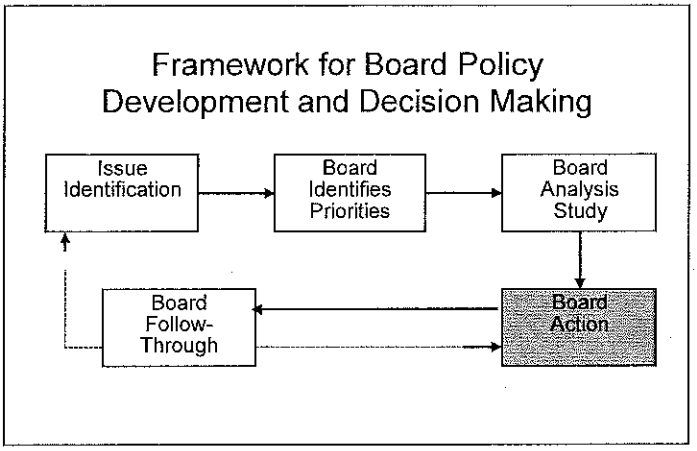
Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

August 4, 2016



Agenda Item: Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC) Accreditation Report

Iowa Goal: Individuals will pursue postsecondary education in order to drive economic success.

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code section 260C.47(3) grants authority to the State Board of Education to determine whether the programs of a community college shall remain accredited.

Presenters: Jeremy Varner, Administrator
Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation

Barbara Burrows, Chief
Bureau of Community Colleges

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: The Department of Education recommends continued accreditation for NCC. A state interim accreditation evaluation will be conducted in FY 2021.

Background: This is a report of the evaluation of NCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The department conducted the on-site portion of the evaluation on March 22-24, 2016, in Sheldon, Iowa. The findings reflect the work of the accreditation team in the comprehensive review of NCC.

NCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) that conducts reviews every five years. In an effort to not duplicate the HLC accreditation process, the state process reviews the most recent HLC report to see if any follow-up is needed and then focuses on the college's compliance with state criteria/standards. State standards are reviewed through a structured process of a pre-visit desk review and a two-day on-site visit conducted by department staff and community college peer reviewers.

Accreditation Report
Comprehensive State Evaluation

Northwest Iowa Community College

March 22-23, 2016

FY 2016

COMMUNITY COLLEGES &
WORKFORCE PREPARATION
PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION

State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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Northwest Iowa Community College
Comprehensive Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2016

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Northwest Iowa Community College
State Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2016 - Conducted March 22-23, 2016

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this review was a scheduled comprehensive accreditation evaluation of Northwest Iowa Community College by the Iowa Department of Education as mandated by Iowa Code, Section 260C.47. The accreditation evaluation was conducted on Tuesday, March 22, and Wednesday, March 23, 2016, at the main campus of NCC in Sheldon, Iowa.

Institutional Overview

College History[1]

Northwest Iowa Community College began as a pilot program sponsored by the Iowa Department of Public Instruction and conducted by the Sheldon Community School District under the name of Northwest Iowa Vocational School (NIVS). The vocational school became sanctioned, and the first day of class was January 27, 1964, when 49 students met in rented facilities in downtown Sheldon. During the period 1964 through 1966, three vocational programs (auto mechanics, auto body and fender repair, and welding) were offered to students from 19 high schools in Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, and Sioux counties. Part of Cherokee County joined the merged area at a later date.

In July 1965, the Iowa State Legislature enacted Senate File 550, which authorized the formation of merged 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 region, and on April 27, 1966, the NIVS was officially organized.

Unlike the community colleges that began as junior colleges, NCC has roots deep in technical instruction, and by the early 1970s had 38 programs that enrolled more than 500 students annually. However, in 1973, when needs in the service regions changed, the college applied for approval to provide an Associate of Arts degree, which was approved in 1975. Also in that year, the college received accreditation from the North Central Association to deliver diplomas and degrees and consequently changed its name to Northwest Iowa Technical College (NITC) to reflect both the established vocational emphasis and its new college transfer curriculum. This limited program, which offered courses in the evening, served the needs of area residents, particularly returning Vietnam veterans. After peak veteran enrollment passed, overall enrollment fell to a modest level and the arts and sciences program was discontinued in 1980.

In 1988, the college again received permission from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and the Iowa Department of Education to 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 (NCC) to reflect its status as a comprehensive community college. To that end, the first student housing facility was added in 1992, symbolizing NCC's focus on college life. Student housing opportunities expanded with the completion of Lyon and O'Brien Halls in 2007 and 2009.

In the early 1990s, NCC began delivering postsecondary programming to area high school students under the new Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities Act (PSEO). NCC utilized the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) classrooms to help in this effort being that, aside from Sheldon High School, the closest

school is 20 minutes away from the NCC campus. Since 1994, NCC has grown concurrent enrollments and has achieved the second highest penetration rate of Iowa's 15 community colleges.

In 1999, largely because of the challenges posed by its large service area and the distance from its high schools, NCC joined with six other Iowa community colleges to form a partnership to organize the Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCOC) to provide quality online educational opportunities. NCC's partnership with the ICCOC has played a significant role in increasing its enrollments in the past decade, particularly in concurrent enrollment courses. Currently, high school enrollments account for about 30 percent of NCC's head count and up to 20 percent of credits taught.

Institutional Profile[1]

Northwest Iowa Community College is the only public, two-year community college in extreme northwest Iowa. Its faculty and staff are dedicated to providing quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities in this fairly remote region of Iowa.

In addition to providing quality technical education and arts and science college transfer opportunities to 2,599 credit students during academic year 2014-15, the college provides its communities with outstanding non-credit workforce training and continuing education programs to over 17,500 students annually. In fact, more than one in three people in the region have taken a non-credit course to improve their technical and professional skills or to participate in lifelong learning activities that are recreational in focus. In addition, area business and industry capitalize on education and training for their employees through workforce development programs, further illustrating NCC's commitment to improving the lives of the people in its service region.

As aforementioned, NCC is a leading partner in the Iowa Community College Online Consortium, which has served to increase the college's enrollment significantly, particularly in college parallel and concurrent enrollment courses. However, this technological investment has also helped to transform teaching and learning at NCC by providing all courses with web-enhanced components and technology integrated into instruction collegewide. The Sheldon campus is wireless, which extends out into the powerline fields where instructors use mobile devices to keep track of student performance. Student access to the internet, electronic textbooks, computers, information, and communication has come to be expected and has improved the learning experience for NCC students.[2]

The desire to improve student learning and improve lives goes beyond technology and curriculum into the realm of student life at NCC. In 2011, the Lifelong Learning and Recreation Center opened for student, staff, and community use. This has helped student activities, clubs, and organizations to proliferate on campus and resulted in expanded campus living quarters, the remodeling of the campus store, enhanced staff oversight and programming, and expanded off-campus learning opportunities.

Because of a strong commitment to serve its region, sound planning, outstanding community support, and a dedicated and professional leadership team, faculty, and staff, NCC is poised to face the challenges of the next decade. Their *Vision 2020 Strategic Plan* contains trend statements, strategic initiatives, and goals that, if followed and reached, should result in NCC's continued success for years to come.[3]

Continuous Improvement[1]

NCC's mission statement proclaims: *Northwest Iowa Community College is a progressive learning college rapidly responding to the global needs of our changing community.*
Although NCC is the most rural and the smallest community college, evidence of their commitment to this mission are the following state and national honors confirming the quality education provided by NCC:

Top 20 Fastest Growing Community Colleges in the Nation: *Community College Week* (2010)

Top 120 Best Community Colleges in the Nation: Aspen Institute (2011, 2013)

Top 150 Best Community Colleges in the Nation: Aspen Institute (2015)

Seventh in the Nation for Graduate Success: *CNN Money* (2012)

Great College to Work For: *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2012, 2013, 2014)

11th Best Community College in the Nation: *TheBestSchools.com* (2013)

15th in the Nation: *CreateaCareer.org* (2013)

Safest College in Iowa: *StateUniversity.com* (2013)

Highest Graduation/Transfer Rate: *CollegeMeasures.com* (2013)

Top 4 in the Nation: Automotive Program: *Tomorrow's Tech* School of the Year Contest (2013)

Third Best On-line College in the U.S.: *BestColleges.com* (2015)

Top 45 Colleges in the Nation: *College Scorecard, U.S. Department of Education* (2015)

One of 50 Great Schools in the Nation for High School Students to Earn College Credit: *CareerCounselorServices.com* (2016)

#9 of Best Affordable Online Community Colleges in the USA: *CollegeStart.org* (2016)

Retention Excellence Award: *Ruffalo Noel Levitz* (2016)

In addition to accolades, NCC's improvement can be measured in its acquisition of financial support in the way of grants and donations. Since 1999, NCC has obtained and utilized competitive grant funding to leverage additional resources amounting to more than $11.2 million to move the college forward. Much of the grant money has been in the form of competitive Title III Strengthening Institutions, for which the colleges has received resources to fund three projects that have improved college operations and expanded program offerings. In addition, in 2001 the college was successful in obtaining its first TRIO Student Support Services grant to provide resources to first-generation and low-income students. This grant has been re-funded three times since then and the college anticipates its continued support.

Perhaps most impressive has been the huge growth in NCC's Foundation since 1996, at which time the foundation's total assets were $192,628. By 2003, this asset had grown to just shy of $1.5 million and at the end of 2013 amounted to $3.7 million. These funds have allowed NCC to award an average of over $171,000 in scholarships annually, which represents an increase of 76.5 percent between 2007 and 2013. This level of growth in a small, rural community college's foundation illustrate the high degree of community support NCC has grown to warrant in their service region and beyond.

As accreditation agencies have expounded and community college leaders have learned to realize, continuous improvement of learning institutions requires a commitment to assessment and data-driven decision making. It was apparent during the state accreditation review that NCC has taken the Higher Learning Commission's directive to improve its assessment tools seriously. Currently, assessment at NCC is systematic and well-documented, and is viewed as a vital element of improving instruction and student outcomes. NCC has come a long way over the past decade in improving its assessment tools and is in the

process of incorporating an assessment of their assessment processes to ensure that they are measuring the right components of success, particularly in their academic programs. NCC's commitment to its students, service region, and continuous improvement is commendable and appreciated.

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[1] Most information reported in this section was gathered from the Northwest Community College website at: www.nwicc.edu/about/past-present-future/through-the-years.aspx

[2] Northwest Community College, *NCA Self-Study for Accreditation (2014).* Submitted by NCC and retrievable at: www.nwicc.edu/Post/sections/254/Files/HLC%20Report-FINAL.pdf

[3] Northwest Community College, *Vision 2020 Strategic Plan (2013).* Submitted by NCC and retrievable at: www.nwicc.edu/Post/sections/254/Files/vision2020-trifold.pdf

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Special Topic Summary – Title IX and SaVE Act Assistance re: Process Improvement

As part of Iowa Department of Education's (DE) Comprehensive State Accreditation process, colleges may request assistance on a 'special topic' that they perceive to be an area in need of improvement. This special topic review is intended as an opportunity for the college to receive input, feedback, or assistance from one or more peer institutions or agencies on a particular issue. The review is purposefully separate from the assurance/compliance component of the accreditation review and no sanctions may arise based on the DE team's findings or recommendations. In fact, inclusion of this summary in the final accreditation report is at the college's discretion.

NCC's president, Dr. Alethea Stubbe, and her leadership team requested that a special topic be included in their comprehensive accreditation review to help them improve processes surrounding recently enhanced Title IX and Campus SaVE Act (Sexual Violence Elimination Act) compliance regulations. Specifically, Dr. Stubbe requested that *best practices on how institutions handle inquiries, complaints, and investigations* be shared with NCC's staff. (February 26, 2016, email correspondence.)

In 2013, a bi-partisan coalition in Congress championed the Campus SaVE Act (SaVE) as an amendment to the federal Jeanne Clery Act. SaVE was designed by advocates and victims and survivors of sexual assault to serve as a companion to Title IX that would help bolster the response to and prevention of sexual violence in higher education. On March 7, 2013, President Obama signed the measure into law as part of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013. This act requires universities and colleges to increase transparency about the scope of sexual violence on campus, guarantee victims enhanced rights, provide for standards regarding institutional conduct proceedings, and provide campus community-wide prevention educational programming. (Jeanne Clery Act Information retrieved at: www.cleryact.info/campus-save-act.html)

To deliver on President Stubbe's request, the accreditation team leader requested the expertise of college and university staff who had presented at a 2014 Campus Security Seminar sponsored by the Board of Regents Office. The following presenters agreed to participate in NCC's Special Topic in the specified capacity (see Exhibit 1 for more information about the Special Topics):

- Jon Buse, Vice President for Student Affairs, Kirkwood Community College, provided an extensive review and valuable feedback on NCC's *Title IX Harassment/Sexual Violence: Complaint and Resolution Procedures* and other related documentation he found on NCC's website.

- Debbie McKittrick, J.D., Legal Officer, Des Moines Area Community College, provided a session during a May 2, 2016 *Title IX and SaVE Act Policies and Procedures* training session conducted at NCC's Sheldon campus. She discussed the history of Title IX and Clery Act legislation, including the SaVE Act amendment and the VAWA; laws addressing sex and gender misconduct on college campuses; Title IX essentials regarding compliance elements and when they apply; policy, practice, and processes surrounding Title IX and SaVE Act enforcement; and a review of numerous NCC resources regarding these topics.

- Steffani Simbric, Aaron DeLashmutt, and Mary Sirna, with the Iowa State University *Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)* of Story County, Iowa, are a team of law enforcement professionals who joined Debbie McKittrick at the May 2, 2016 session at NCC. They discussed the development of a college response team and the components of viable policies, practices, and procedures to provide transparency, insurance of victim and accused rights, and the campus/community-wide prevention training required by the SaVE Act and VAWA.

The NCC staff and DE accreditation team leader that participated in this on-campus training session provided by McKittrick and the ISU team were impressed with the presenters' professionalism and expertise. Everyone reported learning a great deal of valuable information regarding policies, best practices, and procedures needed to adequately address this very serious college life issue. NCC will follow-up with additional training sessions for their staff and students, and the DE will consider ways to conduct such trainings statewide as this is a reported need at most of Iowa's 15 community colleges.

Assurance Summary State Standards

Compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria

The state accreditation team reviewed the most recent report and information from the HLC available at the time of the evaluation. NCC's letter of accreditation by the HLC was reviewed and NCC has continuing accreditation. NCC has demonstrated that it meets HLC criteria.

Compliance with Additional State Standards

Faculty Qualifications

All community college-employed instructors who are under contract as of July 1, 2011, who teach in career and technical education (CTE) or arts and sciences (including adjuncts) are required to meet minimum faculty standards (Iowa Code, Section 260C.48). The Iowa Department of Education (DE) accreditation team reviewed a random sample of faculty personnel files provided by NCC's Human Resources office to ensure compliance with the standard.

The DE provided a random list of 20 faculty members for whom NCC provided personnel files regarding their faculty qualifications, with supporting documentation such as college transcripts, employment applications to illustrate related work experience, and third-party licensure or certification, if applicable. The DE accreditation team then perused the files to determine whether each faculty member complied with current Iowa Code faculty standards for the courses he or she taught during FY 2015.

The DE accreditation team had some questions about the qualifications of a few adjunct faculty members, but NCC's chief academic officer (CAO) and Human Resources director provided additional document to justify hiring the instructors to teach the courses in question.

Finding: Based on the DE team's review of randomly selected faculty members' qualifications, it was determined that an adjunct instructor hired to teach one course in the summer of 2014 was not adequately qualified. This person has not been hired since and will not be hired for future on-campus or online courses until/unless faculty standards are met, so no DE follow-up is necessary.

Faculty Teaching Load

The teaching loads of full-time instructors must not exceed the faculty load limits set forth in Iowa law. This is the case for CTE instructors, as well as for college parallel (arts and sciences) instructors (Iowa Code, Section 260C.48). The DE accreditation team reviewed the instructional loads of a random sample of faculty to ensure compliance with the standard. To do so, the DE provided a random list of 20 faculty members for whom NCC provided documentation of their FY 2015 teaching loads. NCC provided clear documentation of the teaching loads of the faculty members under review for compliance with the maximum teaching loads established in Iowa Code, Section 260C.48.

Upon review of the faculty teaching loads, the DE team found a few that appeared to exceed the maximum allowable credits. NCC's Chief Academic Officer (CAO) explained that the excess credits were taught as Independent Study or during shortened terms between semesters. According to the NCC's faculty master contract, credits taught during these session do not count toward load, so therefore are not a violation.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Special Needs

Community colleges are required to maintain equal access in recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities must be given access to the full range of course offerings at a college through reasonable accommodations (Iowa Administrative Code 24.5(3)). In addition, community colleges are required to have nondiscrimination statements covering access to educational programs and employment. These may be two separate statements or the college may locally choose to combine the statements. The nondiscrimination statement(s) must list all state and federally protected classes, cite related state and federal regulations, provide the name and contact information of person(s) designated to coordinate Title IX and Section 504 compliance, and provide contact information for the Office for Civil Rights.

The DE accreditation team conducted a desk review prior to the on-site visit in which they reviewed NCC's Americans' with Disabilities Act (ADA) and nondiscrimination policies, statements, and practices in marketing and recruitment publications, handbooks, the college catalog, and its website. During the on-site visit, the team reviewed additional documentation and conducted interviews with staff associated with disabilities services to ensure compliance with the standard.

During both the desk and onsite reviews, the DE accreditation team found inconsistencies between the nondiscrimination statements included in the publications and materials provided - particularly within the board policy, college catalog, adjunct instructor handbook, academic program brochures, and other college publications. In some instances, a few protected classes, as well as contact information for both the college's equity coordinator(s) and the Office for Civil Rights, were missing.

In addition, they found that there is no nondiscrimination statement included in course syllabi. Additionally, although there is a disability accommodation policy statement in the syllabi that states the title of the individual responsible for accommodations, there is no contact information for students in need of services.

Finding: There are inconsistencies in the nondiscrimination statement published in various college publications (college catalog, handbooks, recruitment material, etc.) and it does not appear in all major publications. In most cases, it did not include adequate contact information for the college's equity officer(s) or the Office for Civil Rights. Additionally, the disabilities accommodation (ADA) statement does not include contact information and is not in all course syllabi.

College leadership immediately made strides to correct this issue, including having the Board of Trustees approve a DE-approved nondiscrimination statement to place in board policies. The DE will follow-up with NCC in March of 2017 to ensure compliance with these standards in all documents.

CTE Program Evaluations and Timelines

There are a variety of state standards related to the offering of career and technical education (CTE) programs included in Iowa Code, Chapter 258, 281—IAC 46.7(4), and 281—IAC 24.5(4). Standards for CTE programs include numerous requirements related to program and award length, program content, labor market demand, articulation, advisory committees, and more. All CTE programs (including new programs and changes to existing programs) must be approved by the DE. Standards for CTE programs are included in the *Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges* located on the DE website.

The DE utilizes a web-based platform for its CTE program approval process and maintains a database of approved programs and courses. This platform also performs a compliance check on each CTE program offered by each college. The DE accreditation team reviewed this compliance check for NCC's CTE programs to ensure compliance with program standards. To check compliance with the standards regarding program advisory committees' composition, roles and responsibilities, the DE accreditation team reviewed a random sample of CTE advisory committee membership lists and meeting minutes.

Additionally, community colleges are required to review at least 20 percent of their CTE programs annually. Standards for CTE program review are also included in the program approval guidelines located on the DE website. The DE accreditation team reviewed NCC's CTE program review process, schedule, and a random sample of recent CTE program review reports to ensure compliance with the program review standards.

The following observations were noted regarding the quality of NCC's program review process and assessment methodologies:

- NCC assesses all courses during their Program Review and Evaluation (PRE) process.
- NCC has created and utilizes a standardized format for their PRE process that ensures consistency.
- NCC is piloting a PRE process for their Arts and Sciences degree program that is not DE-required.
- NCC utilizes "Tracdat" technology to track recommendations and actions resulting from each PRE, as well as to identify who is responsible for the actions and their progress, with the expectation that each program must have a "Criterion for Success" and must make forward progress each year. As part of this process, they track GIO (General Instruction Outcomes) and SLOs (Specific Learning Outcomes).
- NCC is assessing General Education outcomes across the curriculum.

NCC appears to have a culture of continuous improvement and effectiveness, further illustrated by the recent addition of an assessment process in which peer reviewers assess other department's assessment methodology and progress reports to see if the assessment is effectively leading to improved programs, delivery, and student learning outcomes.

Other commendable activities and programs that the DE accreditation team identified during interviews with NCC staff regarding CTE program review and activities include:

- NCC is collaborating with Rock Valley School District to develop a 7-12 grade program to help students get work-based exposure and experience. This program represents a potential *best practice* CTE program made possible by a collaboration with Rock Valley's Rocket Manufacturing.
- Some CTE programs are incorporating "Portable CTE Modules" into K12 programs to provide college-level learning opportunities.
- Many CTE programs offer second year learning opportunities for students to work on an actual job site, which aligns with the National Governors Association Work-Based Learning Initiative. One such opportunity is availed through the Heavy Equipment course housed at Rock Valley.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Strategic Planning

Community colleges are required to update their strategic plans at least every five years as a guide for the community and its internal decision-making (Iowa Code Section 256.31(4)(a)). The DE accreditation team reviewed NCC's most recent strategic plan and interviewed selected staff to ensure compliance with this standard.

The DE accreditation team was impressed with NCC's strategic plan entitled *Vision 2020,* created after a 2013 environmental scan and the involvement of Noel Levitz, a highly-regarded success assessment firm. Many of the team's observations evidenced the fact that NCC is committed to data-driven decision making and is continuously trying innovative strategies to improve retention and student success. A prime example of this is their MAT 044 developmental mathematics courses in which students are co-enrolled with college level math courses where they are encouraged to build foundational skills as they see the need for such in their higher level coursework. The college is also researching predictive assessment models to enable them to make notable gains in keeping students on track to completion and workplace success.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Physical Plant and Facilities

Each community college must present evidence of adequate planning, including a board-approved facilities plan that includes a master plan in accordance with Iowa Administrative Code 24.5(5)(a). The community college's facilities must meet state and federal requirements as outlined in the state accreditation guide. The DE accreditation team reviewed NCC's facilities plan and met with the facility director and staff to discuss the college's planning process and decision-making structure to ensure compliance with this standard.

While the facilities director and his staff have a clear understanding of the activities necessary to operate a college campus efficiently and effectively, NCC has no board-approved facilities plan that presents evidence of adequate long-range planning. The director discussed numerous components of such a plan, but stated that, due to his limited staff, he has not had the time to put all of the components together into a single comprehensive facilities master plan.

The DE accreditation team found NCC's facilities to be well-maintained and the staff committed to creating safe, efficient facilities for learning. The following are observations of NCC's facilities:

- After the college's 2008 DE Equity Review, the college underwent a board-approved, large-scale facilities assessment, which included an ADA compliance check. They have been working to remedy and upgrade facilities accordingly based on this assessment report.
- Doors, including those in the housing units, operate by swipe cards, with automatic opening buttons located in close proximity to accommodate people in wheelchairs.
- Each housing unit has at least one handicap-accessible apartment.
- EMC Insurance conducts periodic security assessments and makes recommendations that NCC then acts upon or projects into future renovations.
- NCC has installed blue lights in outdoor areas where one can find a push button to directly notify police in case of an emergency or safety threat (3-6 minute response time).
- NCC has posted emergency tabs in all classrooms with information regarding actions to be taken for various emergency situations.
- There are clearly marked tornado shelters throughout the campus.

- All rooms have push button locks from the inside.
- Classrooms have phones – all phones programmed so that dialing "200" activates the loud speaker (referenced on the back of staff name tags).
- A RAVE system provides instant communication re: emergencies, school closure, etc. They are soon to have offer a phone app with one-touch alerts for various types of emergencies.
- NCC maintains an active Safety Committee and Emergency Response Team that has created a documented emergency action plan.
- Officials conduct numerous in-service activities for staff, most recent were First Aid and CPR.
- NCC uses various tools to organize and track maintenance and monitor energy use.
- New buildings are energy-efficient and impressive.

Finding: While it is evident that the spirit of this criteria is satisfied, NCC does not have a comprehensive facilities plan that documents the planning process, strategies for prioritizing maintenance and improvement, and plans for funding short- and long-term projects. The college should develop and maintain such a facilities plan to serve as a single source to clearly document the college's approach to and philosophy regarding the required criteria.

The DE accreditation team was assured that the Vice President of Operations and Finance and the Director of Physical Facilities will work to integrate the currently existing components which demonstrate comprehensive facilities planning into a singular facilities plan by October 1, 2016. The DE team will follow-up with NCC by March of 2017 to see if this document has been created and is being utilized.

Quality Faculty Plan

Iowa law establishes the process for community colleges to plan for the hiring and professional development of faculty. Institutional Quality Faculty Plans (QFP) are required to meet the standards of 281—IAC 24.5(5). The DE team reviewed NCC's QFP to ensure compliance with these standards.

The DE accreditation team was impressed with NCC's QFP, and in particular with the fact that they have established professional development requirements that must be met in five-year increments. However, if individuals meet the requirements before the five-year period is up, they are still required to establish and meet annual professional development goals. This illustrates a collegewide commitment to learning and continuous improvement.

During conversations about the QFP, it was noted that NCC does not have a faculty handbook. A faculty member was asked about the lack of such guidance and stated that they use the QFP and their master agreement for faculty guidance. While those documents may suffice for professional development and contract-related issues, the DE team highly recommends the creation of a faculty handbook for guidance on teaching and classroom related policies, procedures, and practices; particularly for new faculty and the growing population of adjunct and online faculty members.

Findings: No major compliance issues were noted during the evaluation; however, the QFP Committee should strive to maintain equal representatives from CTE and Arts & Sciences. The DE will follow-up with NCC in March of 2017 to ensure compliance with this membership distribution.

Senior Year Plus Programs

There are a variety of requirements for Senior Year Plus (SYP) programs offered to high school students jointly enrolled in a community college. These requirements are included in Iowa Code, Chapter 261E. Currently, the DE utilizes the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (NACEP) accreditation process to ensure compliance with many statutory requirements (legislated Postsecondary Course Audit Committee). The DE accreditation team reviewed NCC's accreditation status with NACEP, interviewed selected staff, and reviewed documentation to ensure compliance with the standard.

The DE accreditation team reviewed the documentation that NCC submitted regarding their SYP program and were very impressed with the comprehensive guidance provided to instructors, both at the college and high schools, as well as advisors working with the jointly-enrolled students. The following observations were deemed noteworthy by the team:

- NCC faculty review courses taught at the high schools and provide one-on-one *discipline-specific* professional development opportunities to the high school teachers.
- The high school instructors are invited to all professional development activities, but to garner 100 percent participation, NCC faculty have created professional development activities (example: "whole-brain theory") conducted during high school based classroom observation.
- To ensure rigor, content, and similar course outcomes, NCC faculty fill out a checklist while they observe courses taught in the high schools.
- NCC staff meet with high school advisors re: processes and send a letter to students at the start of each semester.

The DE accreditation team was unable to meet with the SYP director, so NCC's CAO will arrange a conference call for the director and the DE team leaders. During that call, the DE team will reiterate their recommendation that NCC creates a handbook for their jointly-enrolled students regarding college policies and processes regarding registration, orientation, grades, drop dates, appeal processes, etc..

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.
FOLLOW-UP NOTE: The conference call with the SYP director and CAO was conducted on June 30, 2016. The director addressed all questions the DE team had and stated that she is working on the recommended student handbook for jointly-enrolled students.

Compliance with Non-Accreditation State or Federal Requirements

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Evaluation Team Recommendations

The state accreditation team recommends continued accreditation for Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC).

As mentioned on pages 10 and 13, DE accreditation team leaders will conduct a follow-up review to ensure that the college is in compliance with the Special Needs and the Physical Plant and Facilities standards.

A state interim accreditation evaluation of NCC is scheduled for FY 2021 (AY 2020-2021).

EXHIBIT 1

NORTHWEST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STATE COMPREHENSIVE ACCREDITATION REVIEW – FY 2016

SPECIAL TOPIC
TITLE IX and SaVE ACT POLICIES & PRACTICES

PRESENTATION: May, 2, 2016 at Northwest Iowa Community College, Sheldon, Iowa

A. Review of Title IX and SAVE ACT legislation and college's responsibilities
Debbie McKittrick, J.D. – DMACC, Equity Coordinator and Legal Officer

1) History of Title IX, Clery, VAWA, and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act
2) Laws addressing Sex, Gender Misconduct on Campus
3) Title IX Essentials
    a. Compliance
    b. Compliance Elements
    c. The Juncture of other laws with Title IX
4) When does Title IX Apply?
5) Policy
6) Practice
7) Process
8) A look at NCC

B. Training Session: Sexual Assault Response Team (Story County, IA) * *See bios on page 2.*

Aaron DeLashmutt	**Mary Sirna**	** **Steffani Simbric** **
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Topics of discussion:	**Questions addressed:**
Reporting and investigation	What training does your EO and staff have?
Alcohol and consent – separate and together	What resources are on campus? In community?
Roles: Advocacy/Medical/Law Enforcement	Who handles the college investigation?
Ability to respond and encourage reporting	What's the relationship with local police?
Always have to be prepared	Where are you with this subject, as a person?
"Preponderance of evidence" not "evidence beyond a reasonable doubt" *(not criminal)*	What do employees say when someone reports an alleged assault? What do they do?
Clery Act – Numbers don't matter – it can happen. Council for Prevention!	Plan for immediate action? Protection for victim and the accused? Appeal process? Sanctions?

Aaron DeLashmutt

Aaron DeLashmutt, Interim Chief of Police at ISU Police Department, possesses more than 19 years of law enforcement experience. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Community and Regional Planning from ISU and a Master's degree in Criminal Justice Leadership from Concordia University, St. Paul.

DeLashmutt has received advanced training in the areas of sexual assault, threat assessment, and harassment related crimes, as well as computer forensics. He has been an active member of the Story County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) since its conception in 1997. During that time, he has investigated numerous sexual assaults and provided outreach and training to the university community and many other agencies. Additionally, DeLashmutt has been conducting computer forensic investigations since 2001 and received certification in 2004 as a Certified Forensic Computer Examiner (CFCE) through the International Association of Computer Investigative Specialists (IACIS).

DeLashmutt was instrumental in the formation of ISU's Title IX group which meets weekly to discuss reports of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and harassment on campus. Members are comprised of representatives from across ISU including: University Counsel, Office of Equal Opportunity, Dean of Students, Department of Residence, ISU Police, Athletic Department, and the Title IX Coordinator.

Mary Howell Sirna

Mary Howell Sirna, Administrative Advisor with the Iowa State University Police, received her bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA, and a law degree from the University of Iowa, College of Law in 1996. She then worked as a domestic abuse prosecutor for the Marshall County Attorney's Office and served as a law clerk to the Honorable Robert W. Pratt, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa. From 1996-2013, Ms. Sirna worked as an Assistant Story County Attorney (SCAO), eventually obtaining the title of First Assistant. During her tenure at SCAO, she specialized in victim cases including: sexual abuse (both adult and child); domestic abuse; child endangerment; vehicular homicide, and murder.

In 2013, Ms. Sirna was hired as an Administrative Advisor to the Iowa State Police Department. In this capacity, she trains and provides legal updates to officers; assists with investigations, policy, and procedure; and acts as a liaison on behalf of the police department to the larger university community. Ms. Sirna is also a member of both the Title IX group and SART. Most recently she has been assisting Iowa State University's Counsel in adjudicating sexual misconduct cases. She also served as the Interim Director for the Office of Equal Opportunity and Iowa State University's Title IX Coordinator from October 2015 through April 2016.

Steffani Simbric

Steffani Simbric has advocated for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence for more than 16 years. She has a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Northern Iowa and a master's degree in public administration from ISU. Her career started at Cedar Valley Friends of the Family in Waverly, Iowa, where she worked as the domestic violence shelter coordinator, transitional housing program manager, and assistant director of the agency.

Ms. Simbric presently oversees the coordination of the Story County SART (Sexual Assault Response Team), based out of the ISU Police Department. In this capacity, she trains law enforcement and medical professionals in sexual assault response, monitors responses to reports of sexual assault for quality assurance, and provides technical assistance to other communities and universities.

C. **Resources noted in the presentation for NCC's future use:**

www.notalone.gov. Good resources for colleges, students, etc.

www.atixa.org. Professional organization of Title IX professionals. Many free resources available on their website, including sample policies.

United Educators – UE insures many Iowa community colleges. I've found their resources and professional development to be top notch.

Center for Violence Prevention – www.uni.edu/cvp. Established at UNI, the Center for Violence Prevention provides technical assistance for developing prevention and education initiatives to colleges and universities. Many colleges in Iowa have worked with the CVP. Great resources.