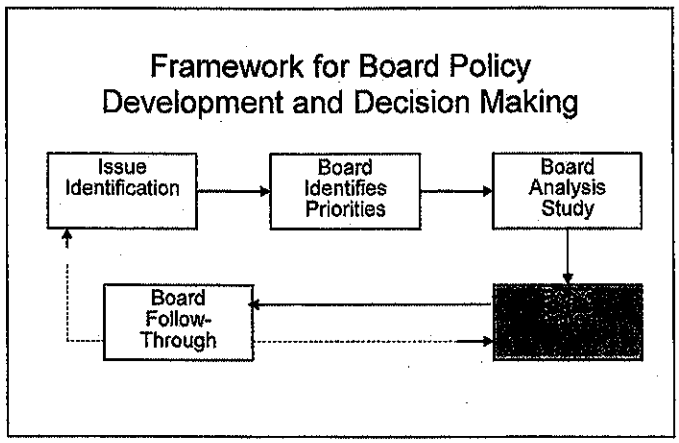
Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

April 30, 2009



Agenda Item: North Iowa Area Community College Accreditation Report (NIACC)

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

Equity Impact Statement: NIACC supports an open-door policy in enrollment of all students.

Presenters: Colleen Hunt, Chief
Bureau of Community Colleges

Debra Derr, Ph.D., President
North Iowa Area Community College

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: The Department of Education recommends continued accreditation for NIACC through 2013. A state compliance accreditation visit will be held in 2012-2013.

Background: This is a report of the evaluation of NIACC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The Iowa Department of Education conducted the evaluation visit on February 23-25, 2009. The findings reflect the work of the accreditation team in the comprehensive review of NIACC.

NIACC is following the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) model for accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission, a commission of the North Central Association (NCA). With AQIP, an institution demonstrates it meets accreditation standards and expectations through sequences of events that align with those ongoing activities that characterize organizations striving to improve their performance.

Accreditation Evaluation

North Iowa Area Community College

Interim On-Site Visit Conducted
February 23-25, 2009

Iowa Department of Education
Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation
Bureau of Community Colleges

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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Bureau of Community Colleges

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Accreditation Team
North Iowa Area Community College
Accreditation Visit
February 23-25, 2009

Team Members

Judy Cook
Executive Director of Planning and Development
Iowa Lakes Community College
3200 College Drive
Emmetsburg, Iowa 50535

Kelli Diemer, Education Consultant
Bureau of Career and Technical Education
Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Colleen Hunt, Chief
Bureau of Community Colleges
Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Roger Utman, Ph.D., Co-Chair
Administrator, Division of Community Colleges
and Workforce Preparation
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Ms. Barb Vredeveld
Emeritus Director, Planning and Institutional
Iowa Western Community College
2700 College Road
Council Bluffs, Iowa 51502

North Iowa Area Community College's Interim State Accreditation

Conducted February 23-25, 2009

Purpose of the Visit:

The purpose of the visit was an interim accreditation of North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) by the Iowa Department of Education.

Organizational Context:

NIACC is located just off Highway 122, four miles east of downtown Mason City, Iowa, a community of 30,000 which serves as an active business center for northern Iowa and southern Minnesota. The community is served by the Mason City airport and a bus line. The NIACC (Area 2) was formed in 1966 in compliance with laws enacted by the 1965 Iowa Legislature, which provided for the delivery of postsecondary education in Iowa. The NIACC Board of Directors assumed operation of Mason City Junior College, which was the first public two-year college in Iowa and one of the earliest in the country having been established in 1918 by the Mason City Independent School District. Construction of the present campus began in 1970.

NIACC has been accredited since 1919 by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, 30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400, Chicago, Illinois, 60602, and (800) 621-7440.

Mission of the College:

Philosophy
NIACC believes that education, which has as its overriding goal the optimum development of all human potential, is the foundation of a democratic society.

Mission Statement
The mission of NIACC is to enhance the quality of life for people of north Iowa through comprehensive educational opportunities, progressive partnerships, exemplary service, and responsive leadership.

Institutional Purposes:

Within the human, financial, and physical resources entrusted to the NIACC, the institution strives to achieve the following goals:

- Enhance the human potential of students by assisting them to acquire the knowledge and tools necessary to understand and enrich their environment and contribute to their communities in a positive way. This becomes manifest through the development of general education skills and abilities.
- Ensure that all citizens of the north Iowa region, regardless of their educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, geographic placement, or needs for special assistance, have the opportunity and the necessary support to take advantage of postsecondary educational programs and other services offered by the college.

- Enable individuals to complete the first two years of a baccalaureate program and, upon successful completion, to achieve efficient and effective transfer to senior colleges.
- Ensure that individuals have opportunities to prepare themselves for employment in occupations in demand in a global society.
- Ensure that all individuals have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lifetimes.
- Promote a strong economy by engaging in activities which develop and maintain a skilled and educated workforce and which promote and support entrepreneurial activity.
- Extend the reach of college resources through progressive partnerships with agencies and entities in communities served by the college.
- Build community by promoting understanding, appreciation, cooperation, and communication among diverse individuals.
- Instill confidence and pride in all who come into contact with the college by fostering a commitment to excellence in all college endeavors.

Facilities/Services:

The main campus in Mason City consists of contemporary, attractive facilities located around lakes in a park-like setting. The 500-acre campus provides facilities for instructional, administrative, recreational, and community activities. Up-to-date laboratories offer the latest in technological equipment. Adequate parking is available without charge for students and staff members. Residence halls and apartments are situated on a site adjoining the campus to the north.

Agriculture Technology Lab
The NIACC farm lab consists of a cow/calf operation, furrow/breeding facility, pole barn, swine confinement, pasture, and no-till demonstration fields.

Athletic/Recreational Fields
Baseball, softball, football, soccer, and recreational fields are located on the east edge of the campus.

Career and Internship Center
The Career and Internship Center is located in the Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center. The center provides NIACC students and alumni resources and support in successfully securing employment and internship opportunities. A variety of resources, tools, and activities are available to students and alumni as well as one-on one support. The center works in partnership with Iowa Workforce Development through the Workforce Development Partnership to enhance the resources and service available.

Conference Center
The Muse-Norris Conference Center, located east of the Auditorium and Fine Arts area, serves NIACC and community groups for education-related meetings and activities. A multipurpose recreational area is found on the lower level.

Entrepreneurial Training and Support
The John Pappajohn Business and Entrepreneurial Center provides entrepreneurial training and business support to aspiring entrepreneurs, small business owners, and individuals working in high growth industries. The comprehensive programs are designed to increase successful new business starts, reduce the high failure rate of young ventures, and strengthen business growth opportunities.

Laboratories
The attractive facilities available in the Natural Science and Mathematics Divisions are considered unusually complete for a community college. The math lab and the physical and biological science laboratory areas provide for effective learning opportunities. The laboratories in the Business Division, Buettner Careers Building, and Murphy Manufacturing Technology Center contain the latest equipment and facilities for proper instruction in the career and technical areas. Computer labs are available throughout campus (including the residence halls) and are available to all students to use for instructional application, Writer's Workbench analysis, checking e-mail, or web browsing. Lab attendants are on staff to assist students. Students have access to this equipment days and evenings, Monday through Saturday.

Library
Conveniently located in the Clifford H. Beem Center, the NIACC Library serves the College as a vital part of the learning experience. Built in 1977, it is an attractive facility providing seating for 150 people. Conference rooms provide areas for group study. Collections include books, reference materials, and non-book media in the forms of audiotapes, videotapes, films, filmstrips, slides, and electronic resources. The Library subscribes to state and national newspapers as well as area papers; periodical subscriptions cover a broad spectrum of subjects to meet user needs. Materials are coordinated with the curriculum, supporting the career and technical and the academic. In addition, a collection of contemporary fiction is maintained. The Library's online catalog makes it easy to locate resources.

North Iowa Community Auditorium
A variety of opportunities are available to NIACC students through the North Iowa Community Auditorium, a modern 1,167-seat facility located on the NIACC campus. Students perform regularly on stage through the NIACC vocal and instrumental music departments, as well as the theatre department. In addition to student and community shows, performances by nationally and internationally known artists are available to NIACC students, often at reduced prices. Before the show or between classes, students may browse through the Auditorium Gallery where they will see various exhibits created by famous artists and NIACC art faculty and students.

OK House
The Oikoumene Religious Center (OK House) is an ecumenical religious organization serving postsecondary students in North Central Iowa. The OK House, located just across from the residence hall, is open daily for students to drop in for social events, listening and referral services, recreation, counseling, study, support groups, contemporary worship experiences, and a serene environment. The OK House is supported by area churches.

On-Campus Housing
The residence hall accommodates up to 450 single men and women on a site adjoining the campus to the north. The residence hall features a commons area, complete with dining, recreational, computer, and study facilities. NIACC student housing also includes lakeside apartments.

Small Business Assistance
The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offers assistance to small business owners or would-be entrepreneurs in all areas of business management, including sources of capital, loan applications, marketing strategies, and financial planning and analysis. Assistance includes counseling, training, and information. Services are either free or low cost. The SBDC is affiliated with Iowa State University and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Student Activity Center
Located in the heart of campus, the Student Activity Center offers a classy, comfortable atmosphere for studying, dining, lounging, and visiting with classmates and instructors. Meals and snacks may be obtained in the Food Court, Monday through Friday. Vending machines are also available.

Student Learning Center
The Student Learning Center, located in Beem Center, offers opportunities to all college students and potential students who wish to:

- Increase their understanding/learning in NIACC courses through one-on-one academic support.
- Improve their skills in reading, writing, math, and study techniques (for example, note-taking, test-taking, time management) either as a brush-up before enrollment or while participating in a NIACC course or testing program.
- Gain new skills by participating in an individualized course such as high school credit.
- Validate their skills by participating in a testing program such as GED (General Education Development), ICBE (Individualized Competency-Based Education), CLEP (College Level Examination Program).

Tobacco-Free Campus
Because the college wishes to provide a safe and healthy environment for students and staff members, the use of tobacco products is prohibited in college facilities and on college grounds.

Continuing Education:

Community Education
NIACC partners with local communities and their school districts and has five outreach centers to remove the barriers of distance in providing lifelong learning opportunities to the people of the area. Most community education centers have an advisory board and an operations board comprised of community members who provide insight for local education programs and facility planning.

Computer Skills
Computer proficiency is a vital part of competitiveness in today's business world. NIACC can provide the highest quality and most cost-effective computer training in north Iowa. Classes are taught on campus or at the work site.

Business Management
NIACC can help employees learn how to communicate better, deal with workplace stress, delegate effectively, understand motivational concepts, manage their time, and build their leadership skills for maximum organizational effectiveness.

Lean Enterprise
A Lean Enterprise uses a systematic approach to eliminating waste and producing what customers want when they want it. Curriculum is available that specializes in manufacturing, process, office, and health care environments.

Manufacturing Skills and Processes
NIACC can help industries educate new employees or advance the skills of current employees about new processes, procedures and technologies. Standardized offerings include courses through the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS), the National Association of Purchasing Management (NAPM), and the American Society of Quality (ASQ).

Health and Wellness
The Regional Health Education Center, a unique partnership between NIACC and Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa, provides a wide range of health-related offerings including safety and healthy lifestyle training, laboratory testing, health screenings, fitness assessments, and consultations.

State Funding Programs
The Iowa Jobs Training program (260F) invests in customized training for existing employees. The program is designed to provide funding to train or retrain a company's workforce. The Iowa New Jobs Training Program (260E) assists businesses that are creating new positions. The program is designed to lower the cost of adding and training the newly created positions. Companies must qualify under the parameters of the programs to receive assistance.

Online, ICN and Facilities
With continuing education's availability of over 500 courses delivered online, a company can benefit from programs across the country. The statewide fiber optics capabilities (Iowa Communications Network) also allow employees to attend seminars and workshops and take courses without leaving town.

North Iowa Business and Industry Group (BIG)
The NIACC Continuing Education Division has joined forces with the Business and Industry Group (BIG) to provide training to businesses and industries in North Iowa. The collaborative efforts of both organizations working together provide quality educational offerings and networking opportunities to common constituents.

NIACC Foundation
The NIACC Foundation was incorporated in 1968 as the official fund-raising arm of the college. It is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) not-for profit, tax-exempt corporation operating for the express benefit of the college. It is governed by a Board of Directors who serves in a non-compensated capacity. The foundation supports the mission of the college by serving as a financial resource in a variety of areas, including program development, equipment acquisition, building construction, cultural opportunities, and student scholarships. Private gifts through the Foundation have played an important role in the college's history, and there are many ways that individuals, businesses, and organizations may support the college. The foundation is authorized to solicit and receive gifts of cash, property, equipment, and/or bequests and to purchase or lease property for the benefit of the college. Foundation books and records are audited annually.

Sites or Branch Campuses/Centers Reviewed:

- Mason City Campus
- Regional Workforce Center

Interactions with Institutional Constituencies:

1. Cabinet
2. President
3. Chief Academic Officer
4. Vice President for Student Services
5. Vice President for Administrative Services
6. Student Services Staff
7. Human Resources
8. Admissions Staff
9. Continuing Education Staff
10. Equity Staff
11. Library Staff
12. Instructional Division Chairs
13. Arts and Sciences Faculty
14. Career and Technical Faculty
15. Board of Trustees
16. Career and Technical Advisory Committee
17. School Partnership Staff
18. Institutional Research Staff
19. Technology Services Staff
20. Foundation/Grants Staff
21. Business Office Staff
22. Career and Technical Students
23. Arts and Sciences Students
24. Multicultural Student Union Staff
25. Global Diversity Committee
26. Learning Support Staff
27. College Senate
28. Quality Faculty Plan Committee
29. Academic Affairs Committee
30. Education Effectiveness Committee
31. Workforce Development

Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed:

1. Web Site: www.niacc.edu
2. NIACC Intranet:
   - Institutional Research
   - NIACC Compared to Iowa Institutions and/or NIACC Compared to Peer Institutions and/or Comparison of Aggregate Data 2007 to 2008
   - Plans and Reports
   - Presentations/Remarks from Former President Morrison
   - Demographics
3. NIACC Career Link Instructor Handbook 2008-2009
4. Workforce Development Report for the Department of Education, February 24, 2009
5. NIACC Career Link Report for Department of Education Visit
6. 2008 Career Placement Report
7. Count on NIACC
8. College Catalog
9. Checklist of Engaged Students

10. Engagement Checklists
11. NIACC Strategic Goals
12. MIS/ERP Enhancement 2003-Present
13. North Iowa Area Community College: Goals for 2008-2009
14. NIACC Assessment Plan
15. Registration Feedback
16. Board Policy Manual 2009
17. NIACC Program Review and Evaluation System 2008-2009
18. Articulation Agreements
19. AQIP/PEAQ Documentation
20. Board Minutes
21. Campus Safety and Security
22. EEO/AA Documentation
23. Organizational Chart
24. Sports Offerings Demographics
25. Student Handbook (in Catalog)
26. NIACC Plan for Improving Student Learning Through Assessment of Student Outcomes, Revised February 20, 2009
27. Report from Educational Effectiveness Committee Meetings with Divisions and Programs
28. NIACC Assessment Plan, February 2009
29. Plant Fund Estimated Receipts and Expenditures July 1, 1996 to June 30, 2017
30. Operational Handbook NIACC/Buena Vista University, January 2009
31. NIACC Disability Services---Services and Accessibility
32. Student Services Personal Counseling
33. Enrich Your Life!
34. To Do, To Be, To Succeed, Engagement Opportunities
35. You + Mentor = Success!
36. Help...I Need to Choose a Major
37. Mastery Math
38. Course Placement Information
39. Early Alert System
40. Supplemental Instruction Program
41. SLC Testing Center Services and Policies
42. NIACC Student Learning Center—Teacher Schedule
43. ICBE: Individualized Competency-Based Education
44. Schedule of GED Classes
45. ESL Classes in Mason City
46. Hispanic Focus Group Minutes
47. Adult Student Committee Minutes
48. Student Services Council Minutes
49. Multicultural Opportunities in the Classroom
50. Join the Club @ NIACC
51. NIACC Where You Want to Go
52. Come Visit Campus
53. Living on Campus
54. A Quality Education for the Mature Mind
55. Financial Aid @ NIACC
56. Trojans Athletics
57. Guidelines for Part-Time Credit Instructors 2008-2009
58. NIACC Salary and Welfare Agreement for Full-Time Board Approved Faculty Members 2008-2009
59. NIACC Advisory Committee Handbook
60. Personnel Manual FY 2009

61. Personnel Directory 2008-2009
62. The Logos
63. In Touch
64. Campus Safety and Security
65. Student Health Clinic
66. The Next Step RN-BS
67. Learn Earn Intern NIACC Business Internships
68. NIACC Career Link Connection
69. Business Incubator
70. Start Your Business, Grow Your Business
71. Get Ready to Start or Expand Your Business
72. NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center NanoLoan Program
73. Make SCORE Your Best Business Decision
74. Business Services: NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center
75. Accelerator Services for Existing Businesses: A Collaborative Business Development Effort
76. The Entrepreneurial Edge
77. FastTrac New Venture
78. Make or Break: The First 30 Seconds of a Sale: An Introduction to Ultimate Sales Academy
79. NIACC Now: New Opportunities for the Wise
80. Lifelong Learning: Spring Semester 2009 Course Schedule
81. Adult Continuing Education Spring 2009
82. The Performing Arts and Leadership Series
83. General Education Statement
84. Course Schedules: August 2008, January 2009
85. NIACC Classes Taught at Local High Schools 2008-2009
86. District Demographics
87. Board Policy Update: June 4, 2008
88. NIACC President's Report
89. NIACC Self-Study 2003
90. Professional Development Activities-- August 2008; January 2009
91. NIACC Library Annual Student Survey 2008
92. Student Satisfaction Initiative: Fall 2000 to Fall 2004
93. Student Opinion Survey: Fall 2004
94. NIACC Focus Group: Facilities
95. NIACC Focus Group: Admissions
96. NIACC Focus Group: Counseling/Advising/Other Student Services
97. NIACC Focus Group: Academic
98. NIACC Focus Group: Registration and Financial Aid
99. Student Satisfaction Focus Group—Student Involvement Committee Recommendations
100. Charter of College Senate
101. Personnel Affairs Council
102. Academic Affairs Council Charter
103. Faculty Load
104. Faculty Personnel Files
105. HLC Accreditation Status
106. 2007-2008, 2008-2009 Assessment Reports
107. Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act Budget
108. Educational Effectiveness Committee: Assessment Plans/Reports 2005-2007
109. Adjunct Handbook 2008-2009 and 2009-2010

Additional State Review Requirements:

- The Quality Faculty Plan (QFP), as required by Iowa Code, was reviewed NIACC and was found to meet the stated requirements of the Iowa Code. The QFP Committee reported that the committee had been re-activated and had been in the process of developing the adjunct faculty QFP. Review of the full-time QFP will be reviewed as the next step.

- Review of faculty personnel files, as required by Iowa Code, did not present any issues.

- The review of faculty load, as required by Iowa Code exhibited evidence of career and technical education (CTE) as well as arts and sciences faculty who were exceeding the full-time teaching load as specified in Iowa Code. The college should examine their policies and procedures in order to assure that all faculty members comply with the teaching loads as specified in Iowa Code.

- The Iowa Code requirement of reviewing 20 percent of CTE programs per year is being followed.

- A review of the catalog and the AS28s did not present any issues.

Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previous Accreditation Visit:

- The college has an opportunity to clarify goals and institutional purposes to avoid confusion.

Met—The college has clearly identified purposes and goals.

- Improvement of the policy manual could be accomplished by thorough redesign for improved understanding and readability. Redesign may include consistent format for each section that establishes the context for each major division of the manual (either guiding principles, general principles, or philosophy). The college may consider documentation on policies to indicate any annual review.

Met—The college has reformatted the Board Policy Manual.

- Develop proactive and deliberate ways to "teach" students about diverse cultures and interpersonal skills in the Orientation program. This would communicate to new students that diversity is valued and validate their experiences.

The college has developed an on-line orientation program which currently does not include components of teaching students about diverse cultures and interpersonal skills. This program will be reviewed in July 2009. The college is encouraged at the time of the review and revision of the orientation program to develop proactive and deliberate ways to teach students about diverse cultures and interpersonal skills. Student orientation would be an excellent starting point for students to begin learning cultural competence.

- Improvement in the review of demographic data regarding various growing numbers of diverse groups in the communities that NIACC serves could ensure the recruitment efforts reach out to all.

  Met—The college is utilizing labor shed and demographic information to affect recruitment efforts. Labor shed data includes occupations and employment status in the region. In addition, the data looks at commuting statistics, education and current median wage characteristics by industry, unemployed, and the underemployed.

- The college could expand learning resource services via the Internet and the college Intranet.

  Met—Learning resource services have been expanded on both the internet and the college Intranet. Resources now include items such as EBSCO Host, Lexis Nexis, an on-line catalog and database, and League of Innovation.

- There is an opportunity for all community colleges, including NIACC to address the issue of parental resistance to career and technical education. The college could consider the advantage of developing additional partnerships with four-year institutions along the lines of the current partnership with Buena Vista University.

  Met—The college has entered into multiple partnerships with other four-year institutions in areas of career and technical education as well as other partnerships. Examples of partnerships initiated since the last accreditation visit includes those such as an admission partnership program with Iowa State University; an admission partnership program with University of Northern Iowa; a 2+2 agreement with University of Iowa; a joint admissions agreement with Waldorf College; a business articulation agreement with Waldorf College; an education articulation agreement with Waldorf College; and updated and enhanced agreements with Buena Vista University.

- Providing students with on-line access to their student records is becoming the norm at most institutions of higher learning. There may not be a direct correlation between on-line access and the student's decision on where to go to school. However, since NIACC has identified enrollment as a challenge for the future, on-line access to records could be provided in order to level the playing field. It is the accreditation team understands that the college intends to provide on-line access when the switch to the new administrative software is made in the near future.

  Met—The college has implemented on-line access to financial accounts, grades, and a degree audit. The college is planning to implement on-line registration in the spring.

- Enrollment Services may wish to look at populations with the service area that have been underserved in the past, including outreach to Hispanic families in Mason City who are not "newcomers" but who have not been enrolling as they might. An important strategy may be to conduct a series of focus groups with this population as opposed to putting all Latino or Hispanic groups together and assuming that the different populations within the area are the same. The college may step up efforts to recruit nontraditional students (retirees, working people) in the service area for day, evening, and on-line courses.

This is being addressed. The college has added a recruiter for older adults. In addition, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are being offered. Region 2's Workforce Development Partnership also received a Literary/Workforce Preparation Grant. The focus of this program is a concentrated effort to enhance English language literacy for North Iowa's growing Hispanic population and other underrepresented residents. The ESL curriculum will be infused with computer literacy training and job skills training. In addition, two specific short-term training areas will be offered in welding and Certified Nursing Assistant. Focus groups were held in broad categories of facilities, admissions, counseling, advising, academics, registration, and financial aid. Additional efforts to integrate these underserved populations will need to continue to be emphasized.

Opportunities for Institutional Improvement:

- The implementation of the new Management Information System offers the college the opportunity to continue to improve assessment and efficient use of information. The new management information system may also offer the students on-line access to records.

  Met—The college has implemented on-line access to financial accounts, grades, and a degree audit. The college is planning to implement on-line registration in the spring.

- In January 2003, the NIACC Board of Directors stated: "The College's integrity is its most embedded value and the one that guides all of its practices." (NIACC Self Study 2003, p. 149) The accreditation team found evidence through the interview that integrity is valued and fundamental in the culture. The college has the opportunity to further visibly demonstrate its commitment to integrity by including this statement throughout their institutional documents, both printed and electronic.

  Met—The college has included policies and has included statements in institutional documents.

- The board reviews the policy manual on an annual basis. Revisions and additions are made and dated. However, there is no documentation on each policy of the latest review date if no revisions are made so that the reader knows it was reviewed.

  The board reviewed and approved all board policies at its meeting in April 2008. This date was noted on the front cover of the policy notebook and approval was reflected in the board minutes. However, documentation of date of review should be included on each policy rather than only on the policy notebook cover.

1. Mission and Governance

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

1A. The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.

Strengths:

- The mission statement and nine associated institutional purposes, published on the college website and various print documents, define the scope and commitment to students and other stakeholders. Board policy and student handbook frames the expectation of the institution on integrity and ethics.
- The Board of Trustee agendas and minutes are published on the college intranet and easily accessible to all employees.
- The NIACC-L is an electronic communication device, which is used to communicate with both offsite and on campus personnel.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- The last review of the college mission was May 2000. There are no written statements of commonly shared institutional values or core beliefs. A review of the current mission statement and development of commonly shared institutional values should be aligned with current operational structures and priorities. Inclusion of all stakeholders in this process can help ensure institutional acceptance and demonstration of those values. All board policies were approved in April 2008. Documentation of the approval date should be reflected on each policy.

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

Strengths:

- Staff recognizes the diversity of learner abilities and the need for accommodations to support learning.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Development of a statement of core beliefs or values would provide an opportunity to define the institution's commitment to the dignity and worth of individual stakeholders and basic strategies to address growing diversity among the student body. The institution may wish to consider integration of appreciation of diverse cultures and learning styles across the curriculum. The college can continue to monitor the changing demographics of its service area and develop programs and strategies to address changing learning needs.

1C. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Strengths:

- Team interviews substantiate faculty and staff investment in and advocacy for the college mission/goals and student success. Faculty and staff feel strongly invested in NIACC and proactively advocate for the institution, its programs, and the students.

- The Board of Trustees interview revealed a commitment on the part of the board to continuously ask "are we meeting our mission". It was stated that this question is commonly used when the board makes decisions.

- The board, administration, and staff commitment to ensuring access to the college and its services to students by controlling tuition costs while simultaneously serving as a catalyst for regional economic development were consistently expressed during multiple interviews.

- The Board of Trustees meets monthly with one division of the college to discuss and better understand current initiatives, stakeholder needs and learning outcomes. This understanding of college divisions provides the board members with the background needed to make policy decisions with confidence.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- The college could continue its emphasis to maintain the commitment to student learning. Through the review of the mission and core beliefs, the college is encouraged to maintain this commitment to students.

1D. The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Strengths:

- The Board of Trustees interviewed stated that they were committed to providing effective policy leadership without micromanagement of day-to-day operations.

- Board leadership is routinely rotated among board members ensuring involvement of all trustees in the process.

- Several councils and committees indicated that they provided opportunities for broad-based participation in the shared decision-making processes.

- The President's Council and all committee agendas and meeting minutes are published on the college Intranet. This enables the college personnel to be aware and involved in the various aspects of the college. This leads to collaboration and understanding among councils, committees, and NIACC personnel.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Evidence appears that by-laws and charters of decision-making groups have not been revised or reviewed since 2000. It is appropriate that the institution review its internal decision making structure to evaluate effectiveness and determine if it is still a viable and effective structure as well as a governance structure that is consistent with current needs and evolving structures. A review of mission and interrelationships among various decision-making groups may provide the opportunity for closer alignment with current reporting and operational structures.

1E. The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Strengths:

- The Board of Trustees considers good stewardship of public funds an essential charge.
- The board policy document includes a statement of ethics and integrity.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

2. Preparing for the Future

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improves the quality of its education, and responds to future challenges and opportunities.

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

Strengths:

- The organization scans its environment to develop realistic objectives in accordance with changing economic and social demographics. Labor shed data provides evidence that data is collected, analyzed, and applied in the planning process for future programming. Student survey and focus groups also provide feedback for future planning.

- The college is addressing changing technology needs of students and staff. Interviewees in the technology services stated that the expansion of bandwidth will enable the addition of online services for students to be more useable.

- The addition of an adult learner enrollment specialist to focus on the mature population is evidence in the attention paid to the demographic shift in the area. The college website targets this population.

- The current strategic plan (2007-2011) includes annual goals and milestones and is evidence of the goal setting and future planning at the college.

- Multiple groups are aware of student profile data. This can enable internal stakeholders to plan appropriate and relevant learning activities.

- The college emergency response plan provides evidence of planning for the safety and security of the employees and students.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- NIACC is presently reviewing its strategic plan with a focus on its 100th birthday. This can help the college to identify elements in its environmental scan which will enable the college to align the strategic plan while preparing for the future. Alignment of plans with the new and emerging strategic plan will enable NIACC to comprehensively prepare for its future. One example of institutional planning includes the 2003 technology plan. The capital improvement plan needs to be developed for future building, planning, and budget planning.

- If the college pursues the alternative AQIP accreditation model, the current long- and short-term planning for continuous improvement model can be integrated into its future, strategic planning processes.

- NIACC has an opportunity to measure success as evidence of the college role in shaping and influencing the local service area.

2B. The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Strengths:

- The program and course approval process includes confirmation by the librarian to ensure the availability of learning resources for students and faculty usage.
- Continuing education provides Lean initiatives for business and industry.
- Anecdotal feedback indicates that faculty presently state that they have adequate resources and technology for teaching.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- The college is encouraged to research the availability and/or development of qualified faculty to expand current and develop future programs.

2C. The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Strengths:

- Interviewees stated that the college focuses on learning by looking at what changes need to be incorporated to continuously improve without losing effective and valued practices.
- Evidence of an estimate of the college's revenue, including long term projections, was found.
- When the college registers students who have previously participated in the high school Career Link program, these students are given priority to register for classes before other high school students can register. The college provides separate days for these students to register for NIACC classes.
- NIACC Link Scholarships enable high school students to qualify for scholarship money after graduation with no application needed. This scholarship is made available for the Career Link students. Scholarships are dependent on NIACC credits earned prior to high school graduation and the college grade point earned prior to high school graduation. Career Link students do not need to apply for these scholarships. This ensures seamless transition. Scholarship funds are obtained from a student learning services grant.
- The high school staff stated that they surveyed students from the high school Career Link program group. Students were asked about their experiences at NIACC and whether that experience was better than what their initial perception was. A majority of these students indicated that their experiences were more favorable.
- The high school staff continues to seek additional ways to explore opportunities for entrepreneurship training and experience. It is their intent to work with the John Pappajohn Center.

- The college has worked with the adjunct high school teachers to analyze their transcripts to determine their eligibility to teach for the college after July 2011 when Iowa Code changes take effect so that it will ensure that adjunct faculty have the same standards for teaching as which full-time faculty have.

- The Career Links staff has created an English/Hispanic brochure to provide communication to the Hispanic population.

- The college has combined the career fair and resource fair.

- The Diversity Committee has put a booklet together to help different cultures on resources on consumer tips. This booklet addresses items such as where to get hair cut and where to buy certain ethnic products.

- The college supports group study exchanges in other countries for students and staff.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Measures of institutional effectiveness may need to be reviewed and revised in concert with the AQIP accreditation parameters and a changing strategic plan. The can ensure appropriate evidence of effectiveness and provide data for analysis and decision making for continuous improvement.

2D. All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

Strengths:

- The college and its stakeholders value the opportunity to be able to serve students and the community while maintaining the college's academic reputation and credibility, while confronted with the current uncertain economic times.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- The college is encouraged to make tighter connections with budgeting and college planning.

- The college is encouraged to continue their use of data for decision making.

3. Student Learning and Effective Teaching

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

3A. The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Strengths:

- A Title III grant has provided the opportunity to develop expectations for student learning. Quantifiable benchmarks for retention and graduation with a goal of two percent increase in retention and graduation have been established.
- Evidence indicates that the institution is exceeding the established benchmarks for student success within classes, student academic progress, student retention, and graduation.
- The college has structures are in place for early identification and intervention of students at risk.
- All new students are asked to identify at least one engagement activity in which they will be involved. If the student expresses no interest, the student is assigned a mentor to encourage student engagement. The student's involvement is tracked and recorded.
- Evidence of program and course assessment plans for the 2007-08 academic years are in place for career and technical education (CTE) courses as well as arts and science divisions. Outcomes have been developed.
- NIACC has a board-approved program and evaluation plan in place as required by Iowa Code. Twenty percent (20%) of CTE programs are reviewed annually in accordance with the plan. Arts and sciences programs are also included in this approval and evaluation plan.
- The general education program at NIACC is based on eight learning objectives including communication and interpersonal skills, quantitative skills, critical thinking, information literacy, technological skills, global awareness, aesthetics, and scientific literacy.
- A random sampling of full-time faculty indicated that they met minimum standards required for teaching.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- While course assessment results are available, the process is unclear as to how and whether general education outcomes are assessed at a cross curricular level. It is the responsibility of NIACC to develop and employ multiple direct and indirect measures of assessing and documenting student learning.

3B. The organization values and supports effective teaching.

Strengths:

- Staff development may include institutional staff development days, as well as program and individual activities. The college offers tuition reimbursement, opportunities to travel to conferences and workshops and internal speakers and activities. Three weeks of professional development is provided for full and part time faculty. Release time is allowed for group study abroad.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

3C. The organization creates effective learning environments.

Strengths:

- Learning communities have begun to be developed.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

3D. The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Strengths:

- The library provides multiple event and online resources to assist student learning and research.
- The Student Learning Center provides support services such as tutoring, academic enrichment, testing, ESL/ELL and comparable services.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

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

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

Strengths:

- NIACC's culture and environment encourages faculty and staff to try innovative strategies and explore alternatives without risk.
- The Lifelong Learning Institute offers nontraditional students to continue their life of learning and involves stakeholders in program planning.
- Professional development at multiple levels (individual, institutional, and department) is encouraged.
- NIACC has established criteria for awarding certificates, diplomas and degrees as evidenced in the college catalog.
- The program evaluation and review is a board approved process. The team found evidence that the college is complying with the program evaluation process.
- The math mastery program and mastery writing programs in developmental education are competency-based.
- The Academic Affairs Committee provides oversight to curriculum revisions and new proposals.
- Student opinion survey from ACT is given to assess student's satisfaction of the institution.
- Co-curricular activities and clubs are available and encouraged strongly for students as a retention tool.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

4B. The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry is integral to its educational programs.

Strengths:

- None

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None

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

Strengths:

- NIACC has committed to diversity as reflected in its institutional purpose. A Global Diversity Committee has been established. This committee has developed a booklet of resources and consumer tips to assist different cultures. International student enrollment has increased. The college also has a Multicultural Student Union, which provides a forum to discuss student perspectives and concerns.
- General education learning outcomes reflect technology skills and global awareness to support this.
- Group study exchanges in other countries support efforts to expand students learning to global and diverse cultures.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- NIACC recognizes the need to develop and assess cultural student learning outcomes (competencies).
- NIACC strives to broaden recruitment efforts to diversify its workforce. By offering on-line courses and services, a location-bound diverse workforce can contribute to this initiative.

4D. The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover and apply knowledge responsibly.

Strengths:

- None.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

5. Engagement and Services

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

5A. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Strengths:

- The institution regularly undertakes assessment of internal and external constituency needs, expectations and perceptions as evidenced by labor shed analysis, campus climate survey, focus group outcomes.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

5B. The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

Strengths:

- NIACC's John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center is the only one of its kind located on an Iowa Community College campus. The College's John Pappajohn Center and Small Business Development Center provide valuable services to the civic and business leaders of the area.

- NIACC proactively supports changing community needs through outreach services. The staff strives to take services to citizens throughout the college district. Career fairs, rapid response teams, and short-term courses are developed in real time to respond to the needs of displaced workers and adult learners. The upcoming Career and Resources Fair is an example of adapting to meet the changing needs of constituents.

- Coop and Internship programming provides students' opportunities for practical application of classroom learning within the local business and industry setting.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

5C. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Strengths:

- Transfer policies/articulation agreements provide for course and program level articulations.
- All area secondary schools offer joint enrollment opportunities for area students through NIACC courses and/or career link programming on campus and at high school locations. High School staff stated that enrollment in such programs have doubled in the past five years.
- Seventy-five percent (75%) of instructors teaching contracted courses at high school locations attend college instructional division meetings.
- Outreach activities by secondary program staff, support secondary students, and their parents with career pathway planning and course enrollment.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- The college is committed to diversity and the students interviewed of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds agreed that in their academic endeavors that the college is "inclusive" in dealing with all students. However, these same students have concerns with student housing in that they feel they are not treated equally and that others are not held to the same standard as they are. This is an opportunity for the college to provide cultural competence training to the students and college personnel.
- As the college expands its enrollment, programs, services, and student activities, there may be a need to modernize and expand residential housing. The college is encouraged to utilize data to make decisions regarding current and future needs of residential students. One concern may space utilization of the residential housing. The college may wish to study the need for adequacy and access to current technology. Student and staff expressed concerns regarding these issues.
- The college may want to explore the development and offering of a service learning program. This can enable expansion of student learning outcomes and linkages with the community.

5D. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

Strengths:

- The college's new recreation center assists in providing needed recreational space for students, staff, and the community.
- The North Iowa Community Auditorium (located on campus) is a remarkable cultural resource to the region. The NIACC Performing Arts and Leadership Series are well attended by the region's population.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- None.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

In review of the college faculty load files, it was determined that both arts and sciences as well as career and technical faculty members are exceeding the teaching loads as required by Iowa Code. The college should examine their policies and procedures in order to assure that all faculty members comply with the teaching loads as specified in Iowa Code.

The board reviewed and approved all board policies at its meeting in April 2008. This date was noted on the front cover of the policy notebook and approval was reflected in the board minutes. However, documentation of date of review should be included on each policy rather than only on the policy notebook cover.

The State Accreditation Team recommends continued accreditation for North Iowa Area Community College District. A State Comprehensive Accreditation visit will be held to coincide with the district's next Higher Learning Commission visit in 2013 in four years.