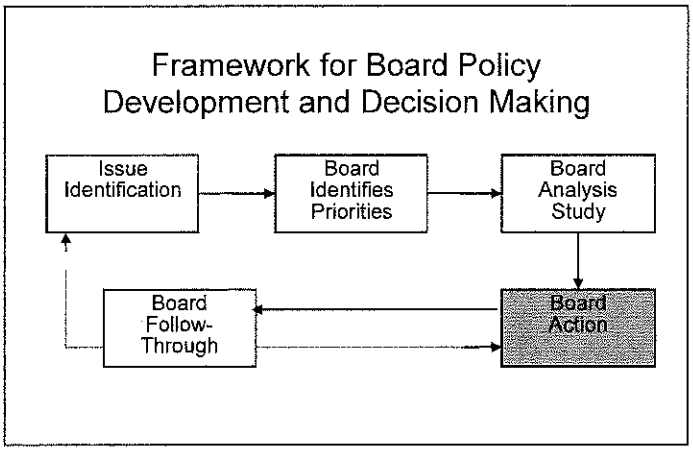
Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

September 15, 2016



Agenda Item: North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) 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
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Attachments: 1

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

Background: This is a report of the evaluation of NIACC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The department conducted the on-site portion of the evaluation on April 20-22, 2016, in Mason City, Iowa. The findings reflect the work of the accreditation team in the comprehensive review of NIACC.

NIACC 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

North Iowa Area Community College

April 20-22, 2016

FY 2016

COMMUNITY COLLEGES &
WORKFORCE PREPARATION

PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION

State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
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North Iowa Area Community College
Comprehensive Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2016

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North Iowa Area Community College
State Accreditation Evaluation
FY 2016 - Conducted April 20-22, 2016

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this review was a scheduled comprehensive accreditation evaluation of North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) by the Iowa Department of Education (DE) as mandated by Iowa Code, Section 260C.47. The accreditation evaluation was conducted on Wednesday, April 20 through Friday, April 22, 2016, at NIACC's main campus in Mason City, Iowa.

In conjunction with this accreditation visit, NIACC officials graciously agreed to participate in a pilot project to integrate the DE's Focused Equity Review with the state accreditation review process. This involved extending the visit a half day to allow the DE team to meet with a few additional interview groups. The pilot was successful in helping the team identify some integration details that need refinement and in conducting NIACC's equity review without the need for a separate visit. NIACC will receive a separate Equity Review Report from the DE.

Institutional Overview

College History[1]

North Iowa Area Community College in Mason City has the distinct privilege of being the first public community college established in Iowa. In 1917, the Mason City School Board passed a resolution establishing a junior college to be "an extension of the high school to offer two years of advanced study" *(college records)*. In the spring of 1918, the college received full accreditation by the college division of the North Central Association, establishing Mason City Junior College (MCJC) as the 46th public junior college in the United States.

On September 9, 1918, MCJC opened its doors in the newly built Mason City High School building to 28 students, six teachers, and five fields of study under the direction of Principal James Rae. Residents could attend at no cost and non-residents paid $10 per semester. MCJC's pre-baccalaureate curriculum was designed to encourage further study on the part of high school graduates as well as to offer higher education to those students who might have otherwise been unable to afford it. The college held its first commencement exercise with four graduates in the spring of 1920, and, during that decade, continued to expand its programs and athletic opportunities. By 1940, enrollment was 265, the tennis team was undefeated for the third consecutive year, a noncredit Civilian Pilot Training program was started, and a new radio club was formed.

As with all colleges nationwide, World War II caused enrollments and offerings to decrease in the early 1940s, but after the war, enrollment climbed as service men and women took advantage of the G.I. Bill (i.e., the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944) to further their education. In 1947, the college began a program in adult education for teacher training and recertification. By 1948, noncredit adult education classes became popular and summer school for teachers was offered.

The 1960s saw the addition of vocational-technical programs and by 1966, enrollment increased to more than 1,700 credit students. In 1966, the statewide organization of areas to maintain and operate community colleges or technical institutions resulted in the election of a board representing 34 school

districts to direct the college. This board named the institution North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) and the main body of the college moved back to the remodeled high school building (Mohawk Square). Planning began for a new 300-acre campus located on the east side of Mason City and William F. Berner became NIACC's first Superintendent in 1966. The NIACC Foundation was established in 1968, providing an essential avenue for fundraising to help the college grow, structurally and in enrollment.

Many changes were in store for the new community college, including two new programs – Agriculture and Nursing, and new buildings – the first of which were designed primarily for vocational-technical programs and occupied in January 1970. Five temporary buildings were completed during the summer of 1971, and all college programs moved to the campus for the 1971-72 academic year, with dormitories constructed in 1972. By 1974, NIACC reached an enrollment of 2,000 students.

The momentum of growth continued during the 1980s and 1990s as NIACC continued to expand and offer services, activities, and clubs of interest to students. During this 20-year span, the college opened an activity center, expanded women's sports, constructed a Fine Arts wing, provided a home for Buena Vista University on campus, opened the Muse-Norris Conference Center, added more student apartments, formed the NIACC Alumni Association, expanded distance education, opened the Murphy Manufacturing Technology Center, and became an entrepreneurial resource to the region with financial gifts from John and Mary Pappajohn.

Today, NIACC is a progressive, comprehensive institution that serves as the primary educational and cultural center in North Central Iowa. According to the NIACC Alumni Association records, there are more than 29,000 graduates of MCJC and NIACC residing in all 50 states and 13 foreign countries. Over the last 25 years, the association has recognized 52 alumni with the "Outstanding and Distinguished Alumni Award" for their personal and professional accomplishments.

Institutional Profile[1, 2]

In just under 100 years, NIACC has grown from a student population of 28 to more than 4,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2015, which includes a five-year average decline in enrollment between 2010 and 2015. The college serves a variety of student populations in more than 11 counties in the North Iowa region. With a staff of over 400, NIACC currently offers nearly 40 one- and two-year career programs, the first two years toward a bachelor's degree, and an array of continuing education opportunities for professional and personal growth. These credit and noncredit opportunities are provided on NIACC's main campus in Mason City and at five Community Education Centers located in Charles City, Garner, Hampton, Lake Mills, and Osage. The mission of these off-campus centers is to provide opportunities for nontraditional students to acquire employment skills (noncredit-to-credit courses) and participate in lifelong learning to enhance the quality of life throughout NIACC's service region.

In FY 2015, *NIACC's Profile*, created by the Division of Community College's data consultants from enrollment data submitted by the college, had the following highlights:

- 4,011 credit students (ranked 11th of the 15 Iowa community colleges)
    - 54.4 percent female
    - 12.2 percent minority
    - Median age of 20.6
    - 3,012 students enrolled in arts and sciences, transfer programs
    - 790 students enrolled in career and technical education programs
    - 63.6 percent (2,553) enrolled in one or more distance learning courses

- 32.7 percent (1,312) jointly-enrolled students
    - 52.0 percent female
    - 6.6 percent minority

- 866 awards issued (ranked 2nd of the 15 Iowa community colleges, which is impressive being their enrollment is ranked 11th)
    - Majority of career and technical education awards were in health sciences, with manufacturing being a distant second
    - Approximately 280 Associate of Arts (AA) transfer degrees
- Graduation rate of 38.3 percent (almost 10 percent above the state average and ranked 3rd among Iowa's 15 Iowa community colleges)
- Transfer rate of 27.7 percent (2.7 percent above the state average and ranked 4th among Iowa's 15 community colleges)
- Success rate* of 48.3 percent (6.3 percent above the state average and ranked 3rd among Iowa's 15 Iowa community colleges)

  ** Students who either graduated within 150 percent of the time for completion or transferred without graduating. No student is counted more than once.*

In addition to the credit statistics above, NIACC offers more than 2,500 continuing education courses each year to approximately 12,000 individuals accounting for over 20,000 enrollments and 213,782 contact hours of instruction. These learning opportunities are available in the areas of recreation and leisure, business management, health, computers, summer camps for kids (elementary and middle school age), lean enterprise, customized training for business and industry, skilled trades, and lifelong learning through the NIACC Lifelong Learning Institute.

Continuous Improvement

NIACC is currently in the final year of a five-year strategic plan and in the process of creating a dynamic new strategic plan focused on three key components: Recruitment, Retention, and Completion (discussed further on pages 11 and 12). In this plan, college officials identified their greatest challenge moving forward to be the population decline of North Iowa. With the number of high school graduates declining 13 percent over the last 10 years, the college will need to identify enrollment management strategies that will attract more students from both inside and outside of NIACC's service area. Furthermore, student support and instructional strategies will need to be identified to retain students once they have enrolled at the college. Finally, strategies will be identified and implemented to support students on their pathway to completion in order to uphold NIACC's commitment to help students leave the college having met their educational and personal goals.

Despite the challenges of the recession years and a declining population within its service region, NIACC leaders are moving forward to improve facilities, expand programs, and recruit more aggressively. In the strategic focus area of recruitment, the college opened the beautiful Campus View Housing Complex in the spring of 2015, which provides modern living quarters for 396 students. With a focus on student success and completion, a new Diesel Technology Center and Health Care Simulation Center were opened in the fall of 2015 to provide state-of-the-art manufacturing and nursing training. Additionally, a $10 million renovation and addition to the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics wing is being planned and scheduled to open in the fall of 2018.

NIACC has enjoyed many successes aligned with their mission and strategic initiatives focused on student success over the years. Some of the recent accolades that align with their current focus on recruitment, retention, and completion are listed below:

- 2014-15 fall-to-fall retention rate was 60 percent for first-year students, which is slightly higher than the national average *(NIACC Registrar records, July 2014).*
- Career and technical education graduates have a 94% placement rate *(2015 Career Placement Report).*
- Nursing programs have a long history of success, including:
  - students who graduate in the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) and Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) programs continue to have stellar outcomes on licensure exams; and
  - the ADN program received a full eight-year accreditation* renewal from the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission, which became the Accreditation Commission for Nursing Education (ACEN) in the spring of 2012.

    * *NIACC is one of only two in the state of Iowa to obtain that accreditation.*
- NIACC received the following five national rankings between 2012 and 2016:
  - In 2012, CNNMoney.com ranked NIACC number 14 in the nation for student success based on the percentage of students graduating or transferring to four-year colleges within three years of initial enrollment.
  - In 2012, the Aspen Institute ranked NIACC in the top 10 percent (150) of all community colleges in the nation based on a quantitative formula that assesses performance and improvement in four areas: graduation rate, degrees awarded, student retention rates, and equity in student outcomes.
  - In 2014, the Community College Week reported that NIACC was ranked 20th in the nation by BestSchools.org.
  - In 2014, NIACC was again selected by the Aspen Institute as one of 150 community colleges nationwide to be eligible to apply for their $1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.
  - In 2016, NIACC was selected for the third consecutive time as one of 150 community colleges nationwide to be eligible to apply for the $1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. This time they advanced in the prize process to one of the top 50 colleges to be selected for interview.
- The following programs received regional and/or national recognition:
  - Automotive program
  - John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center
  - NIACC Foundation
  - Multiple athletic teams
  - Marketing
- Awarded a Title III Grant to improve outcomes of students in developmental Math and Reading. Among the initiatives funded by this grant are the following:
  - Instructional designers have redesigned these developmental courses to align assessment with learner outcomes.
  - Increased attention is being placed on proper placement of students upon admissions.
    - Math department has determined appropriate ALEKS cut scores.
    - English department has created rubrics for placement into writing courses.
  - Increased mentoring for minority students.
  - Employed a Housing Success Coach to implement mandatory study tables and provide tutoring to students in housing who do not meet established grade-point-averages.

NIACC has an outstanding history of providing quality education and support services that have continuously produced positive student outcomes. It was apparent during the Iowa Department of Education's State Accreditation Review that the faculty, staff, and administrators are committed to their

strategic plan and continuous improvement by embracing their history of success as well as their challenges as they embark on the next 100 years of service to the residents of the North Iowa area service region and beyond.

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[1] Most information reported in this section was gathered from the "DOE Institutional Overview" provided by NIACC in preparation for the Iowa Department of Education's State Accreditation Review.

[2] Iowa Department of Education's annual publication, "North Iowa Area Community College – Profile 2015" (from data submitted by NIACC to the Division of Community Colleges MIS for FY 2015).

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. NIACC's letter of accreditation by the HLC was reviewed to confirm that NIACC has continuing regional accreditation. NIACC 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 NIACC's Human Resources office to ensure compliance with the standard.

The DE provided a random list of 20 faculty members for whom NIACC 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 was very impressed with the consistent structure of the personnel files in terms of the order, consistency, and thoroughness of the documentation. NIACC's vice president over Human Resources, Dr. Shelly Schmit, is a member of the statewide Faculty Standards Task Force and has effectively incorporated the material developed by this group into NIACC's faculty qualification review process. As a result, the DE team's review of the faculty qualifications was expeditious, with no findings.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

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 NIACC provided documentation of their FY 2015 teaching loads. NIACC 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 had a few questions regarding overload credits that were answered satisfactorily. Here, too, the team was impressed with the order and clarity of NIACC's documentation.

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 for state and federally protected classes. 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 NIACC'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 faculty, students, and staff associated with disabilities services to ensure compliance with the standard.

NIACC has made commendable efforts to publish a consistent, complete nondiscrimination statement on its website, major publications, and marketing material. In addition, there is a board policy stating the college's commitment to ensuring a welcoming, safe learning environment for all students via a strong diversity statement. The DE team was particularly impressed with the following efforts:

- A Diversity Plan Committee exists that works primarily with International students. As of April 2016, NIACC enrolled 44 International students, but is conducting a three-year project, for which the board has committed $50,000, to recruit more students internationally.
- A course syllabi template has been developed with a policy section that includes the collegewide nondiscrimination statement and information about acquiring ADA accommodations, complete with contact information.
- Recent professional development sessions have been conducted with a focus on "diverse learning" with presentations regarding challenges faced by first generation college students, gays and lesbians, handicapped students, and other minority students on campus.
- Disability services and facilities staff appear to be extremely caring and accommodating to the point that they have solicited the help of handicapped students to identify improvements needed with accessibility, signage, and classroom learning accommodations.
- CTE program marketing material has a consistent design that includes the nondiscrimination statement on the bottom of the last page.
- A link to the nondiscrimination statement is on the college's home page; however, it is recommended that it be placed a bit higher alongside other links and/or in bigger font to be more obvious.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation; however, a few documents were discovered online that did not contain updated Office for Civil Rights contact information. These were corrected immediately.

Another area of concern was that they do not provide an annual statement of nondiscrimination that clearly states that NIACC does not discriminate in its CTE programs, with a listing of those programs. This is an Office for Civil Rights requirement for which the DE needs to provide better guidance statewide. Therefore, after the existing guidance is improved, the DE will follow up with NIACC to ensure full compliance.

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 NIACC'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 guideline located on the DE website. The DE team reviewed NIACC's CTE program review process, schedule, and a random sample of recent CTE program review reports to ensure compliance with the program review standards.

NIACC's current CTE program review process is aligned well with the standards/criteria stated in Iowa Administrative Code, but is a bit cumbersome and has resulted in inconsistencies, particularly regarding the use of demographic and student success data. For example, the automotive program submitted a thoughtful analysis that celebrated student and program successes and pointedly designed plans for improvements, whereas another program's review seemed to consist of old data with much less analysis.

The DE team spent extra time discussing this process with NIACC's academic leadership, who expressed awareness of process's deficiencies. Donna Orton, interim vice president of Academic Affairs who also serves as the dean of Health Sciences, stated that efforts toward improving program assessment have suffered because of administrative turnover. She expressed that they have established an Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC) with oversight of the academic assessment process, which includes student learning outcomes and general education assessment. The chair of the EEC, a full-time faculty member, stated that he would discuss how this group could better assist in the development of a streamlined, data-driven CTE program review process.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation; however, it is strongly recommended that NIACC commit to improving the CTE program review process, particularly its use of disaggregated data to assess their effectiveness in reaching and serving all student populations. The DE will follow-up with NIACC to ensure full compliance

Strategic Planning

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

Based on their desk review prior to the NIACC visit, the DE team had some concerns regarding the strategic planning process because the documents were fairly sparse with confusing timelines and insufficient detail regarding responsible parties and initiative assessment. Therefore, this topic was paramount with the leadership team during the opening session of the DE team's visit.

During the strategic planning discussion with NIACC's president, Dr. Steve Schulz, and his administrative team, it became apparent that there is a high level of commitment to and engagement with the updating of NIACC's strategic plan to keep NIACC *First in Education, Leadership, and Partnership*. The new strategic plan is scheduled for launch in 2018 as a celebration of the college's 100th anniversary. College leadership will kick off a broad-based process starting this fall with faculty and staff that will be facilitated by an external consultant. Highlights of their strategic planning process include:

- emphasis on three major initiatives – recruitment, retention, and completion;
- communication strategies designed to gather input from faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders, above and beyond the typical staff meetings, such as:
  - informal listening sessions known as "Cracker Barrel Sessions" in which the president meets with interested stakeholders four times a year;
  - conversation sessions between the president and four employee groups conducted two times per year for each group separately;
  - three all-staff meetings conducted annually with attendance of full-time employees required;
  - monthly reports to the board regarding Key Performance Indicators, and AQIP project and accreditation updates; and
  - links to the developing plan and associated reports provided on the college's website so the public has access to NIACC's goals and the fact that the strategic plan is a dynamic document for which they can provide input.

The DE accreditation team understands the leadership challenges NIACC has experienced over the last eight years and is encouraged and supportive of the efforts Dr. Schulz and the NIACC community are making to become a more inclusive, strategic learning institution. We encourage faculty and staff to fully engage in the communication and planning processes.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation; however, while the work on the new strategic plan is commendable, it is recommended that the college continue to focus on the assessment and communication of goals established by the current strategic plan until the new one is launched in 2018.

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 NIACC'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.

NIACC's facilities director seems to be extremely experienced and effective in using limited resources and technology to track facility needs and maintenance requests. In addition to the efficiency of the facility's operation, the DE team was impressed with NIACC's commitment to energy conservation and the process they've developed to maintain a self-supporting fund with rebates from utilities companies in which they

have accumulated $400,000, some of which was allocated toward their new student housing complex. The team was also very impressed with the cleanliness of the buildings and the upkeep of the grounds. It is apparent that the facilities are maintained by internal staff with a sense of pride for the college.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

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 NIACC's QFP to ensure compliance with these standards.

The DE accreditation team was impressed by NIACC's strong faculty-driven professional development plan (i.e., QFP) and the enthusiasm of the QFP Committee that was interviewed during the site visit. Furthermore, the two external reviewers (faculty at another community college) were envious of the two weeks of 'all-staff development' the college offers annually. Most colleges only dedicate a few days in the beginning of each term, but NIACC offers one full week in the beginning of the fall and spring terms and three days at the end of spring term. This extra time not only allows for more professional development activities, but NIACC's QFP Committee has included individual reflection in the faculty's annual plans designed to encourage self-assessment and personal growth.

Interestingly, NIACC was the first community college in Iowa to create a faculty-driven professional development center. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) established in 2009, is led by faculty members who develop, orchestrate, and evaluate professional development opportunities for all faculty at NIACC. Additionally, CETL offered the first *Teaching and Learning Conference* in Iowa and has continue to infuse the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in their work to advance faculty professional development opportunities.

The QFP Committee has also created ways to engage adjuncts instructors such as sponsoring an adjunct professional development dinner and providing funds for concurrent enrollment instructors from the high schools to attend their spring professional development session. Additionally, they encourage participation in a mentor/mentee process for new faculty that starts with a *New Faculty Orientation* week followed by monthly meetings for the first year. Furthermore, the administrative support and faculty utilization of NIACC's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is commendable.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

Senior Year Plus Program

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. The DE utilizes the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (NACEP) accreditation process to ensure compliance with many statutory requirements along with the legislated SYP Postsecondary Course Audit Committee. The DE accreditation team reviewed NIACC'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 NIACC submitted regarding their SYP and was very impressed with the concise, yet detailed, information provided to high school students regarding the 'Career Link' opportunities they have to earn college credit while in high school. NIACC has also

created a very impressive "Handbook for NIACC Career Link Instructors" that includes valuable information such as:

- NIACC's philosophy, mission, and institutional purposes;
- administrator and faculty contact information and a campus map;
- hiring, faculty qualification, and professional development processes and requirements;
- comprehensive general academic and student affairs policies and procedures; and
- information about Career Link and NACEP accreditation standards

The DE team suggested that NIACC's SYP program and documentation could serve as a best practice model for other community colleges and encourages their continued commitment to offering quality instruction to high school students through faculty and staff interaction with concurrent enrollment instructors.

Finding: No compliance issues were noted during the evaluation.

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 North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC).

As mentioned on pages 10 and 11, DE accreditation team leaders will conduct an informal follow-up review in the spring of 2017 to ensure that the college is in compliance with the annual notice of nondiscrimination and is improving its CTE Program Review processes. To aid NIACC and other community colleges in the improvement of these accreditation components, the team will provide guidance within the next four months.

A state interim accreditation evaluation of North Iowa Area Community College is scheduled for FY 2021 (i.e., academic year 2020-2021).