted to the web site. The annual audit report is posted and made available there.

NWC has processes in place for monitoring expenditures. All employees designated with budget authority have access to up-to-date expenditures and balances.

In 2013, the BOT changed policy to require the President approve all college contracts. Following this change, the President requires the supervisory Vice President and the VPASF to review and sign before approval to ensure alignment with the mission. This change includes employment contracts, stipends, and service contracts. The President's authorization is required for out of the ordinary expenditures.

President Hicswa and VPASF Watson have implemented processes to improve expenditure review. VPASF Watson monitors budgets quarterly to track revenue receipts and expenditure percentages budget to actual. Large shortfalls and overages are identified; budget managers are consulted for further analysis. With the budget reduction in FY 2017, budget lines in need of closer monitoring

were identified, e.g., motor pool and print services.

The VPAFS creates financial reports for BOT meetings which include a monthly check register. The BOT reviews the register transactions as part of its fiduciary duty.

At BOT's 2016 winter retreat, trustees reviewed state statutes related to the community colleges and the fiduciary statutes for municipalities. At the February 2016 BOT meeting, the principal from NWC's auditor provided training. He emphasized the importance of the BOT's oversight and fiduciary responsibility.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

1. The Board of Trustees (BOT) is knowledgeable about the institution. The BOT's Rules and Regulations provide a framework for appropriate involvement through regular monthly meetings with meeting agendas. Trustees learn about college operations through regular monthly reports from the President, Vice Presidents, Foundation Executive Director, Institutional Researcher, employee constituent groups, and the Student Senate President. During BOT meetings, Trustees may ask questions about the reports to seek more information. BOT agendas typically include study sessions for Trustees to learn about specific topics, e.g., academic programs, policy drafts, facilities and construction reports, budget development, financial audits, and other college issues. Student groups and competitive teams are introduced and recognized during BOT meetings. Trustees engage in two planning retreats per year, and newly-elected Trustees participate in a six-hour orientation.

The BOT fulfills its legal and fiduciary responsibilities to oversee financial and academic policies and practices. The BOT's statutory responsibilities include approving Northwest College's (NWC) annual budget and an additional one-mill levy in its district. Further evidence of the BOT's attention to NWC's financial health is an annual review of NWC's external financial audit, including the auditor's presentation during public meetings. Monthly expenditure lists are part of the BOT's monthly consent agenda. The BOT's Policy and Student Success Committee reviews policies presented by the President after review by NWC's shared governance structure. The BOT approves new degree and certificate programs before submission to the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) for approval. The BOT approves all student fees.

2. Internal constituencies engage in the governance of NWC. NWC's Shared Governance and Decision Making Guide, approved by the BOT on March 11 2013, formally defines "shared governance" and provides the following operational guidelines.

"Shared Governance is a means by which:

- all members have the opportunity to contribute to the success of their organization;
- all members have the opportunity to provide information, advice, and support to their organization's decision makers;
- the relevant parties and constituent groups within the organization are brought together to provide for continuity, broad-based understanding and ownership of decisions; and

- decisions are made based on the best information and most inclusive perspective."

An extensive committee structure fosters cross-campus involvement and collaboration. Representative groups provide consultation on various aspects of college operations (see discussion in 5.B.3). Major standing committees address matters related to instruction, curriculum, assessment, retention, administration, budget development, academic computing, institutional effectiveness, policy review (one for all employees and one for faculty), the library, marketing communications, website, and student appeals. Meeting minutes or summaries are posted on NWC's portal, and links are emailed to employees.

The following bodies carry out NWC's shared governance functions.

- College Council is a consultative body composed of representatives from all constituent groups. Its bylaws and operations are based on the institution's Shared Governance and Decision Making Guide. The Guide provides parameters for how various topics should be considered by the College Council.
- Constituent group organizations for faculty, professional staff, classified staff, and students maintain elected officers.
- The President appoints task forces as necessary, e.g., the 2016-17 Futures Task Forces for Organizational Structure, Finances, Faculty Salaries, and Staff Salaries; and a Policy Development Task Force.
- Representative search committees are integral to the employee hiring process. Students serve on search committees for select positions, e.g. President, Vice-President of Student Services.
- Students have the opportunity to participate in shared governance in a variety of ways. Representatives are included on various committees, e.g. Budget Committee, facilities master plan development, and strategic planning groups. Students participated in the development of Vision 2020. The Student Senate President has regular meetings with the President.

Formal policies adopted by the BOT underpins its commitment to shared governance. The introduction to the BOT-adopted Shared Governance and Decision Making Guide states that "While the President and BOT have ultimate decision-making authority over most matters of the institution, NWC has had a rich history of strong committee activities and many channels of cross-program faculty and staff collaboration which funnel information to the President and Board."

Opportunities for members of the campus community to help shape the workplace and learning environment remain a strength of the institution. As the NWC's Shared Governance and Decision Making Guide states, "Good decisions that are developed collaboratively inevitably help create better policies that contribute to the effectiveness of the college."

3. Several committees contribute to the setting of academic requirements, policy, and processes. These committees include membership, and thus input, from administration, faculty, staff, and students. Committees related to setting academic requirements, policies, and processes include:

- Academic Advisory Council (includes members from administration, faculty, and staff)
- Academic Computing Committee (includes members from administration, faculty, staff, and students)
- Central Assessment Team (includes members from administration, faculty, and staff)
- Course Scheduling Committee (includes members from administration, faculty, and staff)
- Curriculum Committee (includes members from administration, faculty, staff, and students)
- Library Committee (includes members from administration, faculty, staff, and students)
- Retention Committee (includes members from administration, faculty, and staff. student

representation planned for 2017-2018)
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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

1. President Hicswa, along with her administration, has implemented a process of systematic and integrated planning at Northwest College (NWC) that allocates resources to align with the Mission Statement and Vision 2020 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The hiring of a new Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance (VPASF) in 2014 and a new Finance Director in 2016 brought NWC expanded expertise in resource allocation and planning. These additions, along with the development of a new Mission Statement and Vision 2020, further aligned NWC's resource allocation process with its mission and strategic priorities.

In Spring 2016, the Budget Manager group was created to expand shared governance and work with administrators and the Budget Committee to ensure recommendations for resource allocation align with the new mission and Vision 2020. During the Fiscal Year (FY) 17 budget process, NWC needed to reduce expenditures due to state revenue shortfalls. In line with NWC's primary focus of being student-centered, NWC honored all awarded scholarships and analyzed academic programs for discontinuation based on affecting the least number of students possible. To reduce expenditures and align resource allocations with NWC's focus on employees, NWC developed an Early Retirement Special Offer that allowed eligible employees to select retirement rather than implementing Reduction in Force across all areas of campus. In cases where Reduction in Force was implemented, the mission and Vision 2020 guided those decisions.

2. NWC has expanded processes linking assessment, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting across the entire campus. The VPAFS has led the continuing implementation of the facilities master plan, development of a landscaping master plan, and the Student Housing Master Plan. Academic and support building plans are slotted for completion in Fall 2017.

In 2012, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) enlisted faculty and staff in an initiative to improve assessment of student learning (see 4.B.). The resulting process for assessment of student learning has set an example for systematic evaluation of operations and planning for improvement.

Evidence of links between the assessment of student learning, planning, and budgeting occurred in 2014 when NWC received an additional $427,289 in one-time state funding. The President

determined priorities for this funding using Central Assessment Team (CAT) recommendations based on evaluation of funding requests. The CAT evaluated those funding requests based on linkages to the assessment of student learning outcomes. The President has communicated to the campus that this type of analysis is expected moving forward.

In Fall 2013, NWC began a campus-wide facilities master planning process. Point Architects and A&E Architects led campus personnel in updating the Facilities Master Plan. This is an example of "scaling up" planning to include all employees in the evaluation of campus operations and future planning needs. In May 2015, a Planning Committee was created consisting of the President, VPASF, the VPAA, the Vice President for Student Services (VPSS), and the NWC Foundation Executive Director. Following initial developmental meetings to prioritize major and minor facilities projects, attach timelines, and determine funding sources, the committee continues to meet monthly to evaluate project progress, discuss fundraising strategies, and implement steps to seek state capital construction support.

In 2015, NWC contracted with CBT Consultants to review policies and make recommendations. In 2016, the Board of Trustees (BOT) prioritized policy reform on campus. Initiatives to link processes for assessment, planning, and budgeting are ineffective without policies to support these expectations. Following those recommendations, the President worked with the College Council to reorganize and update the college policy manual. This process resulted in the creation of the College Policy Task Force in Fall 2016. The task force includes the President, a faculty representative, a professional staff representative, a classified staff representative, and the Human Resources Director. Task force members serve to drive policy updates as NWC evaluates operations and implements changes.

In response to a state revenue decline in FY 2017, the President and VPASF required an evaluation of operations and evidence-based information from budget managers for the purpose of making budget cut recommendations. An example of an evaluation-based decision was the discontinuation of three academic programs (see 5.D.)

The next step in enhancing the connection between budgeting to planning is to systematically assess all college operations and expand evidence-based funding priorities. In Spring 2017, the President has charged the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to initiate this process (see 5.D.).

3. NWC considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups in campus planning processes. All employees, as well as community members, were involved in revision of the Mission Statement and creation of Vision 2020 (see 1.A.).

Similar processes involving internal and external stakeholders have been employed in emergency planning. In Fall 2011, employees participated in two table top exercises regarding an active shooter and tornado striking campus. As a result of these exercises, employees identified the need for training and guiding documents. In October 2012, a committee of campus stakeholders developed the Emergency Operations Plan with the assistance of Reliant Services consulting. In January 2014, the newly created Emergency Response Guide was disseminated to campus and a training on using the guide was held for campus employees. With input from campus, the Emergency Response Guide was updated in Spring. Evaluation of our ability to communicate emergencies to the campus revealed the need for a budget to support ongoing emergency preparedness. That budget was put into place the following year. The Campus Safety and Security Brochure was produced and delivered to potential students and their parents for the first time in Spring 2014. This document was used in the revision of the NWC Campus Security Website to create consistency within the information that was being produced and disseminated to the public. In March 2015, NWC began involving external constituents in our emergency planning process.

Internal and external constituent groups were involved in the development of the 2014 updated Facilities Master Plan. A steering committee of campus representatives guided the external planning team led by Point Architects and A&E Architects of Billings, MT. The planning team held focus group sessions with employees, students, and community members.

Budget managers serve on the front line between operations and reporting. For FY 2017, the budgeting process expanded to include a campus wide Budget Managers group. This group encompasses the institution as a whole and provides robust input.

 4. NWC plans from a sound understanding of its current capacity while anticipating the impact of revenue fluctuations.

Historically, fiscal planning used an incremental base model supplemented by projected enrollment increases and one-time state revenue. During times of economic downturn, the planning methodologies were ineffective. Currently, fiscal planning is driven by current enrollment, state, and local revenue projections. If revenue exceeds projections, those funds are prioritized for strategic initiatives and long-term campus needs. This new approach better anticipates long-term and short-term fluctuations with less drastic impacts on budget. To aid in continuous planning for revenue fluctuations and resource allocations, President Hicswa has charged the Institutional Effectiveness Committee with analyzing enrollment capacity, areas of enrollment growth (i.e. international students, part-time and non-traditional students), student and administrative services program costs, and academic program development opportunities within the current and emerging economy.

To plan strategically for enrollment fluctuations, NWC implemented a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) planning process. In 2014, NWC contracted with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers SEM consultant services to make recommendations to inform the ongoing SEM planning process.

The President's Advisory Council monitors the fluctuation of revenue sources as it relates to facilities planning and projects. Significant reductions in state appropriations and local levy tax have resulted in decreased funding for deferred maintenance and capital projects. Lower enrollment, new vendor agreements, and a lack of inflationary increases for multiple years have left auxiliaries with small margins. The prioritization of projects using the facilities master plan, supplemental deferred plans, the planning committee, and operational priorities, are critical to ensure resources are used in the wisest manner possible (see 5.A.).

5. NWC's planning anticipates emerging factors such as globalization, demographic, and technological shifts. NWC's new mission strategically includes "global society" in anticipation of emerging priorities. This commitment is demonstrated by a focus on diversity in the new general education requirements, international student programs to engage students in cultural awareness, and the implementation of virtual machine technology that allows access to the campus network worldwide.

Enrollment trends are examined annually to identify opportunities for planning. This information was included in the development of the strategic enrollment management plan (see 5.C.4).

NWC is committed to adequate technology and reaffirmed that commitment during the 2017 budget development when no reductions were made to technology budgets. Instructional and campus technology staff are focused on planning and best practices by the Mission Statement and Vision 2020 (see 3.D.4. and 5.A.).

During 2015-2016, President Hicswa appointed task forces to anticipate emerging factors. The Organizational Structure Task Force evaluated NWC's future needs regarding appropriate staffing to accomplish the key performance indicators of Vision 2020. The Faculty Salary Task Force reviewed faculty salaries.

One of the emerging factors colleges face is emergency response planning. As mentioned in 5.C.3., NWC developed an Emergency Operations Plan and distributed the Emergency Response Guide to all employees and displayed it in all classrooms and meeting areas.

Institutional planning efforts are focused on sustainability beyond recycling with the implementation of the Vision 2020 institutional priority of Environment. Participation in NACUBO's key facilities metrics serves as a starting point for comparative work. VPASF Watson serves on NACUBO's National Sustainable Advisory Panel and meets monthly with vice presidents nationwide to discuss political, environmental, and operational activities related to sustainability. This knowledge is used to promote increased sustainability projects as returns on investment allow.

These efforts demonstrate that NWC anticipates and responds to a variety of factors in institutional planning.

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

1. Throughout this Assurance Argument, reports and information are referenced that demonstrate that Northwest College develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations. Highlights are described below.

Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators

All strategic and operational goals are guided by NWC's strategic vision, Vision 2020 (see 1.A.). Following the development of Vision 2020, key performance indicators (KPIs) were developed for each element. The KPIs are measured, documented, reviewed and published annually.

President's Operational Plan

The Board of Trustees (BOT) sets institutional priorities each year. Once the BOT has set the priorities, the Vice Presidents meet with President Hicswa to determine goals for the year. The President's Operational Plan guides operations for all areas. Throughout the year, the President and Vice President's conduct periodic reviews of the Operational Plan to monitor progress (FY17, FY16, FY15, FY14).

Facilities Master Plan

NWC updated the Facilities Master Plan in 2014, which guides improvements and new buildings across campus (see 2.C., 5.A.). The Facilities Master Plan is scheduled to be updated in Fall 2017.

Annual Report

The Office of College Relations publishes an Annual Report each summer, which reports on progress towards Vision 2020: innovation and distinction in experience, connections, and environment. This online publication is promoted via a postcard mailed to external stakeholders, news release, and paid newspaper advertising in service area newspapers.

Institutional Fact Card

Annually, the Offices of College Relations and Institutional Research compile an Institutional Fact Card, which includes information covering college information, including the mission, enrollment, student costs, scholarships, employee counts, library resources, budget, and endowment funds.

The Office of Institutional Research distributes hard copies of the Fact Card to internal and external constituents; an online version appears as the Institutional Profile on the NWC website.

Program Reports

Academic programs are in a 5-year rotation for a program review. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) reviews academic program reviews, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and Dean of Student Learning provide feedback to the academic programs. IEC began a process to regularly review non-academic program reports in 2017 (see 4.A.,3.C.).

Annually, each academic program submits a Student Learning Outcomes Report to the Central Assessment Team (CAT), which reviews, scores with a rubric, and provides feedback to the program (see 4.A., 4.B.).

To address budget shortfalls in Spring 2016, the VPAA and the Academic Advisory Council developed academic program discontinuation criteria. Programs were considered for discontinuation based on the following criteria:

- Cost versus Revenue
- Number of program majors - trend
- Job prospects
- Other funding sources
- Community Keystone

Student and Employee Feedback

NWC participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement to document student perception of performance in operations (2015). To gather employee feedback on the institutional climate, employees participated in The Chronicle of Higher Education's Great Colleges to Work For survey during 2012 and 2014. In 2016, NWC administered the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) survey to gather employee feedback. NWC uses survey results to develop and document evidence of performance in operations.

2. NWC learns from its experience and strives to continuously improve all aspects of its operations as evidence in the following examples:

- Revision of the Mission Statement (see 1.A.)
- Development of the strategic vision - Vision 2020 and Key Performance Indicators (see 1.A.)
- President's Operational Plan Status Report
- Facilities Project Report
- Emergency Plan Implementation
- Budget planning processes (see 5.A., 5.C.)
- Course Scheduling Committee
- Ongoing Retention Efforts (see 4.C.)
- Improvement based on Instructional Assessment (see 4.B.)
- Faculty hiring decisions based on Program Reports (see 3.C.)
- Student support improvement based on CCSSE results (see 3.D.)

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) is charged with ongoing efforts in institutional improvement. The IEC was formed in 2009 to:

- Assess the quality of currently available data and needs for additional data
- Provide data from across the campus for planning and decision making
- Capitalize on multiple college perspectives to analyze available data

- Provide institutional effectiveness information to NWC, community, and other constituencies.

The IEC's tasks have evolved to fit NWC's needs. Initial responsibilities included developing and annually monitoring the measurements for the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan Tracking Report. In 2014, President Hicswa charged IEC with exploring the ideal enrollment size for NWC. In 2016, IEC began reviewing and providing feedback on academic program reviews. In 2017, President Hicswa charged the IEC with overseeing the comprehensive review of all programs and services college-wide and the IEC added a process for non-academic program reviews.

Sources

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

Northwest College (NWC) fulfills Criterion Five by ensuring its resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to its future challenges and opportunities.

NWC has responded to enrollment and funding challenges in line with the Mission Statement and Vision 2020. Those responses include improved planning in assessment, project development, and budgeting. A new President and many new faculty, staff, and administrators have created opportunities for fresh ideas and teamwork.

NWC is financially sound and has made budget adjustments in response to fluctuating resources. NWC has low debt obligations, access to state funding for deferred maintenance, and a Foundation with $38 million in assets. These resources support efforts to improve the campus and move forward with Vision 2020. Participatory budget planning and expanded program reviews will assist with future allocation of resources.

Employee Feedback on Criterion Five

The Assurance Argument Team held informational workshops on Criterion Five on January 4th and 13th, 2017. At those workshops, employees were asked to provide evidence statements pertaining to the sub-components of this criterion.

Future Plans

NWC will maintain and implement processes and planning to ensure that its resources and structures are sufficient to fulfill its mission and continuously improve the quality of its educational offerings.

NWC will:

- Expand program review and outcome assessment to non-academic areas
- Implement the Strategic Enrollment Plan
- Implement a comprehensive model of predictive scheduling
- Utilize building and grounds recommendation reports to prioritize deferred maintenance
- Seek funding for capital projects including a new visual and performing arts facility and student center
- Identify opportunities to address employee compensation

While there is always work to be accomplished, NWC has addressed opportunities and economic challenges to respond to the needs of its students in a global society.

Sources

- Committee List 2016-2017
- Criterion 5_Workshop Comments