An Accreditation Self-study

Prepared for
The Higher Learning Commission
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Northwest College
WYOMING

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Institutional Snapshot

I. Student Demography Headcounts

I.A. Undergraduate Enrollments by Class Levels

CLASS LEVEL	FALL 2009	FALL 2008
Freshmen (<30 completed credits)	1,057	806
Sophomores (30+ completed credits)	1,141	1,004
TOTAL	2,198	1,810

I.B. Students by Degree Seeking and Non-degree Seeking Status

GENDER/ETHNICITY	FALL 2009			FALL 2008		
	DEGREE SEEKING	NON-DEGREE SEEKING	TOTAL	DEGREE SEEKING	NON-DEGREE SEEKING	TOTAL
M A L E —						
Black, non-Hispanic	9	0	9	8	0	8
American Indian/Alaska Native	15	1	16	6	0	6
Asian	9	4	13	17	3	20
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	0	2	0	0	0
Hispanic	53	5	58	32	2	34
White, non-Hispanic	684	95	779	523	82	605
Two or More Races	13	1	14	0	0	0
Unknown	6	8	14	1	1	2
TOTAL	791	114	905	587	88	675
F E M A L E —						
Black, non-Hispanic	4	0	4	3	0	3
American Indian/Alaska Native	15	1	16	13	0	13
Asian	11	37	48	37	27	64
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3	0	3	0	0	0
Hispanic	78	5	83	59	7	66
White, non-Hispanic	962	127	1,089	835	151	986
Two or More Races	30	3	33	0	0	0
Unknown	6	11	17	2	1	3
TOTAL	1,109	184	1,293	949	186	1,135
OVERALL TOTAL	1,900	298	2,198	1,536	274	1,810

I.C. Graduate/Professional Students by Degree Seeking and Non-degree Seeking Status

— Not Applicable —

I.D. Age Range of Students

AGE	FALL 2009	FALL 2008
24 and under	1,406	1,185
25 and older	792	625
TOTAL	2,198	1,810

I.E. Numbers of Students by Residency Status

I.E.1. Numbers of Students by Residency Status *(All Students)*

RESIDENCY STATUS	FALL 2009	FALL 2008
In-State Resident	1,603	1,260
Out-of-State Resident	500	460
Non-US Resident	95	90
TOTAL	2,198	1,810

I.E.2. Numbers of Students by Residency Status *(Credit-Seeking Students)*

RESIDENCY STATUS	FALL 2009	FALL 2008
In-State Resident	1,508	1,228
Out-of-State Resident	496	461
Non-US Resident	95	86
TOTAL	2,099	1,775

Note: Fall 2008 out-of-state residents increased slightly from 1.E.1. to 1.E.2. due to querying database on different days.

2.   Student Recruitment and Admissions

2.A.   Number of Applications, Acceptances, and Matriculations

CATEGORY	FALL 2009			FALL 2008		
First-time Students	1,249	578	531	1,109	533	461
New Transfer Students	286	149	129	211	92	82
Other Students	375	353	261	185	175	108
TOTAL	1,910	1,080	921	1,505	800	651

Note: All students with complete applications are accepted for admission.

2. B.   Standardized Test Scores Required for Admission
— Not Applicable —

3.   Financial Assistance for Students

3.A.   Percentages of Students Who Applied for Financial Assistance

	FALL 2009	FALL 2008
Number of Students Applying for Financial Assistance*	1,108	867
TOTAL STUDENT HEADCOUNT	2,198	1,810
Percent of Students Applying for Financial Assistance	50%	48%

*Applying for federal assistance only.

3.B.   Percentages of Students that Received Financial Assistance

	FALL 2009	%	FALL 2008	%
TOTAL STUDENT HEADCOUNT	2,198		1,810	
Students Receiving:				
ANY TYPE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	1,347	61%	1,218	67%
LOANS	516	23%	422	23%
WORK-STUDY	54	2%	75	4%
SCHOLARSHIPS / GRANTS	1,278	58%	1,167	64%
ACADEMIC-BASED MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS	768	35%	364	20%

Note: Trapper Scholarship Program (merit-based) was initiated in Fall 2009.

3.C.   Tuition Discount Rate

	FALL 2009	FALL 2008
Total Tuition*, I+P	$ 5,714,658	$ 4,470,708
Total Institutional Financial Aid Awarded**, I	$ 1,544,572	$ 1,482,440
Tuition Discount Rate = I/(I+P)	27%	33%

* Total income that would result from all students paying full tuition for their residency status.
** Financial aid awarded by the institution may be used for any educational expense, including tuition.

4. Student Retention and Program Productivity

4.A. Student Retention Rate by Race and Ethnicity (First-Time, Full-Time, Degree Seeking Students)

Race/Ethnicity	FALL 2008			FALL 2007		
	Entering Students	Returning Students	Retention Rate	Entering Students	Returning Students	Retention Rate
American Indian/Alaska Native	8	5	63%	5	2	40%
Asian/Pacific Islander	25	20	80%	14	10	71%
Black, non-Hispanic	5	1	20%	6	1	17%
Hispanic	29	11	38%	26	17	65%
White, non-Hispanic	383	226	59%	392	208	53%
Unknown	0	0	-	1	0	0%
TOTAL	**450**	**263**	**58%**	**444**	**238**	**54%**

4.B. Graduate/Professional Degrees

— Not Applicable —

4.C. Number of Graduates by Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Codes

CIP AREAS AND CODES	2008-09	
	Degrees	Certificates
Agriculture/Natural Resources (1, 3)	39	1
Architecture/Engineering/Engineering Technology (4, 14, 15)	12	9
Biological & Physical Science (26, 40, 41)	6	0
Business (52)	40	7
Communications/Communication Technology/Fine Arts (9, 10, 50)	59	34
Education/Library Science (13, 21, 25)	24	0
Humanities/Interdisciplinary (5, 16, 23, 24, 30, 38, 39, 54)	48	0
Health (51)	54	11
Law (22)	0	0
Mathematics/Computer Science (11, 27)	7	1
Military Technology/ Protective Services (29, 43)	0	0
Personal Service/Consumer Services/Fitness (12, 19, 31)	3	6
Psychology/Social Sciences & Services (42, 44, 45)	17	0
Trades/Production/Transportation Health (46, 47, 48, 49)	14	17
TOTAL	323	86

4.D. Licensure Examination Pass Rates

PROGRAM	TEST	2009	2008
Nursing - Registered Nursing	National Council Licensure Examination - RN	78%	81%
Nursing - Practical Nursing	National Council Licensure Examination - PN	100%	83%

Note: Pass rate is the percentage of graduates who were successful on their first attempt.

5. Faculty Demography

5.A. Headcount of Faculty by Highest Degree Earned

DEGREE LEVEL	FALL 2009		FALL 2008	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Doctorate	21	6	22	7
Terminal (MFA, JD)	7	5	8	3
Master's	41	24	42	30
Bachelor's	10	18	9	18
Associate's	0	6	0	6
None/Unknown	1	13	1	11
TOTAL	80	72	82	75

5.B. Headcount of Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Rank

GENDER	FALL 2009		FALL 2008	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Male	49	31	51	36
Female	31	41	31	39
TOTAL	80	72	82	75
RACE/ETHNICITY				
Black, non-Hispanic	0	0	0	0
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0	0	0
Asian	2	0	2	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	2	0	2	0
White, non-Hispanic	76	71	78	70
Unknown	0	1	0	5
TOTAL	80	72	82	75
RANK				
Professor	10	0	9	1
Associate Professor	16	1	19	1
Assistant Professor	29	0	25	0
Instructor	25	2	29	1
No Academic Rank	0	69	0	72
TOTAL	80	72	82	75

5.C. Headcount of Faculty by CIP Codes

CIP AREAS AND CODES	FALL 2009	FALL 2008
Agriculture/Natural Resources (1, 3)	9	9
Architecture/Engineering/Engineering Technology (4, 14, 15)	6	6
Biological & Physical Science (26, 40, 41)	12	10
Business (52)	10	12
Communications/Communication Technology/Fine Arts (9, 10, 50)	36	39
Education/Library Science (13, 21, 25)	7	11
Humanities/Interdisciplinary (5, 16, 23, 24, 30, 38, 39, 54)	30	30
Health (51)	12	12
Law (22)	0	0
Mathematics/Computer Science (11, 27)	24	21
Military Technology/ Protective Services (29, 43)	0	0
Personal Service/Consumer Services/Fitness (12, 19, 31)	34	35
Psychology/Social Sciences & Services (42, 44, 45)	14	17
Trades/Production/Transportation Health (46, 47, 48, 49)	3	3
TOTAL	197	205

Note: Numbers of faculty are unduplicated for each CIP grouping; however, faculty members may be counted more than once if they taught in more than one CIP area.

6. Availability of Instructional Resources and Information Technology

Technology Resources Dedicated to Supporting Student Learning

- Forty-two computer labs and areas host 500 PC and Mac machines (see NWC Computer Labs List in the Resource Room).

- Eleven science labs are stocked with computer stations, software for Geographic Information Systems, CAD applications, a 3-D printer, and other equipment and materials to perform scientific research (see Northwest College Laboratory Resources in the Resource Room).

- Wireless network and high speed internet connections are available throughout the main campus, residence halls, A. L. Mickelson Field Station, Cody Center, and Worland Center. The Trapper Village Main apartments have wireless internet only at this time.

- Technologies used in courses include the Blackboard online course platform, SmartBoards, podcasting, vodcasting, computers, LCD projectors, and Elmo Presenters (electronic overhead projectors).

- Computer Services staff provide, maintain, and support student computer labs and campus networks.

- Instructional Technology staff provide, maintain, and support course-related technology resources.

- The Resident Technician provides computer support to students outside of regular college working hours.

Methods to Monitor Level of Usage

- Secure login with custom software to track usage

- Continuous monitoring of server uptime to ensure network integrity and availability to students

- Weekly monitoring of bandwidth for usage and anomalies

- Yearly surveys to faculty regarding instructional technology usage

7. Financial Data

7.A. Actual Unrestricted Revenues

	FY 2009	FY 2008
Tuition and Fees	3,825,142	3,768,059
State Appropriations	13,745,238	13,685,941
Local Appropriations	3,442,793	3,321,282
Sales and Services/Auxiliary Enterprises	4,197,937	3,895,662
Other Sources	164,383	147,421
Transfers	9,330	8,893
TOTAL REVENUE	25,384,823	24,827,258

7.B. Actual Unrestricted Expenses

	FY 2009	FY 2008
Instruction	9,086,331	9,076,561
Public Service - Community Service	89,264	65,663
Academic Support	1,670,528	1,586,787
Student Services	2,263,244	2,227,364
Institutional Support	3,678,933	3,521,681
Operations and Maintenance of Plant	2,182,504	2,046,338
Scholarships and Fellowships	736,638	736,641
Auxiliary Expenses and Transfers	4,089,197	3,660,098
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	23,796,639	22,921,133

Northwest College:
An Overview

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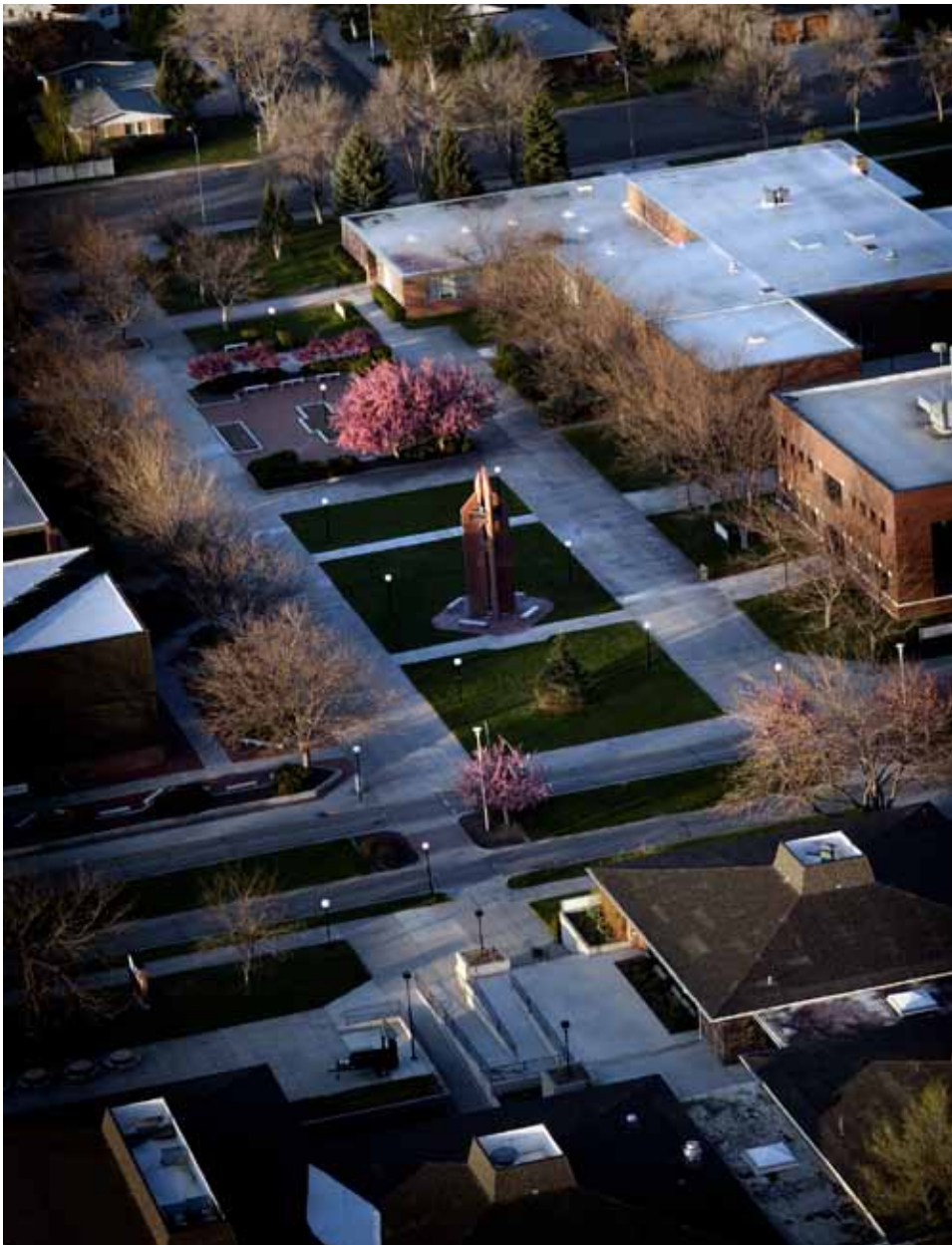
Northwest College: Who We Are

On 30 March 2004, a fire broke out in a second-floor residential room of Bridger Hall, one of Northwest's oldest residence halls. Fire departments from Powell, Cody, Lovell, and Deaver-Frannie responded. All [120] students living in Bridger Hall were evacuated safely, and as a safety precaution, [44] residents of nearby Colter Hall were also evacuated for one night. Students displaced by the fire were assigned alternative residential housing on campus through the end of the semester. An unprecedented outpouring of community support raised over $66,000 in cash, chamber bucks, local coupons, and more for the Bridger Hall residents. The cause of the fire was determined by a Wyoming Fire Marshal to be an accidental failure of an electric device in a student's room.[1]

> *"In the face of this disaster, the College and the area communities immediately came together."*

Taken from the Northwest College website, this account is factually accurate, but it doesn't tell the whole story. In the face of this disaster, the College and the area communities immediately came together. As Residence and Campus Life Director Dee Havig remembers, "I think every employee and almost every student that was on the campus jumped in (to help). People even putting their backpacks down, saying, 'What can I do to help?' The campus—everything just shut down. Everybody was out helping. It's a pretty warm feeling when you see that."[2]

For example, the Trapper Gym was opened to provide temporary housing while the College made available emergency support and counseling; students who had single-occupancy rooms in the residence halls agreed to take a roommate for the rest of the semester; *The Northwest Trail* student newspaper produced a special edition and covered the fire extensively, and the College website provided up-to-date information; the bookstore and Hinckley Library made textbooks available while faculty provided class accommodations for students affected by the fire; faculty and staff volunteered their time to help students—including organizing a garage sale to raise funds. Local area businesses and community members made generous donations of money, food, linen, clothing, hygiene supplies, and even opened their homes.

"The community spirit here, just how tight-knit of a community this is, just amazed me," Jeremy Johnston, Associate Professor of History and then Faculty Organization President, recalls. "People came forward and raised money to help students get back on their feet, clothing them, in some cases, just taking them in. That night, I don't think anybody stayed in the gym. They all found somebody to stay with, on campus or off. It just really demonstrated to me how the campus could come together as a team—helping students, caring for their needs, cleaning up."[3]

Ultimately, the Bridger Hall fire became a catalyst for change. At the next legislative session, the State funded the installation of sprinkler systems in all residence halls

. . . .

1   See "College History: 2000s" in the Resource Room.
2   See Ilene Olson's "More Memories of the Bridger Hall Fire—And the Relief Effort that Brought a Community Together," *Powell Tribune blog* in the Resource Room.
3   See Ilene Olson's "More Memories of the Bridger Hall Fire—And the Relief Effort that Brought a Community Together," *Powell Tribune blog* in the Resource Room.

in the State of Wyoming. The proceeds from a $4.1 million Bridger Hall insurance settlement were used to build Phase I of the 80-bed Simpson Hall, named in honor of former US Senator Alan Simpson and his wife, Ann. The new building introduced suite-style residence options to the campus. Ultimately, Northwest took what could have been a disaster and through hard work turned it into an opportunity for growth.

In many ways, Northwest College, a comprehensive community college located in Powell, Wyoming, isn't a typical two-year college. Student learning is supported by

- **a vibrant community** with a collegiate atmosphere that includes extensive co-curricular and extra-curricular activities on and off campus with clubs, classes, and travel opportunities usually available only at universities or private institutions.

- **a commitment to general education** that provides students with a basis for life-long learning.

- **an emphasis on transfer.** According to 2008–2009 Wyoming Community College Commission data, approximately 70% of Northwest's students are in transfer ("academic") programs while 24% are in occupational programs. This academic program figure is the highest in the State. (Casper College is second with 43% of students in transfer programs.)

- **a sizable residential population and residential life program** that provides students choosing to live on campus with a number of options. Based on Fall 2009 enrollment data, of the 2,198 students enrolled in classes, 743 chose to live on-campus with 658 in the residence halls and 85 in apartments. More students live on campus at Northwest than at any other Wyoming or Montana community college.

- **a commitment to diversity** through a multinational student body, significant multicultural programming, travel-abroad opportunities, and a small but fast-growing minority population.

- **engagement with a largely full-time faculty in and outside of the classroom.** As reported in Fall 2009 statistics, the student-to-faculty ratio is 20:1.

- **an expanding culture of evidence and student learning outcomes assessment.** Northwest's assessment program is multilayered, interactive, and faculty-led.

- **a tradition of broad-based shared governance** that values multiple perspectives on problem solving, college priorities, and faculty leadership of academics. Since the mid-1960s, shared governance has been a defining characteristic of Northwest College.

- **a commitment to access that utilizes a sizeable physical plant and dedicated educational space.** In addition to the main campus in Powell, the College has two centers in outlying communities in addition to growing concurrent and dual enrollment programs as well as service area-wide ABE/GED and workforce programs.

- **a supportive, rural service area** that covers a three-county area roughly the size of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Northwest College Background and Demographics

On 10 September 1946, the University of Wyoming Northwest Center (UWNWC) opened in Powell, a rural community located some 75 miles from the East Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. UWNWC was the University of Wyoming's first "satellite center," established as a two-year, fully accredited branch of the University, which was responsible for conducting annual evaluation visits. Northwest Community College came into existence in 1953 when a community college district was formed in Powell and the Center became autonomous.

On 9 April 1964, Northwest Community College received full independent accreditation from the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges. The name changed to "Northwest College" in 1989. Today, Northwest is one of seven Wyoming community colleges, each with independent boards and transfer courses articulated with the University of Wyoming.

Today, Powell is a community of about 5,400 supported by an economy primarily based upon irrigated farming, ranching, tourism, oil, and agricultural support services. The Powell campus encompasses 124 total acres with 57 buildings, the second largest physical plant in the State. Northwest serves three counties:

- **Park County** (tax district with 6,942 square miles, 27,976 residents, 4.0 persons per square mile);

- **Big Horn County** (3,137 square miles, 11,581 residents, 3.7 persons per square mile); and

- **Washakie County** (2,240 square miles, 7,911 residents, 3.5 persons per square mile).

Additionally, the College supports the Mickelson Field Station (50 miles west of Powell) and learning centers in Cody (25 miles southwest of Powell) and Worland (90 miles south of Powell). Associate degrees, workforce trainings, adult basic education, and student support services are available at all three physical locations. Through a BOCES agreement in Powell, the Powell campus also partners on the delivery of a diverse community education program.

Table 0.1 provides a more comprehensive view of Northwest's demographics based on end-of-year reports provided by the Wyoming Community College Commission.

> *"Northwest Community College came into existence in 1953 when a community college district was formed in Powell and the Center became autonomous."*

Table 0.1
Northwest College Fall Enrollment Summary, 2001–2009

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
UNDUPLICATED HEADCOUNT	1,576	1,626	1,689	1,755	1,754	1,763	1,747	1,810	2,198
FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)	1631.3	1636.3	1704.3	1772.0	1710.0	1793.1	1796.9	1791.8	2090.2
GENDER									
Male	599	591	662	644	654	718	687	675	905
Female	977	1,035	1,027	1,111	1,100	1,045	1,060	1,135	1,293
ETHNICITY									
Black, Non-Hispanic	6	8	8	5	9	10	14	11	13
American Indian/Alaskan	20	17	12	13	21	17	18	19	32
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	18	20	19	30	31	45	84	61
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	*New category in 2009–10*								5
Hispanic	41	69	58	83	79	90	84	100	141
White, Non-Hispanic	1,483	1,504	1,584	1,628	1,606	1,609	1,581	1,591	1,868
Two or More Race, Non-Hispanic	*New category in 2009–10*								47
Non-Resident Alien	15	10	7	1	1	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	6	8	6	5	5	31
FULL-TIME/PART-TIME									
Full-time	1,067	1,039	1,120	1,176	1,129	1,170	1,172	1,158	1,348
Part-time	509	587	569	579	625	593	575	652	850
AGE									
Under 17	3	12	4	15	13	23	13	12	46
17–24	1,017	985	1,091	1,187	1,140	1,200	1,199	1,173	1,360
25–29	131	144	153	137	144	164	159	154	233
30–34	88	122	115	90	96	93	112	139	161
35–39	93	81	78	78	84	81	75	110	118
40–49	137	144	144	145	141	116	106	112	139
50–59	70	91	72	79	102	59	56	77	91
60 and over	25	37	22	24	30	26	26	33	45
Unknown	12	10	10	0	4	1	1	0	5
Average Age	*Began tracking in 2005–06*				27.16	25.69	25.61	26.53	26.47
Male	–	–	–	–	25.61	23.94	24.23	24.87	24.56
Female	–	–	–	–	28.09	26.89	26.50	27.52	27.81
Full-time	–	–	–	–	22.80	22.42	22.55	23.04	23.27
Part-time	–	–	–	–	35.10	32.15	31.85	32.74	31.57
RESIDENCY									
Service Area Residents	979	1,056	1,087	1,128	1,114	1,096	1,055	1,101	1,416
Big Horn County	226	272	279	271	287	283	241	235	331
Park County	658	670	703	751	728	717	745	779	949
Washakie County	95	114	105	106	99	96	69	87	136
All Wyoming Residents	1,132	1,209	1,280	1,306	1,278	1,251	1,213	1,260	1,603
Non-Residents	444	417	409	449	476	512	534	549	595
Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Source: Enrollment Reports submitted to the Wyoming Community College Commission

IR: 4/15/2010

> *"Within the full-time faculty, 35% hold doctorates or terminal degrees (the national community college average is about 15%)."*

Northwest is an open-access college that accepts any student with a Wyoming high school diploma or GED certification. The annual cost for a Wyoming resident living on campus is approximately $9,851.00. The State provides merit-based scholarships to Wyoming high school graduates. Approximately 44% of Northwest College students receive scholarships with 81% of those awards institutionally funded and 19% funded through private Foundation scholarships. The average scholarship amount awarded per student is $2,389.00. Because of its extremely low tuition and fees, Northwest is easily accessed by students from almost any economic situation.

Northwest offers 56 transfer degrees (Associate of Arts and Associate of Science), 20 technical degrees (Associate of Applied Science), and 34 skills certificates. Graduate numbers are divided between transfer (roughly 60%) and career degrees (roughly 40%).

There are 314 employees at Northwest. Of those, 152 are faculty with 80 working full-time. Within the full-time faculty, 35% hold doctorates or terminal degrees (the national community college average is about 15%). The College also employs 162 administrative, professional, and classified staff. The College's organizational structure is seen in Figure 0.1, "Northwest College Organizational Chart."

Figure 0.1
Northwest College Organizational Chart

* Reports to the NWC Foundation Board of Directors and the College President
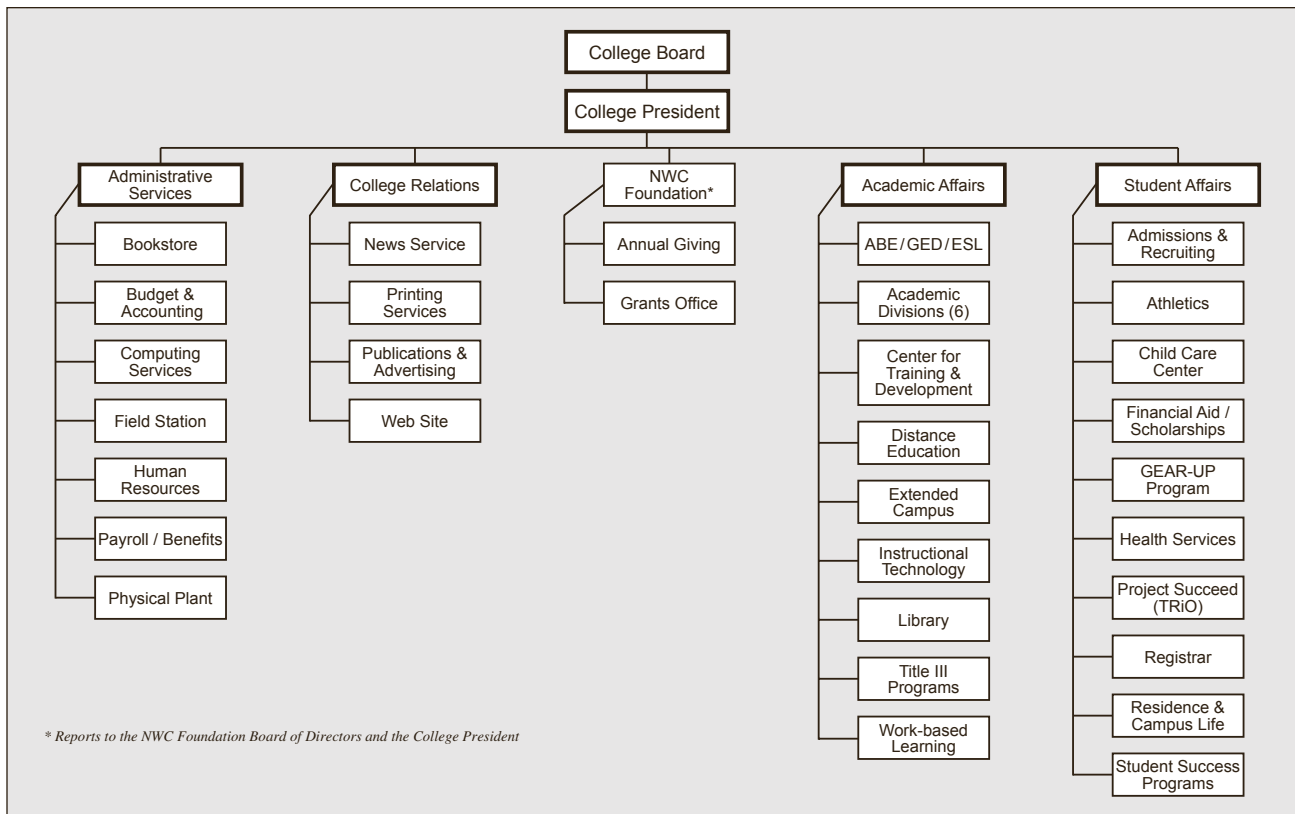
Because of the work of students and faculty, the College has a significant cultural impact on the community, offering over 100 programs every year on a wide range of subjects: musical concerts, art exhibits, sporting events, readings and presentations, science fairs, agriculture expositions, welding contests, television and webcasts—the list goes on. Contributing to community vitality is part of the College's mission.

The College has been fortunate that Wyoming's mineral-based economy has produced increased state revenue in recent years. As a point of comparison, in FY 2001, the College had revenues totaling $16,404,358; that amount had almost doubled by FY 2009 to $30,664,882. During this time, the College has grown its financial reserves and invested money into equipment and facilities improvements for programs. More importantly, because Northwest's mission focuses on "providing superior living [student services] and learning [instruction] environments," the College has continued to allocate its budget so that expenditures demonstrate the institution's priorities of student learning in and beyond the classroom, including through residence hall programming. The College also has significant support through the NWC Foundation. (See Criterion Two for an extended discussion of Northwest's financial resources.)

Northwest's economic impact is significant. During 2009, the College carried an employee payroll of $16,709,827 (salary and benefits), making it the fifth largest employer in Park County. Northwest also expended annually $3,505,234 on goods and services in Park County.

Significant Changes Since the 2001 Accreditation

Since North Central's 2001 visit, five factors have significantly affected the culture of Northwest College: changes in leadership; challenges to shared governance; the creation of a culture of assessment; changes at the State level; and increases in student enrollment.

Changes in Leadership

The College has had three presidents in addition to one interim president since 2001. Each president has had a significant impact on the College.

- **Frances Feinerman** (July 1998–July 2002)
  In July 1998, Dr. Frances Feinerman, Campus Director of the University of Alaska Southeast's Ketchikan campus, arrived at Northwest to assume the presidency. Using the results of a comprehensive market research study conducted during the previous year and input from a series of community meetings, President Feinerman committed the College to creating a strategic plan before the end of her first year. She also took aggressive budget reallocation measures to reposition Northwest for the future, strengthened workforce development programming, hired consultants Noel Levitz whose work led to Student Services changes, and prepared the College for anticipated enrollment declines and related budget declines.

- **Elise Schneider** (July 2002–June 2003)
  After President Frances Feinerman's resignation in July 2002, Northwest College trustees selected Dr. Elise Schneider, retired president of Oxnard College in California, to serve in a one-year interim position during a nationwide presidential search. She expanded international recruiting and improved relations with the community.

- **Miles LaRowe** (July 2003–June 2008)
  Dr. Miles LaRowe, the President of Eastern Idaho Technical College in Idaho Falls, accepted the presidency of Northwest in July 2003. President LaRowe oversaw more than $5 million in campus renovations in five years. Several buildings were updated, including Lewis and Clark Hall, which had been closed for two years. The Cody and Worland Centers were both expanded, and a facilities master plan was developed. Also under President LaRowe's watch, the College's financial integrity and health were improved. The NWC Foundation's "Toward New Vistas," a successful $8 million endowment campaign, was conducted. In addition, the institution became the first "Disaster Resistant University" in Wyoming, a designation granted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

- **Paul Prestwich** (June 2008–Present)
  After President LaRowe's announcement in the summer of 2007 that he would retire after the 2007–2008 academic year, a national search resulted in the hiring of Dr. Paul Prestwich as the College's new president. Raised in Colorado, Dr. Prestwich had most recently been Vice President for Academic Affairs at Sussex County Community College in New Jersey. He took the Northwest College helm in June 2008, charged by the Board of Trustees to implement the *Facilities Master Plan*, contribute to the State's funding formula revisions, and track the work of the Community College Task Force Planning Study impaneled by the Wyoming State Legislature earlier that same year. He facilitated the process for a significant budget reduction and has been a supporter of academic quality and student support initiatives.

It should also be noted that during this time, significant turnover occurred on Northwest's publicly elected Board of Trustees.

Aside from leadership and morale issues during presidential and Board transitions, perhaps the single most significant impact was on institutional planning and implementation. Each president brought with him or her different philosophies and experiences related to planning, some of which were flavored by significantly different attitudes about shared governance.

Challenges to Shared Governance

Northwest College has a long tradition of shared governance that has shaped the

College and is seen by many as a source of institutional vitality. The central role of shared governance became clear on 1 March 1966, when the Board of Trustees, facilitated by the College President, revoked tenure, choosing not to renew the contracts of eight faculty and terminating two outright, eliminating roughly 40% of the faculty. This action closely followed the College's first successful independent accreditation in 1964. Faculty participation in writing the self-study led to an expectation of shared governance; administrators and Board members saw this as inappropriate for employees who should simply teach classes and allow others to run the College.

To mediate this conflict, several organizations became involved: North Central Accrediting Agency, the National and Wyoming Education Associations, the American Association of University Professors, and the American Civil Liberties Union. The summer of 1966 found three teams visiting the campus to gather data that became the basis for three reports. Ultimately, most devastating was North Central's decision to place Northwest Community College on academic probation. College faculty and the Board began working together to address governance issues: President SinClair Orendorff was hired; *The Faculty Handbook* was rewritten to clarify policies and procedures; and the institution committed itself to shared governance. In 1969, after submitting a voluntary self-study, Northwest Community College was removed from academic probation.

Even though this event happened more than 40 years ago, its influence has been profound. Northwest College remains committed to shared governance and is, indeed, a bit of an anomaly: a rural, two-year college located in a right-to-work state with a carefully defined rank and tenure system, faculty-led curriculum, professional development, and program development, and a strong system of shared governance. Staff participate in shared governance as well, and the philosophy is taught to students. In terms of student governance, students enrolled in six or more credit hours are automatically members of the Associated Students of Northwest College. The governing body of ASNWC is the Student Senate, which is composed of five officers and five general representatives elected in the spring semester and seven additional general representatives elected in the fall. Through appointment or election by the Senate, students are represented on many college committees that assist in governance of the institution.

Because of shared governance, faculty and staff see themselves not just as employees but as stakeholders. This investment manifests itself in the hours faculty teach and devote to students beyond courses, the many student activities faculty and staff sponsor and attend, and in the service they provide through committee and community work. Wyoming has a boom-and-bust economy; the College's shared governance structure provides a mechanism for dealing with financial instability. The College has seen significant presidential and administrative turnover since President Orendorff's retirement in 1988. In both cases, having a committed faculty and staff participating in the College through shared governance has provided a stability that has allowed students to continue their educations while remaining largely unaware of the other issues.

To say that Northwest has not seen conflict over shared governance would be inaccurate. In fact, issues over governance have been at the core of some of the College's most contentious disagreements. However, it's important to see them as more than fights; rather, they provide opportunities for the college community to re-evaluate its values and arrive at compromise. Moreover, these conflicts testify to the commitment of those who care deeply about this college and its place in its service area.

The College's internal governance issues will face new challenges as external forces come to bear on what has always been internal decision-making. The State of Wyoming's system of higher education has become progressively more top-down through the intervention of the increasingly powerful Wyoming Community College Commission, which was formed primarily as a coordinating body but has been given more authority by the State Legislature. The College remains sensitive to external influences on its governance system, and how it will navigate this shift while preserving one of its most essential core values remains a central question.

Three governance-related issues merit additional discussion: College Council, handbook consolidation, and the creation of the Administrative Staff Organization.

College Council

To address governance concerns raised in the 1991 self-study, the College took a number of steps, perhaps most significant the creation of College Council. Launched officially in May 1992, College Council is comprised of representatives elected by constituent groups, including Students, Faculty, Professional Staff, Classified Staff, and Administrators. The Council's function is to advise, provide input, and submit recommendations to the President and, through the President, to the Board of Trustees. College Council hears concerns raised by College administrators, standing committees, *ad hoc* committees, or any member of the college community via Council representatives. It is also the role of College Council representatives to communicate to their constituencies concerns, points of view, ideas, and recommendations regarding items submitted for discussion. It is expected that all major policy and budgetary decisions will be presented to College Council for review and discussion prior to implementation. The Council meets once monthly during the academic year with more frequent meetings to discuss specific topics (e.g., budget issues).

However, its effectiveness has varied from president to president and from chairperson to chairperson rather than from its established place in the governance structure. For College Council to be more effective, it needs adherence to its stated functions, skilled leadership, and members committed to its charge and communication with constituency group members.

Handbook Consolidation

Since 2001, Northwest's governance handbooks have seen significant revision. Through 1997, there were three recognized constituency

groups of employees: Faculty, Professional Staff, and Classified Staff. *The Faculty Handbook*, *The Professional Staff Handbook*, and *The Classified Staff Handbook* housed policies and procedures documents relevant to these constituencies, with each book having a clearly articulated revision process. In 1997, the Dean of Administrative Services initiated creation of the *Institutional Handbook*, a repository for policy documents common to all employee constituencies.

The LaRowe presidency featured another major revision of governance documentation with the creation of the *Employee Handbook* as an anthology of not just former *Institutional Handbook* policies, but an expanded additional collection of new policies and procedures, some of which applied to faculty, and some of which did not. In 2008, the Board of Trustees initiated a revision of what had been *The Faculty Handbook* into a purely contractual body of "Faculty Employment Policies" located in the larger *Employment Handbook*. At first glance, this would seem to be another attempt at "housecleaning" documents to clarify college policies and procedures. Some argued that the consolidation of *The Faculty Handbook* with the *Employment Handbook* led to a decrease in the status of faculty as campus and governance leaders and more limited focus on the discussion between faculty, administration, and the Board in favor of a legal text. Important information about committees, decision-making, and college processes were also lost in these changes. The drafting of a *Shared Governance Handbook* in 2010 was an effort to provide an updated version of this lost information.

Reduced to the "Faculty Employment Policies" section of the *Employment Handbook*, *The Faculty Handbook* became much less useful in college operations. Prior to consolidation, *The Faculty Handbook* had been the major source of process, governance, and committee information, and the loss of this material was significant. Governance materials were moved to an internal document, *The Governance Handbook*, initiated by the President's Advisory Council in the summer of 2009.

Creation of the Administrative Staff as a Fifth Constituency

The 2004–2005 *Catalog* lists "Administration" as consisting of the President and four Vice Presidents; the 2005–2006 *Catalog* lists 14 positions as "Administration"; and the 2006–2007 *Catalog* defines "Administrative Staff" as the President, the four vice-presidents, and additional positions that had previously been classified as members of the Professional Staff. President LaRowe proposed this new constituent group, citing that it was common practice at many other colleges (referencing some other Wyoming Community Colleges) to categorize several mid- to upper-level directors as "Administrators." Initially it was difficult to determine what positions should be included in the proposed group, so Dr. LaRowe determined that decision-making authority and budget administration would serve as criteria for membership. The President served as the spokesperson for the Administrative Staff.
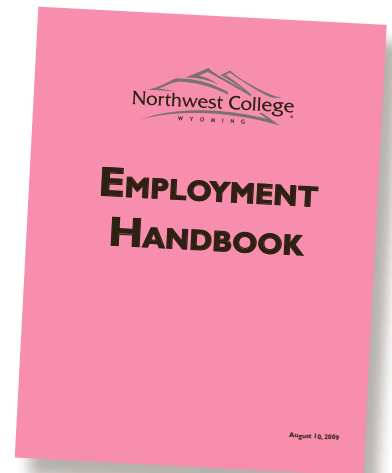
> *"All areas of campus were asked to write learning outcomes and assessment plans. These efforts for everyone from coaches to custodians were guided by one overarching question: 'How do you and your area contribute to student learning?'"*

For two years, this group existed largely outside the governance system. Many members did serve on key committees, but any committee based on constituency membership did not have a clear place for this new staff group. This group also had no identified place in the shared governance structure. The Board was very concerned about this issue, and at their request, during the summer of 2007, Administrative Staff members developed the infrastructure for an organization, which excluded the President. By-laws were developed and approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2007. The group's purpose (as defined in the by-laws) "is to represent and advocate for the interests of the administrative staff employees and Northwest College." The Administrative Staff was further clarified by the Fox-Lawson compensation system, which led to the implementation of a position-classification system based on decision-making. As a result, a number of positions throughout the organization were re-classified.

The Creation of a Culture of Assessment

In 2001, North Central requested that Northwest become much more aggressive about assessment, requesting a monitoring report be submitted in 2003. The College began by revisiting its academic assessment program with faculty developing learning outcomes at the course, program, general education, and all-college levels in addition to specifying how those outcomes would be measured. Those data were then reported to the Office for Academic Affairs and used as a basis for institutional improvement. (See Criterion Three for an extended discussion of academic assessment.) Northwest has seen a significant infusion of grant monies since 2001, and some of that money has been used to enhance assessment. (See Criterion Three for an extended discussion.)

The College moved beyond its academic assessment plan in 2006–2007 when it embarked on a major institutional assessment initiative. All areas of campus were asked to write learning outcomes and assessment plans. These efforts for everyone from coaches to custodians were guided by one overarching question: "How do you and your area contribute to student learning?" The results were impressive and asked employees to reconsider their place in the institution. However, implementation of institutional assessment has been inconsistent in relation to these outcomes. The presence of an institutional researcher will make campus-wide assessment follow-up more possible.

Changes at the State Level

Wyoming is the only state with just one established four-year university. (Wyoming Catholic College is a newly created, private, four-year liberal arts college.) Wyoming has been recognized for the quality of its community colleges. According to a 2008 Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government study, Wyoming leads the country in terms of having the largest share of total higher education enrollment in community colleges; its percentage of residents attending two-year colleges is second only to California.[4]

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4   See David F. Shaffer's "The States and Their Community Colleges," *Education Policy Brief*, May 2008, in the Resource Room.

Significant state-level changes fall into two categories: The changing role of the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) and budget issues.

The Changing Role of the Wyoming Community College Commission
Northwest College is part of a community college system, coordinated by the Wyoming Community College Commission, a group of seven appointees that oversees a staff headed by an executive director. No more than four members may be from counties in which a community college district is located, and no more than four members may be of the same political party. *Ex officio* members include the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

According to the Commission's bylaws, **"**The mission and purpose of the Commission is to provide coordination, advocacy, and accountability for the Community College System on behalf of the State of Wyoming (Article II, Section 1). The Commission is responsible for

- **State funding—**Wyoming community colleges send a joint request for State funds to the Commission. The budgeting process starts with the Commission, which sets system budget priorities and develops a system-wide request for the next biennium. State-allocated funds are then given to the Commission, which then distributes the money to the various colleges by use of a Commission-established funding formula.

- **New credit programs—**The Commission approves all new credit programs for certificate or for degree to be offered by any Wyoming community college.

- **Capital construction—**The Commission must approve any new capital construction projects with costs exceeding $100,000.

- **Tuition rates**—The Commission sets the tuition rate for all Wyoming community colleges; however, each college establishes its own fees.

- **Internet access—**The Commission provides internet access for the community colleges in addition to contracting for Datatel, the colleges' administrative and student data management computing system.

- **Data collection**—Each community college is required to submit enrollment data to the Commission at the end of each academic term. The Commission then reports to the Governor, the Legislature, and the State Department of Education in addition to providing information to other state agencies or interested parties. The data currently collected for the *Annual Performance Report* include information on subjects such as graduation and transfer rates, employer assessments, and responsiveness to community needs. Other reports that are submitted to the Commission annually include semester Enrollment Reports, a Workforce Development Report, an Accreditation Report, and a Partnership Report.

The College provides supplemental data to the Commission when requested through *ad hoc* reports and provides student record data to facilitate the reporting required by the Wyoming Department of Education to administer the Hathaway Scholarship Program."[5]

Budget Issues

A variety of budgetary issues complicate the College's financial status and planning process.

The State of Wyoming funds state operations biennially—those biennial revenue allocations represent roughly 64% of Northwest's budget. (The exact amount varies from biennium to biennium, in part depending upon the strength of local revenues in comparison with the local revenue of other community college districts.) The State legislature, working with the Governor's office, passes a budget appropriation for the community college system. By law, the Governor must submit and the Legislature must pass a balanced budget.

Added to this appropriation is the 4-mil tax revenue from the seven counties that have community colleges. Although Wyoming receives tax revenues from sales and property taxes, currently only 7 of the 23 counties in Wyoming levy property tax mills for the support of the community college located in its county. (Some of the richest counties do not host a college and therefore do not collect property taxes specifically for colleges.) Local property taxes depend heavily on the mineral industries and consequently may be impacted by boom-and-bust cycles. On several occasions, the Legislature has debated the merits of a statewide mil levy to support community colleges, but legislation has not been enacted.

This annualized funding amount is then separated into a variable-cost portion and a fixed-cost portion for each college. The variable-cost portion can also be described as the cost of instruction. The fixed costs for each college are calculated from actual expenditures for a previous fiscal year (e.g., for the 2011–2012 biennium, FY 2008 was used). These costs are funded by the state appropriation at 100%. The remaining portion of the appropriation is then allocated to each college based on its percentage of the base period total credit hours taught in the State. This allocation is paid by the State at the system-wide average credit hour cost, which may be more or less than the college's actual credit hour costs.

Normally this means that each college knows by the end of March what its state-level budget will be for the next two fiscal years (barring an unanticipated reduction in state revenues or a redistribution of funds based on actual local revenue as compared to the estimated revenue used in the original distribution formula). The funding allocation model also contains two provisions for an exception budget request. The first provision is for an external cost adjustment to fixed costs. The second provision is for enrollment growth funding to address the costs of increasing enrollment. These exception budget requests may or may not be funded by the Legislature.

. . . .

5   See Commission Reports in the Resource Room.

Generally, the State has funded the community colleges relatively well, and the process tends to provide some predictability. The biennial budget also provides some security because an institution can anticipate its funding for two successive years although such a budgeting system makes it difficult to plan more than two years in advance. Growth in the percentage of the college budget that comes from the State has produced increased state scrutiny and may eventually lead to a reduction of local autonomy. For state revenues, Wyoming relies heavily on severance tax levies on the extractive industries (oil, natural gas, and coal). Since these industries are subject to boom-and-bust cycles, the State has occasionally found itself facing significant projected shortfalls although boom years can result in additional funding (e.g., salary increases in 2007; additional funds for major maintenance; significant budget reductions as gas and oil prices fell in the 2008–2009 recession).

Increased Student Enrollments and International Student Population

As Table 0.1 illustrates, Northwest has seen significant enrollment increases. Since 2001, enrollment has increased by 39%. Northwest has also seen an expansion of its international student population. This is the result of two areas of activity: increased international student recruiting and new relationships with international agencies. Northwest is enthusiastic about its expanded student populations, which provide important cultural and learning opportunities for students and the community.

Accreditation History

The following section provides a summary of Northwest's accreditation history.

1964: On 9 April 1964, Northwest Community College received full accreditation from the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges.

1967: The College was placed on probation after the Board of Trustees voted to revoke tenure.

1968: In 1968, a new college administration, led by President SinClair Orendorff, initiated a voluntary self-study that led to a 10-year accreditation.

1979: The North Central evaluating team recommended a five-year accreditation with a focus visit scheduled for 1980. This recommendation was the result of issues surrounding the academic administration and the role of occupational programs in relation to the instructional curriculum at Northwest. The 1980 visit led to the recommendation by the evaluating team that the College had addressed problems satisfactorily. In 1983, North Central conducted a comprehensive visit resulting in the College's receiving a seven-year continued accreditation period.

1990: North Central recommended that Northwest receive a ten-year accreditation with a 1994 focus visit to address issues concerning governance, assessment, planning, and the College's adaptation to the "Omnibus Bill," recent Wyoming legislation that gave greater authority to the Wyoming Community College Commission. The focus visiting team noted in its report that while Northwest had made acceptable progress in terms of governance and planning, the assessment plan remained unacceptable.

1995: Northwest submitted a new assessment plan, which North Central subsequently approved, and the College had met its accreditation obligations through 2001.

2001: North Central granted Northwest full accreditation status, describing Northwest's 2000–2001 self-study as "evaluative and comprehensive."

- In North Central's report, evaluators noted that Northwest had "attempted to address the concerns of the 1990–91 comprehensive team and the 1994 focus visit team, even though more progress is needed in institutional planning." A progress report was requested for submission in the summer of 2002 in which the College re-evaluated its strategic plan. In 2002, the planning progress report was submitted and accepted by North Central. (For more on Northwest's planning processes, see Criterion Two.)

- The Evaluating Team also made clear the need for the College "to fulfill more aggressively the requirements of NCA for assessment" and requested that a supplemental report be submitted in the summer of 2003. The report was received positively by North Central, and since then, Northwest has worked aggressively to create a campus-wide culture of assessment. (See Criterion Three for more on academic assessment.)

The 2010 Report

Work began on the 2010 self-study in the spring of 2006 with the formation of the Self-study Executive Committee. When creating the committee, an emphasis was placed on academic diversity with committee members taken from administrative and faculty positions from across campus. Membership is shown in Table 0.2.

Table 0.2
Self-study Executive Committee

AREA	COMMITTEE CHAIRS
CRITERION I: "Mission & Integrity"	Kim Mills, *Vice President for Administrative Services* Steve Thulin, *Associate Professor of History*
CRITERION II: "Preparing for the Future"	Dana Young, *Vice President for Student Affairs* Allan Childs, *Associate Professor of Chemistry and Mathematics*
CRITERION III: "Student Learning & Effective Teaching"	Sher Hruska, *Vice President for Academic Affairs* Elise Kimble, *Assistant Professor of Biology*
CRITERION IV: "Acquisition, Discovery & Applications of Knowledge"	Ronda Peer, *Dean of Extended Campus and Workforce* Mike Masterson, *Professor of Music*
CRITERION V: "Engagement & Service"	Virginia Fish, *Dean of Student Learning and Academic Support* Rob Koelling, *Professor of English*
FINANCIAL ANALYSIS	Sheldon Flom, *Finance Director* Gary Sturmer, *Professor of Political Science and Economics*
CHAIRPERSON	Duane Fish, *Professor of Speech Communication*
SELF-STUDY AUTHOR	Renee Dechert, *Associate Professor of English*
COLLEGE PRESIDENT	Paul Prestwich, *Northwest College President*
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR	Mark Kitchen, *Vice President for College Relations*
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH	Lisa Smith, *Institutional Researcher*
NWC FOUNDATION	Shelby Wetzel, *NWC Foundation Executive Director*
FACULTY	Charlotte Patrick, *Professor of Communication*

As part of the self-study process, the College began a self-examination with a 2007–2008 revision of Northwest's mission, goals, and enduring values providing the nexus of the process. This also coincided with a major facilities planning initiative. This self-study represents several years of campus-wide work, research, and reflection.

Final Thoughts and Future Plans

The Bridger Hall fire was a significant campus moment but not a defining one; rather, after the cleanup and insurance settlement, the College used this event as a springboard for growth with an eye toward enhancing student learning opportunities and a commitment to student learning, community engagement, and ongoing improvement.

Criterion One

Mission and Integrity

"Northwest College prides itself on a focus on student learning."

Criterion One:
Mission and Integrity

Criterion One Statement: Northwest College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Northwest College Prides Itself on

- A focus on student learning.
- A commitment to diversity and multicultural programming.
- Serving as a cultural hub and model of community enrichment and development.
- Mission documents based on college-wide collaboration.
- Publicizing its mission documents to all constituencies.
- A long history of shared governance.
- The Board of Trustees' commitment to the success of the College.

Northwest College Challenges Itself to

- Use and evaluate the mission documents more consistently.
- Continue to value and refine shared governance.
- More consistently integrate College Council into shared governance and college leadership.
- Develop a budget process that is more inclusive and transparent.
- Create a system for regular evaluation of college structures, processes, and policies.
- Foster Board of Trustees professional development in terms of policy governance and evaluation methods.

Northwest College: Who We Are

Northwest spent much of 2007–2008 revisiting its mission documents, an extensive process that involved soliciting comments from all campus constituency groups, several committees, and College Council. (Prior to that, the most recent revision took place after the hiring of President LaRowe in 2003.) Although the vision statement remained unchanged, on 9 June 2008, the Northwest College Board of Trustees adopted the following revised mission materials:

Vision Statement

Through a superior teaching, learning, and living environment, Northwest College will be a dynamic and distinguished educational leader that shapes a positive future for students and the many communities it serves.

Mission Statement

Through exceptional, dynamic living and learning environments, Northwest College dedicates itself to individual student achievement, diversity, global citizenship, and community vitality.

Enduring Values

- High expectations
- Purposeful learning
- Social responsibility
- Intellectual curiosity
- Diversity and inclusion
- Community engagement and vitality
- Celebration of accomplishment

Priorities

- Access
- Support
- Partnerships
- Institutional vitality
- Student achievement
- Communication and image

CORE COMPONENT—1A: *Northwest College's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.*

Northwest College has statements of mission, vision, enduring values, priorities, and strategic goals that define its mission. (See Appendix 1.1, Mission, Vision, Enduring Values, Priorities, and Strategic Goals.) The mission and vision statements articulate:

- what the College will provide ("exceptional, dynamic living and learning environments").

- the constituencies for which it provides educational opportunities ("students and the many communities it serves").

- the purpose of these opportunities (to further "individual student achievement, diversity, global citizenship, and community vitality").

Northwest's mission documents include a strong commitment to high academic standards that sustain and advance excellence in higher learning. Supplementing the mission and vision statements are the enduring values, those qualities Northwest College most wishes to preserve in meeting goals and supporting student learning.

The mission documents state goals for the learning to be achieved by students by making reference to "high standards for our students and ourselves." In addition, the mission documents reference individual student achievement in learning and living (e.g., out-of-class activities and residential life experience), valuing diverse ideas, and providing global perspectives. *The Northwest College Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–11* also establishes Northwest's commitment to

- Increased degree offerings

- Increased numbers of graduates

- Increased retention

- Increased support for developmental studies and at-risk students

- Increased support for workforce development

When appropriate, Northwest revises its mission documents. However, there is no regularly scheduled timeline and process in place for review; rather, the documents tend to reflect changes in leadership and State pressures. It would be helpful to institute a regular schedule of review and revision as an element of the strategic planning process.

To promote awareness of its mission documents among prospective and enrolled students, employees, and the community, the mission documents receive attention through an extensive publicity process. They are prominently displayed in a number of locations, such as *The Catalog*, and are also available through multiple links on the College website, such as

- "Vision and Mission" *(http://www.northwestcollege.edu/info/vision_mission.dot)*

- "Human Resources" *(http://www.northwestcollege.edu/jobs/)*

- "President's Welcome" *(http://www.northwestcollege.edu/info/welcome.dot)*

Reinforcing the importance of these materials, the College has created framed signs that state the mission and vision statements and are placed by the main entrance of many campus buildings and in designated offices and meeting rooms. The strategic goals and priorities are also discussed at every fall in-service all-campus meeting, and the vision statement appears on the back of employee business cards. To further publicize this material, the Office of College Relations

produces a tri-fold brochure, which is designed to publicize the College's strategic goals and priorities in addition to the mission materials.[1] Each year, the Strategic Plan brochure has a pressrun of 1,500 with copies going to all employees, Student Senators, and some 750 external stakeholders. Copies are placed in the College's Outreach Centers and libraries and are distributed to service clubs, chambers of commerce, etc. In addition, at the close of every academic year, full-page advertisements are placed in all six service area newspapers and report the year's accomplishments in relation to annual strategic plans.[2] These strategies help ensure a consistent understanding of the mission and vision among internal and external constituencies.

It should be added that various college units (e.g., Hinckley Library, Student Affairs, College Relations) have developed mission statements that operate within the context of the College's mission. The presence of these statements helps to fill an organizational need while improving internal communication.

Currently, the Wyoming Community College Commission is creating a strategic plan, which should be finalized in 2010. Northwest recognizes that it may need to revise its mission documents in light of the Commission's strategic plan.

CORE COMPONENT—1B: *In its mission documents, Northwest College recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.*

Powell and the state of Wyoming are rural populations without significant racial diversity. Still, Northwest College is committed to creating a diverse campus and providing students and the community with a range of international and multicultural learning opportunities. Northwest College values diversity and sees it as a college responsibility to the larger community. In its mission documents, Northwest addresses diversity and presents the College's function in a multicultural society as well as basic strategies for addressing diversity. The mission statement makes explicit reference to "diversity" and "global citizenship." The College has also embraced an enduring value of "Diversity and inclusion": "We promote equal access to educational services and programs. We model civility, mutual respect, and appreciation of differences. We offer a welcoming, safe, and inviting campus community and dedicate resources to provide an attractive, collegiate environment that supports learning." Underscoring this commitment are statements in "The Faculty Employment Policies" of the *Employment Handbook* and the *Student Handbook* that support diversity in thought.

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1   See Strategic Plan brochures in the Resource Room.
2   See Annual Report Advertisements in the Resource Room.

> "Both the mission statement and the enduring values affirm the College's commitment to honoring the dignity and worth of individuals."

The mission documents provide a basis for basic strategies to address diversity. One of the Strategic Goals of the *The Northwest College Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–11* is to "[i]ncrease minority student head-count by 2% per year." A mission and plan for international student programming is being finalized.

The College has a "Respect for Diversity Statement" that was created by the Diversity Awareness Committee and has been endorsed by College Council and the President's Advisory Council. This statement reads:

> The Northwest College community includes a rich mix of individuals who, through their distinctive viewpoints, personalities, and life experiences, contribute to an intellectually stimulating and supportive culture.
>
> Northwest College's commitment to diversity is central to understanding and learning through the promotion of free and open inquiry and discussion.
>
> We recognize that our success as an institution depends on an environment where all individuals are included in Northwest College's community regardless of, but not limited to race, age, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, citizenship, religious affiliation, ability or disability.

The Diversity Awareness Committee is composed of members from each constituent group in addition to a member of the Student Senate and the Director of Human Resources as well as a number of volunteer members. The Multicultural Subcommittee oversees programming and provides input on other relevant campus issues.

These commitments are further underscored by the College's dedication to diversity as seen in general education requirements, in the international student program, and in extensive multicultural programming, study-abroad opportunities, and student clubs that support diverse cultures (See Criteria Three and Four for additional discussion).

Both the mission statement and the enduring values affirm the College's commitment to honoring the dignity and worth of individuals. Northwest's hiring practices also show the College's commitment to respecting individuals. Northwest adheres to Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act in its statement of nondiscrimination as stated in the compliance/non-discrimination statement that prefaces the *Employment Handbook* and involves all aspects of employment, from hiring to termination.[3]

Policies are in place to guide behavior in ways that are consistent with Northwest's mission and values. Both faculty and students have clearly stated "codes of conduct." The "Faculty Employment Policies" include the American Association of University Professors' 1966 (revised in 1987) "Statement on Professional

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3   See *Employment Handbook* in the Resource Room.

Ethics" as well as extensive written passages on "expected behaviors."[4] Similarly, the *Student Handbook* contains statements on "expected behavior" for students as well as faculty.[5] However, it is not evident from any document that the board, administration, professional, or classified staff are governed by any explicitly stated code of conduct.

CORE COMPONENT—1C: *Understanding of and support for the mission pervade Northwest College.*

The College's board, administration, faculty, and staff understand and support the mission, especially given the manner in which so many faculty and staff were involved in the development of the new mission documents. Evidence of campus understanding of and support for the College's mission can be documented in a number of ways. Two recent examples are Northwest's revision of its concurrent enrollment program and its decision to open centers in Cody and Worland (See Criterion Five).

The goals of administrative and academic subunits are congruent with the College's mission. Actions taken by the College to address priorities and targets in *The Northwest College Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–11* are documented in actions taken by individual administrative areas. Further evidence may be found in the curriculum development and approval process, the strategic planning and budgeting processes, and the assessment process.

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

Northwest College has a long history of shared governance that has shaped the character of the institution and has been reinforced by the extensive council and committee structure. Two groups play a central role: The President's Advisory Council and College Council.

President's Advisory Council
This group is comprised of the area vice presidents (Academic Affairs, Administrative Services, College Relations, and Student Affairs) and meets to advise the President on important campus issues. Guests with expertise in a specific area are often invited to make presentations. The Council meets every Monday.

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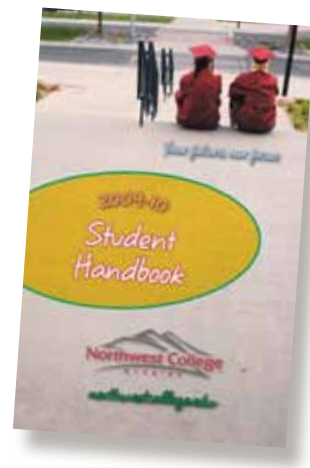
4   See *Employment Handbook* in the Resource Room.
5   See *Student Handbook* in the Resource Room.

College Council

Launched in May 1992, this group is comprised of representatives elected by constituent groups. The Council's function is to advise, provide input, and submit recommendations to the President and, through the President, to the Board of Trustees. College Council hears concerns raised by College administrators, standing committees, *ad hoc* committees, or any member of the college community via Council representatives. College Council representatives are also responsible for communicating to their constituencies' concerns, points of view, ideas, and recommendations regarding items submitted for discussion to College Council. It is expected that all major policy and budgetary decisions will be presented to College Council for review and discussion prior to implementation. College Council meets at least monthly throughout the calendar year. Membership includes the following:

- Administrative Staff—1 member
- Classified Staff—2 members
- Faculty—4 members
- Professional Staff—2 members
- Student Senate—2 members
- Director of Human Resources—*ex officio*
- College President—*ex officio*

Although College Council is effective in terms of providing a forum for all parts of campus, its effectiveness tends to vary from president to president and chair to chair rather than from an established place in the governance structure.

Other important groups include the Academic Advisory Council, the Enrollment Management Committee, and the Integrated Communications Committee. Although many other decisions are generated from and reviewed by other committees before reaching either the President's Advisory Council or College Council, one or more of these councils is involved with most significant campus-wide decisions.

Comprised of seven members elected for four-year terms, the Board of Trustees geographically represents and is elected from the tax district, Park County. The Trustees themselves elect officers (President, Vice President/Secretary, Treasurer).

- **Jim Sessions, Trustee**
  Jim Sessions is a videographer/hunter for an outdoor TV/video company focusing on self-guided hunts and over-the-shoulder videography. A Northwest College alumnus, Jim has worked in the parks and recreation field and earned a bachelor of science degree in that area at the University of Wyoming. Jim and his wife, Lynn, and family reside near Meeteetse.

The board meets on the second Monday of each month and is regulated by state open meeting laws. Meetings are covered by the local media, and minutes are available online via the College's website *(http://www.northwestcollege.edu/intranet/minutes/bot/)*.[6] Board members do not receive compensation; however, they are reimbursed for reasonable expenses. As part of its duties, the Board of Trustees

- Reviews and approves the College's annual strategic plan and mission documents.

- Hires the College President and evaluates him/her based on attainment of targets and priorities in the Strategic Plan.

- Provides fiscal oversight.

- Considers policy decisions.

- Approves the annual budget.

The Board's policies and practices document its focus on Northwest's mission. The Board of Trustees operates under *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to the Governance of the Northwest College Board of Trustees*.[7] According to the *Rules and Regulations*, Chapter I, Section 6, "The objective of the Northwest College Board of Trustees shall be to assure that the College accomplishes its vision and mission."

The College administration provides the Board of Trustees with an internal orientation to the College. Through the use of work sessions that provide an education of the departments and divisions of the College as well as insight into special topics, the Board of Trustees learns how all areas of the College operate. Over the past few years, most board members have attended at least one major national or regional conference including the National Legislative Summit (NLS); the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees Conference (WACCT); and the American Association of Community Colleges Leadership Conference (AACC). The Board also has a yearly self-evaluation process. However, there are questions surrounding both the effectiveness and transparency of this process, which receives input exclusively from Board members, lacks any form of narrative or self-assessment, and is not distributed to the public.[8]

6 See Board of Trustees Minutes in the Resource Room.
7 See *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to the Governance of the Northwest College Board of Trustees* in the Resource Room.
8 See Board of Trustees Self-Assessments in the Resource Room.

The Board's *Rules and Regulation* (Chapter VII) defines the board's role as a policy-making body and distinguishes between policy making and the development of "organizational procedures for the implementation and interpretation of policy," which is assigned to the President. In addition, the Board's *Rules and Regulations* (Chapter IV) includes a "Board Code of Ethics" statement that the "primary function of the board is to establish the policies by which the community college is to be administered."

The Board's *Rules and Regulations* (Chapter IX) further outlines the College President's duties as having "authority and responsibility for the (well-being) of college finances, records, buildings, grounds, personnel, students, business, support services, and instructional activities." Additional regulations include the following:

- **Chapter VII, Section 2, "College Procedures":** "The College President has the responsibility for developing organizational procedures for the implementation and interpretation of policy. The College President will utilize personnel and College committees for such actions. The Board may advise if needed."

- **Chapter IX, Section 1, "Authority":** "The Northwest College President is appointed by the College Board and is directly responsible to the Board. The College President is the chief executive officer of the institution. The Board evaluates the President, acknowledges the President's recommendations, while providing resources to the President to complete the respective duties."

- **Chapter IX, Section 2, "Duties":** "The President is responsible for the completion of duties relating to Wyoming statutes, these Rules and Regulations, College policies, and procedures. The President has authority and responsibility for the (well-being) of College finances, records, buildings, grounds, personnel, students, business, support services, and instructional activities."

In the past, there have been allegations of Board micromanagement, a point underscored in the 2001 report from the North Central visiting team. Since then, more Board members have participated in professional development opportunities to support board education regarding policy governance and successful college operations.

In 2007, there were allegations about improper Board meetings: The Board of Trustees was criticized by some employees for its spring 2007 discussions—said by some employees to have violated the Wyoming Open Meetings Law—prior to a board decision to change coaches from faculty to professional staff contracts. While the issue was finally laid aside, concern lingers among some employees about how the Board gathers information and makes some decisions. The

> *"Northwest College works to ensure that the distribution of responsibilities as defined in governance structures, processes, and activities are understood and implemented through delegated authority."*

minutes of the 8 June 2007 special retreat of the Board with employee group representatives indicate the commitment of the Board and Northwest College to shared governance and articulate expectations of that commitment, as do minutes of subsequent similar meetings as well as specific constituent group reports on these events.[9] Thus began a series of quarterly meetings between Board members and constituency group representatives with discussion topics such as the compensation study and College budget process, decision-making patterns, and the planning process. The President and Vice Presidents have not been included in these meetings, raising questions of Board intrusion into College operations and an undermining of Board policy governance.

Northwest College works to ensure that the distribution of responsibilities as defined in governance structures, processes, and activities are understood and implemented through delegated authority. However, the evolution of this process has been uneven. Prior to 1997, governance materials were primarily communicated via handbooks. Each constituency group had its own handbook outlining that group's responsibilities in the governance system in addition to housing relevant policies and procedures materials. In 1997, the Dean of Administrative Services initiated creation of the *Institutional Handbook*, a repository for policy documents common to all employee constituencies. President Miles LaRowe oversaw the transformation of the *Institutional Handbook* into the *Employee Handbook*, an expanded collection of new policies and procedures. At that point, only *The Faculty Handbook* continued to exist as a separate entity; *The Classified Staff Handbook* and *The Professional Staff Handbook* had already been dismantled. The faculty was uncertain of their relationship to these handbooks and continued to see *The Faculty Handbook* as their chief governance document.

In 2007–2008, the Board initiated a major revision of *The Faculty Handbook*, ultimately resulting in the inclusion of sections of *The Faculty Handbook* in the *Employment Handbook*. Some argued that this revision and consolidation was another example of Board micromanagement and led to a decrease in the status of faculty as campus and governance leaders in favor of a legal text that articulates how faculty should do their job, failing to convey a full picture of the holistic life of a Northwest College faculty member. In addition, the *Employment Handbook* omitted most governance materials (e.g., committee selection and membership materials). Also problematic was that fact that constituency group bylaws and College Council bylaws did not exist in a publicly accessible form or any official documents. To address this problem, in the summer of 2009, the President's Advisory Council drafted *The Governance Handbook*, which it is currently revising.

Currently, the *Student Handbook* receives attention from two groups. The first group considers academic sections of the *Student Handbook*. For policy changes, the Student Handbook (Non-Academic) Committee reviews non-academic student handbook policies and procedures and makes recommendations for newly suggested and existing substantive policy changes, additions, or deletions to the

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9   See Board of Trustees Minutes, 8 June 2007, in the Resource Room.

Vice President for Student Affairs. In 2009–2010, the College decided not to print the S*tudent Handbook* in favor of placing the document online.[10] Students were given a card directing them to the online version of the *Student Handbook*.

People within the governance and administrative structures are committed to the mission and appropriately qualified to carry out their defined responsibilities. The mission statement as well as the strategic plan with its priorities and strategic goals are drafted by a combination of administrative personnel, faculty, staff, and students and then reviewed and approved by the Board. The process for creating and revising job descriptions as well as the hiring process as defined in writing through the *Employment Handbook* assists in ensuring that those in the administrative structure are qualified to carry out their defined responsibilities. In addition, the College *Catalog* highlights academic credentials of administrators and faculty.

Faculty and other academic leaders share responsibility for the coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of academic processes. Course content is developed, reviewed, and approved by faculty. Each division holds monthly meetings during the academic year in which curricular and campus issues are discussed. Formal course approval starts with programs, followed by divisions, and then moves to the faculty-led Curriculum Committee with the Dean of Student Learning and Academic Support and the Vice President for Academic Affairs working with faculty on changes. Final decisions on new programs are approved by the President and the Board and then ultimately by the Wyoming Community College Commission.

In 2007, the Board of Trustees inserted itself into the curriculum approval process, assigning itself the role of approving new degree and certificate programs before these proposals are sent for review by the three-tier, state-wide community college program approval process (Wyoming Academic Vice Presidents' Academic Affairs Council, the Executive Council, and the Wyoming Community College Commission). While potentially raising governance issues in relation to faculty-led curriculum development, this new role of the Board is consistent with procedures at a number of Wyoming community colleges. Procedurally, this change has resulted in positive discussions, only small delays in program approvals, and no over-riding of faculty program decisions. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of faculty involvement in curricular development and academic assessment.)

Northwest works to have effective communication to facilitate governance processes and activities, using a variety of methods:

- Campuswide e-mail messages, delivered as necessary by Vice Presidents and middle managers, provide information on updates, developments, employee accomplishments, etc.

- *Presidential Updates* are sent via e-mail to all employees and Student Senators.

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10 See *http://www.northwestcollege.edu/students/handbook/* for the online version of the *Student Handbook*.

> *"It was also noted that communication often breaks down on the way up with particular questions about when a pending decision should first go to College Council or the President's Advisory Council."*

- The President hosts pre-board meetings among all constituent group Presidents.

- Regular updates are provided by the President and Vice Presidents at College Council meetings.

- The President gives formal updates on major developments at twice-a-year in-service meetings attended by all employees.

- Agendas and post-meeting summaries from the President's Advisory Council meetings are sent to all employees via e-mail.

- Vice Presidents hold regular (some meet weekly) meetings with their staff to review, discuss, and answer questions on major topics/actions in President's Advisory Council meetings.

- Major student performances in regional and national competitions are highlighted in the "Spotlight" section of the website's home page.

- Beginning in Fall 2009, yammer.com is being used as a voluntary employee forum to facilitate informal communication. The E-forum is also in response to *The Northwest College Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–11* strategic goal of "[d]evelop[ing] a new initiative to improve internal communication."

Surveys of employees conducted in 2008 and 2009 continued to include observations that poor communication has been and continues to be a problem: The perception is that communication does not occur fast enough and that leaders do not share common understandings of decisions made. It was also noted that communication often breaks down on the way up with particular questions about when a pending decision should first go to College Council or the President's Advisory Council.[11]

President Prestwich's e-mail "updates" have been helpful in terms of communicating major budgetary updates and answering questions. During the FY10 budget cuts made during 2008–2009, President Prestwich communicated through memos with the campus, explaining the process and proposed cuts. He also submitted proposed cuts to College Council at a special meeting in April 2008. Given increasingly uncertain budget changes, the need for college-wide communication and involvement of College Council for collaborative problem solving will be essential.

11 See Governance Surveys in the Resource Room.

CORE COMPONENT—1E: *Northwest College upholds and protects its integrity.*

During the 2009–2010 academic year, a number of administrative decisions and actions resulted in a variety of on- and off-campus reactions that reverberated for months. Perceptions about these cases and varying interpretations of the implications of these decisions were shared on campus, in the media, and in the community. The set of decisions and actions included the following:

- The dismissal of a long-term and well liked professional staff member.

- The potential dismissal of a senior tenured faculty member.

- A contract non-renewal after the second year of the untenured faculty member who oversaw the print journalism program and college newspaper, *The Northwest Trail*.

- A contract non-renewal of a multi-year adjunct faculty member in art.

- A college recruiting letter sent to students of a single religion from the President with an attached recruiting letter from a local religious leader.

- An anonymous "climate survey" was sent via campus e-mail with the approval of the Vice President for Administrative Services in which employees identified themselves as the "Peace Movement" and questioned the actions of faculty and staff, characterizing them as "threatening."

Although the administration argued it had followed policy, many campus employees saw these decisions as violating core principles of shared governance. These situations led to significant campus tension. To address this, in March 2010, all constituent group representatives met with the Board of Trustees, and the decision was made to bring a mediator to campus. The President's Advisory Council selected a mediator, whose name was announced in late April with mediation beginning in the summer of 2010 and continuing into the fall.

Northwest works to ensure that its activities are congruent with the mission. There are many positive examples of providing students with "exceptional, dynamic living and learning environments":

- Analysis of capstone courses and their outcomes continues to document overall student success in terms of the all-college outcomes.

- Monthly reports of the vice presidents to the Board document academic and non-academic activities by faculty, staff, and students.

> *"The Board exercises its responsibility to the public to ensure that the College operates legally, responsibly, and with fiscal honesty."*

- Faculty evaluations and the Rank and Tenure Committee decisions document quality of instruction/teaching.

- The Enrollment Advisory Committee/Retention Subcommittee and Title III grant document retention, engagement, and advising plans and their assessments.

- The Office of Residence and Campus Life conducts regular assessments and uses this information for planning.

- The Institutional Effectiveness Committee considers assessment data as a means for improving student learning.

The Board exercises its responsibility to the public to ensure that the College operates legally, responsibly, and with fiscal honesty. The Board's *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to the Governance of the Northwest College Board of Trustees* (Chapter IX) outline the College President's duties as having "authority and responsibility for the (well-being) of college finances, records, buildings, grounds, personnel, students, business, support services, and instructional activities." The College employs a Finance Director who is a Certified Public Accountant and is continually re-evaluating internal controls and accounting procedures to meet the Board's and College's fiscal responsibilities. The College has also hired an auditing firm with higher education experience to conduct independent financial audits in compliance with state and federal rules. The firm conducts audits to assess if the College is conforming to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and that their statements are fairly stated, meet federal requirements, and provide effective internal controls. Since 2007, the College has had no material findings. The Wyoming Community College Commission examines audits every year to verify financial compliance.

The College understands and abides by local, state, and federal laws and regulations applicable to it. Northwest works within a coordinating framework established by the Wyoming State Legislature by which the Wyoming Community College Commission monitors compliance with specific laws and agency regulations.[12] The College also adheres to a bid process.

Other compliance efforts include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Audits prove financial compliance of the College and federal grants.

- An appeals process is followed through set procedures.

- External grant evaluators monitor compliance.

- Athletic regulations are followed in terms of eligibility and scholarships.

12 See *Wyoming Community College Rules and Regulations* in the Resource Room.

- Visa regulations are enforced for regulating international students, faculty, and staff.

- The Compensation Study conducted in 2007 focused to a significant degree on compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

- The Employment Policy Review Committee works to ensure compliance in employment policy and practices with federal, state, and local laws or regulations and recommends measures to the President's Advisory Council.

- The College has a Compliance Officer (the Vice President for Administrative Services), a Grievance Officer for faculty and staff complaints, and a Student Grievance Officer for student complaints.

- The College complies with EEO regulations in its implementation of search processes.[13]

- The College protects students' privacy by adhering to FERPA laws.

- Personnel records are kept consistently and meet legal requirements.

The College works to implement consistently clear and fair policies regarding the rights and responsibilities of each of its internal constituencies. A new College Grievance Policy has been adopted at the recommendation of the College attorney, and it will require time and practice to determine its effectiveness.[14] The Grievance Policy should, along with other policies, be reviewed and perhaps revised based on available evidence. The objectivity of the Grievance Officer was questioned following the revelation of her participation in the Peace Movement, and the faculty filed a class-action grievance with the President who ultimately determined that he would appoint an independent grievance officer for anyone filing a grievance who did not believe he or she would get a fair hearing.

Leadership at the highest levels needs to engage and sustain dialogue with employee constituency groups to accomplish greater communication, improved morale, and better decision making. Committees serve an important, ongoing shared leadership role; however, more attention must be given to decision-making models in the cases of budget priorities, the compensation system, long-range planning, reductions in force, and more intense problem-solving matters.

The College's structures and processes allow it to ensure the integrity of its co-curricular and auxiliary activities. Funding is specifically allocated to support

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13 See *Employment Handbook* in the Resource Room.
14 See *Employment Handbook* in the Resource Room.

these activities. Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are provided for within the College's organizational structure and are supported with faculty and staff as stated in applicable job descriptions and with adequate budgets and reassigned time for faculty and staff. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- An "Athletic Code of Conduct" was developed by coaches and staff and then approved by the Board. Teams operate according to NJCAA and NIRA rules.

- The bylaws of the Booster Club have been revised, and there is better monitoring of its activities and fiscal profile. (This was listed as a concern in North Central's 2001 assessment.)

- The Livestock and Equine Judging teams compete in national competitions regulated by oversight bodies such as the National Horse Judging Team Coaches Association.

- The Forensics team uses the American Forensics Association Code of Ethics.

- The Music program is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music Accreditation.

- The Nursing program is approved by a state board of nursing and the National League for Nursing.

Northwest deals fairly with its external constituents. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- The College employs a fair, open process for allowing the public access to its facilities and has changed its system for reserving rooms to enhance public access. Currently, Northwest is tracking that procedure to assess its effectiveness.

- The College has cooperative relations with its landlords in the case of facilities leased in both Cody and Worland.

- Northwest College adheres to a "Purchasing Policy" approved on 13 July 1982 that is based on state statutes and describes the bid process.

- Northwest honors contracts with all vendors and pays bills promptly.

- The DeWitt Student Center has a designated place for the community to share non-college information with the campus (e.g., Gideons, military recruiters, etc.).

According to a five-year plan, community surveys are conducted annually in service-area communities to determine attitudes and perceptions that exist

among residents. Major governance events, including meetings of the Board and College Council, are open to the media and public. (See Criterion Five for a discussion of the College's relationship to its external communities.)

Northwest College presents itself accurately and honestly to the public. Communications professionals in the College Relations Office have contributed to the College's positive track record in this area. Their philosophy of positive public relations has aided communications with the public and has promoted accountability and transparency to both internal and external audiences. The College also regularly seeks media input on how news release and dissemination practices can be improved. The College utilizes a range of vehicles to promote accurate and honest communications to the public, including

- **Annual report advertisements** in each of the College's service area newspapers highlight accomplishments of Strategic Plan priorities and major developments.

- **The annually updated Institutional Fact Card**, which include key facts about NWC, are provided to all employees and to the Student Senate, and are mailed to several hundred external stakeholders.

- **Strategic Plan brochures**, which include Northwest's mission documents, are provided to all employees and to the Student Senate, and are mailed to several hundred external stakeholders.

- **The *Northwest Alumni News*** is the official publication of the NWC Alumni Association; it's provided to all employees and to the Student Senate, and bulk mailed to nearly 15,000 alumni and donors.

- **The Public Events Calendar** is printed and mailed to a subscriber list of about 2,000 individuals in the college's service area.

- **Publications** ensure the accuracy of assertions and facts; College Relations Office staff work directly with campus clients in a system which provides appropriate proofreading and authorization.

- **Paid media advertising** ensures the accuracy of assertions and facts; College Relations Office staff work directly with campus clients in a system which provides appropriate proofreading and authorization.

- **News releases and biographical files** ensure the accuracy of assertions and facts; College Relations Office staff work directly with campus clients in a system which provides appropriate proofreading and authorization. While most news releases are

primarily promotional, serving either to announce upcoming events and employee/student successes or provide informational updates, occasionally controversial and/or "hard" news items (e.g., Board of Trustees meeting actions, budget cuts, reduction in force, and presidential searches) are also covered in news releases. Alphabetized biographical files housed in the College Relations Office provide access to information which helps ensure accuracy and thoroughness in communicating with both internal and external audiences.

- **Radio talk show appearances** allow employees and students to participate in talk shows on area radio stations and are assisted in doing so.

- **The College website** provides an essential communication tool. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of assertions and facts on the "central" website; a content management system—new to the campus since August 2008—gives individual "website monitors" the ability to update content in their area. Major news, e.g., presidential searches and a 2004 residence hall fire, is shared by creating microsites that are accessible 24/7.

- **Crisis communication** takes several forms. The College's *Crisis Communication Plan*, which includes clear communication steps to be followed during a crisis, promotes full, accurate, honest and timely communication. The plan's primary content areas are: its purpose, definitions, a public relations policy statement, communication policies, the Crisis Communication Team, and procedures (activation of the team, information collection, Web presence development, notification of media and stakeholders, team and media resources rooms, and a post-crisis audit).

- **Public presentations** allow college personnel respond accurately and honestly to a variety of questions about the college in various public settings including chambers of commerce and service club meetings.

- **NWC Foundation's** *Annual Report* includes clear, honest, accurate presentations of the NWC Foundation's successes and financial position.

Northwest documents timely response to complaints and grievances, particularly those of students. The *Student Handbook* and the *Employment Handbook* clarify the grievance process for students. Students who bring concerns forward to the administration are mentored about the complaint and appeal processes. Grievances are governed by a calendar that ensures a timely response.

Final Thoughts and Future Plans

All parts of Northwest College work to meet the mission statement as part of the institution's continuing commitment to improvement, student learning, and community engagement. Very importantly as well, in view of recent controversies involving policies and actions covered in the local and national media, it appears that Northwest College again has an opportunity to address challenges already enumerated at the outset of this report. To address these challenges, the Board of Trustees and College have

- hired an outside individual to act in the role of a mediator and to meet with the Board, all College constituency groups and a committee consisting of elected constituency group representatives. The Board and the College are then committed to act on the recommendations made by this individual.

- committed to the continuation of meetings between the Board and constituency group representatives.

- committed to finishing the revision of *The Governance Handbook* and in Fall 2010 start the process of getting input from the various standing committees and College Council, so *The Handbook* can be published and distributed to the campus.

Criterion Two

Preparing for the Future

Northwest College
WYOMING

Criterion Two:
Preparing for the Future

> Criterion Two Statement: Northwest College's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

"Northwest College prides itself on allocating resources to expand student learning and development through the use of technology."

Northwest College Prides Itself on

- Making significant strides in implementing plans (e.g., *Strategic Plan*, *Facilities Master Plan*, *The Assessment Plan*, *The Enrollment Management Plan*, and *The Web Management Plan*).

- The dedicated commitment of faculty and staff to planning in the face of leadership and financial challenges.

- Allocating resources to expand student learning and development through the use of technology.

- The increased use of data for planning and decision making.

- The support provided by the NWC Foundation to enhance teaching and learning.

Northwest College Challenges Itself to

- Create a more systematic method for campus-wide collection, distribution, analysis, and use of data for institutional decision-making.

- Create a more systematic process for developing, updating, and integrating plans and assessing their effectiveness.

- Continue to create a transparent budget to achieve strategic planning goals in the face of budget fluctuations.

- Continue to augment funding through private and government grants.

Northwest College: Who We Are

Prior to 2007, the College worked under a facilities master plan created in 2001 but not consistently implemented. At one point, it was "mothballed," a decision that had significant consequences. Eventually, however, both because of necessity and legislative mandate, the College revived the existing plan and turned its attention to facilities planning in a new way.

In 2007, a series of workshops were facilitated by the consulting firm GouldEvans as part of creating a new facilities master plan. These workshops took place over

a five-month period and involved a broad range of participants from the College and surrounding community. Issues, priorities, and goals were established through a variety of interviews and interactive techniques. Surveys were distributed to faculty, staff, administrators, and students to gather opinions, concerns, and ideas on specific topics; focus group meetings were held; and the NWC Foundation and Alumni Directors met with GouldEvans to provide additional input. The exercises allowed participants to share information, discuss differences, and come to a general consensus on the direction of the *Facilities Master Plan.*

Sher Hruska, Vice President for Academic Affairs, remembers, "This master planning process was characterized by multiple group meetings and repeated opportunities for input. We were fortunate to have consultants who were willing to slow down the process to make room for multiple perspectives to be heard and more trust to be built. The consultants structured a process for college constituents, from students to the board, to reach more consensus on priorities and to develop a plan that could serve the College over a period of years and circumstances. The discussions were as important as the plan itself."

The original completion target date for the *Facilities Master Plan* was June 2007; however, to ensure participation and a transparent process, the decision was made to conclude the effort during the Fall 2007 semester. Ultimately, four alternative master plan options were prepared and presented. These plans were reviewed by the Foundation, alumni, faculty, staff, administration, and students. A final version of the *Facilities Master Plan* was submitted after that and has provided a road map for the College to guide planning and decision making.

As Vice President for College Relations Mark Kitchen puts it, "The most recent facilities master planning process offered dramatic differences from its predecessors in that it was inclusive, broadly focused rather than predisposed by project-specific notions, and underpinned by what's best for teaching and learning. The process resulted in prioritized projects that focus meaningfully on the future and revolve around the College's instructional core."

Thus far, the *Facilities Master Plan* has been a success. As President Prestwich noted in his 9 November 2009 "Presidential Update," five projects identified in the plan are in the process of being completed: The Simpson Hall expansion and development of athletic fields; the identification of a campus "front door"; the Hinckley Library renovation; the expansion of the tack area in the Equine Center; and the addition of a sound and recording studio in the Nelson Performing Arts Center.

Planning at Northwest College: An Overview

Northwest's strategic planning process is outlined in a document submitted to North Central: *Progress Report: Northwest College Strategic Plan, 2001–2006*.[1] This was one of two follow-up reports requested as part of North Central's 2001 decision to grant Northwest the maximum 10-year reaccreditation. Turnover in senior leadership and a failure to implement an ongoing planning process were flagged as concerns, so the goal of the adopted strategic planning process was to implement a model that would provide institutional stability and continuity while being flexible enough to adapt to change. Throughout all of this, the mission has continued to serve as the College's guiding document. Currently, the process is undergoing review by President Prestwich.

The Strategic Plan

After several months of development and review by the numerous campus groups, in June 2008, the Northwest College's Board of Trustees approved what was then a two-year plan, *The Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–2010*, which consists of the following:

- Vision statement;

- Mission statement;

- Enduring Values of the institution, along with a brief description of each; and

- Strategic Goals categorized by priorities:

  - Access
  - Support
  - Partnerships
  - Institutional Vitality
  - Student Achievement
  - Communication and Image

The strategic goals, which include both quantitative and qualitative goals, provide a guide for institutional decision-making and resource allocation. (See Appendix 1.1.) Prior to this plan, priorities had focused on each of the four areas of the College (College Relations, Student Services, Academic Affairs, and Administrative Affairs); with *The Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–2010*, the emphasis moved to priorities more clearly focused on student success and the College's mission.

The Implementation and Tracking Plan

Although the previous strategic plans were well designed, there were often weaknesses in their implementation:

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1 See *Progress Report: Northwest College Strategic Plan, 2001–2006,* in the Resource Room.

- The plans lacked an evaluation system to measure success.

- The plans lacked a description of assigned responsibility for the implementation and accomplishment of strategic goals.

- As activities were developed to address various targets and priorities, integration among administrative units was not consistent.

To address those deficiencies as the plan has been implemented, the college president, vice presidents, and other individuals with assigned responsibilities have created *The Implementation and Tracking Plan* (see Appendix 2.1). For each strategic goal of the Strategic Plan, *The Implementation and Tracking Plan* describes the following:

- Timeframe

- Baseline data, which is a quantitative measure for numerical goals and a more descriptive measure for qualitative goals

- Targets for each year of the plan

- Data for each completed year

- Key responsibility

The Implementation and Tracking Plan, which is continually being updated, defines the strategic goals by describing how those goals are measured and identifying timeframes. As progress is made through the Strategic Plan, the College will assess whether strategic goals are met. For example, one straightforward quantitative goal is Strategic Goal 4.1, which is to "increase FTE enrollment by 2% per year." For that goal, Fall 2008 FTE data (1,759 FTE) was used as the baseline data. (Most, but not all, of the baseline data is from Fall 2008.) Once FTE was calculated for Fall 2009, the College found that it had met the first-year strategic goal of 1,794 FTE (a 2% increase). [2]

The College completed a major assessment of the Strategic Plan's first-year results in November 2009, which was shared with the college community and Board of Trustees. *The Strategic Plan 2008–2010: First Year Progress Report*— along with its companion report, *Strategic Plan: Implementation and Tracking Plan (with First-Year Data)*—showed that the College was highly successful at meeting or surpassing the majority of the first-year targets.

At its November 2009 meeting, the Board of Trustees agreed to extend the current strategic plan to create a three-year plan, based on a request from the College President. There were several advantages to this decision:

- The 2008–2010 Strategic Plan had been successful at focusing the College's attention on appropriate priorities and strategic goals. It made sense to provide more time for the effects of the strategic plan to be realized.

. . . .

2   See *The Implementation and Tracking Plan* in the Resource Room.

> *"In addition to the Strategic Plan, the President's Advisory Council has identified several 'major plans.'"*

- The College has had the opportunity to analyze data for only one year of the plan. It will be beneficial to have two years of data prior to the creation of the next plan.

- Extending the plan until 2011 will also allow the College to have the results of the November 2010 visit by the Higher Learning Commission prior to the creation of the next plan, which will likely be a 2011–2014 plan.

- Once the Board of Trustees approved the extension of the strategic plan by one year, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee was charged with three tasks:

  - *Recommend to the Board of Trustees new strategic goals where needed*. The fact that a third year was added to the plan was a contributing factor in amending some of the goals. For example, Strategic Goal 5.3 ("Increase the first-time, full-time student fall-to-fall retention rate by 1.5% per year") had as its first-year target an increase in the retention rate from 59.0% to 60.5%. The first-year data of 62.7% far surpassed the first-year target, so the Institutional Effectiveness Committee recommended an amended strategic goal to be a 62.0% retention rate for the second and third years of the strategic plan.

  - *Establish new second-year targets where needed*. Again, because first-year data exceeded targets—oftentimes quite significantly—for so many of the plan's strategic goals, new second-year targets were needed in several situations.

  - *Establish third-year targets (2010–2011) for each strategic goal*.

Operational Plans

Each strategic goal in *The Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–2011* has an individual or individuals who have been assigned "key responsibility" for leading the College toward accomplishment of that goal. As such, the vice presidents have been given the charge to create Operational Plans (using *The Strategic Plan* and *The Implementation and Tracking Plan* as a guide) for their administrative units to meet the strategic goals for which they have key responsibility and to support the achievement of strategic goals for which they have more collaborative, but not the lead, responsibility.

Major Plans

In addition to the Strategic Plan, the President's Advisory Council has identified several "major plans." These plans tend to be cross-functional, have an institution-wide focus, and have major implications for successful implementation of the Strategic Plan. These plans direct resources and coordinate efforts where needed.

- ***The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan***
  Development Committees: Curriculum Committee, Academic Advisory Council, and Assessment Committee

Supervisory Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs

This plan addresses the way student learning outcomes are developed and assessed at the course, program, general education, and all-college levels. Northwest's faculty-led process includes several years of data collection and analysis that have resulted in the implementation of new student-support programs, the redesign of academic programs, the reassignment of faculty positions, and improved student performance, especially noteworthy at the all-college outcome level.

This plan is at the heart of the College's ability to achieve the educational outcomes stated in the mission. Through implementing this plan, the College is able to assess and enhance the extent to which it achieves its mission-driven commitment to creating an exceptional learning environment and individual student achievement. Through the general education and all-college outcomes, Northwest also supports student learning in relation to cross-cultural awareness and utilization of multiple points of view, which are important components of building support for diversity and global citizenship.[3]

- ***Distance Education Plan***
  Responsibility: Dean of Extended Campus and Workforce

  This plan begins with a guide that enumerates and describes best practices in the field of distance learning, followed by a detailed plan of how Northwest College will employ best practices to deliver a quality distance education program. The plan includes an overall structure that coincides with the strategic plan. The Distance Education Staff meet annually to determine the detailed plan for each year that will move us toward the overall goals for the five year period. The Distance Education staff writes the draft plan for approval by the Academic Advisory Committee.

- ***The Enrollment Management Plan***
  Overall Responsibility: Vice President for Student Affairs

  The Recruitment Plan Development Committees: Enrollment Advisory Committee, Student Affairs Leadership Team, workgroups

  The Recruitment Plan Supervisory Responsibility: Vice President for Student Affairs

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3   See *The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan* in the Resource Room.

> *"All the projects completed or planned have improved campus living and learning environments."*

The Retention Plan Development Committees: Academic Advisory Council, Enrollment Advisory Committee, workgroups

The Retention Plan Supervisory Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Enrollment management enables Northwest College to identify enrollment goals that connect with its mission, strategic plan, and resources. *The Enrollment Management Plan* is a dynamic and holistic plan consisting of two parts: *The Recruitment Plan* and *The Retention Plan*. The Enrollment Advisory Committee, which oversees plan development, implementation, and assessment, is made up of cross-functional members to assist in the integration of administrative processes, student services, curriculum, and promotion. Faculty, academic support personnel, Student Affairs staff, College Relations staff, Administrative Services staff, the Institutional Researcher, and one student are members of the committee, which meets monthly.

The plan supports the mission and individual student achievement through several retention initiatives; increases access for all students by increasing financial resources and housing availability; and supports diversity by recruiting and retaining international students and students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds.[4]

- *Facilities Master Plan*
  Development Committees: President's Advisory Council, College Council.

  Supervisory Responsibility: Vice President for Administrative Services

Historically, Northwest College has expanded without a detailed plan in place. In 2007, GouldEvans was retained to develop a facilities master plan and create a "road map" for the College—a living document to act as a framework for future planning and decision making. This effort included evaluating existing facilities and programs, creating a campus "front door," strengthening campus identity, reconsidering overall campus organization and physical layout, creating design guidelines, and developing an implementation plan for potential projects.

In its mission statement, Northwest College states that it has an "exceptional, dynamic living and learning environment." All the projects completed or planned have improved campus living and learning environments.[5]

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4 See *The Enrollment Management Plan* in the Resource Room.
5 See *Facilities Master Plan* in the Resource Room.

- *Priorities for Website Development Plan*

  Development Committee: Web Management Committee

  Supervisory Responsibility: Vice President for College Relations

  This plan sets forth priorities for development of Northwest's Website, which provides overall direction for the College's Web presence within parameters of the site's mission statement. Priorities on these lists represent major areas of emphasis—areas the committee believes should receive concerted effort. Plans by no means represent all work on the site that occurs in any given year.

  Planning is approached by the committee in late spring and summer in a two-step process: The committee assesses progress made in reaching the previous year's priorities, and then establishes priorities for the coming year. Drafts of the plan are reviewed by the President's Advisory Council and College Council. Achieving these priorities enhances Northwest's Web presence in ways that help recruit and retain students and employees, and creates a functional Web environment for the College's various operations.

  The *Website Development Plan* furthers Northwest College's mission by identifying major projects to improve the College's Web presence and its ability to promote student progress, stimulate efficient communication, and foster student life through encouraging lifelong learning, highlighting cultural diversity, and supporting institutional operations.[6]

- *Big Horn Basin Market Research Plan*

  Development Committee: Office of College Relations

  Supervisory Responsibility: Vice President for College Relations

  This plan provides a five-year road map for the College's environmental scanning activities in its service area (Park, Big Horn and Washakie Counties). In 2005, the College Relations Office was charged with developing "home-grown" research because of a financial shortfall that prohibited using a professional market research organization. A five-year plan to survey service area residents was implemented, with annual community surveys conducted.

  The plan specifies geographic areas to be targeted by community surveys each year, allowing all service area residents to be surveyed

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6   See *Priorities for Website Development Plan* in the Resource Room.

within the five-year period. Aggregate data collected from respondents regarding attitudes and perceptions, college selection factors, awareness of Northwest, computer use, media habits, etc., are reviewed by the Integrated Communications Committee, and executive summaries are created in the College Relations Office. Those summaries are then reviewed by the President's Advisory Council, College Council and, finally, by the Board of Trustees. Actions taken as a result of survey respondents' input and subsequent analysis have informed changes to course delivery as well as approaches to promotional efforts.

The Big Horn Basin Market Research Plan supports the Northwest College mission by helping the institution and its Board of Trustees better understand needs, attitudes, and perceptions of service area residents.[7]

Next Steps

Under the integrated planning system under which the major plans were created, two main weaknesses have been identified: Planning has not been done on a common cycle, and there are several situations where major plans do not yet have direct ties to the Strategic Plan.

Table 2.1
Development and Implementation Schedule for Major College-wide Plans

PLAN	KEY RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME FOR NEXT PLAN	SCHEDULE FOR PLAN CREATION	TARGET APPROVAL DATE
Strategic	President	2011–2014	Spring 2011	June 2011
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment	VP for Academic Affairs	2011–2014	2010–2011 Academic Year	June 2011
Distance Education	Dean of Extended Campus & Workforce	2012–2015	Spring & Fall 2011	January 2012
Enrollment Management	VP for Student Affairs	2012–2015	Spring & Fall 2011	January 2012
Facilities Master	VP for Administrative Services	2008 plan is in effect	Update during 2010–2011	May 2011
Priorities for Website Development	VP for College Relations	Annual	Spring 2011	September 2011
Big Horn Basin Market Research	VP for College Relations	2011–2014	Spring 2011	September 2011

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7   See *Big Horn Basin Market Research Plan* in the Resource Room.

The College has identified strategies to deal with both weaknesses. Individuals and committees have worked to make the linkages between the college-wide strategic plan and major plans more explicit, although much of that work will occur when the College creates its next strategic plan, which will likely have a 2011–2014 timeframe. When that college-wide strategic plan is created, the focus during the development of the major plans will be on supporting the next college-wide strategic plan. Thus, the strategic plan and major plans will have more coordinated timeframes and goals.

Table 2.1 shows the timeframe for both development and implementation of the college-wide strategic plan and major plans.

The next college-wide strategic plan will be created through a collaborative process. A Strategic Plan Development Task Force—consisting of members of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee along with additional representatives—will develop the draft plan.

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee consists of the following:

- President (chair)
- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Institutional Researcher
- Faculty member
- Registrar
- Finance Director

Additional members of the Strategic Plan Development Task Force will likely include:

- Faculty members—a total of two Division Chairs and two other faculty members, with representatives from both transfer and career/technical areas
- Vice President for Administrative Services
- Vice President for College Relations
- Dean of Extended Campus and Workforce
- Library Director
- Student Success Programs Manager
- Residence and Campus Life Director
- Classified Staff member
- Student representative(s)

> *"… new Major Plans will have a more specific assessment cycle, and assessments of each plan's success will likely be provided to the College Council on a more regular basis."*

Following the development of a draft strategic plan, the plan will be reviewed by the College Council and President's Advisory Council. Ultimately, the plan will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

When new major plans are created, they will also be reviewed by the College Council and President's Advisory Council. In addition, the new Major Plans will have a more specific assessment cycle, and assessments of each plan's success will likely be provided to the College Council on a more regular basis.

An additional challenge takes the form of tracking and publicizing results. Although Northwest College has achieved many of its planning goals, this information has not been systematically tracked until the hiring of President Prestwich. Additionally, many on campus are unaware of each year's strategic planning accomplishments and do not perceive their input has been solicited when the College is developing the Strategic Plan. It is often difficult to foster engagement with employees not involved below the administrative, Division Chair, program director, and major committee membership levels.

Institutional Assessment Plans

Each unit at the College has also written learning outcomes assessment plans for its area. These institutional outcomes were created primarily as a result of a months-long, campus-wide effort to create learning outcomes-based initiatives in all departments and units on campus. Follow-up assessments of specified outcomes have been uneven. Now with an Institutional Effectiveness Committee and an Institutional Researcher, the College is in a position to improve the quality and consistency of these outcomes assessment activities.[8]

Standard Operating Budget

The standard operating budget is developed over several months, beginning in about December of each year. During the 2008–2009 academic year, the College President added the Action Resource Plans to the budget development process. Action Resource Plans link significant budget requests to the *The Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–2011*. These plans help "close the loop" by having the College's strategic plan and major plans more explicitly drive resource allocation decisions.

Action Resource Plans describe what action/request is desired (e.g., new staff position or major piece of equipment) and the rationale for such request. Also included are a description of the linkage between the request and the College's strategic plan, the projected outcome of the request, how success will be measured, and the projected cost and timeframe of the request.

Each major administrative unit (President's Office, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administrative Services, and College Relations) creates an Action Resource Plan, with all requests prioritized within the administrative unit. The President's Advisory Council then evaluates these requests and selects those to be included in a college-wide Action Resource Plan, with approved items to be

8   See unit institutional assessment plans in the Resource Room.

incorporated into the following fiscal year's budget.

The President's Advisory Council has completed the Action Resource Planning process twice: once during 2008–09 to prepare for the FY10 budget, and more recently in 2009–10 to prepare for the FY11 budget. Table 2.2 provides an overview of budget items for FY11 that were approved by the most recent Action Resource Planning process.

Table 2.2
Overview of FY11 Budget Items Approved by Action Resource Planning

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Software license increases	**$48,000**
Adjunct faculty budget—*increase to budget if enrollment grows*	**$10,000**
Writing Center staff—*increase in staffing budget*	**$10,000**
International Academic Programs—*increase in support staff to support International Academic Programs as well as weekend activities for all students*	**$16,000**
Hinckley Library—*extra employment hours during Summer 2010 for staff to move books and equipment during the renovation project*	**$6,636**
Hinckley Library—*employment hours to staff new late-night study area*	**$6,169**
Theatre production budget	**$5,000**
Model UN project—*funding to support program expansion*	**$5,000**
Campus Resource Officer position—*increased funding needed to make the position an NWC employee*	**$3,500**
Assistant Wrestling Coach position—*increased funding for the current position due to the large number of wrestlers and the individual nature of the sport*	**$3,000**
Athletic Training—*establishes a start-up budget*	**$8,000**
Athletic Department—*increase for contracted services*	**$5,500**
Disabilities Services—*increase in student employment hours*	**$4,500**
Disabilities Coordinator—*increase contract from 10 to 11 months*	**$4,825**
Human Resources—*supplemental staff costs*	**$15,000**
Bandwidth increase	**$1,500**
Administrative computing—*hardware*	**$10,000**
Computing Services—*parts/repair*	**$5,000**
Computing Services—*budget for recycling and properly disposing of outdated hardware*	**$4,000**
WebCT / Moodle—*funding for the one-year overlap*	**$35,000**
Content management system—*upgrade*	**$9,500**
Web development—*funding for contracted services to create online forms and web apps*	**$20,000**

CORE COMPONENT—2A: *Northwest College realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.*

A capacity study done in 1999–2000 has remained largely unchanged; moreover, individual groups have a strong sense of their capacities as defined by external factors (e.g., finances, the service area, state and local politics, etc.). No new classroom buildings have been built, and although renovations have adapted the use of some space, overall they have not added significant classroom capacity. Opening the Cody Center and Worland Center facilities reflect recent attempts to expand services for Northwest's outreach communities. Northwest also developed more online degree courses and worked with area high schools to design concurrent enrollment options as strategies to facilitate growth in FTE that does not impact campus space issues.

While the Strategic Plan is the guiding planning document supported by other operational plans, Northwest has a number of planning documents that demonstrate that the College is paying attention to emerging factors such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization. Three central plans are the following:

- *The Instructional Technology Plan* fostered the Title III grant that guides the College in making decisions about technology allocations.[9]

- *The Comprehensive Distance Education Plan* was revised in 2009, is based on best practices, and was developed by the Distance Education staff in consultation with faculty, Division Chairs, and Academic Affairs administrators. This plan was reviewed by the Academic Advisory Council and, finally, approved by the President's Advisory Council.[10]

- *The International Recruiting and Program Plan* describes activities targeted to recruit and support diverse populations from around the globe. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of global opportunities for students and Criterion Four for additional information on the general education diversity requirement.)[11]

The College utilizes a number of environmental scanning practices.

- **Market Research**

  In 1998, Interim President Mark Kitchen authorized Northwest's first comprehensive market research. Working with the Clarus Corporation at a cost of about $40,000, the College conducted four "scans." The data were then analyzed by work teams. In 2005, the College planned to conduct a follow-up study; however,

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9   See *The Instructional Technology Plan* in the Resource Room.
10 See *The Comprehensive Distance Education Plan* in the Resource Room.
11 See *The International Recruiting and Program Plan* in the Resource Room.

President Miles LaRowe believed that the fee was excessive and directed the Vice President for College Relations to create and administer an in-house study in an attempt to determine constituent needs and attitudes. After that, the Integrated Communications Committee, a cross-campus group, devised *The Five-year Plan: Big Horn Basin Market Research* based on geographic areas. The plan will be completed in 2010.[12]

Surveys were mailed to residents or could be completed online. In the end, the response rate was around 10%. Results of community surveys are analyzed by the Integrated Communications Committee, and executive summaries are produced and shared with the campus and Board of Trustees.[13] In addition, College Relations Office personnel create documents called *Observations and Considerations re: Promotion* that inform the Office's promotional plans.[14]

Over the years, the responses to these surveys have varied. Survey responses are not necessarily representative of the communities in that the average ages of respondents has tended to be higher than that of the average Northwest College student, and the surveys were not as comprehensive or effective as phone and in-person surveys. Recent results, including improved response rates, are encouraging; however, the College is investigating options for using a professional organization in the near future to provide a more comprehensive scan.

- **Community Meetings**

  A second environmental scanning took place during the accreditation self-study process as a series of community meetings was held throughout the service area in Cody, Powell, Worland, and Meeteetse. The comments at these meetings showed the diversity of Northwest's service area.[15]

  The community was also invited to provide input into the creation of the *Facilities Master Plan*. In an evening meeting, community members were encouraged to voice needs and concerns.

- **"Key Leaders" Meetings**

  Each month, community "Key Leaders" gather for breakfast

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12 See *The Five-year Plan: Big Horn Basin Research* in the Resource Room.
13 See Big Horn Basin Market Research Executive Summaries in the Resource Room.
14 See *Operations and Considerations re: Promotion* in the Resource Room.
15 See Community Meetings Summaries in the Resource Room.

meetings to discuss issues of interest or concern within the community, including state and local revenue opportunities (e.g., grant projects, campaigns for tax levies), infrastructure needs, and economic development. Attendees include the Northwest College President, the City Manager of Powell, the Superintendent of Schools, the Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, and the Powell Valley Healthcare Administrator.

- **Informal Feedback**

  Wyoming citizens tend to prefer direct interaction over responding to surveys, so significant feedback comes via personal contact with the Office of Extended Campus and Workforce Training. This information is channeled to the appropriate college personnel and committees. Moreover, all trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff are community members and hear a great deal about what the College does well and what it needs to improve. While this information is anecdotal and unsystematic, it is valuable.

Northwest is supportive of innovation and change. The following list provides a few notable examples.

- **Retention Activities**

  Planning was a major consideration of the 2000 accreditation visit, and retention was cited as a concern in the *Report of Findings and Recommendations* made to Northwest College by Noel Levitz (February 2000) because the College's retention rate was below the national average for two-year public schools. The Northwest College five year retention average was 51% in 2000 and the national average for two-year public schools at that time was 52.5%.

  As a result of these major influences, Northwest College developed *The Retention Plan*, which it has modified, updated, and maintained since 2002. In 2004 *The Retention Plan* was incorporated with the recruiting plan into *The Enrollment Management Plan*. Throughout the history of this planning, the process has been grounded by the following statement, which appears in some form in each of the plans: "Retention is a campus-wide concern that involves every area and process at NWC. Therefore, NWC is resolute in its focus on building a retention plan that is *participatory, sustained, systematic, and organized*—four key elements in effective retention programs according to research found in 'Developing the Quality of Student Life and Learning Plan: A Retention Planning Resource.'"

  Goals and activities developed through the plan include the areas of Academic Advising, Student Technology, First-year Experience, Financial Aid, Residential Life, Developmental Education, Career and Transfer Services, and Student Support Services. A

variety of activities have been initiated through the planning process.

During the summer of 2009, tutoring was moved from the Office of Student Services to the Office of Academic Affairs. New tutoring and developmental education work groups began in the fall of 2009. (See Criterion Four for a discussion of tutoring and retention of students placing into developmental coursework.)

The Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs have worked with Title III to support a number of student retention activities. The College added career and transfer planning, and online student support resources for career and degree planning (See Criterion Three) in addition to providing expanded articulations and advisor training (See Criterion Five).

A major retention activity started in August 2006 with Kick-off Weekend (KOW), a four-day orientation. After three pilot years, changes were made to improve the program. Kick-off Weekend consists now of two credited classes, HMDV 1200, "Academic & Career Orientation" (1 credit) and PEAC 1014, "Wellness Orientation" (.5 credit). Learning Outcomes were created by a focus group of faculty and staff.

Throughout KOW, 32 wellness activities and 48 academic sessions are offered during the day. These activities and sessions are facilitated by College staff, faculty, and returning students. Large group activities are hosted every evening. KOW starts with a "Welcoming BBQ" for students and their families and concludes with a Faculty Open House that allows students to become more acquainted with the campus and faculty. As Table 2.3 indicates, response has been positive.

Table 2.3
Kick-off Weekend Participation

	KOW 2006	KOW 2007	KOW 2008	KOW 2009
Total who participated in at least one activity	370	254	258	351
Total who received credit	368* (na%)	121 (47.6%)	146 (56.6%)	213 (60.7%)

*During KOW 2006, students were able to receive credits for both wellness and academic programs, so "Total who received credit" reflects a duplicated student count. In subsequent years, students were only able to receive credit for either wellness or academic programs, so numbers reflected for those years are unduplicated student counts.

> *"The institution has focused considerable energy on classroom teaching technology, electronic student–learning support, on–line course–delivery technology, and electronic information to facilitate learning and service to students."*

In the last four years, students who have received credit from Kick-off Weekend have been studied as a cohort. These students have completed more credits, have a higher overall GPA, and have a higher retention rate, which have helped increase the overall College retention rate. In 2000, Northwest College's five-year retention rate average was 51%. By 2009, the retention rate had increased to 62.7%.

- **Investments in Technology**

  The institution has focused considerable energy on classroom teaching technology, electronic student-learning support, on-line course-delivery technology, and electronic information to facilitate learning and service to students. These resources include but are not limited to the following:

  - SMARTHINKING
  - TutorTrac
  - Revised and expanded My NWC Portal
  - SmartBoards and related digital projection and recording devices in classrooms
  - Vodcasting
  - WEAVE Outcomes Tracking Software
  - Online degree audits
  - Online early alerts
  - Online scholarship applications
  - ePortfolio for student use
  - Redesign of Northwest College website
  - Purchase of a Web content management system

  As the demand for technology increases, the College will need to continue to invest wisely in the key technological resources to remain competitive. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of instructional technology.)

Northwest incorporates into its planning those aspects of its history and heritage that it wishes to preserve and continue. From its earliest iteration in 2001, strategic plans have encompassed valued characteristics that are part of the fiber that weaves the College together as a community. An earlier version listed 15 enduring values to be retained and nurtured, including challenging, lively classroom instruction with high quality transfer and technical programs and learning opportunities outside the classroom; accessible and supportive faculty and staff; challenging, co-curricular activities; a highly residential campus that is friendly, safe, and student centered; attractive, well maintained facilities; a host county that is proud of the College and supports students; and a regional center

for education, culture, and sports.[16] The enduring values were revisited, updated, and broadly reaffirmed in 2008, restated as values statements. To clarify these values, they were arranged under broad headings:

- High Expectations

- Purposeful Learning

- Social Responsibility

- Intellectual Curiosity

- Diversity and Inclusion

- Community Engagement and Vitality

- Celebration of Accomplishment[17]

In terms of formal archives, Hinckley Library houses collections of college catalogs, college and local newspapers, and college yearbooks in addition to files on many prominent people associated with the College. However, a systematic method for recording historical events and for interviewing retiring personnel needs to be created.

As a means of identifying authority for decision-making about organizational goals, the Board of Trustees operates under State of Wyoming statutes and its *Rules and Regulations*.[18] The College's "Administrative Organizational Chart" is outlined in the *Employment Handbook*. (See the Criterion One for additional discussion.)

CORE COMPONENT—2B: *Northwest College's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.*

Northwest has adequate financial resources and fiscal flexibility to support achievement of the educational quality it claims to provide.

Financial Resources

Revenues and Expenditures
The College has been fortunate that Wyoming's mineral-based economy has produced increased state revenue in recent years. (See Table 2.4 and Appendix 2.3, FY 2004–2010 Revenues and Expenditures.)

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16 See strategic planning brochures in the Resource Room.
17 See Appendix 1.1 for the mission, vision, enduring values, priorities, and strategic goals.
18 See *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to the Governance of the Northwest College Board of Trustees* in the Resource Room.

As a point of comparison, in FY 2001, the College had revenues totaling $16,404,358; that amount had roughly doubled by FY 2009 to $30,664,882. (See Table 2.5 and Appendix 2.3, FY 2004–2010 Revenues and Expenditures.) During this time, the College has grown its financial reserves and invested money into equipment and facilities improvements for programs. More importantly, because Northwest's

Table 2.4
College Expenditures from FY 2004–FY 2010

	FY2010 Budget $29.1 M	FY2009 $28.4 M	FY2008 $27.2 M	FY2007 $25.3 M	FY2006 $23 M	FY2005 $21.8 M	FY2004 $20.7 M
Total Auxiliary Fund	15%	14%	13%	14%	16%	15%	15%
Scholarships	12%	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	14%
Plant Operations	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%	11%	9%
Institutional Support	18%	16%	16%	16%	15%	13%	13%
Student Services	9%	10%	10%	11%	10%	9%	9%
Total Instructional Programs	39%	41%	42%	40%	39%	40%	40%
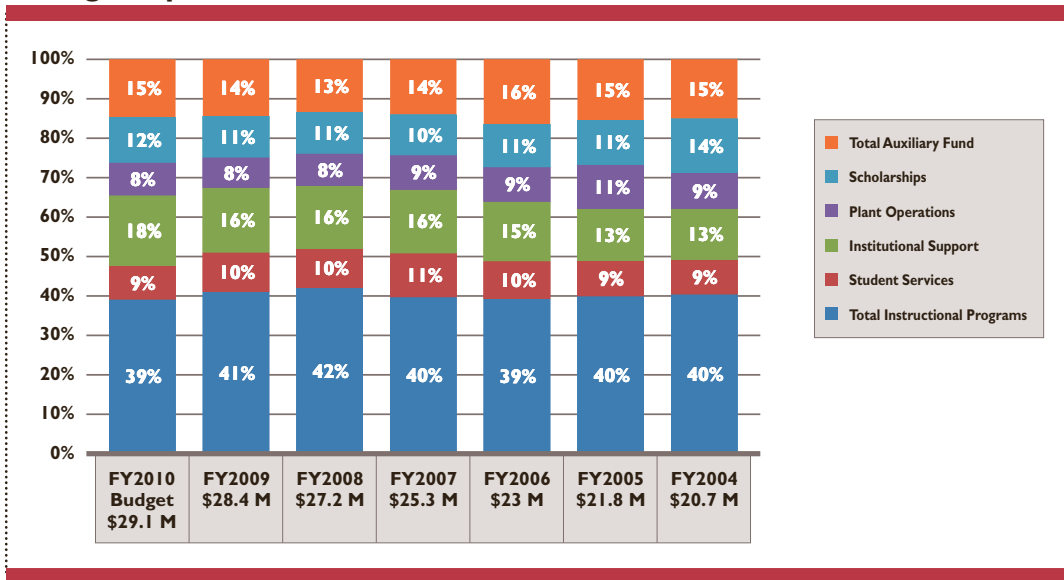
Table 2.5
College Revenues from FY 2004–FY 2010
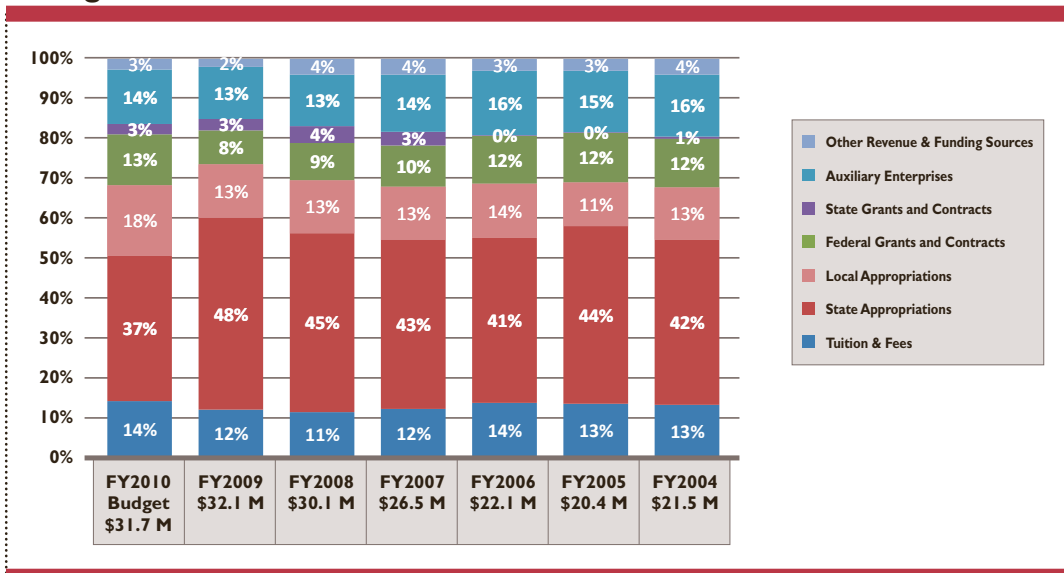
	FY2010 Budget $31.7 M	FY2009 $32.1 M	FY2008 $30.1 M	FY2007 $26.5 M	FY2006 $22.1 M	FY2005 $20.4 M	FY2004 $21.5 M
Other Revenue & Funding Sources	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%
Auxiliary Enterprises	14%	13%	13%	14%	16%	15%	16%
State Grants and Contracts	3%	3%	4%	3%	0%	0%	1%
Federal Grants and Contracts	13%	8%	9%	10%	12%	12%	12%
Local Appropriations	18%	13%	13%	13%	14%	11%	13%
State Appropriations	37%	48%	45%	43%	41%	44%	42%
Tuition & Fees	14%	12%	11%	12%	14%	13%	13%

mission focuses on "providing superior living [student services] and learning [instruction] environments," the College has continued to allocate its budget so that expenditures demonstrate the institution's priorities of student learning in and beyond the classroom, including through residence hall programming.

With state funding provided on a biennial basis, a significant percentage of the College's budget is set in advance through the funding provided to state agencies by the Legislature and Governor. Since 2003, the College has built its financial reserves to the statuary limits (8%); this provides flexibility for supporting and strengthening programs and resources for better mitigating an economic downturn. During the 2009–2010 biennium, College reserves were above the statuary limits, and excess reserves were used to fund capital projects taken from the project priority list in the *Facilities Master Plan*. It should also be noted that Northwest applies for a variety of federal and state grants and programs. In 2008, the College received $1.2 million in grant monies; in 2009, that amount was roughly $1.1 million.[19]

The Governor cut statewide community college funding for the 2009–2010 budget by 10%, and then through the redistribution of community college funds, the College had an additional decrease in State revenues of 10%. Fortunately, local appropriations and an increase in tuition offset all but $725,000 of the decrease. The College went through an open process, using the Strategic Plan as a guide to determine how best to cut the budget while minimizing the impact on student programs. The President invited constituent group representatives to a budget meeting to provide suggestions and feedback on other proposals. The College was able to reduce its budget by $600,000 without significant cuts to programs and used reserves to cover the remaining deficit.

The tax base of the state and local governments primarily comes from extracted minerals, which have recently seen a dramatic decline in prices because of the economic downturn. At best, the College expects revenues to remain flat for the next two biennia, and there is a possibility of more decreases in appropriations. The College will continue to control costs while working to maintain services to students.

Auxiliary Enterprises
The College's auxiliary enterprises operate with profit margins that allow for minor re-investment into future improvements. In 2008–2009, auxiliaries generated approximately $4.2 million in

19 See Schedule of Expenditure of Federal Awards in the Resource Room.

sales and had a profit of almost $100,000 after contributing $275,000 towards the $400,000 bond payment for the Simpson Hall addition. Auxiliary enterprises include Food Services, Residence Halls, Trapper Village Main, Trapper Village West, Bookstore, Child Care Center, Stabling, Johnson Fitness Center, Student Health, Printing Services, College Farm, Field Station Food, and Conferences/Facilities. However, while many auxiliary enterprises operate with profit margins, some operate at a loss that is covered by Northwest's optional 1 mil fund. In 2008–2009, the College contributed $94,000 to four auxiliary enterprises, and $60,000 went to support the Child Care Center, which serves Northwest College students and employees. The College believes that the Child Care program is essential for serving nontraditional students in addition to providing learning opportunities for Early Childhood Education students. The College is working to create a maintenance fund for auxiliaries in the event that state funding is lost.

Grant Funding

Northwest College has supplemented its state and district revenues through a number of short-term and long-term grants. The short-

Table 2.6
Grant Funding from FY 2004–FY 2010
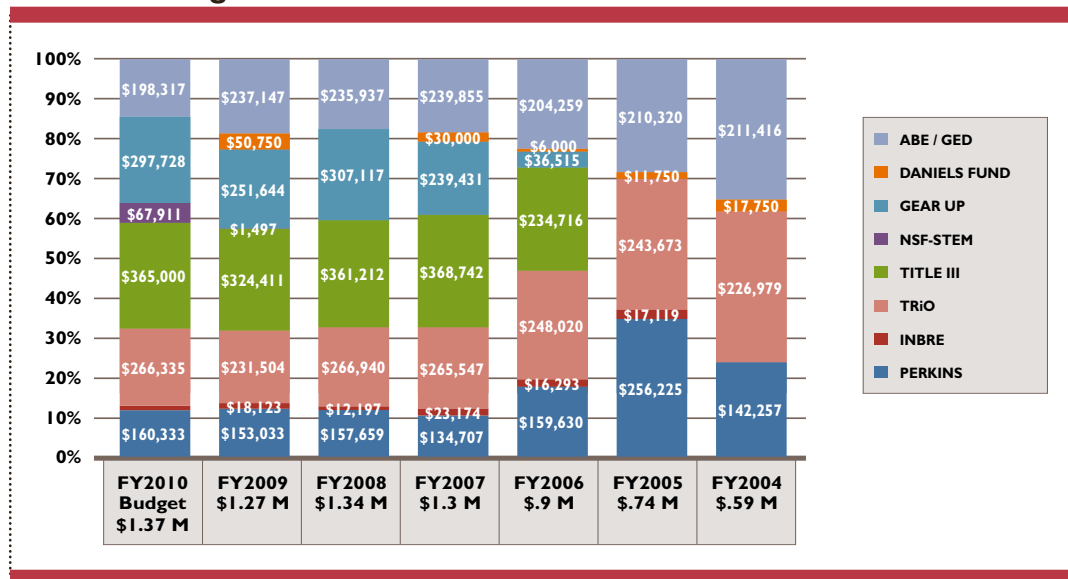
term grants have funded primarily focused projects or activities (e.g., speakers, targeted-group retention, multicultural programming). These funds have enriched the educational and cultural experiences of students, the College, and local communities. The College has benefited from a number of longer-running grants that provide significant

funding for educational equipment, innovation, and additional support for at-risk students. A brief listing of these grants is shown in Table 2.6 with a five-year total of the grant contributions from each.

In late 2009, Northwest College hired a full-time Grant Writer. By upgrading the position, NWC was able to hire an employee with significant higher education grant-writing experience to advance its work in this important area. The position is funded as a partnership between the College and the NWC Foundation to bring about greater coordination in resource development activities for the College.

A new Grant Office Process has been developed with forms for idea submission and research as well as concept development planning to aid in fleshing out proposals. Northwest College invested in a Foundation Center subscription to provide online, searchable access to information on approximately 98,000 granting entities. Grants meetings are also being conducted with divisions and non-academic departments to identify potential needs that can be addressed in this manner. Discussions have also begun regarding developing some initiatives in areas where federal funding may be available (e.g., healthcare, alternative energy, etc.) so that Northwest is prepared to respond to requests for proposals that have short lead times.

NWC Foundation

One of Northwest's greatest assets is its relationship with the NWC Foundation. Northwest has an operating agreement with the Foundation, which operates to raise and manage private funds for the College's financial benefit. From December 2003 to February 2004, Leigh and Associates performed a study to assess the feasibility of a NWC Foundation initiative to undertake a $10 million campaign for scholarships, technology funds, and three building projects. The consultants conducted 43 separate interviews (31 face-to-face and 12 by telephone) with 45 individuals drawn from a cross section of alumni, friends, and community leaders. The College and Foundation gleaned information about how Northwest is perceived by key constituents, including strengths and areas for improvement. Interviewees were supportive of a campaign, and overwhelmingly selected the concept of endowments versus the idea of building projects, in part due to potential endowment matching dollars from the State of Wyoming and because there was a sense that buildings should come from state or local tax dollars. The report recommended the campaign focus on endowing scholarships and leading-edge technology with a goal of $5 million (donors could not imagine the Foundation raising $10 million). This study has guided the Foundation's fundraising work.[20]

NORTHWEST COLLEGE
FOUNDATION
TOWARD NEW VISTAS

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20 See Foundation Reports in the Resource Room.

> *"The Northwest College Foundation has had significant fund-raising success with annual cash flow to the College nearing the $1 million mark."*

In July 2004, the Foundation launched its first comprehensive fundraising campaign. The five-year effort set out with a goal to raise $6 million, primarily for endowments. The mark was met inside of three years, and the goal was raised to $8 million. Wyoming's seven community colleges were each provided with up to $4.5 million from the State of Wyoming as a 1:1 matching fund for contributions through the Wyoming Community College Endowment Challenge Program. Northwest was one of four colleges to fully match the first appropriation and receive another $2 million of incentive dollars from the State. Commitments for these funds were also fully used, and Northwest is now working with its subsequent legislative appropriations of $1.33 and $1 million. The campaign's focus areas are endowed scholarships and technology. The campaign ended 30 June 2009, having surpassed the $9 million mark.

With more than $20,000,000 held in scholarship endowments, including $7,121,995 of state matching funds, the NWC Foundation is a key funding source for Northwest's new Trapper Scholarship Program. From January 2001 to December 2009, the Foundation raised a total of $19,504,162. The Northwest College Foundation has had significant fund-raising success with annual cash flow to the College nearing the $1 million mark. Revenue for the College's scholarship program and instructional equipment dropped temporarily due to decreased return on Foundation investments. In 2008, Northwest pledged $146,000 to cover these shortfalls with an additional $220,000 from reserves to ensure a successful launch of the new Trapper Scholarship Program.[21] With improved economic conditions, Foundation resources are recovering.

In terms of technology, the NWC Foundation created an endowment to address the needs of instructional programs and outfit classrooms for current student learning modes, which was identified as a top priority during campaign planning. More than $500,000 has been raised from private donors. After doubling these contributions with matching funds from the State of Wyoming, the Instructional Technology endowment holds more than $1.1 million. Since the campaign's inception, over $165,000 has been awarded to support instructional technology grants. These funds have been awarded for equipment purchases in the Photography, Biology, Performing Arts, Chemistry, Agriculture, Journalism, Culinary Arts, and Nursing programs as well as for the library.

Human Resources

Northwest uses its human resources effectively. Recruiting and retaining a quality workforce is imperative to the College, which is improving its evaluation

21 See *NWC Foundation Plan* in the Resource Room.

process by standardizing forms and timelines and by requiring annual professional development planning sessions with each employee.

Effective Staffing and Competitive Salaries

Northwest spends approximately 70–72% of its operating budget on personnel, which is consistent with other Wyoming community colleges although instructional costs are slightly higher than those of other colleges. Currently, the state's Administrative Services Vice Presidents are working with the Wyoming Community College Commission to evaluate how this value is calculated to ensure that all colleges are using consistent data. Based on the new 2009 allocation model, Northwest will need to reduce costs for instruction, instructional support, and student support services to bring FTE costs closer to the state average.

A compensation study was conducted in 2007–2008 to provide guidelines and a structured system for determining compensation of non-faculty staff. Each non-faculty constituency group requested that the College utilize an unbiased consultant to conduct a survey of college positions and recommend a compensation system. Employees, supervisors, and area vice presidents all had a role in developing job descriptions. The Steering Committee, which included a representative from all affected constituency groups, selected the decision-banding method from several different methods, which was approved by the President and the President's Advisory Council. Fox Lawson, an external consulting firm, submitted a first draft that was reviewed by the Steering Committee, supervisors, and the appropriate vice president. Two separate appeal processes have attempted to ensure proper band placement for all employees. The first appeal process was done through Fox Lawson; the President's Advisory Council elected to have a second appeal process, which the Council oversaw with the President making the final decision. Eight employees were granted title changes based on appeals while 10 employees had their requested band placement granted based on appeals.

Because of legislative allocations in 2008, on average, faculty received up to a 20% raise in 2008; classified staff received an 18% raise, and professional staff and administrators received 10%, bringing average salary levels to 107% of mid-point of the salary range for non-faculty employees.22 These increases make the College more competitive in terms of regional comparative data. Increased compensation dollars

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22 See Northwest College FY 2010 Salary Structure in the Resource Room.

> *"These [salary] increases make the College more competitive in terms of regional comparative data."*

are expected not only to bolster employee recruiting but also aid with retention although Northwest's retention data indicates that it is better than many Wyoming institutions of higher learning and well above the national average in terms of employee retention. From FY 2003–2007, Northwest saw a turnover of 8.25%; for Wyoming colleges and the University, that number was 11.78%, and the national average was 22.96%.[23] The College has indicated its commitment to maintaining current salary levels, and if possible, small salary increases, even during the economic downturn.

Succession Planning

The College is anticipating a significant number of retirements in senior positions. As 2009 data indicates, over 30% of Northwest College full-time employees are over 55. (See Table 2.7.) Some 43% of faculty are over 55, 31% of administrative staff, 23% of professional staff, and 27% of classified staff.

Although succession planning is listed as a goal in the Strategic Plan, Northwest College cannot promote individuals into significantly different positions than they hold because policies require that a competitive search be conducted for any open position. However, Northwest College is implementing a new evaluation system that is designed to facilitate employee communication of short- and long-term career goals. This process will assist any employee wishing to acquire needed skills to be a better candidate for other jobs. Professional development opportunities continue to be available despite budget reductions. (See Criteria Three and Four for discussion of professional development opportunities.)

23 See Wyoming Turnover Data in the Resource Room.

Table 2.7

Northwest College Full-time Employee Population by Age and Constituency Group in 2009

CONSTITUENCY GROUP	AGE RANGE	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL IN GROUP
Administrative	<36	2	13%
	36–40	1	6%
	41–45	2	13%
	46–50	3	19%
	51–55	3	19%
	>55	5	31%
Administrative TOTAL		16	100%
Professional	<36	20	27%
	36–40	7	9%
	41–45	5	7%
	46–50	12	16%
	51–55	14	19%
	>55	17	23%
Professional TOTAL		75	100%
Classified	<36	5	8%
	36–40	7	11%
	41–45	11	18%
	46–50	11	18%
	51–55	11	18%
	>55	17	27%
Classified TOTAL		62	100%
Faculty	<36	9	11%
	36–40	10	12%
	41–45	6	7%
	46–50	13	15%
	51–55	10	12%
	>55	36	43%
Faculty TOTAL		84	100%
EMPLOYEE TOTAL		237	

Source: Human Resources Office

Northwest intentionally develops its human resources to meet future changes. The College does this by creating new positions and reallocating existing positions to provide support for planning and operations. Although Northwest has seen many changes since its 2001 accreditation, the following new positions have

had a significant impact on planning/resource development/allocation: Human Resources Director; Director of Finance; Full-time Grant Writer; and Institutional Researcher. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of faculty changes.)

Facilities

Northwest's history of financial resource development and investment documents a forward-looking concern for ensuring educational quality, and one area of note is the College's development of its facilities. Northwest is proud of its physical plant, which is comprised of 57 buildings located on 124 acres. The College also has the Mickelson Field Station, located some 50 miles west of Powell, as well as the Cody Center in Cody and classrooms in Worland. According to a 2007 *Validation of Statewide Resource Study*, prepared by the Wyoming Community College Commission, Northwest has 695,389 gross square feet in its physical plant, making it second only to Casper College in terms of building square footage.[24]

Guiding the College's physical development are two plans: *Facilities Master Plan* and *The Facility Condition Assessment Survey/Plan* conducted by CTA Associates in 2002.[25] The assessment project centered around inspecting 21 major buildings on campus, evaluating their condition, and pointing to deficiencies that would require repair as part of upgrading or keeping the buildings in good working order. The buildings were examined from architectural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical standpoints. A second element of the report was an energy study that examined existing energy use and systems and identified potential energy projects. The Vice President for Administrative Affairs is taking the lead on a planned energy audit to increase campus efficiency. It should also be noted that Northwest was the first "Disaster Resistant University" in Wyoming, a designation granted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Overall, campus buildings are well maintained. In 2004–2005, the State began giving community colleges major maintenance money, which was distributed by a formula. Northwest began receiving $800,000–$1.1 million annually, depending on state allocations. (Prior to receiving those dollars, all major maintenance money came from locally generated funds.) Since 2004, Northwest has spent $7.8 million on maintenance, remodeling, and renovations. This money has allowed Northwest to address the backlog of projects for campus buildings, including addressing some of the building deficiencies noted in *The Facility Condition Assessment Survey/Plan*:

- Roof membrane replacements on seven buildings
- Electrical panel breakers installation
- Fire alarm and sprinkler systems installation in all residence halls.
- Emergency lighting installation

24 See *Validation of Statewide Resource Study* in the Resource Room.
25 See *The Facility Condition Assessment Survey/Plan* in the Resource Room.

- HVAC mechanical equipment installation in the Fagerberg Building

- Mechanical systems reinforcement for the computer server room

- Boiler installation in the Nelson Performing Arts Building and Colter Hall

- Significant remodeling in Lewis and Clark, Colter, Cody, and Ashley Halls to update rooms, lounges, and bathroom facilities

In terms of classroom remodeling projects that address growth in program areas like Photography and Nursing, the College dealt with space needs by remodeling parts of buildings to create a new digital photo lab and a nursing laboratory classroom, special simulation nursing labs, and an improved lecture hall (FAB 70) in addition to adding work stations to the Drafting Lab. Renovations to Hinckley Library created additional group study space. Northwest has invested the following amounts in building renovations:

- Nursing Building (2009): $203,000

- Library Expansion (2010): $2.3 million

- Creation of Nelson Performing Arts Recording Studio (2010): $800,000

- New Plant and Soils Lab (2010): $250,000

- Redesign of Fagerberg Building, Room 70 (2005): $55,000

- Equine Barn Replacement (2004): $250,000

- Athletic Fields Rebuilding (2010): $350,000

Additional investments in new or renovated facilities and physical resources include the following:

- **Outreach Centers**—Northwest College contracted for expanded space in Cody and redesigned its delivery in Worland. The new Cody space has allowed for additional course offerings and increased enrollment. (See Criterion Five for a discussion of outreach.)

- **Motor Pool Replacements**—In 2009, the College motor pool reported that student activities, teams, and employees traveled some 243,000 miles. After having some difficulties with travel, Northwest has invested a good deal of money into updating its motor pool. In an average year, Northwest spends between $250,000–$300,000 on travel. The motor pool budget for 2010 is $200,000 with an additional $100,000 budgeted for vehicle

replacement. This is expensive but necessary given the College's physical location, emphasis on learning outside the classroom, and the need for student and employee safety. For general use by faculty and staff for off-campus travel, the College has three buses, six vans, and nine cars. This does not include vehicles dedicated to specific tasks (e.g., maintenance). Several years ago the College made a significant policy change to increase faculty, staff, and college group accessibility to the fleet. Mileage charges to those using the vehicles were dropped; instead, costs were absorbed in the motor pool budget.

CORE COMPONENT—2C: *Northwest College's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.*

Northwest demonstrates that its evaluation processes provide evidence that its performance meets its stated expectations for institutional effectiveness. At annual planning retreats held from 2002–2007, the major administrative areas reported on progress related to past priorities and goals. After review at planning meetings, goals were either declared completed and removed from the next strategic plan iteration or verified/refined as a continuing priority for the future. Since the arrival of President Prestwich, a more formal process of documenting progress has occurred with *The Implementation and Tracking Plan*.

The College has improved its maintenance of effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using organizational information in addition to creating appropriate feedback loops. Northwest lost its institutional researcher in 2000. After that, data gathering became a distributed set of tasks with no centralized oversight or systematic usage. Institutional data gathering focused primarily on meeting off-campus reporting (e.g., Wyoming Core Indicator Report for the Legislature; IPEDS; Mountain States Report). The Office of Academic Affairs has reported and used enrollment and faculty load data for course and program planning and resource allocation. The College's systematic collection and use of data saw significant improvement with the hiring of an institutional researcher in March 2009 and the creation of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee in the summer of 2009. This Committee and the Institutional Researcher work together to assess the quality of currently available data and needs for additional data; use data for planning and decision making; capitalize on multiple college perspectives to analyze available data; and provide institutional effectiveness information to the College, community, and other constituencies. However, the College's use of appropriate data and feedback loops has been uneven with data often becoming "siloed."

Northwest conducts periodic reviews of academic and administrative subunits to contribute to organizational improvement. Academic departments undergo a

formal Program Review approximately every five years in addition to annually reviewing academic and tracking program-specific student learning outcomes. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of academic assessment.)[26] In 2007–2008, all units at the College established written learning outcomes. These outcomes were to be assessed yearly as all employees consider ways in which to improve their contributions to student learning. This process needs more systematic oversight, support, and use for long-term planning. Some units have closed the loop better than others.

The College works to provide adequate support for its evaluation and assessment processes. Northwest has purchased WEAVE software to track and monitor annual academic program-specific outcomes. Title III has dedicated resources to student data tracking with a focus on student progress, learning outcomes assessment, and basic skills program development; however, these funds will disappear at the grant's end. The Office of Academic Affairs has a small assessment budget that has not grown since 2001.

CORE COMPONENT—2D: *All levels of planning align with Northwest College's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.*

Coordinated planning processes center on the mission documents that define Northwest's vision, values, goals, and strategic priorities. Although the College's planning process may have varied since 2001, given changes in presidential leadership, the basic elements have remained the same, and the mission has continued to serve as the institution's guiding document.

The College takes steps to show evidence of its planning and implementation. Monthly reports from area vice presidents to the Board of Trustees show accomplishments in various areas; starting in 2008, these reports were categorized by strategic priority. The addition of a Finance Director has enhanced Northwest's ability to begin building a system of data sharing, so the budget can more clearly support the Strategic Plan. The Board of Trustees and College Council receive detailed quarterly budget reports.

Northwest's planning processes involve internal constituents and, when appropriate, external constituents. The following list provides examples of those involved in planning:

- **College Council**—The Strategic Plan, major initiatives associated with it, and budget updates are presented to College Council.

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26 See Program Reviews and Assessment Reports in the Resource Room.

Meeting agendas and minutes are shared with all employees. Constituency group members are also encouraged to communicate with and gather input from those they represent.[27]

- **President's Advisory Council**—Made up of the College's President and four Vice Presidents, the President's Advisory Council meets to advise the President.[28]

- **Academic Advisory Council**—Although the Academic Advisory Council has traditionally been involved in institutional planning, increasingly, this role is restricted to the academic area. Furthermore, initiatives are increasingly generated at the President's Advisory Council level with the Academic Advisory Council's role limited to discussing implementation, a shift many chairs and faculty have found frustrating.[29]

- **Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT)**—The Team meets bimonthly to determine critical student programming needs and serves as an advisory team to the Vice President for Student Affairs. During the 2008–2009 year, SALT met jointly with the Academic Advisory Committee to discuss issues impacting students. This collaborative meeting has strengthened ties between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

- **Web Management Committee**—The Web Management Committee provides overall direction for the College's Web presence. Specific committee responsibilities are to develop and evaluate annual website development priorities; develop major policy and other documents which ensure a first-rate Web presence; report major Web developments to their respective units; and work with the Webmaster to monitor development, technical, staffing, promotional and other trends as they relate to Northwest's site.[30]

- **Enrollment Advisory Committee**—The Enrollment Advisory Committee is a college-wide, cross-functional committee that reviews and helps establish the direction of recruitment and retention at the College. This committee assists the Vice President for Student Affairs in developing and monitoring *The Enrollment Management Plan*.[31]

- **Integrated Communications Committee**—Cross-functional membership of this committee includes major administrative offices that deal directly in communications as well as three vice

27 See College Council minutes in the Resource Room.
28 See President's Advisory Council minutes in the Resource Room.
29 See Academic Advisory Council minutes in the Resource Room.
30 See Web Management Committee minutes in the Resource Room.
31 See Enrollment Advisory Committee minutes in the Resource Room.

presidents who have the decision-making authority to integrate the Committee's initiatives. The Committee's goal is to achieve high quality, clear, consistent communications that reflect the College's mission and vision statements as well as its enduring values. The Committee's focus is on strategy implementation rather than on policy development; therefore, its composition is not intended to be constituency-based. Depending upon the nature of specific agenda items, non-members are invited to join meetings from time to time to assist with projects.[32]

- **Curriculum Committee**—This committee oversees general education and all-college outcomes requirements in addition to other curriculum changes. (See Criteria Three and Four for an extended discussion.)[33]

External feedback comes from a range of sources, including market research surveys, the Board of Trustees, the Foundation and Alumni Boards, various academic advisory boards, and local business leaders.

Final Thoughts and Future Plans

Although Northwest College got off to a good start in making changes and improvements to its planning process and procedure after the 2001 accreditation review, the middle of the decade saw the process deteriorate. The past two years have seen the process come back to life with new connections being made and new processes being established.

The year 2008 serves as the baseline year for the *2008–2010 Strategic Plan* which has been extended through 2011. The Strategic Plan is now tracked using the *Implementation and Tracking Plan*. This information has been distributed to all college employees and reviewed by College Council as the College starts to prepare next year's budget. An Institutional Effectiveness Committee was convened in Fall 2009 with an initial purpose of helping the Institutional Researcher and the administration evaluate and analyze the quality of the data. Although a definitive process has not been finalized, a process is evolving.

32 See Integrated Communication Committee minutes in the Resource Room.
33 See Curriculum Committee minutes in the Resource Room.

Criterion Three

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Northwest College
WYOMING

Criterion Three:
Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Criterion Three Statement: The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrate it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Northwest College Prides Itself on

- Success in promoting student learning in and beyond the classroom.

- Its multi-level, faculty-driven assessment program.

- A highly credentialed, full-time faculty with significant professional development opportunities.

- Supporting student access, learning, and career success through the adoption of appropriate technologies.

- Strong academic support, retention success, and broad transfer options.

Northwest College Challenges Itself to

- Share and use data more broadly to increase its impact at the program and institution levels.

- Continue building a campus-wide culture of assessment that extends beyond instruction.

- Continue innovation in support of student learning despite uncertain funding.

- Continue to build staffing to support the delivery of high quality distance education.

Northwest College: Who We Are

Northwest College takes pride in the many ways it facilitates student learning. Here's one example of a program that has responded to student needs and taken advantage of technology to expand student learning and career preparation.

In the past decade, the Northwest College journalism program has grown from three classes to four full degree programs. Enrollments and the number of class offerings have also increased. In fall 2008, a second faculty position was added.

The Northwest Trail, *the student newspaper, has shifted in 1998 from an irregular production schedule to a regular weekly publication of typically 27 issues annually during the academic year. The paper and individual students*

have placed in national Associated Collegiate Press competitions. Former Trail *staff members regularly talk about how the experience of working on a student newspaper has changed their lives and given them more hands-on experience than peers who started at four-year institutions. As Jen Lynn, the 1999–2000* Trail *Editor explains. "Opportunities, intensity, and experience are what I got in the Northwest College Journalism program. In conjunction with career-oriented classes and up-to-date technology, I had the ability to dive into the weekly newspaper,* The Northwest Trail, *[which] provided challenges that have led me to be a more critical thinker, a better problem-solver and to tweak leadership skills while engrossed in real-life situations. There is no doubt that the journalism program at NWC has been the most valuable endeavor that I have embarked on for my future."*

In 2000, Northwest added webcasting classes to produce live and recorded audio and video programming via the Web, which allows parents and friends around the world to follow student activities. Students now produce programming not only for the Web but also for NWC-TV, a cable television channel delivered on three local cable systems. The diverse range of coverage and experiential learning offered by the broadcast program are unique in the region. Additionally, in July 2009, Northwest College was approved for a non-commercial FM radio license. Now pending are the construction activities so that the College can add a new radio station to student learning tools. (College funds and the Title III grant have contributed to station development.)

Students began producing an annual student movie in 2004 with a premiere night that draws standing-room-only crowds. A statewide news magazine launched during the spring semester of 2009.

The department developed a three-course certificate to allow high school teachers to obtain endorsements from the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board. These courses are delivered online to enhance access. Participants in the journalism certification program say that the program has made it possible for them to continue in their jobs.

In spring 2009, the program has expanded to include new degree programs in film, radio, and television.

Assessment at Northwest College: 2001–2010

Student learning is at the heart of everything Northwest College does. As articulated in the mission, "Through exceptional, dynamic living and learning environments, Northwest College dedicates itself to individual student achievement, diversity, global citizenship, and community vitality."

> *"Faculty also use multiple direct and indirect measures of assessing student learning, that include but are not limited to, writing assignments, exams and quizzes, portfolio and project evaluation, and skills tests."*

In 2001, the North Central visiting team observed, "[T]he institution needs to fulfill more aggressively the requirements of NCA for assessment." At that time, North Central requested that the College update its 1995 assessment plan and required the submission of a revised assessment plan by 30 June 2002. Northwest College began immediate development of a four-level learning outcomes assessment plan, which was described in a monitoring report submitted in September 2005.[1] *The Northwest College Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan* was created through collaboration with faculty across campus and provides a method for the College to continue to increase student benefits from instruction.

Northwest's qualified faculty develop, review, and approve curricular content and strategies for instruction. Faculty also use multiple direct and indirect measures of assessing student learning that include but are not limited to writing assignments, exams and quizzes, portfolio and project evaluation, and skills tests. Each division holds monthly meetings during the academic year in which curricular and campus issues are discussed, including formal course approval. The curriculum approval process requires faculty to provide student learning outcomes for new courses, certificates, and degrees.

From the division, proposed departmental and divisional curricular work moves to the Curriculum Committee, which is comprised of six faculty, one from each academic division, two students, and six committee liaisons. This committee reviews and provides approval of new courses and programs, conducts periodic evaluations of the general education curriculum, and leads all-college outcomes revisions and data analysis. Collaboration between the faculty and academic administration is positive and productive.

New degrees and certificates are also ultimately approved by the College President, the Board of Trustees, and the Wyoming Community College Commission. In 2007, the Board of Trustees inserted itself into the curriculum approval process for adding and closing degree and certificate programs before these proposals are sent for review by the three-tier, state-wide community college program approval process (Wyoming Academic Vice Presidents' Academic Affairs Council, the Presidents' Executive Council, and the Wyoming Community College Commission). While potentially raising faculty governance issues, this new role of the Board is consistent with procedures at a number of other Wyoming community colleges. Procedurally, this change has resulted in positive discussions, only small delays in program approvals, and no over-riding of faculty program decisions.

Access to reliable and valid student-tracking data plagued the College for years. Until the hiring of an Institutional Researcher in March 2009, Title III part-time, grant-funded positions, and the Registrar have been a primary source of student-tracking data for program reviews and program improvement. Additionally, in 2007, WEAVE, a learning outcomes-tracking software system, was

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1   See *The Northwest College Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan* in the Resource Room.

phased into the program learning outcomes data management process with the goal of making outcomes assessment results more accessible.

Northwest embraced assessment as a college-wide effort beginning in 2007 when all units were asked to identify the student learning outcomes achieved through their work. This initial step of identifying learning outcomes was accomplished in the period of one year through the collaborative efforts of the administration and key faculty leaders. The initial timeline for the project called for the first Unit Outcome Reports to be submitted in fall of 2008. Given major external transitions at the state level (e.g., redefinition of community colleges, funding, and the Wyoming Community College Commission) and major internal transitions (e.g., presidential transitions) all units of the College did not meet this timeline. As with the initial adoption of assessment materials in the academic areas, other units on campus have adapted assessment with varying degrees of enthusiasm, and issues with closing the loop have been exacerbated by a decentralized model for data collection. However, these problems are being addressed.

In the spring of 2009, under the leadership of President Prestwich, what had been the Assessment Committee evolved into the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, which is chaired by the President and charged with identifying data requests and needs, determining the audience for data, and developing timelines for data distribution. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee will also develop a new timeline for implementation of institutional assessment and will oversee unit compliance.

> **CORE COMPONENT—3A:** *Northwest College's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.*

Northwest is a two-year, open admissions college that clearly articulates its student-learning outcomes for Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees as well as all certificates. The all-college outcomes and general education outcomes are available in the *Northwest College Catalog* and on the college website. In addition, each syllabus includes expected course-specific learning outcomes defined by the course instructor and created in collaboration with other departmental faculty and program-specific student learning outcomes.[2]

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2 See course syllabi in the Resource Room.

> *"The College's student learning assessment plan, led by faculty and adopted in 2001, resulted in identification and approval of learning outcomes at four levels: course, program, general education, and all-college."*

Northwest assesses student learning at multiple levels. The College's student learning assessment plan, led by faculty and adopted in 2001, resulted in identification and approval of learning outcomes at four levels: course, program, general education, and all-college.

Course-level Assessment

Faculty provide course-level student learning outcomes on each course syllabus. New course proposals include a copy of the planned syllabus and must specify course-specific outcomes and assessment methods. Divisions, the Curriculum Committee, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs or Dean of Student Learning and Academic Support review these drafts and provide suggestions for improvement before a new class is offered. All course syllabi are available on the College's website.[3]

Program-specific Assessment

At the program level, faculty in each instructional program have developed and updated program-specific outcomes. These outcomes and methods of assessment are shared with students through course syllabi, program materials, and academic websites. Changes in courses, teaching methods, and facilities are made in response to these assessments of student performance compiled from program-required courses, particularly capstone courses, and faculty conversations about student performance.

Each year since 2005, program faculty have reviewed student performance data relative to program-specific outcomes and reported their use of direct and indirect measures as well as their findings in Program-specific Learning Outcomes Assessments Reports.[4] These reports discuss actions taken and/or planned to improve student mastery of expected program-specific outcomes. In 2007–2008, the reports provided the opportunity for programs to update their student learning outcomes. Results of student outcomes assessment are also included in Program Reviews completed by each program at approximately five-year intervals.[5] Then, Division Chairs and the Academic Advisory Council analyze and update learning assessment reporting and use of data for program improvement and, in some cases, program closure.

General Education Assessment

Facilitating a college-wide, faculty-shaped process, the Curriculum Committee provided leadership for the development of general education outcomes to replace more general philosophy statements for each of the general education categories. A multi-year outcomes development and assessment plan allowed for broad faculty discussion

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3   See course syllabi in the Resource Room.
4   See Program-specific Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports in the Resource Room.
5   See Program Reviews in the Resource Room.

and contributions in shaping these student learning outcomes. Small faculty-staff work groups initiated discussions for each category of general education:

- Wellness

- English

- Lab Science

- Social Sciences

- Comparative Culture Awareness

- Humanities

- Mathematics

- Visual and Performing Arts

- American & Wyoming Government

Then faculty input was provided at the division level, with the Curriculum Committee granting final approval of the outcomes.

Following this process, all general education courses were reviewed by the Curriculum Committee in relation to the new general education outcomes. Faculty provided revised syllabi and documentation explaining how the course helps students meet appropriate outcomes. Most courses successfully met the new general education outcome requirements. (See Criterion Four for a discussion of general education at Northwest College.) Assessment of these cumulative outcomes is measured as part of the integrative all-college outcomes assessed in capstone courses.

All-college Outcomes Assessment

All-college outcomes were developed by faculty and approved through the Curriculum Committee. Again, broad faculty input was key to agreement on both the outcomes and the assessment method. The final integrative outcomes were intended to address the integration of general education and program-specific outcomes. The all-college outcomes include

- Analysis

- Oral Communication

- Information & Technology Literacy

- Multiple Points of View

- Writing

> *"Preliminary data suggest that the College's assessment plan is working in terms of measuring and improving student learning and leading to interventions that further enhance learning."*

Student success with the all-college outcomes is measured through student performance in a required capstone course, the cornerstone of Northwest's assessment efforts. In capstone courses, which are a graduation requirement, students demonstrate and apply their knowledge of their field of study while demonstrating a mastery of the all-college outcomes. Faculty, staff, and evaluators from outside the institution provide feedback to students.

The 2001 North Central visiting team noted two concerns about the capstone. The first dealt with a perceived lack of faculty support for capstones. However, capstones were changed after that review, and the College now has a study showing broad faculty support for the new form of capstones because the classes focus on all-college outcomes and provide an additional chance to help students build and demonstrate these skills.[6] Moreover, the data about student weaknesses have helped the College design and implement interventions to improve student performance (e.g., Writing Center, Presentation Lab). North Central's second concern dealt with transferability of capstone courses. With this in mind, academic divisions, the Curriculum Committee, and the Academic Advisory Council examined the use of capstone classes as an assessment tool. These groups determined that many capstone courses (e.g., "Differential Equations," "Farm and Ranch Management") did transfer as general education courses. In addition, informal feedback from Northwest College graduates suggests that the successful completion of capstone requirements have positioned students well for meeting expectations at transfer institutions.

Capstone course feedback provided on student performance has been supplemented by All-college Outcomes Studies. These independent, rubrics-guided research studies are led by faculty and examine student capstone papers and taped presentations for evidence of success with all of the all-college outcomes. (See Appendices 3.1, 2007 Capstone Paper Assessment Report; 3.2, 2009 Capstone Paper Assessment Report; 3.3, 2007 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone; and 3.4, 2009 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone.)

Preliminary data suggest that the College's assessment plan is working in terms of measuring and improving student learning and leading to interventions that further enhance learning.

Although Northwest has shown significant progress in terms of making assessment results more widely available to appropriate constituencies, including students themselves, this is an area in which the College continues to work. Data on student placement and academic progress are not widely shared with students, prospective students, or the campus. Quality of student tracking was flagged as

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6   See Review of Summary of Capstone Faculty Survey — 2008–09 in the Resource Room.

a significant institutional problem in 2001 and became one of the core components of a Title III grant. Better data are now being gathered and will be shared through workshops and committee memberships. These data will soon be available through online queries so that faculty and staff can access the information independently, though more training is needed to ensure access and accurate interpretation of this information. In addition, new state-level initiatives have helped the College and its post-graduate student tracking, starting in Fall 2009.

Northwest integrates into its assessment of student learning the data reported for purposes of external accountability. In addition to outside evaluations conducted by national and state accrediting bodies (e.g., Music and Nursing), the College provides data on the community college core indicators required by the Wyoming Legislature:

- Graduation rates

- Passage on licensing tests

- Transfer rates

- Placement rates

- Instructional data

- Specialized testing done by nationally recognized certification exams[7]

However, these data have not been shared broadly on campus. The Institutional Researcher has greatly increased access to and accuracy of student-progress data. The Wyoming Community College Commission staff have also begun to share community college data more systematically and broadly.

Northwest College extends its use of assessment through all of its educational offerings, including both credit and non-credit certificate programs. All academic courses must have student outcomes and assessment strategies as do all credit and non-credit certificate programs. Proposals for credit certificate programs are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and must be approved at the state level. Workforce Development/non-credit certificate programs also have specified student-learning outcomes and assessment. Workforce Development evaluates all training programs and non-credit training certificates, and the Powell Valley Community Education Program has all participants complete an evaluation. However, the results of these program evaluations are not shared with the college community, which remains largely

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7   See *Wyoming Community Colleges Annual Performance Reports: Core Indicators of Effectiveness* in the
    Resource Room.

> *"The fact that Northwest relies primarily on a full-time faculty is one of its greatest strengths given that full-time faculty are available throughout the day to support students and build collaborative working relationships with student support staff."*

uninformed about the number of people served, program quality, and the success of these non-credit programs. The Board of Trustees does receive annual or semi-annual reports on Workforce Training participation.

CORE COMPONENT—3B: *Northwest College values and supports effective teaching.*

Northwest is committed to having a core of highly-credentialed, full-time faculty. The fact that Northwest relies primarily on a full-time faculty is one of its greatest strengths given that full-time faculty are available throughout the day to support students and build collaborative working relationships with student support staff. (It should be noted that finding qualified adjuncts can be challenging given Northwest's rural location and small population.) These positive connections increase student referrals and support the College's strong retention rate. Table 3.1 gives a breakdown of full-time faculty academic degrees.

Table 3.1
Academic Degrees of Full-time Faculty

DEGREE	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10
Doctorate	20	22	23	21	19	19	22	21
Other Terminal Degree (JD, MFA)	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	7
Master's	44	42	45	44	48	42	42	41
Bachelor's	4	5	2	6	6	9	9	10
None	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	76	77	78	79	81	78	82	80

Source: Human Resources   *IR: 5/3/2010*

Northwest College supports professional development to facilitate teaching suited to changing content, varied environments, and new delivery modalities. Professional development funds support attendance at meetings, conferences, workshops, and on-campus professional development opportunities. In its 2001 report, the North Central visiting team pointed to concerns over professional development, writing, "While the team believes that quality instruction is taking place, it also believes that a high level of institutional support for faculty professional development is needed to ensure acquisition of new pedagogical skills and currency in the various teaching fields." Northwest took this feedback seriously and added significant funds for faculty professional development. Prior to 2006, funding had been level at $12,000; 2006 saw a 250% increase, resulting in a yearly allocation of $42,000 for professional development and articulation travel.

This amount is supplemented by Title III and Perkins funds.

Primary professional development funding sources are administered through the Office of Academic Affairs; Academic Divisions; the Faculty Development and Morale Committee; and other grant funds (e.g., Title III, Perkins, IN-BRE). Approximately 1/3 to 1/2 of faculty take advantage of the professional development funds available through divisions. Available college funding for professional development is typically utilized each year, along with some $20,000 from grants.

Office of Academic Affairs

The Office of Academic Affairs has several roles in terms of providing professional development funds:

- It distributes a pool of $42,000 to divisions based on the number of full-time faculty.

- It disburses specific articulation funds to cover travel to state-wide higher education curriculum and program development meetings.

- It coordinates on-campus professional development opportunities provided by campus faculty and staff as well as by national consultants. Examples include new faculty orientation, advising workshops, and workshops on new instructional approaches.

- It supervises grant funds and implements processes and priorities for use of grant funds for professional development.

In addition, the Office of Academic Affairs routinely collaborates with other parts of campus to provide professional development opportunities. For example, the Office of Extended Campus and Workforce Training and the Vice President for Academic Affairs have contributed to professional development for faculty, such as Adjunct Faculty Orientation and stipends for faculty who learn to deliver courses over interactive television or the Internet. Several offices and grant projects collaborated to bring the nationally acclaimed OnCourse instructional development workshop to campus in 2008 and 2009.

Academic Divisions

The Office of Academic Affairs distributes professional development funds to each division on a per-faculty basis, providing divisions with funds to support travel to professional meetings. Divisions distribute these monies based on divisional decision-making processes. Faculty provide the Division Chair and Vice President for Academic Affairs with a report about these professional development experiences. Table 3.2 provides information on divisionally allocated professional development funds.

> *"Northwest has two primary professional development grant funding sources: A Title III grant and Perkins funding."*

Table 3.2
Distribution of Full-time Faculty Development Funds

ACADEMIC YEAR	MONEY AVAILABLE	TOTAL NUMBER OF FACULTY	NUMBER OF FACULTY PARTICIPATING	RANGE SPENT PER PARTICIPATING FACULTY MEMBER	
				LOW	HIGH
2004–2005	$12,000	78	11	$308	$1,100
2005–2006	$12,000	79	16	$112	$1,400
2006–2007	$42,000	81	37	$65	$2,600
2007–2008	$42,000	78	35	$112	$3,000
2008–2009	$42,000	82	38	$150	$2,700

Faculty Development and Morale Committee

Institutional money is allotted to the Faculty Development and Morale Committee (FDMC), a committee elected through the Faculty Organization. The committee is charged to award grants to faculty for professional development and to sponsor on-campus professional development opportunities. In 2001, the Faculty Development and Morale Committee had $8,200 for its use; since 2002, that amount has increased to $8,400 per year.

This committee also sponsored the Yellowstone Master Teacher Seminar from 2006–2008 and helped defray costs of Northwest College faculty involvement in this regional event. Faculty Development and Morale Committee workshops have targeted a number of instructional issues, such as different learning styles, ADA accommodations, assessment, and the use of grading feedback/rubrics.

Grant Funds

Northwest has two primary professional development grant funding sources: A Title III grant and Perkins funding. These grants have provided funding for faculty to attend conferences related to developmental education, technical education, integrated learning, interactive teaching methods, and educational advances in particular fields. Grant monies have also supported on-campus professional development. Topics for these programs have often grown out of student learning assessment results (e.g., writing-across-the-curriculum; speaking-across-the-curriculum; integrating general education skills into technical curricula; and service learning).

Title III

The Title III grant, directed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, must be used for identified grant targets designed to enhance student learning and retention. This five-year grant has been a significant source of faculty professional development, providing monies for

- Faculty travel to conferences in targeted content areas (Wyoming Distance Education Consortium and specialized conferences on topics such as music technology, developmental education, and advising).

- Faculty travel to visit programs related to new initiatives and technology applications (e.g., radio programs, welding equipment applications, etc.).

- Increased faculty participation in professional-development related to developmental education (e.g., National Association of Developmental Education and related campus follow-up discussions).

- Nationally recognized consultants to help faculty increase student engagement in the classroom (e.g., OnCourse).

- Faculty workshops on using online teaching platforms to engage students and respond to ADA needs.

- Models for online student support services.

Perkins Funds

Perkins-allocated grant funding has also played a significant role in faculty professional development. These funds are appropriated through the Wyoming Department of Education from the federal government and focus on technical fields. For example, Perkins funds supported

- Specialized faculty attendance at conferences in Associate of Applied Science content areas and related topics (e.g., digital photography, business technology, applied learning).

- Technical conferences (e.g., integrated learning, internships).

- Support for developmental education improvements (e.g., National Association of Developmental Education Conference, the Developmental Math Conference).

Perkins funding has been impacted by federal reauthorization and new state interpretation of the federal law. Still, this grant is a key

professional development and program development resource in those areas targeted by the College's five-year Perkins plan.[8]

Additional Faculty Development Issues

Although Northwest has had success in terms of providing professional development opportunities for faculty, it will need to address the following challenges:

- Given the increase in travel, meal, and hotel costs, professional development budgets will need to grow if the College is to keep up the same or similar level of programming and faculty development. Finances may be inadequate for newly hired faculty who are eager to pursue professional development. While new grant initiatives will help in select fields (e.g., National Sciences Foundation grant in sciences), campus-wide needs will remain.

  As a means of trying to resolve travel and funding issues, the College has begun using webinars to provide additional professional development opportunities. Each year since 2007, the College has sponsored three to five webinars, often coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs.

- The Title III grant ends in October 2010 with a required two-year "wait out" before the College can reapply. Northwest is laying the groundwork for a new grant application.

- Northwest should consider bringing more high-quality professional development programs to campus to stretch available professional development funds.

Northwest creates an environment that encourages faculty self-assessment in addition to implementing a set of procedures to evaluate and recognize effective teaching.

Evaluation

A record of teaching excellence is the most important criterion for continued faculty employment at Northwest College. Evaluation by students is required for two courses per year for tenured faculty, and three courses per semester for untenured faculty. In addition to student evaluations, Division Chairs conduct classroom observation visits and write reports to provide faculty with additional feedback. Faculty members then discuss all evaluative materials with their Division Chairs who are also faculty. While some other colleges in the state have moved to administrators for these roles, Northwest places importance on the faculty-to-faculty

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8   See *Northwest College 5-year Perkins Plan* in the Resource Room.

relationship.

At the end of each academic year, each faculty member submits to the Vice President for Academic Affairs a Year-end Report that analyzes student evaluations, teaching, service, and professional development. These reports and other information supplied by the Division Chair and student evaluations become part of the faculty member's evaluative file. Untenured faculty with poor teaching records are mentored by Division Chairs; if adequate progress is not made, the faculty contract is terminated.

The interim review, tenure, and promotion process builds on these types of evaluations. Any faculty member standing for interim review, tenure, or promotion must submit an evaluative file that documents his or her work in terms of teaching, service, and professional development with emphasis placed on teaching. This file is reviewed by the faculty-led Rank and Tenure Committee (RATC). The Committee's written comments for those undergoing third-year interim review are targeted at helping the faculty identify any needed improvements in the three areas of evaluation; in the fifth year, faculty are reviewed for tenure, again preparing an evaluative file that is first submitted to Rank and Tenure. The committee votes to recommend for or against tenure with the Vice President for Academic Affairs conveying this information to the President who, ultimately, awards or denies tenure.

Adjunct faculty are hired to teach additional sections to accommodate student numbers, sabbaticals, and other faculty absences. Adjunct faculty teaching for the College must meet specific teaching standards. For transfer courses, adjunct faculty should have completed a master's degree in the content area or a master's degree in any area and 18 credit hours in the content area, or a bachelor's degree in the content area and 18 credit hours in the content area. The College is in the process of creating a certification class for adjunct faculty. Career/Technical Education adjunct instructors must have a bachelor's degree in the area and/ or industry certification when appropriate. In some cases, adjunct faculty are hired because of special expertise they bring to the classroom. In addition, all adjunct faculty

must be approved by the appropriate department, Division Chair, and Vice President for Academic Affairs regardless of whether they teach on campus, online, at the Centers, or in the high schools.[9] Divisions provide sample syllabi and outcomes for courses; however, adjunct faculty retain autonomy for actual instruction and final course delivery and student assessment. (Adjunct faculty do not typically participate in

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9   See Adjunct Teaching Standards in the Resource Room.

> *"The College provides services to support improved pedagogies in a number of ways, though one area of emphasis is instructional technology."*

formal college-wide assessment activities.) Adjunct faculty teaching is also evaluated by students and Division Chairs.

Recognition

Northwest readily acknowledges excellence in teaching in a number of ways that include but are not limited to the following:

- **Spring Fling:** The Vice President for Academic Affairs hosts a Spring Fling at which faculty are recognized in the following categories: tenure, promotion, professor emeritus, National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) recognition, and Master Distance Educator.

- **Project Succeed Reception**: Project Succeed, a TRiO-Student Support Services program, hosts a yearly reception to honor student accomplishments and faculty who have been selected by students. Each faculty member is recognized individually.

- **Faculty Development and Morale Committee Awards:** Every spring, the Faculty Development and Morale Committee selects one Distinguished Faculty (and when merited, one Adjunct Distinguished Faculty). The award carries recognition and provides a monetary award to this person who also acts as the Chief Marshal and faculty speaker at graduation.

- **College Outstanding Faculty Award:** The College recognizes outstanding personnel at the annual Employee Recognition Banquet. Faculty and staff nominate individuals for these awards. One each year is for the Outstanding Faculty Member.

- **Academic Advisory Council Awards:** The Academic Advisory Council has selected up to two faculty, based on teaching skills, to attend the NISOD conference. The Council also recognizes a Master Distance Educator. All awardees are recognized at the annual Employee Recognition Banquet and Spring Fling.

The College provides a different kind of recognition for graduate work and related experiences through horizontal movement on the pay scale. Faculty requesting horizontal movement prepare a professional development plan that is then reviewed by the Division Chair and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The President approves these plans because they require a contract change to reflect the salary increases that accompany successful work on the professional development plan objectives.

The College provides services to support improved pedagogies in a number of ways, though one area of emphasis is instructional technology.

Instructional Technology Program

Since 2001, Northwest has significantly expanded its use of online

learning platforms and resources to enhance student access and learning. To support this area, in 2000, a position was created, and a full-time Instructional Technology Coordinator was hired to

- Oversee planning processes for purchase and installation of instructional technology.

- Maintain instructional technology equipment.

- Oversee the Instructional Technology Center (MB 109), a resource to support faculty by providing help with digitizing and scanning materials, etc.

- Provide faculty training related to instructional technology (e.g., Blackboard CE platforms, SmartBoards, vodcasting).

- Teach workshops that focus on online curriculum development, student engagement, and accessibility for students with disabilities. In recent years the Instructional Technology Coordinator has offered a minimum of six training workshops, most of them with multiple sections to accommodate demand.
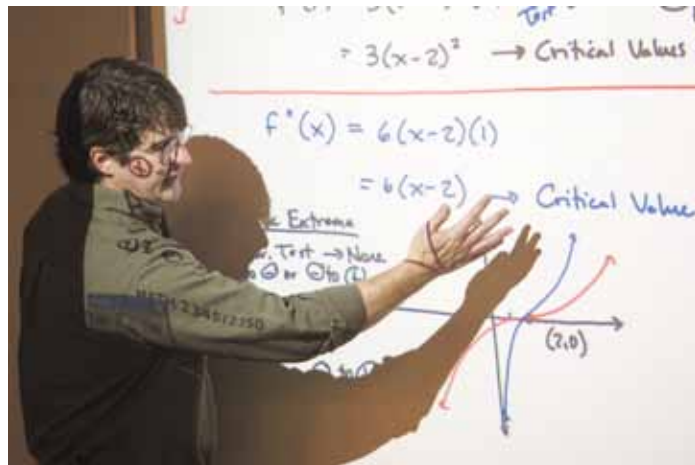
In 2007–2008, this position was supplemented through the hiring of a part-time staff person; this position was made full time in 2009–2010. The staff increase significantly enhanced technology application and faculty ability to meet more effectively the needs of distance education students.

Northwest is proud of its academic programs and demonstrated openness to innovative practices that enhance learning. Examples of innovative courses include but are not limited to the following:

Topics Courses
Faculty are able to propose new and innovative courses. With divisional approval, these courses can be taught two times before going through formal course approval (and articulation with the University of Wyoming for Associate of Arts and Associate of Science courses).

Independent Studies
The College pays a stipend to faculty for providing students with tailored independent studies. Most of these offerings provide faculty and students with the opportunity to study a topic or skill in greater depth.

> *"New funding through the Wyoming State Legislature has greatly expanded online reference materials, including an increasing number of professional journals relevant to topics taught at Northwest."*

Field Studies

The College supports learning through travel and multicultural experiences. Each year, students have multiple opportunities to significantly expand how and where they learn.

- Humanities: France every other year; in-between-year travel courses include England, Prague, and a variety of countries.

- Spanish: Language immersion, home stays, a community service in South America (typically every other year).

- Photography: China, Italy, Ecuador, Vietnam.

- Art: Spain.

- Outdoor Education: river studies and ocean kayaking, bike touring, winter survival.

- Anthropology and Archaeology: Digs in the United States and abroad.

- Agriculture: Farm tours to various states.

Northwest also has extensive co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that enhance student learning. (See Criteria Four and Five for discussions of these opportunities.)

Northwest supports faculty in keeping current with research and technological advances. The College makes professional development funds available for meeting and conference attendance, and faculty and staff participate in a variety of conferences to keep abreast of research on teaching and learning (e.g., WyDEC-sponsored conference, WCET, technology and concurrent enrollment conferences along with discipline-specific conferences).

Hinckley Library has also seen significant financial and resource increases that enhance the faculty's ability to access professional materials. New funding through the Wyoming State Legislature has greatly expanded online reference materials, including an increasing number of professional journals relevant to topics taught at Northwest. The library subscribes to 84 databases and offers other online resources, such as human anatomy virtual dissection and a native plant information network. Audio and video recordings are also available. Faculty are encouraged to submit requests to the library for acquisitions that enhance professional development and student learning, with each division allocated $1,200. Because Hinckley Library is a federal depository, it also houses state and federal documents. (See Criterion Four for an extended discussion of library resources.)

Sabbaticals provide faculty with an exceptional opportunity to advance and update their pedagogical and content-specific knowledge and skills. Although sabbaticals may be unusual at most community colleges, Northwest has seen them as an essential element of faculty professional development. At one time, the College had a specific budget to support sabbatical replacements; shortly

after the 2001 accreditation visit, the funds were rolled into the regular adjunct budget. Typically, the College is able to support up to two sabbaticals each year. In-house sabbaticals provide an opportunity to focus on a significant project through a one-semester reduced teaching load of up to nine credits of reassigned time. These in-house sabbaticals are typically awarded to allow a faculty member to have time needed to complete a thesis or dissertation. Although sabbaticals will be suspended from 2010–2012 because of budgetary concerns, the College is committed to supporting this valuable professional development resource.

Reassigned time can also be awarded to faculty for significant program-development options that require research into best practices in pedagogy and the specific field (e.g., Nursing and Drafting) to support learning of new technologies for teaching students or to build new program components.

Northwest has a highly active faculty who actively participate in a wide range of professional organizations. Also worth noting is the College's very active Wyoming Education Association chapter, the second largest in the state's higher education system. The WEA provides learning opportunities for faculty and is a significant faculty voice in the state legislature.

> **CORE COMPONENT—3C:** *Northwest College creates effective learning environments.*

Assessments of student learning and increased access to data have informed a number of improvements across campus.

Academic Assessment Data

Academic assessment data has been gathered primarily through student evaluations of teaching, Program Reviews, Program-specific Learning Outcomes Assessments Reports, and All-college Outcomes Studies.

Student Evaluations of Teaching
Student evaluations of teaching motivate faculty to improve teaching methods. The self-evaluations for interim review, tenure, and promotion require faculty to analyze student evaluations and to document activities to improve the impact of their teaching on student learning. Course revisions often grow out of these reviews.

Program Reviews
Program reviews include faculty descriptions of actions taken and

> *"The discussion was lively and intense with interest about how to support students' continued strengths and to implement new ways to facilitate student progress in demonstrating success with these key outcomes."*

planned for improving student learning. The internal program discussions and external feedback have helped shape program improvement.[10]

Program-specific Learning Outcomes Assessments Reports

Yearly Program-specific Learning Outcomes Assessments Reports include faculty descriptions of actions taken and planned for improving student learning and require a description of changes in response to assessments of student performance relative to program-specific outcomes.[11]

All-college Outcomes Studies

The most influential assessment efforts have been faculty-conducted studies of capstone outcomes. These All-college Outcomes Assessment Studies have led to significant student-learning program developments and related faculty professional development activities.

Two sets of faculty-led research studies have been implemented to explore the extent to which students in capstone courses are able to demonstrate success with the all-college outcomes. These studies were completed in the summers of 2007 and 2009. One of the studies focused on the writing outcomes and was facilitated by an English faculty member. The second study, facilitated by the Division Chair for Communication, used student presentations as a vehicle to assess student performance in relation to each of the all-college outcomes.

These studies provide information to faculty about the overall strengths and weaknesses of students in their ability to use learning from general education, their major, and electives in order to show competencies in relation to the all-college outcomes. The results of the studies were shared with interested faculty in open meetings. The discussion was lively and intense with interest about how to support students' continued strengths and to implement new ways to facilitate student progress in demonstrating success with these key outcomes. (See Appendices 3.1, 2007 Capstone Paper Assessment Report; 3.2, 2009 Capstone Paper Assessment Report; 3.3, 2007 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone; and 3.4, 2009 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone.)

Improvements Based on Assessment Results

Improvements resulting from academic assessment fall into four areas: curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services.

Curricular Improvements

Programs may be continued, significantly revised, or discontinued after divisional review. After reviewing assessment studies and enrollment

10 See Program Reviews in the Resource Room.
11 See Program-specific Learning Outcomes Assessments Reports in the Resource Room.

numbers, some programs have been discontinued (e.g., Religious Studies, American Studies, Computer Science), and others revised significantly (e.g., Workforce Training). As a result of assessment studies, short courses have been created in information literacy and methods for succeeding in online courses.

Pedagogical Improvements

Assessment results have motivated faculty development programming, including but not limited to the following.

- **Professional development programming**, led by English and Communication faculty, was provided for all faculty. These sessions, delivered over two years, helped faculty redesign assignments and provide more useful feedback to students.

- **Math and English faculty attended the NADE national conference;** after their return, the faculty continued to meet over two semesters with student support staff to explore ways to continue to advance student learning in key content areas.

Student Learning Resource Improvements

- **A Writing Center** was initiated to enhance student writing skills with an English faculty member given reassigned time to develop a more research-based set of writing-center initiatives to support students in work to enhance their writing in any course.

- **A Presentation Lab** was created and made available to all students to assist with oral presentations in any course.

- **A Developmental Math Program Faculty Coordinator position** was created and then filled to implement strategies for building students' math competencies and creating stronger assessment measures and success tracking. This specialist is provided reassigned time to support pedagogical development of those teaching developmental math courses.

- **Academic equipment purchases, institutional use of one-time monies, and allocation of faculty positions** have also been informed by assessment results (e.g., smart classrooms, program-specific equipment purchases, room renovations).

Student Services Improvements

Based on assessment data, the College has made the following changes in the Student Affairs area:

- **Scholarship Changes**
  To help expand persistence in the face of competition from other colleges and to respond to student admissions feedback, the scholarship program was redesigned to include

specific funding for sophomore students and earlier notification of merit-based scholarships. (See Criterion Four for additional information on scholarships.)

- **Expanded Kick-off Weekend**
  The increased focus on student success data and student assessment information (e.g., Advising Survey, CCSSE results) underscored the importance of enhancing student engagement overall. Expanded Kick-off Weekend, faculty workshops on interactive teaching methods and technology applications, a new focus on expanding service learning, and expanded website interactive resources have all been supported as a result of more data about our students. (See Criterion Two for an extended discussion)

- **Retention and First-year Experience**
  The College's *Strategic Plan* has specific goals targeted at increasing student retention, persistence, and success, and this is an area to which Northwest has devoted considerable attention and cross-campus resources. Although the College's retention has been better than community colleges overall, persistence has been uneven and not at a desired level for student success and institutional vitality. Title III made it possible for Northwest to experiment with a number of retention and persistence initiatives.

  In 2006–2007, the Vice President for Student Affairs formed the Enrollment Advisory Committee to analyze and develop recruiting and retention strategies. In 2008–2009, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the Dean of Student Learning & Academic Support began meeting monthly to aid in planning and assessment.

  In the fall of 2008, the new president convened a college-wide retention meeting with leadership to discuss quick, short-term retention strategies (e.g., information booths, helpers for students moving into campus facilities, increased money for accommodations, etc.). This collaborative approach brought new energy and positive results. Also in 2008, the grant writer convened a college program director meeting to assess student retention needs and services to guide TRiO, new grant, and related grant development. These joint efforts led to ongoing collaboration, increased data analysis, and joint programming for new initiatives.

- **Improved Early Alerts**
  Through a collaboration between Academic Affairs, the Student Success Center, Computing Services, and Title III

staff, an improved early alert system was made available to the College. A consultant visited campus and made recommendations for improvement. Faculty and staff now have the ability to file a student alert from their office computers. To improve responsiveness to early alerts, these notifications are divided into two categories: Counseling and General. Counseling alerts go to appropriate staff at the Success Center; General alerts are addressed by Title III staff who are piloting a number of approaches to address this important but very time-consuming process.

Northwest College strives to provide an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring by preparing students to encounter the global environment outside Wyoming. Northwest's mission, Strategic Plan, and Enduring Values also reinforce the College's continual commitment to diversity. Funding has been increased to support international recruiting and programming. A key position has been redesigned to put greater emphasis on minority recruiting.

International and Minority Students

Northwest College has expended significant financial and personnel resources to support diversity through a robust international student population and related multicultural programming. International students come from Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia, North America, and South America. The interactions between international and American students in and beyond the classroom add to the educational experience of the many individuals and groups involved.

The Diversity Committee and the Multicultural Programming Committee help build a supportive environment for all students. The Diversity Committee has received college endorsement of a "Diversity Statement" that was considered by a variety of other campus committees, including College Council. (See Criterion One for additional discussion.) The Multicultural Programming Committee brings in speakers on multicultural topics and supports international students in doing programs about their home country and culture.

The College also considers the unique needs of its international and minority students. The Multicultural Program Coordinator and the Director of International Academic Programs in addition to faculty and staff volunteers coordinate this area. An expanded orientation helps international students build connections. These personnel also provide additional advising for minority students.

English as a Second Language

The College has a small English as a Second Language program that includes two ESL classes, an international student orientation, ESL tutoring, and referrals to tutoring. Students with intensive difficulties are encouraged to take advantage of ABE/ESL services provided through the College. (See Criterion Five.) In 2008–2009, a part-time staff position was added to help students with transition issues and to expand weekend programming.

The international student academic program is directed by a faculty member. This person leads both international recruiting and student support programming. The Director also takes a leadership role in helping international students register in appropriate courses. She provides ongoing academic advising to international students though many students also have program-specific faculty advisors.

Given diversity and growth in the student body, Northwest needs to examine its learning support resources. The organization has a growing number of international students, and the College has plans to increase the number of non-international minority students. Northwest has invested additional funds in tutoring and student support; still, the College must ensure that services and supports grow to provide a welcoming, safe, and productive learning environment to support the success of these students.

Students with Special Needs

The College has augmented the resources it invests in providing ADAAA/504 services to students with disabilities by increasing the hours of service. The student disability services were built into the Student Success Center Director's role when reductions in force led to the closing of the Student Academic Support Center in 2000. However, the disability services and Director roles were too demanding for one person, so a part-time position was created to ensure students with documented disabilities would receive the support, services, and accommodations needed for their academic programs and activities. Funding in 2009–2010 has been expanded to allow for a full-time position with another month added, enhancing services during the academic year and summer.

Through the Student Success Center and Disability Support Services (DSS) office, the following resources are available to students:

- Three private rooms for those students taking tests who experience attention disorders, psychological disorders, or a disability-related need for extended time and/or a distraction-reduced environment, with plans for another testing room with four computer carrels.

- Software to read tests to students with related disability accommodations.

- Books in alternative format via a contract with Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic, and software and equipment to produce other alternative format books and materials.

- Voice recognition software allowing students with physical disabilities to operate computers using voice commands and/or to prepare documents, notes, etc.

- Screen-reader software to allow students access to written material either on the Web or downloaded to the computer.

- Various equipment for students (e.g. screen magnifiers, color overlays for computer screens, tape recorders, calculators, FM systems).

- Note takers and interpreters.

- Training for the Tutoring Center peer tutors for enhancing services while assisting students with disabilities.

- DSS Coordinator collaboration with faculty/staff and students for mediation/facilitation.

- DSS Coordinator training for faculty/staff on disability-specific issues.

- DSS coordination with community agencies.

- High-school-to-college transition programming and support.

Northwest College has accommodated an increased number of students with special needs:

- 55 students registered with the DSS office in Spring of 2009, an increase of 9 students from Spring of 2008.

- 79 students registered with the DSS office in Fall of 2009, an increase of 28 students from Fall of 2008.

- 43 students utilized DSS testing in Spring of 2009, an increase of 22 students from Spring 2008.

- 60 students utilized DSS testing in Fall of 2009, an increase

of 23 students from Fall 2008.

- The number of students with mental health issues has increased dramatically, becoming the second largest group of students registered with the DSS office behind students with Specific Learning Disabilities.

Access to buildings has largely been addressed with the exception of the basement of the Frisby Building and two upstairs classrooms in the Fagerberg Building; classes are moved to other accessible classrooms as needed. In addition, there is new Braille signage in the Science and Math, and Orendorff Buildings.

Student Health Services
Student Health Services provides personalized health care to students enrolled in six or more credit hours. Services are free or involve a nominal fee. The office is staffed by a Licensed Practical Nurse and Physician's Assistant who provide a range of services.

First-generation Students
Many Northwest students are first-generation, low-income students who are new to higher education.

- **The TRiO Program-Student Support Services** supports students who are first-generation or low-income or disabled. Northwest's program has an experienced staff who helps students meet federal expectations in relation to academic progress, cultural enrichment, transfer planning and success, academic, and personal skills.

Types of Support
Support for Northwest's diverse student population takes a number of forms.

Mandatory Placement in Writing and Math Courses: Placement is determined by scores on the ACT, SAT, or Compass exams. However, faculty remain aware that not all students are accurately placed through testing, and many are willing to conduct individual placement activities. Approximately 92% of Northwest's first-time freshmen test into developmental courses. Developmental courses are taught by qualified full-time and adjunct faculty. The English and Math Departments have their own tutoring centers with tutoring services provided by both faculty and qualified student tutors. The Math Tutoring Center employs a ¾ time Math Tutoring Center Coordinator. Writing Center activities are coordinated by an English faculty member with some reassigned time.

Tutoring: The tutoring program included in the Tutoring Center provides tutoring in a variety of subject areas. Peer tutors are selected with faculty support, and the students receive special tutor training;

they are also paid for their work. The College also makes use of TutorTrac to facilitate signing up for appointments and track the use of tutoring resources.

Clubs: Clubs provide another vital link between students with common interests. A sample of these peer support clubs includes but is not limited to

- ACES—For adult students.

- Deaf Awareness—For those who are hearing impaired and those who care about those individuals and the needs of this population.

- Gay-Straight Alliance—For gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals and those who care about and share the needs of this group.

- Native Ways Club—For Native American Students and those supporting and learning about these cultures.

- International Student Club—For American and international students to expand learning and friendships.

- Anonymous Club—For those working away from addiction.

- Spanish Club—For students wanting to celebrate and learn more about Spanish culture.

Each of these clubs has at least one faculty or staff sponsor, and many have faculty and staff included in the club membership. These clubs frequently provide educational information and programming for those both in and beyond the club (e.g., Native Ways' Buffalo Feast; "Deaf Awareness On-line Facts" for each day of Deaf Awareness Month; alcohol awareness programming). The College also supports student involvement in a variety of activities-oriented clubs as well (e.g., Ski Club, Adventure Club, Block and Bridle, Horseman's Club). Along with addressing the interests and needs of students, many of these clubs include a community service component.

Presentations and Programs: Off-campus presenters expand Northwest's knowledge and understanding of varying cultures. Partnerships with the Wyoming Arts Council and Wyoming Humanities Council have helped provide culturally diverse writers, speakers, artists, and performers. Student Activities also uses student fees to bring culturally diverse musicians and performers to campus.

Northwest's advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success. To accomplish this, the College has made

significant changes in terms of its advising. Each degree-seeking student has a faculty or informal staff advisor during his/her time at Northwest with the option of changing advisors; non-degree students may request an advisor. Also, the Student Success Center and Career and Transfer Office staff help students with career and academic planning. Advisors connect students to institutional resources (e.g., Success Center, Math Tutoring Center). Northwest's advising system has the following resources:

- **Advising Day** has been integrated into the college calendar. Each semester, one class day is reserved for advising. Its effectiveness is assessed by students and faculty and staff advisors, with students participating in an online Advising Survey each year. Results show students are largely satisfied with advising.[12] The lowest area is transfer advising from faculty advisors. To address this, a number of steps were taken. Instituted in the fall of 2007, an expanded Kick-off Weekend includes a credit course on academic success and topics including academic, career, and transfer planning. Also, a yearly series of advising workshops for faculty and staff now includes a focus on transfer and online resources.

- **Online advising resources** have been expanded. A 2005–2008 Title III grant initiative provided a three-year focus on advising. New advising workshops for faculty and staff now include components on web and other resources regarding transfer, career, and academic planning. All faculty members are required to complete training and receive a stipend for doing so. A new faculty orientation for both tenure-track and adjunct faculty includes student development modules, such as career and transfer planning.

- **Career Advising and Expansion of the College Career & Transfer Website**
  Data from a 2000 Noel Levitz study combined with results found in Advising Surveys revealed a student desire for better career and transfer advising. This need was reinforced through student participation in the 2004 strategic planning retreat. Positive results have come through program-development initiatives under Title III. Initiatives begun in year one of the grant (2005–2006) have been refined and expanded. In addition, a career exploration website (*http://www.northwestcollege.edu/careers/*) provides students with 24/7 access to information for degree planning, career, and transfer planning in addition to links to individualized career-assessment surveys and a link to an *ePortfolio* option to support students' electronic career-portfolio building provides additional help.

- **Transfer Advising**
  Given student concerns, expansions of transfer advising were also

12 See Advising Surveys in the Resource Room.

built into the Title III grant project, both to increase transfer articulations and to enhance student and faculty knowledge of this important student-planning information. Project Succeed and the Title III Career, Transfer, and First-year Experience Coordinator have done an excellent job of building better transfer resources. For example, the new Transfer Website (*http://www.northwestcollege. edu/transfer/*) provides information to assist students transferring. After the Career, Transfer, and First-year Experience Coordinator resigned, the duties were divided among a number of staff members with services continuing uninterrupted.

The College has seen increases in

- The number of general education block transfer agreements with regional colleges and universities and the number of course- and program-specific articulations.
- The number of workshops for students, faculty, and staff on transfer options.
- The transfer information available on the College's website.

Northwest's student development programs support student learning regardless of his or her location. The College continues to expand resources for students throughout the service area. Students have the option of on-line classes, interactive television classes at distance sites accessed via the Wyoming Equality Network, and courses offered through the Outreach Centers. Support services are also available online and at the Centers.

Cody and Worland Centers Resources

The Library, Registrar, Counseling, and Financial Aid regularly provide face-to-face services at the Cody Center. In 2007, a faculty position was assigned to the Centers to provide advising and tutoring support for students. In 2009 because of higher enrollments at the Powell campus, this faculty member saw an increased teaching load, which has reduced his time in support of the Centers. This position adds greatly to student learning through advising, coordinating degree-cohort group meetings, designing a yearly culture series for Cody, and providing a presence in Worland. (See Criterion Five for a discussion of Northwest's extended campus work.)

Workforce Development

A new workforce training delivery model introduced in 2008–2009 has expanded resources available in Powell, Cody, and Worland. Training is provided in general-interest topics (e.g., computers, digital photography) and business-specific topics. Target workforce programs have reached new audiences (e.g., Surveying, Medical Billing and

> *"Northwest has a history of embracing new technologies that enhance effective learning environments for students."*

Coding, Medical Transcription, Food and Hospitality Ambassadors, and BPI Building Analyst Certification). These non-credit programs have helped address regional employment needs and expanded career options for non-degree students. Participants receive support services through the workforce training staff and other college professionals. (See Criterion Five for a discussion of Northwest's workforce development program.) Budget reductions and low enrollment led to a reduction of staff in Worland and to a reduction in the number of classrooms rented in the Worland Community Center.

Internet Resources

Northwest provides extensive Internet resources, including but not limited to the following:

- SMARTHINKING provides online tutoring services 24/7. Any Northwest student can access this support in a variety of subject areas, including writing and math.

- A number of instructional resource modules are now available for faculty to include in their online courses, so students have more information about working effectively in the online medium.

- Online admissions, registration, and scholarship applications were made available.

- The "MyNWC" web portal gives students direct Internet access to key personal, academic, and college information (e.g., online degree-planning audits, the library, transcripts).

Northwest has a history of embracing new technologies that enhance effective learning environments for students. This is particularly important given both the size and isolation of the College's service area. Program-specific technology is supported by an Academic Affairs budget of $35,000 and approximately $60,000 each year from the Northwest College Foundation.

Classroom Equipment

Title III and College funds have provided instructional technology equipment in classrooms. By the end of the Title III grant, all major classrooms will have computers, Internet access, SmartBoards, DVD/VCRs, and digital projection systems available for faculty and student use; the College has invested $120,000 for these improvements. Three classrooms are equipped to do vodcasting at a cost of $170,000. Wireless access was expanded campus-wide in 2009 at a cost of $65,000.

Distance Education: Interactive Television and the Internet

The College has been a leader in course delivery via interactive television, a resource that allows the College to reach students and community members in every service area high school. School districts have

received college courses via ITV over the last ten years. The College offers on average 10 classes per semester using this delivery method.

Online course delivery has also expanded rapidly and significantly, guided by *The Distance Education Plan* created in 2002. While online course delivery grew, steps toward delivery of an online degree were impeded by the College president at that time who chose to devote resources to areas other than online learning even though five of the other seven Wyoming community colleges had already received approval to deliver online degrees. In 2008–2009, with the arrival and support of the new president, *The Distance Education Plan* was updated, and currently, Northwest is seeking approval from the Higher Learning Commission to offer online degrees. In 2006, Northwest offered 42 online courses; that number had grown to 105 in 2010. (For additional information, see Appendix 4.2, Distance Education Report.)

As prescribed by the Legislature in Spring 2009, Northwest College is also participating in the State's efforts to enhance the effectiveness of distance learning for Wyoming citizens.

Vodcasting and Podcasting

Faculty now have the ability to podcast (audio only) or vodcast (streaming video and audio) class presentations and classes, so students have visual and auditory support for learning in their online or face-to-face classes. Three classrooms (ORB 135, NU 125, and SM 104) have been equipped specifically to support the vodcasting of class sessions and/or supplemental instructional information. Vodcasting is becoming an increasingly popular instructional tool: In Spring 2008, 14 courses were vodcast; that number increased to 20 in Fall 2009.

Northwest's systems of quality assurance include regular review of the effectiveness of its educational strategies, activities, processes, and technologies to enhance student learning.

Formal review of academic quality takes place on the following schedule:

- Every Semester: Student Course Evaluations
  Advising Evaluations

- Every Year: Faculty Year-end Reports
  Program-specific Learning Outcomes Assessments Reports
  Capstone assessments

- Every 2 Years: Faculty-led All-College Outcomes Studies
  CCSSE

- Every 5 Years: Program reviews of each degree program[13]

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13 All reports are available in the Resource Room.

CORE COMPONENT—3D: *Northwest College's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.*

Northwest College is conscientious about providing access to resources that support learning and teaching. Class schedules are developed to maximize use of instructional facilities throughout the day. Room scheduling for other activities is coordinated through a single office; specialized learning laboratories are scheduled directly by the department in charge of the academic program. Students have access to many labs and specialized spaces for learning.

Specialized Learning Laboratories

- Welding shop
- Drafting/CAD lab
- Equine Arena
- Photography Lab
- GIS Lab
- Music Technology Lab
- Observatory
- Microbiology Labs
- Agriculture Pavilion
- Art Studios
- Graphics Lab
- Nursing Facilities & Simulations Labs
- Computer Labs
- Greenhouses
- Biology Labs

Performance and Practice Spaces

Practice rooms for music students are available in the Nelson Performing Arts Center. Northwest has only one theater, and it receives heavy use, which limits the number of theater, music, and student activities. Fagerberg 70 is used as a smaller speaker and performance space.

Northwest has conducted the following evaluations of its use of learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching:

- The impact of new investments to support the new Presentation Lab, Writing Center, Math Course Coordinator, and expanded library information literacy and research sessions will be assessed again through the 2009–2010 summer Capstone Outcomes Assessment Studies.

- Investments in technology training for faculty have been met with faculty satisfaction and a rapid increase in the number of courses and students using distance education technologies. A 2008–2009 Title III technology use study provided additional support and guidance for continued renovation.[14]

- The impact of technology and other resources on students has been assessed only through indirect measures (e.g., graduation rates, program-specific graduation numbers). Capstones provide Northwest's only direct assessment of whether student performance in these classes improves over time as a result of technology and language support initiates.

Again, assessment activities have been hampered by the absence of an Institutional Researcher though this situation has improved significantly with the hiring of an Institutional Researcher in March 2009. The Institutional Researcher has been providing more sound data than the College has had before. This information is an excellent resource for academic program, course scheduling, and other related decisions impacting student learning.

In a number of ways, Northwest assesses the effectiveness of its learning resources to support learning and teaching. Conducted every five years, program reviews include an assessment of available and needed resources. Reviews for instructional support programs are included. Program reviews address financial support for needed new equipment or materials. These identified needs have shaped resource allocations (e.g., new lab created and equipped for Photography; purchase of resource materials for Anthropology).

Senior-level Division Chairs play a key role in monitoring enrollment and graduation data provided before by the Dean of Student Learning and Academic Support and now by the Institutional Researcher. New quantitative targets and better baseline data will help the College better assess the impact of new and improved learning resources on student learning outcomes and overall academic progress and success.

Northwest supports students, staff, and faculty in using

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14 See The Faculty Use of Technology Study and Qualitative Review of Technology Use in the Resource Room.

"Northwest supports students, staff, and faculty in using technology effectively."

technology effectively. Some support is course specific (e.g., technical classes in fields like Photography, Welding, and Music Technology); other more general classroom technology support is provided by faculty and staff on an as-needed basis. Staffing has been added to support effective technology applications, and training in using new technology is standard. Computing Services and the Instructional Technology personnel provide prompt and effective support both in terms of training and maintenance. Technology training takes place throughout the College and in workshops.

Students

Students have a technology requirement in capstone courses and must meet a technology all-college outcome. To help students meet these requirements

- Associate of Applied Science programs are often technology intensive; college and grant funds have been used to ensure students have experience with up-to-date equipment.

- TRiO does presentation technology training for its student clients.

- New Student Orientation includes technology training.

- Two Student Senate leaders serve on the Academic Computing Committee to alert Academic Affairs and Computing Services to problems. Their role has been instrumental in significant financial investments to improve wireless access in the residence halls and on campus overall.

- Macintosh computers have been added to the library, primarily to support students in Graphics and Photography.

- One of the computer technical staff was supported to acquire MAC repair certification to facilitate effective operation of Mac-based programs (e.g., Graphics, Photography, Music Technology).

- A number of Associate of Applied Science programs have night lab hours so that students can do assignments requiring specialized equipment and software. The library also has computers with specialized software, so students can do program-specific work in the library at night and on weekends.

Staffing and student employee support to keep specialized labs for these programs (e.g., Photo, Graphics, Drafting, GIS) open more hours would be appreciated by students.

Faculty

- Training workshops for faculty are provided by Instructional Technology staff and skilled faculty. Extended week-long

training is provided after graduation, and shorter sessions are provided during the year. Technology applications for instruction are included in new faculty orientations and also in advising workshops. Northwest's faculty have, pedagogically, embraced technology; however, keeping faculty and staff trained in new technology has not always kept up with the purchasing of new equipment.

- In its 2001 report, the North Central visiting team noted, "If the College intends to make distance delivery a significant element of its service, it will need to address the need for greater faculty incentives." The stipend for developing an online course was increased to $1,000, flat screens have been purchased, and more training provided.

Staff

- College Staff take advantage of many of the same instructional and maintenance resources (e.g., Computing Services, Instructional Technology, library staff). Staff also attend workshops for training in new technology (e.g., *Datatel*) and participate in workshops on how to expand online learning resources for student support (e.g., financial aid, tutoring, and counseling).

- A new Student Affairs online resource development workshop was held early in 2009. The face-to-face workshop featuring online resources for student support staff (funded by Title III) was designed to give these staff the best practices information to ensure that all students, regardless of location, have access to student support. Expansion of online student resources is continuing (e.g., use of TutorTrac to schedule tutoring appointments).

Northwest strives to provide effective staffing and support for its learning support programs. The growth of the College's online presence has had a significant impact on staffing. In addition to expanded staffing for instructional technology, in 2007–2008, a computer resource person was hired to assist students with technology issues in the residence halls. Still, staffing issues will remain given the rapid growth in online course enrollments.

Grants awarded to the College have added new student-learning support resources (e.g., websites, handbooks, workshops, extended orientations, out-of-class enrichment activities, etc.), not just hire personnel, and in this way, they have been successful. However, a number of the College's key student-learning support resources do not have a permanent place in the budget, as

shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3
Support Resources Funded Through Soft Money

Career and Transfer Specialist/First-year Experience/Articulation Facilitator	**2008–2009: 35% Title III; 5% College 2009–2010: 20% Gear Up, 80% College**
Presentation Lab	**Title III and Perkins funds**
Writing Center Coordinator	**Title III and Academic Affairs discretionary budget**
Faculty math and writing tutors	**Title III and Academic Affairs funds**
Student support for high-risk cohort	**TRiO funding for 160 students**
Enrichment activities for Science, Engineering, and Math students	**National Science Foundation Grant INBRE**
Outcomes Assessment Studies	**Title III**

The College's systems and structures enable partnerships and innovations that enhance student learning and strengthen teaching effectiveness. Consider the following examples:

- Northwest has extensive community partnerships that lead to enhanced opportunities for students. (See Criterion Five for additional discussion.)

- Business agencies provide internships.

- The Department of Workforce Services provides shared space for ABE/GED delivery in multiple communities.

- Eleutian Technologies has provided ESL support.

- Forest Service funds photo restoration project and archaeology projects.

Northwest has improved its budgeting priorities to reflect that improvement in teaching and learning is a core value. Until the arrival of President Prestwich in 2008, little linkage existed between the budget and academic improvement. The College had a base budget; funding for improvements came from one-time funds based on a priority list generated by the Academic Advisory Council with purchase priorities set by the President. In Fall 2008, the College began action resource planning. All budgeting requests must link to an element of *The Strategic Plan* and have measurable goals. Funding allocation is based on the proposals that best meet the College's strategic goals to move Northwest forward. The new process led to increased funding for tutoring, instructional technology, improved wireless networks, and international student support.

The following list provides a few examples of how Northwest has shown its commitment to teaching and learning by adjusting budgeting priorities:

- Kick-off Weekend and Career and Transfer support moved from grant to College funding.

- Repurposed Extended Campus funds for online course development.

- Faculty positions moved from closed or under-enrolled programs to other needed areas.

- Purchase of program-specific new technology and equipment.

  - Classroom technology equipment: $65,000 per year
  - Server upgrade to support enhanced wireless and online instruction: $100,000
  - Program-specific technology equipment: $360,000 over five years

Final Thoughts and Future Plans

The expansion of learning opportunities in journalism and broadcasting is just one example of the response of Northwest College to student needs in preparing them for the future. The focus of the College is student learning as shown by the development of clearly stated learning outcomes, adoption of assessment tools, and ongoing work to use assessment to guide change. The College puts the student first and supports faculty so that they can provide the best learning for students.

In terms of future-oriented plans to build on strengths and address concerns, Northwest should do the following:

- The learning-outcomes assessment plan is scheduled to be updated in 2011–12, with the analysis process starting in the spring of 2011. This puts the plan renewal on the same cycle with the other major plans that will be updated in light of the new strategic plan. The Curriculum Committee and Academic Advisory Committee have leading roles in this process. A review of the existing outcomes and assessment process would be appropriate as part of this process.

- Distribute student success tracking information more systematically and broadly across campus with additional structured opportunities for analysis and planning.

- Build on the current strong focus on student success in developmental math and writing courses. Redesigned faculty positions, new faculty collaboration, and new instructional technology

applications are beginning to produce improved student performance.

- In spite of the ending of the Title III Grant, continue with our strong record of support-position additions and equipment-funding allocations to support the applications of instructional technology.

- Provide support for outstanding instructional quality through expanded professional development opportunities for all faculty with special attention to the support and development of adjunct faculty. Continue to use the current faculty-led process through the Academic Advisory Council for recommending priorities for the allocation of vacant tenure-track faculty positions to specific programs in addition to continuing with the current faculty-led peer-review process for interim-review, tenure, and promotion processes.

Criterion Four

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Northwest College
WYOMING

Criterion Four:
Acquisition, Discovery, & Application of Knowledge

Criterion Four Statement: 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.

"Northwest College challenges itself to use data more effectively for program planning and improvement."

Northwest College Prides Itself on

- A strong general education component in all degrees that supports a life of learning.

- A faculty-driven curriculum that transfers well to other colleges and universities.

- Well developed Associate of Applied Science degree programs that prepare students for the 21st century work environment with a curriculum driven by faculty and industry.

- Opportunities for students to apply their learning and research skills both inside and outside the classroom.

- Capstone courses that promote critical as well as creative thinking and facilitate the integration of learning.

- An exceptional learning environment that includes an extensive library, well-equipped science labs, and extensive technology resources.

- A residential life program that encourages whole-person development, promoting social responsibility and respect for self and others.

- Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

Northwest College Challenges Itself to

- Use data more effectively for program planning and improvement.

- More effectively prepare students for success in online learning.

- Improve the outcomes of developmental learning courses

- Maintain and improve funding for faculty and staff professional development.

- Reconsider the general education component of the Associate of Applied Science in light of new transfer opportunities.

- Develop a statement which reinforces "freedom of inquiry" for non-teaching staff.

- Continue to use capstone performance data to build student skills in their earlier academic careers.

Northwest College: Who We Are

The following unsolicited e-mail was sent to Northwest College photography faculty from a program graduate:

7 January 2009

Hello Guys,
You may not remember me, but I graduated in May of '07. I just wanted to send you guys a quick hello, and let you know how I'm doing. I remember Craig [Satterlee] used to tell us how alumni keep in touch, and share their success. It always inspired me when he told us of students and their accomplishments out of school. So I figured, I'd share mine, thus far.

When I first moved to Southern California, I jumped on the first job I could. I was a school photographer. I traveled to different schools around the area and took photos of the kids for their yearbook. I was on staff for about 2 months, and I could no longer do it. The task was too mindless for me. It was more of a high school job rather than a professional job. I decided to move on.

I found Lavalu. Lavalu is an image editing company. I got hired on the spot once I showed the owner my portfolio (that I prepped in college; thanks guys!). I've been here for over a year now, and I am incredibly happy. Here, I color correct, edit, and design wedding albums. We use the latest in photo editing software, so we can correct the images as accurately as possible. We have clients from all around the world, majority who shoot weddings. We have a few portrait clients as well, but we mostly edit weddings. I have come a long way since college, and I see photography differently now. My eye has become sharper when looking for correct exposures, contrast, etc. I am one of two album designers that we have here. I was hired knowing nothing about album design, but now after over a year of experience, I design about 1–2 albums per week. Feel free to check out our website at www.mylavalu.com.

I hope all is well at NWC. I want to thank you, my photo professors, for what you've done as teachers. I could not see how much of a difference you, and the rest of the instructors have done, when I was there. It is only after a couple years out, I realize that what was learned in college, I use today. Thank you, and best wishes.

Sincerely,
Chelsie DeWald

As an institution, Northwest promotes life-long learning for students, faculty, administration, staff, and the community. The College provides students with

a strong general education base that establishes a foundation of knowledge to support inquiry, analysis, and the application of knowledge. Northwest helps students first integrate their learning from general education, program requirements, and electives and then use that knowledge as a tool for interacting in the world. Education at Northwest College is integrative and multifaceted with learning experiences found not only in the classroom, but also in residence halls, extracurricular activities, work experiences and internships, volunteer opportunities, and student clubs and organizations.

Life-long learning is also modeled by faculty and staff. Northwest College has always supported continued learning for employees by providing professional development funds, tuition waivers, and free workforce training opportunities. In short, Northwest College is committed to providing an environment of learning for all of its constituencies.

CORE COMPONENT—4A: *Northwest College demonstrates through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff that it values a life of learning.*

Various governance documents articulate the Board's policy on and support for freedom of inquiry at all levels of the College. Northwest recognizes in its mission documents an Enduring Value of "Intellectual Curiosity": "We welcome change, the open exchange of ideas, inclusion of multiple points of view, consideration of existing knowledge, and the generation of new ideas." Although the Northwest College Board of Trustees has approved statements supporting freedom of inquiry, changes in administration have led to varying interpretations; overall, however, Northwest has respected these policies.

Faculty Freedom of Inquiry
In "Faculty Employment Policies," section 1.6.1 of the *Employment Handbook*, academic freedom is defined as a right and responsibility of faculty: "The faculty member is entitled to freedom in research, publication, and pursuit of professional/vocational areas of expertise subject to the adequate performance of the duties contained in this faculty employment policy." In addition, the College "endorses the general guidelines of the American Association of University Professors' 1940 'Statement on Academic Freedom.'"

Student Freedom of Inquiry
Students' expectations in terms of academic freedom are outlined in the "Student Academic Rights" section of the *Student Handbook*. Among those academic rights, students are entitled to

- experience reasonable, free, and open discussion, inquiry, and expression, both in the classroom and in student/instructor conferences;

- take exception in a scholarly manner to the data or views being presented;

- expect protection against an instructor's improper disclosure of a student's views, beliefs, and political associations which may surface as a result of the instructor's teaching or advising; and

- expect protection, through established procedures, against prejudiced or capricious evaluation.

The faculty's academic freedom policy, found in the *Employment Handbook*, Section 1.5.1, also endorses students' academic rights.

Administrator and Staff Freedom of Inquiry

While the Enduring Value quoted above does not specify to whom "intellectual curiosity applies," the assumption is that it applies to all. Its application to staff, however, is unclear given that no statement exists paralleling those that protect faculty and students. The absence of a written statement for staff has led to some confusion and to some abuses by past leaders.

Northwest's planning and pattern of financial allocation demonstrate that the College values and promotes a life of learning for students, faculty, and staff. Planning and budget requests are linked to *The Strategic Plan* through the Action Resource Planning process (see Criterion Two for a discussion of planning). *The Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2008–11* calls for initiatives in support of lifelong learning. Those initiatives include the following:

Implement the New Scholarship Plan and Assess Its Impact on Year-to-year Retention

Northwest College Scholarships
Northwest College supports the efforts of its students by providing extensive academic, activity-talent, and athletic scholarship support. However, in an effort to promote lifelong learning for the entire college community, Northwest implemented the Trapper Scholarship program beginning in 2009–2010. Under this new awarding philosophy, students are eligible to receive Trapper Scholarships, which are renewable for up to four consecutive semesters and are determined by GPA and residency. This allows prospective students to plan for continued learning because they know the annual scholarship amount for which they qualify. Additionally, returning students are required to maintain specific GPA's to remain eligible.

Analysis of the program will not take place until 2011; however, for the Fall 2009 term, 624 students received $663,279 in Trapper Scholarships alone. In addition to Trapper Scholarships (funded from institutional as well as private donor funds), 70 students received Academic Scholarships valued at $53,400. Academic scholarships are awarded to deserving students demonstrating academic strength in their chosen program of study. Also, 95 students were awarded Activity-Talent Scholarships valued at $89,000.

Additional Scholarship Opportunities

- *Hathaway Scholarships*—Beginning in the fall of 2007, the State of Wyoming began offering Hathaway Scholarships (statewide merit scholarships) to Wyoming high school graduates who met certain grade qualifications or ACT scores. This changed the landscape for financial assistance for students and colleges and allowed Northwest to create a smoother process to help students afford a quality higher education.

- *WyIN Funding*—Made available by the legislature, these scholarships are for student and faculty nursing allocation.

The Financial Aid and Scholarships area has expanded significantly. Two new positions have been added: one to facilitate Hathaway Scholarships with the State of Wyoming, and the other to coordinate increased private scholarships from the Foundation.

Develop and Implement a College-wide Professional Development Plan

Northwest College encourages its staff to continue learning. The College supports professional development opportunities and makes them available to all administrators, faculty, and staff. Faculty must detail professional development activities as part of their year-end reports, and it is a significant factor in earning tenure; staff have a professional development planning component in performance evaluations. To support professional development, all College employees have access to the following:

- **Professional Development Funds**—All constituent groups have access to professional development funds. The College has budgeted $38,000 dollars for staff professional development, which can be supplemented by travel funds of up to $25,000. Members of the Classified Staff have access to funds through their constituent group; Professional and Administrative staff funds are distributed proportionately to each vice president; Faculty professional development is administered separately. However, according to a 2008 survey of employees, given their workloads, many staff members struggle to find time to invest in professional development

opportunities.[1] (See Criterion Three for a discussion of faculty professional development.)

- **Professional Development Workshops**—Throughout the year, these opportunities are available to all college employees. (See Criterion Three for an extended discussion.)

- **Tuition Waivers for Northwest and University of Wyoming Classes**—All benefitted college employees may take classes tuition free from Northwest or from the University of Wyoming. Employees are encouraged to take three credit hours during their work day and may take an additional four credits outside their work day for a total of seven credit hours per semester. According to the Office of Administrative Services, since 2006, each year, an average of 66 employees has taken advantage of Northwest tuition waivers.[2]

- **Workforce Training Classes**—The Northwest College Center for Training and Development makes available skills-based classes, leadership classes, and supervisory trainings to help employees continue learning for the ever-changing world of work.

Although recent increases in funds have allowed more College employees to participate in professional development activities, as costs rise, the allocated funds will need to grow as well. In times of budget cuts, the priority of building professional development resources will be tested.

Implement Pilot Program for Concurrent Enrollment

The Concurrent Enrollment Pilot Project outlines a pathway for high school students to continue their learning at the post-secondary level before they graduate from high school. Currently, the plan is in a three-year pilot phase. In 2009–2010, four high schools in the College's service area took advantage of the program, allowing the College to serve 260 students for a total of 920 credit hours. (See Appendix 4.1, Concurrent/Dual Enrollment Trends.)[3]

Expand Collaboration with Businesses on the Design and Delivery of New Workforce Training Programs and Increase Enrollment in These Programs

Northwest College offers Workforce Development programs that serve employers and employees in the service area as well as the state. This program meets the ongoing needs of local business and industry for a

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1 See Criterion Four Survey of Employees in the Resource Room.
2 See policy and Tuition Waiver Form in the Resource Room.
3 See *The Concurrent Enrollment Pilot Project* in the Resource Room.

skilled workforce and reacts to unique requests from employers for specialized trainings, keeping employers and employees current in diverse local, national, and global societies. Participants in this program can upgrade technology skills, learn leadership techniques, understand and improve customer service, or be trained in new processes specific to many growing occupational areas. Northwest dedicates approximately $350,000 annually to the Workforce Development program in addition to four staff members. (See Criterion Five for an extended discussion of workforce development.)

Northwest has also met life-long learning goals set in earlier strategic plans. For example, in *The Strategic Plan, 2007–2009*, the College set a goal of expanding online course delivery. Online courses provide access to education for students who cannot attend regularly scheduled classes on campus because of work and family commitments or because of their distance from campus. This goal was met: Online courses have expanded from 42 in 2006 to 105 in 2010. (See Appendix 4.2, Distance Education Report.) Quality checks are in place along with initial work on a revision of *The Distance Education Plan*, which will continue to guide how the College handles rapid growth in online course delivery.[4] Additionally, the distance education staff has recently expanded by one so that students receive quality learning and have more support. However, faculty report that a number of students still struggle in adapting to this modality, so the College is beginning to track successful completion rates in online courses.

Table 4.1
Grades Awarded and Successful Completion Rate in Online Courses

	2004–05	%	2005–06	%	2006–07	%	2007–08	%	2008–09	%	TOTAL	%
A,B,C,P,S	373	57.3	490	61.1	658	63.1	1,041	68	1,169	67.1	3,731	64.7
D,F,U	142	21.8	140	17.5	159	15.2	206	13.5	240	13.8	887	15.4
I,UF,W,NS	134	20.6	171	21.3	221	21.2	280	18.3	331	19.0	1,137	19.7
Audits	2	0.3	1	0.1	5	0.5	4	0.3	2	0.1	14	0.2
TOTAL	651		802		1,043		1,531		1,742		5,769	100

NOTES: Passing Grades (A, B, C, P–Pass, S–Satisfactory); Unsatisfactory Grades (D, F, U–Unsatisfactory, I–Incomplete, UF–Unearned F, W–Withdrawal, NS–No Show)

Source: Datatel Colleague Database   *IR: 5/3/2010*

The data show that 64.7% of grades awarded in online courses are passing grades. Non-completers make up 19.7%, and unsatisfactory grades account for 15.4%. To help increase the successful completion rate, INET 1550,

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4   See *The Distance Education Plan* in the Resource Room.

"Exploration of Online Learning," was developed and first offered to students in Spring 2007 and continues to be offered every semester. Additionally, increased staffing and training are being considered to help prepare students to be more comfortable and successful in this modality. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of online enrollments.)

Similarly, in *The Strategic Plan, Academic Years 2005–2007*, the College set a goal of expanding access to face-to-face education in the service area.[5] Northwest planned and financed the development of its outreach centers in Worland and Cody to ensure that face-to-face learning would be accessible for students wanting to continue their education but unable to come to the Powell campus. The Centers provide learning opportunities for students, many of whom have families and jobs, but who continue to learn at every stage of their lives. No matter the reason for students' attendance, the learning is accessible in their hometowns. (For a full discussion of the Worland and Cody Centers, see Criterion Five.)

To celebrate successful learning, Northwest College enthusiastically acknowledges the achievements of students, faculty, and staff in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge. Student, faculty, and staff achievements are publicized via e-mail messages to all employees, and the College Relations Office sends news/photo releases to area print and electronic media, alumni publications and other outlets, as well as schedules individual employees on area radio talk show programs. In addition, such news is often covered in the *Northwest Alumni News* (the College's alumni and other friends' newspaper) and noted in the "Good News" items announced at meetings of the Wyoming Community College Commission. The following lists give a sense of additional ways through which the College celebrates achievement.

Celebrating Student Success

Ceremonies, Awards, and Recognition Banquets

- Graduation (December and May)

- President's, Vice President's, and Dean's Lists

- Student Awards Ceremony

- Nursing Pinning Ceremony

- Division/Department Outstanding Student Awards

- Phi Theta Kappa Induction

5   See *The Distance Education Plan* in the Resource Room.

> *"The faculty and students of Northwest, in keeping with the College's mission, produce scholarship and create knowledge through basic and applied research."*

- Scholarships/Donor Banquet
- Forensics Banquet
- Athletic Awards Ceremony
- Rodeo Gala
- Block and Bridle Banquet
- Horsemen's Club Banquet
- Residential Banquet
- Student Senate Ceremony
- Wyoming Community College Trustee Association Nominations and Awards
- "Board Purchase Award" for Art and Photography Students

Shows and Performances
- Forensics competitions
- Horse Shows
- Athletic competitions
- Monthly open mic readings
- Skills USA Competition
- Students in Free Enterprise Competitions
- Music concerts, recitals, convocations, and festivals
- Student Art Shows (e.g., Visual Art, Graphic Design, Photography)

Publications and Broadcasts
- *Visualize/Verbalize*
- *Northwest Trail*
- *Writing in the Academic World*
- *plainSpeak*
- NWC-TV
- KNWT-FM radio station

Celebrating Faculty and Staff Success

The College has a number of ways in which it celebrates faculty and staff success. In addition to the recognition provided in news releases, reports, e-mails, and Yammer postings, the College also has a yearly Employee Recognition Banquet at which select faculty and staff receive recognition awards. Northwest annually submits nominations for Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees Awards. (See Criterion Three for additional information on faculty recognition.)

Celebrating Alumni Success

The College's Distinguished Alumni Award program, begun in 1981, originally included recognition of Distinguished Alumni in three categories, Professional Achievement, Academic Achievement, and Community Service, with the honored alumni collectively serving as speakers at Commencement Exercises. In the early 2000s, the awards were narrowed to only one award to streamline the commencement ceremony. A plaque system, including a large photo of the current year's Distinguished Alumnus and individual plates for each alumnus, was created by the Alumni Association in the mid-2000s.

The faculty and students of Northwest, in keeping with the College's mission, produce scholarship and create knowledge through basic and applied research.

Student Research

Northwest College stresses the importance of research in providing a foundation for a life of learning. Primary research skills are taught in ENGL 1010, "Introduction to Composition," a course required for all students who graduate from Northwest.[6] Indeed, students are encouraged to take this class as soon as possible to master fundamental research skills. Further, librarians provide library research sessions at faculty requests (a full discussion of these sessions appears later in this chapter). Additional coursework, then, builds on these research skills as students do research in individual classes; in technical classes, students apply theory learned either in the classroom or through research. All of this research prepares students for graduation and the capstone course, a culminating research experience. In capstone courses, students

- demonstrate their understanding of and ability to apply important knowledge and skills in their field.

- demonstrate application of their general education knowledge and achievement of all-college outcomes in writing, speaking, analysis, and multiple points of view.

6   See *The Distance Education Plan* in the Resource Room.

> *"Northwest College is a two-year institution with an emphasis on teaching, and although faculty are not required to do original research and publish, they are expected to stay current in their field and keep their courses current."*

- expand their skills through feedback on their work from professionals beyond the instructor. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of the capstone as an assessment tool.)

In addition to coursework, faculty look for other ways to provide research projects for students, as evidenced by the following:

- INBRE Research Project—Northwest is currently involved in an Idea Networks for Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) grant where faculty and students carry out bio-medical research. It is funded by a National Institutes of Health grant distributed by the University of Wyoming. From 2004–2010, 25 students have participated, some for up to four semesters. Two faculty members mentor the students in their research. Students have made a total of six presentations at state and regional meetings.

- *EPSCoR*—The National Science Foundation funds the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EXPCoR). Northwest College participated with one faculty and two students in an EPSCoR summer research project.

Faculty Research

Northwest College is a two-year institution with an emphasis on teaching, and although faculty are not required to do original research and publish, they are expected to stay current in their field and keep their courses current. In addition, some faculty pursue individual research that often has a direct impact on the courses they teach. The range of faculty research interests varies, everything from books of local history to photography published in national publications, creative writing to research on and performance of music history, presentations on technology to international student programs.

Northwest College uses scholarship and research to stimulate organizational and educational improvements. Planning and resource allocation are driven by research undertaken by instructional, administrative, and student services units.

- **Academic Assessment** takes a number of forms: Program Reviews, All-college Outcomes Studies, Program-specific Student Learning Outcomes Reports provide much of this data.[7] (See Criterion Three for a discussion of these assessment tools.)

- **Community College Survey of Student Engagement Reports (CCSSE)** began in 2007 with the survey administered on alternate years. At this point, the initial CCSSE data is providing a baseline

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7 See Academic Assessment Reports in the Resource Room.

for future studies. The College is committed to using these data to advise institutional improvement.[8]

- **The Kick-off Weekend Retention Data Report** tracks retention and success of students who did and did not participate. Initial results indicate that the program is highly effective.[9] (See Criterion Two for an extended discussion.)

- **The Capstone Course Faculty Assessment Survey** was conducted to assess the value of the capstone course requirement as a vehicle for assessing all-college outcomes. The Summary of Capstone Faculty Survey is discussed by the Curriculum Committee and the Academic Advisory Council. Results shape materials and faculty training for delivery of these courses.[10] (See Criterion Three for an extended discussion.)

- **The New Intersession Student and Faculty Surveys** were conducted with the introduction in 2008–2009 of a two-week January intersession; the surveys were administered a second time in 2010. This learning opportunity was studied through student and faculty surveys, which showed a positive response to the new option. Discussion of results in the Academic Advisory Council and other college groups shapes future uses of this learning option.[11]

- **The Faculty Use of Technology Study** and **Qualitative Review of Technology Use** were conducted as part of the Title III grant to assess faculty utilization of and satisfaction with new instructional technologies.[12]

- **Advising Surveys** are conducted to assess effectiveness and find methods for improvement. Faculty are surveyed every fall semester to gather input about their experience with advising. Similarly, students are surveyed each spring. Data from both are used to improve the advising process.[13]

- **New Student Registration and Family Orientation Surveys** are administered during each summer registration and orientation session to both students and their family members. The surveys contain two sections. The first section asks students and family members to identify and evaluate which forms of media have informed them about Northwest College. Answers assist College
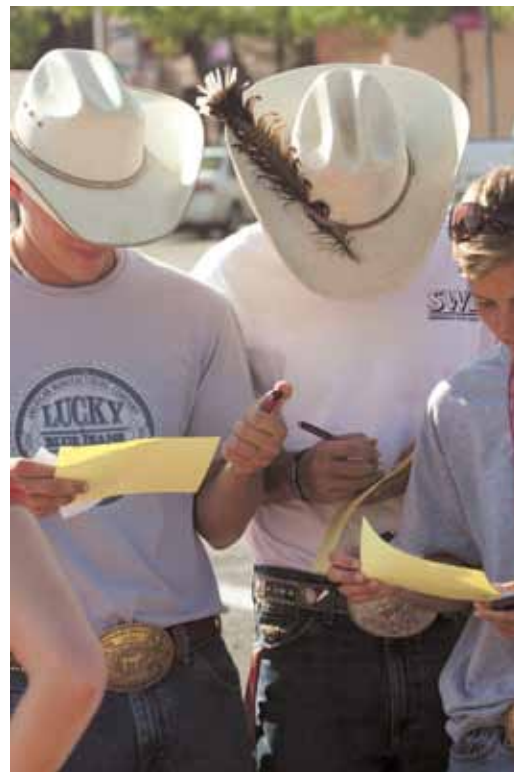
8   See Community College Study of Student Engagement Reports in the Resource Room.
9   See Kick-off Weekend Retention Data Report in the Resource Room.
10 See The Capstone Course Faculty Assessment Survey in the Resource Room.
11 See The New Intersession Student and Faculty Surveys in the Resource Room.
12 See The Faculty Use of Technology Study and Qualitative Review of Technology Use in the Resource Room.
13 See Faculty Survey – Academic Advising and Advising Survey for Students in the Resource Room.

Relations staff in determining future marketing efforts. The second section asks students and family members to evaluate the New Student Registration and Family Orientation session and is used to improve future orientation sessions.

Faculty pursue research to stay current in their field of expertise. Changes to courses and programs are generally based upon this research. In career and technical education programs, faculty work with advisory boards and national associations to stay current, and some research the industry through work in the field.[14] Faculty also keep current in their fields through membership in professional societies and organizations. Staff members, too, stay up to date through professional development. As examples, the Instructional Technologist attends two conferences per year to stay current on new technologies and provide faculty and staff with best practices. In addition, the Wyoming Distance Education Consortium conference has faculty and staff sessions.

A continuing challenge for Northwest, though, is systematic data collection and dissemination for decision-making. The hiring of an Institutional Researcher in March 2009 has provided new opportunities for systematic data gathering, analysis, dissemination, and utilization.

CORE COMPONENT—4B: *Northwest College demonstrates that acquisition of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.*

The general education core at Northwest College provides students with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills and to exercise intellectual inquiry. Northwest integrates general education into all its associate degree programs through curricular and experiential offerings intentionally created to develop the attitudes and skills required for a life of learning in a diverse society. Northwest College offers:

- **Associate of Arts**—graduates must complete 39–42 credit hours of general education.

- **Associate of Science**—graduates must complete 31–37 credit hours of general education.

- **Associate of Applied Science**—graduates must complete 20–23 credit hours of general education.

Students are provided with a well rounded general education core delivered through course work, internships and cooperative education, co-curricular activities, and a residential life program. The totality of this education provides

14 See CTE Advisory Committees 2009-2010 in the Resource Room.

breadth of knowledge and the foundation for a life of learning. This groundwork is supplemented for students as they achieve program-specific outcomes and complete electives. As specified in the College *Catalog*, Northwest's general education outcomes are categorized as follows:

- Government

- English

- Lab Sciences

- Social Sciences

- Wellness

- Comparative Cultural Awareness

- Humanities

- Mathematics

- Visual and Performing Arts

The College specifies student learning outcomes for each of the general education categories and courses are evaluated by the Curriculum Committee against these outcomes. Only approved courses can be used to meet general education requirements. Along with meeting credit requirements for general education, students are expected to apply learning from general education as a part of their capstone projects and experience.

General education strengths include the following:

- A broad range of course options are offered for each category.

- 70% of all credit hours are taught by a highly-credentialed full-time faculty.[15]

- All courses are reviewed and approved in light of faculty-generated and approved general education outcomes.

In addition to curricular offerings, students have opportunities to, and for some degrees must, participate in cooperative education, internships, practica, clinicals, and service learning outside the classroom. This type of learning allows students to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world setting, guided by mentor faculty and involving business and community personnel. Through these experiences, students deepen their knowledge, build their employment skills, and come to better understand the diverse world in which they live. Nursing students, for instance, must apply newly learned skills in a controlled environment in hospitals and nursing homes;
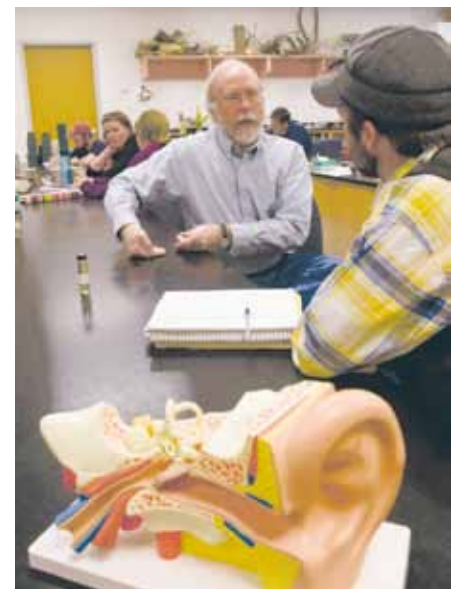
15 See Credits and Sections Taught by Faculty in the Resource Room.

archaeology students participate in digs; students in education programs work with mentor teachers in the schools prior to certifying as Wyoming teachers; veterinary assistant students work in actual veterinary settings in an Animal Care Internship. While this is not an exhaustive list, it provides examples of the learning environments in which students can apply knowledge and skills.

Northwest College reviews the relationship between its mission and values and the effectiveness of its general education. All departmental and divisional curricular work is reviewed first by the division and then by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Curriculum Committee, which meets weekly during the academic year and is comprised of six faculty from each academic division (voting), two students (voting), and six committee liaisons (nonvoting). This committee

- ensures that general education courses are consistent with the College's mission.

- reviews and provides approval of new courses and programs.

- determines if courses meet the criteria for general education status.

- conducts periodic evaluations of the general education curriculum.

- leads all-college outcomes revisions and data analysis.

Possible changes in general education categories and credits have been considered by the Curriculum Committee. Given the wide range of transfer universities students attend, decisions have been made to keep the same general education program and to ask faculty advisors to do career or college/university advising to meet particular external expectations. A new website and periodic workshops have been added to help students and faculty with this process. The College has a general education block transfer agreement with a variety of regional universities. The strength of Northwest's general education requirements and these transfer agreements help degree recipients transfer as juniors. (See Criterion Five for additional information.)

Northwest demonstrates the linkages between curricular and co-curricular activities that support inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility. In addition to traditional classroom work, students also participate in a range of co-curricular activities to encourage personal and professional development and build upon their general education foundation. Cooperative education internships, nursing program clinicals, and work-study positions allow students to practice and apply classroom knowledge while state and national student competitions in Skills USA and Students in Free Enterprise, for example, are venues for demonstrating acquired skills and knowledge in career technical areas. Additionally, Student Senate and many student clubs provide leadership opportunities.

Northwest's many co-curricular activities give students the opportunity to build and test their skills outside of the classroom. For many students, these co-curricular activities provide a number of firsts: feedback from professionals in the field; out-of-state travel experiences; opportunities to learn skills related to professional

life; opportunities to plan and implement significant events; and opportunities to speak at professional events.

Although there are many instances of this, following are three notable examples.

- *Northwest College Forensics*—The Northwest College Forensics Team is one of the top programs in the nation, emphasizing educational goals, competition, and personal development. The College also offers scholarships for students involved in forensics. The team competes in 11 different individual events and two debate events and is a "walk-on team," meaning that participation is encouraged from all who are interested regardless of experience. The squad averages between 16–25 students and consistently ranks nationally in parliamentary debate (in the top twenty for all Colleges and universities and usually in the top two or three for community colleges). From Fall 2006–Spring 2009, Northwest College Forensics never lost to a community college in sweepstakes at regular competitions. Students who compete get credit for their participation and must take CO/M 2060, "Forensics," CO/M 2080, "Introduction to Forensics Research," and CO/M 2070, "Tournament Administration." In addition, students are encouraged to take classes which are a regular part of the curriculum, including "Public Speaking," "Argumentation and Debate," and "Oral Interpretation."

- *Intercollegiate Athletics*—The Northwest College athletics program dedicates itself to the pursuit of athletic excellence within the framework of an academic community committed to the institution's educational objectives. These programs are committed to helping students achieve intellectual, physical, and interpersonal growth while competing at the highest level of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division I and the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA). Between 2006–2009, Northwest averaged 66 student athletes (3.7% of the student body). During that five-year period, student athletes received an average scholarship amount of 87%. Required coursework includes a variety of activity courses. Teams have "Code of Conduct" contracts.

• ***Northwest College Livestock Judging Team***—The Northwest College Livestock Judging Program, averaging 20 students each year, has been part of the College for over 35 years, stressing the need for solid academics in the classroom, as well as excellence in the livestock judging arena. Team members dedicate themselves to practice three times a week, on Saturdays, and for large parts of semester breaks. The College offers excellent facilities, scholarship support, and strong coaching in addition to travel to competitions throughout the U.S. Scholarships are available for team members and are awarded based on GPA and ACT scores as well as livestock background. The team participates in the NILE Judging Exposition (Northern International Livestock Exposition); Northwest students are in charge of the NILE's Livestock Evaluation Event. Regional FFA contests are held on campus. They also travel to communities to coordinate contests for other counties in Wyoming and Montana and have consistently earned individual and team awards at regional and national competitions. The Livestock Judging Team operates under a "code of conduct" contract. Required course work includes ANSC 1210, "Livestock Judging I," ANSC 1220, "Livestock Judging II," ANSC 2230, "Livestock Judging III," ANSC 2240, "Livestock Judging IV," and ANSC 1250 "Field Experience: Livestock Exhibition."

At Northwest, learning outcomes demonstrate that graduates have achieved a breadth of knowledge, skills, and the capacity to exercise intellectual inquiry. Northwest College assesses student learning at four levels: course, program, general education, and all-college. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of the College's *Assessment Plan*.) As explained in *The Northwest College Catalog*,

> *College education prepares a student both for life and for making a living. It blends the practical application of knowledge with the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. When successful, education balances the sometimes contradictory claims of social service and individual ambition. A good general education fosters freedom's values and nurtures individual growth. It lays the foundation for further learning in a discipline or vocation, provides the tools to navigate change, and prepares one for life-long learning.*

> *The purpose of general education at Northwest College is to shape the development of students according to these values… .*

In addition to course-specific general education outcomes, the all-college outcomes further articulate Northwest's commitment to student scholarship and inquiry. All graduates must successfully complete a capstone course, a forum for demonstrating mastery of the all-college outcomes, which include

- Analysis

- Oral Communication

- Information & Technology Literacy

- Multiple Points of View

- Writing

Learning outcomes demonstrate effective preparation for continued learning. Broad-based outcomes expand students' general education and program-specific base of knowledge and experience. Capstone courses require students to gather information, assess options, and consider multiple points of view. Also, the level of professional writing, speaking, and analysis gives students a transferable approach and set of skills for tackling new problems and professional challenges. In a 2008–2009 survey of capstone faculty, 85% of respondents indicated capstones were "very good" or "good" as an appropriate method to assess students' ability to synthesize and apply what they have learned; 10% said "fair"; and 5% indicated "weak." The same survey found 84% of respondents concur to some degree that capstone courses provide students with opportunities to expand learning in relation to all-college outcomes while 73% agree that capstone courses provide students an opportunity to expand learning in relation to general education outcomes.[16] (See Criterion Three for a discussion of assessment.)

In spite of positive capstone results in, the College remains concerned about those students who begin their education in developmental courses and their subsequent success in college-level courses. The highlighted numbers in Table 4.2 indicates Northwest's ranking among the seven community colleges.

16 See Survey of Capstone Faculty in the Resource Room.

Table 4.2
Core Indicator #12 – Success in Subsequent, Related Coursework
2006 Cohort, Reported 2008–2009

	DEVELOPMENTAL MATH		DEVELOPMENTAL ENGLISH	
	Wyoming Community College Average	NWC	Wyoming Community College Average	NWC
% of students successfully COMPLETED DEVELOPMENTAL course in Fall 2006	56.2%	52.2%	59.3%	66.5%
% of students that successfully COMPLETED COLLEGE-LEVEL course within 1 Year	32.8%	29.6%	40.8%	37.1%
% of students that successfully COMPLETED COLLEGE-LEVEL course within 5 semesters	37.9%	36.4%	45.2%	41.0%
% of students that successfully COMPLETED COLLEGE-LEVEL course within 8 semesters	42.1%	40.7%	48.0%	43.8%

As indicated by the rankings provided by the Wyoming Community College Commission for Core Indicator #12, while Northwest did well in terms of students placed in developmental English courses, its percentages of students who successfully completed developmental math courses and went on to complete college-level math courses were lower than the average of the seven community colleges for the 2006 cohort. To address this concern, a new faculty position was created to provide students more support. In addition, the Math Department undertook a two-year review of its curriculum and teaching practices, resulting in common final exam questions for tracking of student performance and the adoption of a number of instructional technologies to increase student engagement and retention. Initial assessment of these activities suggests that the changes have enhanced student course completion. Longitudinal data will confirm whether these changes in fact result in more students being ready to be successful in college-level learning.

To help all students be more successful, the tutoring program was moved to the Office of Academic Affairs, and a new interdisciplinary work group was created. This group includes directors of the Math Tutoring Center, the Writing Center, and the Presentation Lab in addition to the faculty member responsible for developmental math education. This group is working with best practices research for ways to enhance service delivery and student academic success.

CORE COMPONENT—4C: *Northwest College assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.*

To assess the usefulness of the curriculum, Northwest College faculty must regularly review programs, gain input from advisory boards when developing new curricula, and articulate with transfer institutions.[17] Additionally, Northwest hires adjunct faculty who are experts in their field; these adjuncts bring currency and direct application of the content area to Northwest College students.

Northwest conducts academic Program Reviews on a five-to-seven-year schedule; these reports address the currency and relevance of courses and programs. Examples of changes made to programs following Program Review analysis are as follows:

- Dropping of low-enrolled courses and continued updating of Physical Education Activity Course topics in the HOPE program.

- Redesign of program requirements and changes in credit to address improved transfer at regional four-year institutions in the Education program.

- Closing of a fledgling program that lacked sufficient enrollment in Computer Science.

- Closing of the American Studies program and increased online course delivery to improve enrollments in the Humanities program.

In addition to Program Reviews, each Associate of Applied Science degree program has advisory boards comprised of individuals who work in the occupational area, faculty, students, and alumni. This forum allows for discussion of skills employers need in employees. Faculty then use that information to refine the curriculum.[18] For example, the Drafting Technology program made changes to meet workforce needs; similarly, the Photography program moved to a digital format because of industry expectations. The new Perkins Director, hired in 2008–2009, revitalized the use of advisory committees, and although not all boards are equally effective, renewed emphasis on their importance is leading to improvements. A cross-program advisory board was added in 2009–2010.[19]

To ensure the relevance of courses and programs, Associate of Arts, and Associate of Science degrees, the College articulates programs with transfer institutions. Articulation may guide the courses required in a given program. The First-year Experience and Articulation Coordinator oversees program articulation and relays information to program faculty on the relevance of their

17 See Program Reviews in the Resource Room.
18 See Perkins Advisory Committee Guidelines in the Resource Room.
19 For memberships, see CTE Advisory Committees, 2009-2010 in the Resource Room.

> *"In keeping with its mission, Northwest's learning goals and outcomes include skills and professional competence essential to a diverse workforce."*

program in relationship to transfer institutions. Faculty are also encouraged to attend state-wide, discipline-specific articulation meetings to stay current with the University of Wyoming curriculum changes. (See Criterion Five for a discussion of articulation.)

In keeping with its mission, Northwest's learning goals and outcomes include skills and professional competence essential to a diverse workforce. The College's mission, "Through exceptional, dynamic living and learning environments, Northwest College dedicates itself to individual student achievement, diversity, global citizenship, and community vitality," emphasizes the importance of professional competence. Through informal data gathering, regional employers have indicated that they are seeking employees who can compute, read, write, communicate effectively in person and over the phone, provide customer service, and solve problems. The all-college and general education outcomes guide the instruction of these qualities in Northwest College graduates, providing students with the ability to speak and write well, to solve problems, to think critically and creatively, and to better understand the world in which they live. So that students understand the diversity of the world in which they live and work, they must also complete the Comparative Cultural Awareness component of the general education requirements. Cultural awareness is reinforced by the College's strong international student program and on-going multi-cultural programs and events. International students present programs about their home countries, and two Fulbright Scholars in residence have provided international perspectives. Additionally, partnerships with Chile and Korea have brought to campus groups of students who have added to the many cultural events on campus and in the community.

Northwest's learning outcomes document that graduates have gained the skills and knowledge they need to function in diverse local, national, and global societies. The College's recognition of the importance of diversity is reflected in the mission as well as in other mission documents, such as the "Diversity Statement" adopted in 2008 and designed to reinforce perspective, skills, and behaviors central to functioning in national and global societies. In addition, the College has incorporated two diversity outcomes into its assessment plan: "Multiple Points of View" and "Comparative Cultural Awareness." To meet the "Multiple Points of View" all-college outcome, students must "[i]dentify the attitudes, values, core beliefs, data, and/or assumptions that shape multiple points of view in relation to a particular problem, project, or topic." For the "Comparative Cultural Awareness" general education outcome, students must succeed in courses with a "primary focus of cultural analysis that ensures an explicit comparison of culture in context." Options range from agroecology and anthropology classes, to business and field studies classes, to language, literature, history, and political science courses.

Northwest's Associate of Applied Science degrees have two weaknesses. First, these degrees do not have a multicultural component. Second, some Associate of Applied Science degrees do not include a college-level math course, which makes these degrees ineligible for the Bachelor of Applied Science degree at the University of Wyoming. The Vice President for Academic Affairs has raised these issues

with program chairs and faculty. Currently, these issues are being addressed at the advising rather than the programmatic level.

The College models the importance of technology. For example, many classes incorporate technology, whether it be online technology (e.g., *BlackboardCE* and/or vodcasting and/or podcasting) or hands-on skills, such as that done by farrier students shoeing horses, nursing students in their practica, or photo students working in the lab. Most technical programs have up-to-date technology.

Northwest involves alumni, employers, and other external constituents in its curricular development and evaluation. In addition to drawing on the insights of advisory boards, the College relies on community surveys conducted in all service area communities to help guide course and program delivery. All new programs must collect feedback from external groups prior to approval. New program approval forms required by the Wyoming Community College Commission lead colleges to document community professional involvement in the design of new programs. Capstone courses require outside evaluators to attend presentations, and that feedback may be considered by departments and divisions as an impetus for curricular change. Programs provide these evaluators with feedback forms that go to students and may be reviewed by faculty.

Northwest supports creation and use of scholarship by students in keeping with its mission by providing students the environment, the skills and the motivation to do so. The environment for research starts with Hinckley Library, which has a physical as well as a virtual presence for all students.

Hinckley Library

Northwest College's Hinckley Library staff develops, organizes, maintains, and provides access to materials that support students and other library users in their pursuit of educational and lifelong learning goals. Staff also teach library users to find, evaluate, and utilize information resources.

Hinckley Library contains a physical collection of 53,303 books, 358 periodical subscriptions, 1,570 DVDs and music CDs, 258 music scores, and other materials to support student research. The library is a U.S. government and Wyoming state government depository. In addition, it provides access to over 80 paid research databases, which include an image database, a music database, discipline-specific online encyclopedias, a human anatomy dissection database, and a collection of practice tests. Currently, these databases make available 42,578 electronic periodical titles, as well as 57,712 electronic books. In addition, the building houses 26 PCs, 6 Mac computers, and 8 library research

computers. The library also has 4 laptop computers for students to check out for use in the building.

During the academic year, the library is open every day for a total of 85 hours per week. The building is staffed with a library assistant (not student assistant) until 10 p.m. on Sunday and until 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Hours are expanded during final exams. Library staff consists of three Master of Library Science librarians, a Bachelor of Arts-prepared librarian, and three part-time library assistants. Student staff provides support at the circulation desk. Librarians answer about 240 reference questions in a typical week.

Hinckley Library is well-funded. The total budget for 2008–2009 was $395,317.00. The library has used money from its budget and $150,000 from Wyoming Legislative funding to purchase books and AV materials for the collection. To date, Hinckley Library has added new materials in film, nursing, anthropology, English as a second language, and children's literature in addition to updating the U.S.G.S. map collection for Wyoming and Montana. Typically, the library also uses a small amount of donation money, and in 2006–2007, began receiving income from the Student Senate ($2,952.00), which must be used for items that directly benefit students.

On average 2,100 people, both students and community members, enter the library each week to use library and computer resources, get assistance with their research, or to study. Table 4.3 details student use of the Hinckley Library in Powell on the main campus. Hinckley Library also provides part-time staffing at the Cody Center.

As part of the library's mission, librarians provide library research sessions at faculty requests. Each information literacy session is custom-designed for specific assignment(s). Instruction sessions have grown from 32 sessions reaching 452 students during Fall 2006 to 59 sessions reaching 861 students in Fall 2008. The library has been assessing student learning during these sessions with a pre and post test and has seen some improvement over the course of the semester. Faculty who use library services report that they believe their students' papers and projects are better as a result of instruction. In Spring 2009, librarians piloted a one-credit Information Literacy class that is coupled with a student's capstone class.

Laboratory Resources
As important as the library for an environment appropriate for research, are the science labs and computer labs. Northwest College has 11 science labs well stocked with equipment and materials to perform scientific research. Laboratory resources range from physics, biology, and chemistry labs to the drafting lab complete with computer stations, software for Geographic Information Systems, CAD applica-

tions, and a 3-D printer.[20] Additionally, students can choose from 42 different computer labs, both PC and Mac, hosting 500 machines. (At this time, some stationary labs are being considered for a change to a laptop lab for more effective use of space.)[21]

Table 4.3
Student Use of the Library

SERVICE/USAGE	FY2006	FY2007	% Change FY06—FY07	FY2008	% Change FY07 –FY08	% Change FY06—FY08
Total Gate Count (Visitation)	69,294	71,301	+2.9	74,445	+4.4	+7.4
Total Circulation (Items Checked Out)	8,761	8,624	-1.6	10,704	+24.1	+22.2
Reference Transactions (Face-to-Face Help)	11,630	9,993	-14.1	11,201	+12.1	-3.7
Number of Instructional Classes/presentations	50	79	+58.0	88	+11.4	+76.0
Headcount for Instructional Classes/Presentations	681	1,092	+60.4	1,305	+19.5	+91.6

Finally, students are motivated to research through expectations of faculty and degree requirements. Faculty at Northwest College expect students to master the knowledge and skills necessary for independent learning in programs of applied practice. Successful meeting of this expectation is demonstrated not only in the completion of research assignments, a skill first taught in ENGL 1010 and then developed through a variety of course-specific research assignments that lead to the capstone course, but also through public programs and displays: photo shows, art shows, welding contests, open mic performances, music performances and convocations, horse shows, drafting technology displays, athletic events, archaeological digs, internships, etc.

The application of learning is essential, and as such, Northwest College provides many opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and scholarship. All Associate of Applied Science degrees at Northwest are built on a core of general education designed to prepare students for life-long learning. This type of learning assures that students can read, write, analyze and solve problems, think creatively and critically, research, and use appropriate technology. This basic foundation of general education ensures that students can learn independently in and beyond their programs. Beyond the general education core, students must also master the knowledge and skills specific to the occupational area and demonstrate the ability to handle a significant project through their capstone courses. In some Associate of Applied Science programs, students must obtain licensure

20 See Northwest College Laboratory Resources in the Resource Room.
21 See NWC Computer Labs List in the Resource Room.

in the field once their degree is complete (e.g., Nursing, Welding). Northwest's Associate of Applied Science programs prepare students for that step as well as for success in the occupation. Each Associate of Applied Science program has specific student learning outcomes. On a yearly basis, faculty report on student success relative to these specific learning outcomes.[22]

> *"Northwest College's curricular requirements for general education and co-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to gain this balance."*

In addition, most Associate of Applied Science degree programs, as well as many Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degree programs, require students to apply their skills in a work environment through a cooperative education experience or internship. In these environments, students work independently from their instructors to deepen their learning in an on-the-job experience. Experiential learning (Internships and Cooperative Education) allows students to test the waters, either with a specific company or a career field in general. Internships are work-based learning experiences, arranged through Northwest College's Office of Work-Based Learning. These arrangements are supervised, career-related work experiences combined with reflective, academic study that helps students "learn by doing." By embarking on one or more, students can sharpen their skills, begin a network of employer contacts, assess their strengths, and test classroom theories in a real world setting. Additionally, internships and cooperative education boosts student maturity and self-confidence levels; improves human relations skills; prepares students for life after graduation; and helps them student integrate personal values with work. Students may complete a maximum of 12 credit hours of work-based learning to fulfill associate degree requirements, applying no more than six credits of any one of these options toward the total of 12 credits. From 2006–2009, 49 students took advantage of this opportunity, totaling 144 credit hours.

Applying knowledge in a socially responsible manner is critical to a student's development, and to ensure this, Northwest provides curricular and co-curricular activities that promote this. In *The Northwest College Catalog*, the preamble to the general education outcomes states, "When successful, education balances the sometimes contradictory claims of social service and individual ambition." Northwest College's curricular requirements for general education and co-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to gain this balance. The following list provides a brief sampling.

Curricular Opportunities

- **HLED 1005/SOC 1005, "Risky Behaviors"**—"Designed to increase a student's awareness of the social influence of drugs, alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and sexual assault from a multi-disciplinary perspective (health, physiological, and sociological). Presents in logical form accurate, current information from the biological, health, and sociological sciences essential for making sound decisions regarding lifestyle choices." Developed in answer to

22 See Program-specific Outcomes Reports in the Resource Room.

a need of the student body, the main focus of the course is to increase student awareness and to equip them with the knowledge that leads to good choices.

- **SOC 2340, "Relationship Violence"**—"Students learn the nature and extent of domestic violence, child abuse, dating violence, and sexual assault in America and the legal ramifications. A historical perspective on relationship violence is explored as well as contemporary factors that contribute to the recurrence of the cycle of violence. Finally coping strategies and techniques to prevent burnout are addressed for the professional working with the victims of violence. Students who successfully complete this course with a grade of 'B' or better may be eligible for possible internship positions with Crisis Intervention Services." This course was developed in partnership with the Crisis Intervention Centers in Powell and Cody to promote awareness of this problem as well as to train individuals to break the cycle of violence. In promoting this course, new volunteers have been recruited to the community program. Additionally, local law enforcement professionals have taken the class in order to be better informed about the facts surrounding relationship violence. It is taught by the director of the Park County Crisis Intervention Center.

- **Government Requirement for All Graduates**—Wyoming Statute, Title 21, Chapter 9, Section 102, mandates that all public institutions "give instruction in the essentials of the United States constitution and the constitution of the state of Wyoming, including the study of and devotion to American institution and ideals," and no student shall receive a post-secondary degree from a Wyoming institution of higher education without having been instructed in the above. An understanding of politics and government is fundamental to good citizenship and contributes to the foundation of scholarly knowledge expected of college graduates. Students have three options for meeting this requirement.

- **PHTO 2385, "Theme House: Photography"** –Photography Theme House students do a community service project every semester. Students have raised thousands of dollars for different charities and causes in the past 10 years. Most recently, students organized events for a Northwest College employee to help with medical costs, the local charity Reaching Hands Ranch, and a Photography alumnus involved in a car accident. Photo Theme House students also produced a "Portraits of Cancer Survivors" show that has twice toured the state to promote awareness.

January

- **Phi Theta Kappa**—The purpose of Northwest's Phi Epsilon Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society is to promote scholarship, the development of leadership and service, and the cultivation of fellowship among qualified honor students at Northwest College. PTK currently has 80 members. They conduct a book drive for Better World Books every semester and occasionally work with Habitat for Humanity. A current project is to examine the PTK Honors Topic "The Paradox of Affluence: Choices, Challenges, and Consequences."

- **CO/M 2010: "Leadership Skills: SIFE"**—Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) is a partnership between business and higher education that is preparing the next generation of entrepreneurs and business leaders to create a better world for everyone. The SIFE program concentrates on six areas: market economics, success skills, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, environmental sustainability, and business ethics. The NWC SIFE Team has been in existence since 2000 and is usually made up of between 10–20 members. SIFE is offered as a one-credit course CO/M 2010, "Leadership Skills: SIFE."

- **Service Learning**—Northwest's service learning program is in its early stages. (For a discussion, see Criterion Five.)

CORE COMPONENT—4D: *Northwest College provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.*

Northwest's academic and student support programs contribute to the development of student skills and attitudes fundamental to the responsible use of knowledge. These considerations are woven into the fabric of general education courses—often articulated in course syllabi—and standards may vary from discipline to discipline. However, all Northwest College courses of study adhere to discipline-specific practices and ethics.

To enhance student success, the College takes a number of steps that include but are not limited to the following:

Academic Support Programs
- **Required Placement Testing**—To facilitate underprepared students' academic success and transition into the general education curriculum, Northwest uses a placement system for math, writing, and reading courses. This placement is based on Compass, ACT, and SAT scores. Students who do not score at the college level are placed in courses designed to support development of these skills. Those who believe

their placement test scores do not reflect their proficiency may retake the placement tests.

- **Developmental and College Studies Courses**—Northwest offers developmental courses in math, writing, and reading. These courses carry college credit but do not count toward graduation requirements. The College also offers two one-credit courses to help students acquire study skills. On average, 92% of first-time freshmen place into developmental courses. HMDV 1000 and HMDV 1010 are useful in helping students master use of the electronic library, computer labs, and other important academic success skills. These courses do count toward graduation and are highly recommended for all students. (See Appendix 4.3, Retention of First-time Students Who Placed into Developmental Courses.)

- **Tutoring**—Several forms of tutoring are available at Northwest College. The Student Success Center offers peer tutoring in many academic areas for students. Recruited from the student body and recommended by academic departments, peer tutors represent both academic excellence and service to others. Tutoring services are free, and all students are welcome to inquire about group or individualized programs. In addition, the College supports the Math Tutoring Center, the Writing Center, and the Presentation Lab to provide faculty and staff support for students seeking assistance in these areas. These resources are separate from the Success Center. This service is well-used as is evidenced by the data shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.4
Student Success Center Peer Tutor Totals (Fall 2003–Spring 2009)

PEER TUTOR TOTALS (FALL 2003–SPRING 2009)							
SEM.	STUDENTS	HOURS	TUTORS	SEM.	STUDENTS	HOURS	TUTORS
FA03	130	1,258	41	SP04	94	1,570	47
FA04	134	1,222	51	SP05	73	864	22
FA05	114	1,277	51	SP06	111	1,390	38
FA06	128	1,495	55	SP07	136	2,053	30
FA07	131	1,472	60	SP08	109	939	30
FA08	132	1,285	40	SP09	133	1,140	38
TOTALS	769	8,009	298	TOTALS	656	7,956	205

Table 4.5
On-campus Housing Numbers

YEAR	ENROLLMENT	# IN HALLS	% IN HALLS	# IN APTS	TOTAL ON-CAMPUS	% ON-CAMPUS OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT
2003	1,715	394	23%	87	481	28%
2004	1,755	418	24%	73	491	28%
2005	1,754	470	27%	93	563	32%
2006	1,763	505	29%	86	591	34%
2007	1,747	541	31%	84	625	36%
2008	1,810	555	31%	76	631	35%
2009	2,198	658	30%	85	743	34%

Source: Housing Office

- **Personal Counseling**—Northwest College offers personal counseling in a professional and confidential atmosphere to students desiring it. Counselors strive to assist students in dealing with the sometimes stressful college environment, foster awareness of personal strengths and interests, and encourage students to take full advantage of the opportunities for academic and personal growth. Approximately 350 students take advantage of this service in a year.

- **Residential Life**—The Northwest College Residential Life program is more than dormitories and apartment buildings. It is an environment for human development, a living and learning community for students. In this environment, programming is offered to promote students' social, spiritual, physical, and intellectual well being. In addition, the five residence halls and two apartment complexes are safe, clean, and wired for internet access. Rules for living in the halls and apartments are clearly stated, and all students must sign a contract agreeing to appropriate behavior. All halls are staffed with student Resident Assistants (RAs), and each has a Resident Director (RD). Each apartment complex has a manager, and the larger complex has two additional staff members. All residential life operations are overseen by the Residence and Campus Life Director, with help and support from the Residence and Conference Specialist and Senior Office Assistant for Residential Life.

The number of students residing in the halls at Northwest College has grown over the past decade. As shown in Table

4.6, the number of resident students grew from 481 students in 2003 to 631 students in 2008, and, as of Fall 2009, the halls and apartments are at capacity.

Residence Halls

- Ashley Hall is one of the largest halls on campus with housing for 148 residents in 74 rooms.

- Cody Hall is the largest residence hall on the Northwest College campus and houses up to 180 residents in 90 rooms.

- Colter Hall houses 84 residents in 44 rooms.

- Lewis and Clark Hall was recently refurbished, including a new kitchen area, lobby, and resident rooms, and houses up to 148 students in 80 rooms.

- Simpson Hall is a coed, 154-bed hall featuring "suite style" living in units with four single bedrooms, a bathroom/shower and central living room.

Apartments

- Trapper Village Main has 5 apartment buildings containing 20 one- and two-bedroom apartments.

- Trapper Village West consists of 61 one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartments.

Programming is developed by the RAs in cooperation with the RDs and covers a wide variety of topics, everything from study habits to avoiding sexual assault to healthy living habits.

Northwest follows explicit policies and procedures to ensure ethical conduct in its research and instructional activities. Northwest also provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and practice conducted by faculty and students.

Faculty Policies

Professional Ethics: Faculty conduct is guided by policy as outlined in the "Professional Ethics," Section 1.5.1, of the *Employment Handbook*. The College "expects that its faculty should honor and comply with the recognized standards of the profession and the 'Statement of Professional Ethics' promulgated by the American Association of University Professors." The College has a "Human Subjects Research Policy." Other literature- and laboratory-based research is unmonitored though governed by discipline-specific standards (including the handling of hazardous materials). Grant research is monitored by the appropriate agency.

Syllabi Guidelines: The Office of Academic Affairs publishes a yearly

guide for faculty writing course syllabi.[23] Faculty are responsible for overseeing student research in individual courses. They discourage academic dishonesty through written statements on course syllabi and may use technological tools to discover such practices in students' work (e.g., *SafeAssign* to check student work for plagiarism).[24] Capstone faculty have members of the Institutional Research Committee provide feedback to students using surveys as part of the capstone experience.

Staff Policies
The *Employment Handbook* describes the rights and responsibilities of all College employees.

Student Policies
Statements on Course Syllabi: Many faculty include statements on course syllabi describing expected ethical conduct. In addition to explaining the consequences of academic dishonesty, many faculty use syllabi to articulate safety measures and to ensure compliance with government regulations as well as appropriate classroom and online behavior.

Student "Academic Code of Conduct": The Student "Academic Code of Conduct," housed in the *Student Handbook*, outlines the student's academic rights and responsibilities. This section defines plagiarism, cheating, trafficking, copyright infringement, and interfering with the learning of other students. The *Student Handbook* also outlines possible actions that may be taken against students who breach the "Academic Code of Conduct." As explained in the *Student Handbook*, students have the right to initiate instructional complaints "to resolve differences which may arise concerning a disagreement between a student and an instructor over instructional incidents."

Northwest creates, disseminates, and enforces clear policies on practices involving intellectual property rights. Policy 1.6.6, which governs intellectual property rights, is annually disseminated to employees via the *Employment Handbook* and is available on the College website. The *Employment Handbook* further defines copyrightable and patentable material (See section 1.6.6.1.1), rights and responsibilities (See section 1.6.6.1.2), and methods for determining ownership and mediation (See sections 1.6.6.1.3 and 1.6.6.1.4).

Final Thoughts

Though Northwest College is strong in providing a life of learning for students, future plans for improvement include using data more effectively in making program adjustments; the addition of preparatory classes and tutorials for online learners in addition to greater support for these students; improved outcomes in

23 See Writing Syllabus Guidelines in the Resource Room.
24 See course syllabi in the Resource Room.

the developmental learning courses; and a stronger general education component in the Associate of Applied Science degrees. To improve facilitation of a life of learning for staff, Northwest College expects to maintain and/or improve funding for professional development. Additionally, non-teaching staff will be provided with a statement that reinforces freedom of inquiry.

As this discussion has shown, Northwest College values a life of learning, a point reinforced through its emphasis on general education, its commitment to professional development for all employees, and its work with local communities. Northwest has the resources, both in terms of personnel and facilities, to prepare students for a life of learning and to promote continued learning for staff and faculty. If every student, like Photography graduate Chelsey DeWald, is able to say a few years after graduation, "I realize that what was learned in college, I use today," then Northwest has been successful in meeting its mission, knowing that students received the knowledge and skills they needed to thrive in a changing world.

Criterion Five

Engagement and Service

Northwest College
WYOMING

> *"Northwest College prides itself on articulation agreements that facilitate student mobility to continue progress in degree work."*

Criterion Five:
Engagement and Service

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

Northwest College Prides Itself on

- Effective partnerships with local, state, regional, and international entities.

- Strong relationships with public schools in the service area.

- Making its facilities available for the delivery of education, performances, conferences, and community meetings and gatherings.

- Good communication tools that include award-winning student publications, a widely available television station (NWC-TV), and comprehensive website.

- Articulation agreements that facilitate student mobility to continue progress in degree work.

- Cultural, multicultural, extra-curricular, and co-curricular activities that engage the College's various constituencies.

- Strong response to the outreach areas through physical centers and distance education.

- A Workforce Development program that works closely with local employers to strengthen the employee base in their communities.

Northwest College Challenges Itself to

- Balance the need for services at the outreach centers with available resources.

- Continue development of service learning and civic engagement to enhance current student experiential learning opportunities.

- Better track community use of facilities.

- Use data more effectively to make decisions regarding constituency engagement and service.

- Find resources that allow the College to continue providing non-credit workforce training in the absence of an identifiable revenue stream.

Northwest College: Who We Are

In the fall of 2008, Northwest College Ceramics Instructor Elaine DeBuhr

initiated a service-learning project titled, "Empty Bowls," for "Advanced Ceramics" (ART 2430) students. Based upon the national movement of the same name, the goal of the event is to help organizations fight hunger and to raise awareness about the issues of hunger and food security. All proceeds from the 2008 Powell "Empty Bowls" went to Loaves and Fishes, the local food bank.

For the price of $10, attendees picked from the display of handmade bowls crafted by the college art students, and enjoyed a simple meal of bread and soup. Plaza Diane, an off-campus venue located in the very center of town, was chosen to draw a strong audience from the community and not just the College. The event was scheduled the week before Thanksgiving because of the proximity to the holiday that celebrates with food and begins the season of giving. The response was overwhelming. A line of people extended around the block soon after the doors opened at 5:30 pm. Each of the 220 handmade bowls sold within one hour, but people continued to arrive and contribute money though the bowls were gone and the soup depleted. Ultimately, at the 2008 event, $2,625.00 was raised for Loaves and Fishes in that one evening while the 2009 Empty Bowls raised $4,200.00. Equally important to raising money is providing learning opportunities for students. As Celyn Flory, an Art and Writing graduate, remembers:

> When I heard about the Empty Bowls idea from Elaine, I thought it was a wonderful project. Powell is a small town in the proverbial "middle of nowhere," but the community has a large heart. I liked that we could make a difference for Empty Bowls, and bring home to the people of Powell that though we were largely a content little town, there were people there and elsewhere that may not have enough food. The idea of empty vessels, in this case bowls, symbolizing need and hunger, was poignant. I feel that though we are a mechanized culture, with factory-made sweaters in place of hand-knit ones, and most of the items in our lives manufactured overseas, there is also a hunger for handmade objects. There is a want for personal touch, and thrown or built pottery is made by human hands, far different than store-bought bowls cracked out of identical molds.

> While I threw the bowls on the wheel, I thought of times in my childhood where we were a hungry family. My mother received food boxes from time to time, either through a food bank or co-workers. One Thanksgiving, her co-workers sent us a food box filled with items pulled from their own kitchens, and pitched together to buy us a turkey. Contributing to Empty Bowls allowed me to come full circle, not only donating my time to make the bowls to help raise money, but to raise awareness through the community I lived among.

> On the night Empty Bowls opened, I was unable to attend because of tutoring. However, I stopped by in the last hour, and I was shocked to see a line going out from the Plaza Diane building to the street corner. I stood there in the chill November evening, almost not processing how many people

> *"Northwest has a close relationship with its communities and makes a good-faith effort to identify and meet the needs of its various constituencies spread over a sizable three-county service area."*

there were, humbled that so many came out. They were there to raise money for hunger—they then gave generously at the donation jar once they bought their bowls—and they were there because they themselves had a hunger for handmade bowls and for a human experience. I peeked in one of the vertical windows, stuck by how content people looked, how thoughtful, how they touched many of the bowls one by one, almost reverent, at the rim, with one or two fingers. People laughed, talked thoughtfully, shared, and donated. Empty Bowls was not a success just because of the students who made bowls, but because the people of Powell came together.

Northwest's mission emphasizes the College's commitment to "community vitality." Northwest has a close relationship with its communities and makes a good-faith effort to identify and meet the needs of its various constituencies spread over a sizable three-county service area. The arrival of new technologies for the delivery of courses, such as online courses and Wyoming Equality Network (WEN) video, has dramatically increased the College's ability to provide educational resources to its service area. Furthermore, with the opening of the Cody and Worland Centers, the College has amplified its physical presence in two distance education and business hubs.

Northwest College's Constituencies

Northwest College's constituencies have been shaped both by the College's history and by legislative mandate. The most obvious way to define them is by statutorily mandated service area: Park, Big Horn, and Washakie Counties. (See "Northwest College Background and Demographics" in the Self-study Overview for more specific information on each of these communities.) In terms of constituencies, the College has identified four (sometimes overlapping) groups: Students, Local Communities, the State of Wyoming, and Employees.

Students

This is the constituency that receives most of the College's attention. Northwest has a diverse student population that includes traditional-aged students, non-traditional-aged students, workforce non-credit students, pre-college students, high school students taking college classes, and life-long learners. Unlike most community colleges, the majority of Northwest's students are traditional age (See Table 0.1). Approximately one-third of students live on campus (See Table 4.6).

Local Communities

As a community college, Northwest also serves the educational needs of the communities in its defined service area. The largest population center is Cody, a town of approximately 10,000 people and 25 miles from the college. At the farthest end of the service area (90 miles away) is Worland, a town of 5,250 people. People in the service area make a living primarily through farming and ranching, small businesses, tourism, and gas and oil industries. This constituency is comprised of prospective students; elected officials; donors; alumni; business leaders; school, city and county officials; and advisory boards,

not to mention the umbrella Park County taxpayers group—the true owners of the College. Local communities are served in a variety of ways: through concurrent enrollment in the high schools, professional development for teachers, workforce training for business and industry, cultural and athletic events, and more.

State of Wyoming

Because Northwest is primarily a state-funded institution, another constituency is the state of Wyoming. The State governs service through legislative action, provides general fund appropriations to fund College work, and makes demands of the colleges through mandates. Members of this constituency include the Governor, the Wyoming Business Council, the Wyoming Community College Commission, other community colleges, the University of Wyoming, and the general citizenry. Physically, the state is large, but in terms of population, Wyoming is small. The great distances from one end of the state to the other and the bureaucratic nature of state and local government present challenges in meeting the demands put upon the community colleges by the legislature.

Northwest College Employees

Northwest views its own employee base as one of its constituencies. This group is comprised of those responsible for the day-to-day operations of the College. Job-related educational levels range from high school diplomas to PhDs. Included in the College's mission and planning is how it meets the needs of this group. Many employees take classes and/or participate in professional development, but all serve as a vital link between the College and area communities.

In addition to these constituencies, the College has also seen its community expand well beyond its geographic service area boundaries given its increasing number of international students and partnerships.

CORE COMPONENT—5A: *Northwest College learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.*

Northwest's commitments are shaped by its mission and its capacity to support those commitments. Although the wording of the College's mission statement has evolved, at its core remains the philosophy of serving its constituencies through the delivery of quality educational offerings. According to Northwest's mission statement, adopted in 2008,

> *Through exceptional, dynamic living and learning environments, Northwest College dedicates itself to individual student achievement, diversity, global citizenship, and community vitality.*

Although quality educational offerings and documented student learning are the College's primary concerns, cultural and economic elements of its mission have also been defining institutional characteristics.

The distance from the Powell campus to some of these communities has created difficulties in determining and addressing need for educational services. This is further complicated by the economic realities of a state funding formula that requires a certain economy of scale in the delivery of classes and by two counties in the three-county service area that do not directly support the College through *ad velorum* taxes. However, the College works to identify its constituents and meet their educational and service needs.

The College utilizes a number of environmental screening practices to understand the changing needs of its constituencies and their communities with the Market Research Studies being the most consistent community scanning tool. (See Criterion Two for a discussion of capacity screening and planning.) Those constituent groups in the closest proximity to Powell are the easiest to screen while those more distant from the Powell campus provide some of the greatest challenges. (See Criterion Two for more information on scanning.)

The Northwest College campus in Powell as well as the Centers and all other outreach work reflect the College's response to the diverse needs of the constituencies being served. There are many examples of programs and services to illustrate this response. Following are a few examples.

- Lounge opened for non-traditional students.

- Fitness classes fit employee schedules.

- Membership to Johnson Fitness Center as employee benefit.

- The Oasis student lounge.

- The 7th St. Grille Internet Café.

- Diversity in scheduling times and modalities.

- Attractive and fully-developed website.

Northwest College's educational and service outreach programs respond to identified community needs. The most tangible example of Northwest's outreach work is the opening of the Cody and Worland Centers.

- **The Cody Center** provides an off-campus location for Northwest's outreach work in Cody. Until Summer 2001, college courses were delivered on the Cody High School campus. At that time, the College secured 3,000 square feet of leased space and moved out of the high school. The newly acquired space had three classrooms, a computer lab, and a faculty office that was shared by many.

  In 2005, after outgrowing that space, Northwest leased its current

location with nearly 10,000 square feet of classrooms, computer labs, and private offices in the recently purchased Park County Complex. The College partnered with the City of Cody, the Park County Library, the University of Wyoming, and Park County. Increased services became a possibility, and new staff were added to serve the increasing number of students. A small site quickly expanded into a centrally located space to accommodate more courses, full program delivery, and the full range of support services needed by students. In 2008, the Higher Learning Commission approved the Cody Center for degree delivery. Cody Center enrollments and FTE have, for the most part, increased since moving into the new facility. In 2007–2008, Northwest served approximately 400 students a year at this Center. (See Appendix 5.1, Cody Center Full-time Enrollments.)

- **The Worland Center** opened in the fall of 2005. Prior to this date, classes were offered in Worland High School. The new Center, leased space in the Worland Community Center Complex, provided four classrooms, a computer lab, and office space. Northwest experienced a steady decline in enrollments in Worland since 2000–2001. In the spring of 2009, because of significant anticipated budget shortfalls and extremely low enrollment, the College reduced its lease at the Community Center Complex to one classroom/computer lab and redesigned its course delivery model. Enrollments in Worland have slowly declined since 2001, with a high of 282 students in 2000–2001 to a low of 106 students in 2008–2009. (See Appendix 5.2, Worland Center Full-time Enrollments.)

The following paragraphs provide a sampling of additional programs.

- **"College for My Life"** guarantees degree delivery specific to a cohort audience who generally has the same circumstances, schedules, etc. Courses are delivered during students' free time, and rotation is guaranteed through degree completion. As an example, a group of stay-at-home parents in Cody was identified. They had the hours between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. free but did not want to miss their children's evening and weekend events. Daytime delivery of the Business degree at the Cody Center was guaranteed to satisfy this group's needs.

- **RN and PN Nursing Programs** were created in collaboration with Worland and its hospital to answer real needs. The PN program has continued with Worland as its primary delivery base although the Worland RN program has not had enough qualified students for a cohort. Qualifying students can use distance delivery methods.

- **Wyoming Equality Network (WEN) Video Schedule** prioritizes usage times based on needs of various constituent groups. WEN video is available throughout the service area high schools. From 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., courses are scheduled to meet the needs of high school students in college classes. During the 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. session, courses are scheduled for teachers and staff gaining recertification credit (professional development for public school individuals). Finally, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., courses are scheduled for students in the extended campus areas.

- **Student Services** are available on-site on a rotating basis, including librarians, counselors, financial aid representatives, and the registrar.

- **A full-time faculty member** has been assigned part-time to meet the needs of students in Extended Campus; he handles advising, registering, tutoring, and teaching students.

In its role as a comprehensive community college, Northwest provides opportunities in continuing education, outreach, customized training, and extension services.

Outreach

- **Distance Education Delivery** provides opportunities for students who do not live near campus or have time commitments that do not allow them to attend regularly scheduled classes. The number of courses offered and enrollment in those courses continues to increase through Internet and interactive television courses.[1] Northwest College has managed the growth of this delivery in order to maintain quality delivery. Guidelines are in place to ensure that students are well-served in this alternative format. Work has begun on preparing to request Higher Learning Commission approval to deliver degrees completely online. (See Criterion Three for a discussion of online delivery.)

Customized Training

- **The Workforce Training and Development Program** at Northwest has grown from a single person on campus to a five-member team spread throughout the service area. The current structure includes a Coordinator and support staff person on campus and at each outreach center. In the past two years, the Governor of Wyoming has emphasized economic development and workforce training as a state priority. This emphasis has led to the channeling of state grant funding into the College's program and helped fund some high-cost programs (e.g., Land Surveyors Certificate,

1   See Distance Education Report in the Resource Room.

BPI Building Analyst Certification Training and Food and Hospitality Ambassadors Program).

- The Workforce Training unit was reorganized in 2008–2009. Instead of one administrator planning all programming, the responsibilities were divided among first three, then two coordinators who live in one of the towns they serve. Overall management of the team was shifted to the Dean of Extended Campus and Workforce who acts as the team leader and connection to credit activities. During the transition, the College offered fewer trainings, leading to a decreased number of participants. Program delivery and enrollment numbers are expected to increase with a larger number of offerings. In addition, seven new programs are in various stages of development and delivery: Building Analyst Certification, Pharmacy Technician, Food and Hospitality Training, Barista Training, Certified Medical Assistant, Work Readiness Program, and Survey Technician. (See Appendix 5.3, Workforce Training and Development Report.)

- Northwest's economic and workforce development activities are sought after and valued by civic and business leaders. Workforce Coordinators are constantly working to know the needs of the workforce since much of what they deliver needs to happen quickly. Coordinators belong to and attend Chamber of Commerce functions. They also sit on advisory boards in the business community as well as host advisory boards for some certificate trainings.

- While area businesses recognize the contributions of Northwest's workforce program, two comments stand out. The first is from Bruce B. Eldredge, Executive Director and CEO of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, who writes in a 30 March 2009 letter, "Your continuing education workshops and classes in human relations have been particularly helpful to staff, honing their skills in supervision and management."[2] Similarly, Dave Bonner, publisher of *The Powell Tribune*

2   See Community Letters File in the Resource Room.

and State Legislator, observes in a letter dated 30 March 2009, "Through the years, employees at our newspaper have enrolled in classes, both credit and non-credit, offered by the college. *The Powell Tribune* has paid tuition on numerous occasions for employees to improve their job skills, and it has been a benefit to the individual and to our organization. The availability of workforce training is a huge contribution to the business community."[3]

Continuing Education

- **Powell Valley Community Education** (PVCE) provides lifelong learning opportunities to area residents and guests. This non-credit program is funded via a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) agreement with Park County School District, #1. It is supported by a ½-mill tax assessed on property valuation within the Powell School District; this assessment enables funding for supporting administrative staff. All classes, programs, and activities conducted by PVCE are expected to be self-supporting. Community education classes, workshops, and seminars include an extensive variety of topics (everything from belly dancing to driver education) and carry no college or high school credit. The National Weather Service has requested weather-spotter training, and PVCE also provides a way for pilots to receive Federal Aviation Administration training. Since 1999, PVCE has averaged 3,626 participants each year.[4]

College Preparation for Adults

- **The Adult Basic Education Program (ABE)** is currently in its 26th year of program delivery and offers quality, comprehensive adult basic education instructional programs and services designed to promote access to both post-secondary education and employment options for educationally and economically disadvantaged adults in Park, Big Horn, and Washakie Counties. Programs and services focus on basic skills development in reading, writing, and mathematics, GED preparation, ESL, citizenship (EL/Civics combined with language instruction), and basic computer literacy skills instruction, with attention to educational attainment, work-readiness, employment, and entry into post-secondary education or vocational training. Instruction is handled in small groups or through individual tutoring at no cost to participants.

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3   See Community Letters File in the Resource Room.
4   See PVCE Enrollments in the Resource Room.

- In partnership with local workforce centers, area human and social service agencies, area industry and business, school districts, and faith-based organizations, NWC-ABE staff uses effective and proven research-based curriculum and instructional methodologies and strategies to maintain educational and workplace literacy programs and services in six outreach communities across the Big Horn Basin, providing year-round day and evening instruction.

- Park, Big Horn, and Washakie Counties have significant literacy issues. According to statistics released in the 1998 study *The State of Literacy in America: Estimates at the Local, State, and National Levels* (National Institute for Literacy), the percentage of the adult population at Level 1 literacy (estimated at below a 4th grade literacy equivalent) is 11% for Park County, 17% for Big Horn County (the highest in the state), and 14% for Washakie County (third highest in the state), an average of 14% for Northwest's service area compared to a state average of 11%. Consequently, over 3,000 students have enrolled in adult literacy and GED preparation since fiscal year 1998.

- NWC-ABE maintains expanded on-site instructional hours (day/evening/summer) at nine sites: Powell—NWC West Campus; Cody—NWC Cody Center, Cody Workforce Center, and Park County Detention Center; Worland—NWC Worland Center at the Worland Community Center Complex and Washakie County Detention Center; Lovell—Big Horn County Health Coalition; Greybull—Greybull Public Library; and Basin—Big Horn County Detention Center. In addition to conventional delivery of ABE programs and services, NWC-ABE, in collaboration with the Wyoming Equity Network (WEN) and Big Horn Basin school districts, has successfully utilized available ITV video classroom sites to provide access to distance learning opportunities for educationally disadvantaged adults in our three-county service area. The project manager has offered intensive GED preparation classes (fall/spring) over the ITV network to the most rurally isolated communities of Basin, Byron, Burlington, Manderson, Meeteetse, and Ten Sleep.

- The manager conducts regular outreach site visits to ensure delivery of quality educational programs, providing supervision and instructional leadership, assessment of program delivery

methods, and implementation of program improvement efforts. The capacity and experience of the organization to deliver proposed services is documented in past performance outcomes. Since FY 2006, NWC-ABE has served the educational and workplace literacy needs of 1,218 students, 604 of whom have acquired at least 12 or more hours of instruction. Along with increased student numbers, NWC-ABE has met performance plan outcomes and has seen significant student achievements and successes. The persistence or retention rate for NWC-ABE students (those receiving 12 or more hours of instruction) has averaged approximately 50% the past four years. Based on program data collected over the past four years, on average 58% of total students each year completed or advanced one or more educational functioning levels, 81% have acquired a GED, 70% have gained employment, 94% have retained employment, and 79% have entered college or vocational school.[5]

- **The General Education Development Testing Center** provides individualized and small-class instruction in preparation for the General Education Development (GED) Exam, which is offered throughout the year. Northwest College is a GED Testing Center.

- **English as a Second Language (ESL)** is a non-credit, ABE-related program and also a for-credit option at the College. These programs teach English language skills to adults whose first language is not English and seek to develop an understanding of American culture and society to facilitate effective citizenship.

CORE COMPONENT—5B: *Northwest College has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.*

Northwest employs many structures and processes to enable effective connections with its communities. The most tangible examples are the Centers in Cody and Worland, the work of the Dean of Extended Campus and Workforce, and the Workforce Training Team. Academic Advisory Boards are essential to instructional programs. (See Criterion Three for an extended discussion.) But other advisory boards comprise an essential element of Northwest's connections with its communities. Other examples include but are not limited to the following:

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5   See Adult Basic Education Grant Annual Reports in the Resource Room.

Boards

- **The Board of Trustees** geographically represents and is elected from the tax district (Park County). Each board meeting includes a public comment period in addition to yearly meetings held at off-campus, tax district locations in Cody and Meeteetse. The Board provides an important link to the College's external constituencies.[6]

- **The Northwest College Foundation Board** is comprised of 34 members with a variety of ties to the service area. Northwest has an operating agreement with the Foundation, which launched its first comprehensive fundraising campaign in July 2004. The five-year effort set out with a goal to raise $6 million, primarily for endowments. The mark was met inside of three years, and the goal was raised to $8 million. The campaign's focus areas are endowed scholarships and technology, areas identified after extensive needs assessment work on campus and then tested to find which idea had the greatest donor appeal. The campaign ended 30 June 2009, surpassing the $9 million mark.

  Moreover, the Wyoming Community College Endowment Challenge Program has provided the opportunity to double the impact of endowment gifts from private donors. Wyoming's seven community colleges were each provided with up to $4.5 million as a 1:1 matching fund for contributions. Northwest was one of four colleges to match fully the first appropriation and receive another $2 million of incentive dollars from the state. Commitments for these funds were also fully used, and Northwest is now working with its third and fourth appropriations of $1.33 million and $1 million, respectively. Combined with new endowment investments, the total is currently $15.2 million. Investment returns on the Foundation's endowment decreased for 2009 due to economic conditions. Fluctuations on earnings/payouts have an impact on scholarship funds available for students and technology funds for instructional programs. Northwest covered these decreases with reserve funds to support its recruiting and retention efforts. Since then, the Foundation's investments have experienced a dramatic turnaround, producing the largest-ever scholarship payout of $811,000 for the 2010–2011 fiscal year.

- **The Northwest College Alumni Association Board** includes 25 members who provide essential liaisons between the

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6   See *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to the Governance of the Northwest College Board of Trustees* in the Resource Room.

> *"The Trapper Booster Club supports exceptional varsity athletics and opportunities for student athletes to excel in the classroom and in competition."*

College, the community, and its worldwide network of alumni. As such, the mission of the Northwest College Alumni Association is to promote alumni affiliation with the College, engendering a sense of pride, loyalty, interest in, and support for the College; provide meaningful activities and services for alumni; and engage the talents and resources of alumni in the life, work, and mission of Northwest College. The Association was the first of its kind among Wyoming community colleges and among the first in the Rocky Mountain area.[7]

- **The Trapper Booster Club** supports exceptional varsity athletics and opportunities for student athletes to excel in the classroom and in competition. This nonprofit organization works in partnership with the College and the Foundation. The Club focuses on enhancing existing Northwest College varsity athletic budgets by supporting recruiting activities for men's and women's basketball, volleyball, and wrestling teams. Booster Club dollars also help fund special athletic events and travel, additional supplies and equipment, and the advancement of athletic programs. Expenditures are reviewed by the Trapper Booster Club Board of Directors, which consists of the Athletic Director, the Foundation Director (*ex officio*), and five to nine community members.[8]

- **Other Boards**, such as those associated with Multicultural Series, the Writers Series, and the Rodeo Council, provide an essential relationship with the community.

External Communications

- **The Office of College Relations** coordinates Northwest's external communications to connect with primary target audiences in a number of ways. It should be noted that some of these communications have received awards and recognition. Most recently, in 2009, the College's website earned the Gold Medallion of Excellence in a six-state, regional competition. Judges noted the site's design, navigation, content, and other features. In addition, the *Viewbook* earned a 2009 Bronze Medallion of Merit and Gold Medallions of Excellence in 2006 and 2007. The College's *Viewbook* has consistently done well in this competition since the College began submitting entries four years ago. Judges found the publication's clean design, crisp writing, and stellar photography worthy of a medallion. College communications include the following:

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7   See Alumni Association Bylaws in the Resource Room.
8   See Booster Club Bylaws in the Resource Room.

World Wide Web

- The Northwest College website at *www.northwestcollege.edu* (a primary source of information for prospective students and employees as well as current students, employees, and others).

- Program microsites (separate, smaller College sites for programs and services).

- Online support components, such as the student portal (*MyNWC*); connections to various operations such as registration, class schedules, grades and account payment (*WebAdvisor*); software delivering online courses (*BlackboardCE*); admissions tool (*ActiveAdmissions*); employee applicant tracking (*PeopleAdmin*); scholarship application (*STARS*); delivery of online college calendar (*ActiveData*); and tutor management (*TutorTrac*).

Annual Paid Advertising Campaign

- Paid print ads (e.g., newspapers, magazines, phone directories, etc., including full-page advertisements placed at the close of every academic year in all six service area newspapers to report the year's accomplishments in relation to annual strategic plans)

- Paid electronic ads (e.g., radio, movie theatres, etc.).

- Special events and other venues (e.g., county fair, baseball field and arena banners, billboards, parades, chamber of commerce business directory, print ads in annual event programs such as the Buffalo Bill Art Show and Sale, etc.).

News Releases

- News releases are regularly disseminated to print and electronic media throughout the service area and beyond, and are a source of information for area residents about activities and major college developments. Approximately 200 news releases are disseminated each year.

Publications

Numerous printed publications are produced annually for various primary target audiences.

- Student recruitment (e.g., *Viewbook*, *Search* brochure, Residential Life brochure, recruiting event pieces, program brochures, workforce training, scholarships, posters, etc.). College publications and advertisements have earned regional awards in competition with much larger colleges from Wyoming to Texas.

- Miscellaneous (e.g., athletics, *College Catalog*,

> *"A printed semester class schedule announcement is bulk mailed to all postal patrons— approximately 25,000—in the three-county service area."*

co-curricular programs, special events, project newsletters, College operations including student and employee handbooks, etc.).

Mailings

Several pieces are direct mailed annually, some with personal letters from the President, to external constituencies in order to update them on the College.

- *Institutional Fact Card* (information on major areas of the college —enrollment, scholarship support, programs, budget, facilities, etc.—is provided to all College employees and Student Senators as well as to approximately 500 donors, alumni and foundation directors, business leaders, area school and governmental officials, media, legislators, civic organizations, and others).

- *Strategic Plan brochure* (Mission, Vision, Enduring Values, Priorities, Strategic Goals—is provided to all College employees and Student Senators as well as to approximately 500 donors, alumni and foundation directors, business leaders, area school and governmental officials, media, legislators, civic organizations, and others).

- *Calendar of Events* (bulk mailed monthly to approximately 1,000 service area residents who express interest in receiving copies; also online at *www.northwestcollege.edu/calendar*).

- *Northwest Alumni News* (bulk mailed to approximately 14,500 addressable alumni and other friends; the official publication of the NWC Alumni Association).

- *TrapperLink* (e-newsletter e-mailed to approximately 3,300 alumni for whom the College has a current address).

- Northwest College Foundation *Annual Report* (coordinated by NWC Foundation staff and mailed to approximately 5,550 donors and donor prospects).

- Legislator letters (to provide information to service area legislators).

- A printed semester class schedule announcement is bulk mailed to all postal patrons—approximately 25,000—in the three-county service area. This encourages community participation in the College.

Student-controlled media provide additional connections among communities.

- *The Northwest Trail* is the College's student newspaper.

- NWC-TV is accessible on cable systems throughout the service area.

- A Wyoming news magazine, *plainSpeak*, was created during the 2008–2009 year.

- Webcasting is also another media used by student journalists.

- The College recently began work on an FM radio station after receiving broadcast approval from the Federal Communications Commission.

Northwest College is very strong in terms of co-curricular activities, most of which are supported by the community and provide opportunities for the campus to interact with its external communities. The College serves as a cultural center with art shows, concerts, film series, readings, multicultural events, plays, and a long list of activities. It's estimated that the College sponsors more than 100 events per year with most activities held on campus; in addition, some groups, such as Forensics and Photography, hold events off-campus to encourage community participation. The following paragraphs provide a sampling.

Co-curricular Activities

- **Music Concerts**—The Northwest College music program, fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, provides more than 30 orchestra, band, choir, and small ensemble concerts on campus every year. Among the many concerts scheduled are collaborations with the community. For example, the College choir performs a joint concert with the Powell High School choir in an annual Christmas Vespers Concert, the Jazz Choir performs in Cody at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's annual Christmas open house, and the Civic Orchestra and Chorus, consisting of many community members as well as college students, provides musical masterpieces such as Handel's *Messiah*. The College Wind Band also presents concerts in the spring that often include regional community and high school bands. Each year, these concerts attract an audience of over 6,000 individuals.

  The music program also tours their ensembles to regional public schools. Other programs include a two-day fall honor band and choir clinic; a spring Jazz Festival with nationally recognized guest artists and clinicians; a week-long summer music camp for middle and high school band and choir students; and a week-long summer jazz camp for high school students held at the Northwest College Field Station.

> *"The College has two art galleries that provide exhibition space for student and professional work."*

- **Theater Productions**—Throughout the last decade, Northwest College has maintained a modicum of theater productions in the region despite the elimination of the academic program. Amateur productions, children's theater, and traveling productions helped the College maintain a theater presence in the community. These efforts expanded significantly in 2007 when the College began reviving its theater program, in collaboration with Powell High School. The fall production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* brought in more than 40 people to audition; the spring *Beauty and the Beast* production saw more than 70 people auditioning. Of those 70 people, college students, high school students, townspeople, faculty, and administrators were represented.

  In 2008, the College produced *It's a Wonderful Life* with over 40 people involved on and backstage, and over 100 people or organizations were involved, making it a true community production. In the spring of 2009, *Grease* was produced at Powell High School as a community-based effort with a fairly even mix of high school and college students acting on stage and community members helping with sets, lighting and costumes. In the fall of 2009, the theater program became even more community-based with *The Awesome 80's Prom*. Nearly 70 people auditioned (including pre-school, grade school, middle school and college students). More than 100 community members or organizations were involved.

- *Visualize/Verbalize*—*Visualize/Verbalize* is a student-created and developed work produced through the collaboration of four academic departments (Art, English, Graphic Design, and Photography). Production of the magazine is part of a course that provides a practical introduction to magazine design and production and culminates in a student-generated, student-edited, and student-published magazine that includes both written and visual art. Students experience the responsibilities of serving as a staff member of a magazine, assist in the implementation of magazine production techniques and processes, and develop basic management skills for positions in future editions of the magazine. *Visualize/Verbalize* has been in existence since 1993. Over the past 10 years, 127 students have worked on the magazine, and many times that have submitted work to the project.

- **Art Exhibitions**—The College has two art galleries that provide exhibition space for student and professional work. In 2008–2009, eight gallery shows and eight other events drew 1,845 participants.

- **Associate of Applied Science Activities**—Associate of Applied Science students and faculty are actively involved in a wide variety of activities and programs. Welding and Drafting students participate in Skills USA as well as regional and national competitions. Equine students attend regional and national judging contests as well as numerous horse shows. Business students participate in Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) at the regional and national levels. Agriculture students perform livestock judging and plant identification in addition to supporting local agriculture community activities, such as the Northern International Livestock Exhibition (NILE). Photography and Graphic students participate in the management of a real gallery and learn business skills as well as have a venue to show their work.

Extra-curricular Activities

- **The Student Activities Office**—The College provides numerous opportunities for students to be involved on and off campus. Typical activities include programs by musicians, hypnotists, comedians; attendance at plays, an opera, and other area events; Karaoke; interactive games; and other activities designed to enrich their college experience. During the 2008–2009 year, 765 students attended performances, 1,081 students went to dances held on campus, and 1,784 students participated in other activities.

- **Multicultural Programming**—A cross-campus committee collaborates with students to bring a variety of artistic, historical, and culinary programs to the college community. The most popular of these is the spring Multicultural Showcase that features food and performances by international students, faculty, and community members. More specific programs have featured specific countries (e.g., Chile, Sri Lanka, Korea). Multicultural programs such as Mexican Independence Day and Cinco de Mayo build bridges between the community and campus. In 2008–2009, multicultural events attracted 885 participants. Community members also serve as host families for international students.

- **Clubs**—The Student Senate provides funding to support the activities of more than 60 campus-based clubs.

- **Student Senate**—The College provides scholarships to those who want to develop leadership and programming skills through student government. Student Senate officers (5) receive full in-state tuition waivers while representatives get $300 per semester.

- **Block and Bridle**—Members work regularly with regional 4H and FFA chapters and manage/coordinate the Northern International Livestock Exposition. The club also participates in the annual Powell Christmas Parade.

- **Science Students**—Students help judge area middle school and high school science fairs.

- **Intramural Activities**—The intramural program provides opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to stay active and involved. In addition to student-focused intramurals, "Old-ies Basketball" and student-faculty competitions (e.g., golf, softball, etc.) give students, faculty, and staff opportunities to interact in a more informal environment. These activities involved 595 participants during the 2008–2009 year.

- **Recreation Equipment Co-op**—The College makes sports and recreational equipment available to students, faculty, and staff to support exploration of the area's natural resources and sporting opportunities. In 2008–2009, the Co-op checked out equipment to 161 people for long-term check-outs of at least two hours.

- **The Writers Series**—The Writers Series programs bring nationally known writers to campus for evening programs and class presentations. Each year, the Series hosts four authors, generally two of national prominence, one regional writer, and a campus author. In 2008, the Series held its first endowed reading, the Winifred S. Wasden Memorial Reading, named for a long-time English faculty member. The Series has brought in a wide range of authors since its creation in 2004, and averages 50 attendees at readings.

- **First Friday Readings**—First Friday Readings provide published and unpublished writers to share their work. Students, faculty, staff, and community members routinely present material.

Administrators, Faculty, and Staff Activities

Administrators, faculty, and staff belong to a range of community service clubs and boards. The institution recognizes and supports the work of individuals. However, tracking of co-curricular activities is not systematic. Faculty regularly report on these activities in their

end-of-year reports that are submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The College's educational programs connect students with external communities, some through general course work and others through service learning projects. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some sample learning opportunities:

General Course Work

- Field studies classes held in international and regional venues also point to some evidence of success. Field studies courses, which often attract community enrollment, provide global language and culture opportunities. Since 2000, 448 students have participated in field studies. (See Criterion Three for additional discussion.)

- Numerous courses connect students with Yellowstone Park and other surrounding areas. These courses range from Range Management courses in the Agriculture Department to Wildlife Management in the Zoology Department. Courses such as "Writing in the Wild," "Art in the Wild," "River Studies," archaeology and outdoor photography all connect students with the surrounding areas. Similarly, many outdoor activity classes (e.g., skiing, spelunking) take students to sites throughout the region, and the College supports a large fleet of vehicles to allow students to travel through the area for learning opportunities. (See Criterion Two for a discussion of the College fleet.)

- Nursing clinicals are scheduled through the Big Horn Basin as needed.

- Education Capstone/teaching practicum students are placed in area schools. The College also has an agreement about the substitute teaching course.

- Work-based Learning internships and cooperative learning are arranged through the Office of Work-based Learning. These arrangements are supervised, career-related work experiences combined with reflective, academic study that help students "learn by doing."

> *"Northwest devotes considerable physical, financial, and human resources to supporting effective programs of engagement and service."*

Student Engagement: Experiential Learning, Service Learning, Civic Engagement and Volunteerism

Northwest College has a long history valuing student engagements of all types. This is evidenced by the mutual respect and support between the communities the College serves and the students who attend. This long-term commitment to student engagement is evidenced in numerous faculty-staff-student and community interactions.

Students participate in numerous experiential learning opportunities: completing paid and unpaid internships; supporting programs such as America Reads; working through cooperative education programs; and completing service learning projects in disciplines such as art, music, photography, and communication. Students also engage in volunteerism through organized and informal opportunities on campus. Among the organized activities are the Student Senate initiatives for a green campus, Habitat for Humanity, and the Boys and Girls Club partnerships.

Faculty and Staff support student engagement in a variety of ways in and out of the classroom. In addition to sponsoring internships, cooperative education, and independent studies to promote experiential learning, faculty organize community service projects, such as silent auctions for a family in need of support for medical treatment or the Empty Bowls project to raise awareness and funds for the hungry and the homeless. Faculty also facilitate community programs, such as Country Christmas music programs and the Wyoming AIDS Quilt project.

Service area communities demonstrate their mutual support for student engagement by providing opportunities for students to perform internships or expand their skills, supporting work and efforts by students, such as the audience for NWC-TV, and by supporting (by their presence and financially) student activities.

In 2007–2008, the College began to explore options for students and faculty to enrich student experiences through expanded service learning opportunities. Many faculty and courses have included these experiences, but the goal of the new initiative is to expand the number of options to deepen the learning from these experiences. Currently, Northwest tracks service learning through self-reporting. Future plans for the program include more systematic and inclusive tracking methods.

Northwest devotes considerable physical, financial, and human resources to supporting effective programs of engagement and service. The College believes that, ultimately, all of its resources are dedicated to engaging and serving students and communities.

Northwest's planning processes project ongoing engagement and service. The College began formalizing its service learning work in 2008. In the spring of 2008, the Director of Service Learning for Casper College visited Powell as part of the In-service meeting and gave a presentation on starting a service learning project in a Wyoming community college. Additionally, in the summer several faculty and administrators attended a conference dedicated to service learning. In 2008, the Vice President for Academic Affairs began constructing a college-wide *Service Learning Plan*.[9] Academic leaders reviewed the *Service Learning Plan* and are continuing to define experiential learning objectives.

> **CORE COMPONENT—5C:** *Northwest College demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.*

Northwest College has many collaborative ventures with other higher learning organizations and education sectors.

Higher Education Articulations

- *Articulation Agreements*—Northwest has 36 articulation agreements that fall into six categories.

- *Course-By-Course Agreements:* The transfer college agrees that certain classes taught at Northwest are equivalent to those taught at its college. (See Table 5.1)

Table 5.1
Course-by-Course Articulation Agreements

1. Black Hills State University
2. Idaho State University
3. Middle Tennessee State University
4. Montana State University–Northern
5. Montana Tech
6. Rocky Mountain College
7. South Dakota School of Mines & Technology
8. Upper Iowa University–Extended Campus
9. Utah State University

9   See *Service Learning Plan* in the Resource Room.

- *General Education Requirements Course-By-Course Agreements:* The transfer college identifies Northwest courses that fulfill its general education requirements. (See Table 5.2.)

Table 5.2
General Education Requirements
Course-by-Course Articulation Agreements

1. Brigham Young University Utah
2. Concordia University

- *General Education Block Agreements:* The transfer college agrees that an Associate of Science or Associate of Arts will transfer as a block automatically fulfilling its general education requirements. (See Table 5.3.)

Table 5.3
General Education Block Articulation Agreements

1. Bismark State College
2. Brigham Young University–Idaho
3. Brooks Institute of Photography
4. Chadron State College
5. Dickinson State University
6. Franklin University
7. Lake Region State College
8. Mayville State University
9. Minot State College
10. Montana State University–Billings
11. Montana State University–Bozeman
12. North Dakota State College of Science
13. North Dakota State University
14. Prescott College Adult Degree Program
15. Regis University (College for Professional Studies)
16. University of Montana
17. University of North Dakota
18. University of Northern Colorado
19. University of Phoenix Online Program
20. University of Wyoming
21. University of Wyoming Outreach
22. Valley City State University
23. Williston State College

- *Major-specific Articulation Agreements*: The transfer college outlines Northwest courses that fulfill a specific major's requirements. (See Table 5.4.)

Table 5.4
Major-specific Articulation Agreements

1. Idaho State University–Engineering
2. Mayville State University–Early Childhood
3. Middle Tennessee State University–Equine & Agriculture
4. Montana State University–Billings–Education
5. Montana Tech– Biochemistry and Engineering
6. National American University–Athletic Training
7. Northern Arizona University–Athletic Training
8. Rocky Mountain College–Agriculture
9. Valley City State University–Elementary Education

- *Dual Admission*: Students are simultaneously admitted to Northwest and a transfer college. (See Table 5.5.)

Table 5.5
Dual Admission Articulation Agreements

1. Black Hills State
2. Montana State University–Billings
3. University of Montana

- *Distance Programs*: These programs give students the opportunity to complete a Bachelor's Level Degree without leaving the Powell area. (See Table 5.6.)

Table 5.6
Distance Program Articulation Agreements

1. Franklin University
2. Mayville State University–Early Childhood
3. Prescott College Adult Degree Program
4. Regis University (College for Professional Studies)
5. University of Phoenix Online Program
6. University of Wyoming Outreach
7. Upper Iowa University–Extended Campus
8. Valley City State University–Elementary Education
9. Western Governors University

Higher Education Partnerships

- **"Gear-up Grant"**—This statewide collaborative effort with the University of Wyoming works to prepare 7–12 grade students for college.

- **Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC)**—WyDEC is a gathering of the Distance Education Directors from the seven Wyoming community colleges and the University of Wyoming. This group has collaborated on statewide grants, website, conferences, awards, and information sharing. The Consortium recently completed work on a statewide distance education portal that lists all distance delivered education from all partner institutions in the state. Students can view a complete list of online courses available through Wyoming community colleges and register from this site.

K–12 Partnerships

- **Dual Enrollment**—Northwest has agreements with all nine high schools in its service area that allow high school students to attend college classes at a reduced cost and receive both high school and college credit. Students may attend any class for which they meet the prerequisite at the main campus in Powell, the outreach sites in Cody and Worland, over WEN Video on their own campus, or online. This constituency membership averages approximately 178 students per semester. To ensure high school students are getting what they need, the College hosts fall meetings with high school counselors to determine WEN video scheduling, discuss courses that best suit this group of students, and explore effective advising strategies.

- **Concurrent Enrollment**—This program, initiated in 2008, is in its infant stages but is growing rapidly. Northwest has implemented a three-year pilot project to allow high school teachers who can also qualify as adjunct faculty for Northwest College to teach college classes on their own campuses and in their own bell schedules and calendars. The course must meet Northwest College standards for rigor and relevance while meeting minimum number of seat hours. The rules and standards for the pilot project were written by a task force made up of college personnel in both general education and career/technical educational areas with the same mix and number of personnel from area high schools. The task force continues to meet throughout the life of the project to refine practices. At the end of the project, the task force will evaluate overall success of the program and determine whether to write permanent program standards. In Fall 2009, 97 students were enrolled concurrently in Northwest College classes. (See Appendix 4.1, Concurrent/Dual Enrollment Trends.)

- **Vocational Articulation**—High school articulation at Northwest College is a shared responsibility. Faculty are responsible for working with high school teachers to determine curricular "fit," occupational pathways, and equivalent courses based on student outcomes. Schools that have articulated their curriculum to the Northwest College program are eligible to offer college classes for concurrent enrollment on their campuses. While concurrent and dual enrollment agreements have replaced articulation agreements with Wyoming schools, the College continues vocational articulation with Montana and Idaho high schools.

Northwest's transfer policies and practices create an environment supportive of the mobility of learners. Syllabi are designed to provide transfer institutions with full information on the learning outcomes for classes. These syllabi are readily available on the College website and through the Office of Academic Affairs. Moreover, Wyoming's practice of using common course numbering between the community colleges and the University of Wyoming is a significant transfer aid within the state and provides additional credibility to Northwest courses when transferred out of state. Because of Title III funds, the College is able to support an Articulation Specialist in addition to making information available to students on the College's website. Also, in the spring of 2009, the College held its first Career and Transfer Fair with community individuals invited to attend. The Transfer Fair was expanded to fall in 2009–2010, and the Career Fair was made a separate event that same year.

Community support for the College is high, and leaders recognize the contributions Northwest makes to the area. Former US Senator Alan Simpson notes in a 3 May 2009 letter, "In my mind, Northwest College 'sets the bar' for these seven wonderful institutions in Wyoming." He continues, "It does its most significant mission in serving the public… . To me it is the very epitome of what a community College should be—accessible, friendly, adaptive, outgoing, caring, collaborative, compassionate, practical and when you have a curriculum that will enable you to achieve in everything from Shakespeare to welding—that's where a student should be. And all of it based on that basic assumption: to serve!"[10]

Northwest College's programs of engagement give evidence of building effective bridges among diverse communities. The most visible evidence is the continuing work done in the Worland and Cody Centers. Other examples include but are not limited to presentations that bring together diverse audiences; projects in courses that regularly involve schools, businesses, etc.; and international recruiting.

. . . .

10 See Community Letters File in the Resource Room.

Northwest participates in a broad array of partnerships focused on shared educational, economic, and social goals. Since 2002, the College has reported partnerships to the Wyoming Community College Commission as part of the core indicator assessment. Currently the College has a total of 347 partnership agreements in five broad categories as shown in Table 5.7:

Table 5.7
Northwest College Partnerships[11]

PARTNERSHIP TYPE	2008	2009
Academic Partnerships	110	135
Community Service Partnerships	49	50
Work-based Learning and Workforce Partnerships	58	57
Cultural Partnerships	22	21
Student Services Partnerships	83	84
TOTAL	322	347

Source: Wyoming Community College Commission Partnership Reports

Partnerships with international organizations (e.g., Eleutian Technologies) and educational agencies (e.g. Vietnam Association of Community Colleges, Hanoi International High School) help to provide connections to international perspectives, joint programs, and international students who study on our campus.[12]

Northwest's partnerships and contractual arrangements uphold its integrity. Most partnerships are long-standing with area businesses and the University of Wyoming, which indicates that Northwest honors its commitments.

CORE COMPONENT—5D: *Internal and external constituencies value the services Northwest College provides.*

Northwest's evaluation of services involves the constituencies served. The College has conducted regular evaluations of different service areas based on internal constituencies, but those evaluations have not included external constituencies. Northwest has a systematic evaluation system for all credit courses and Workforce Development offerings.

Northwest's service programs and student, faculty, and staff volunteer activities are well-received by the communities served. A sampling of letters of support written by community members provides evidence of this.[13] However, Northwest

11 See Northwest College Partnerships Report in the Resource Room.
12 See International Partnerships in the Resource Room.
13 See Community Letters File in the Resource Room.

College does not systematically track the number of participants, satisfaction, or support for activities, such as concerts, plays, athletics, and activities.

External constituents participate in Northwest's activities and co-curricular programs that are open to the public. Powell Mayor Scott Mangold writes in a 2 April 2009 letter, "One of the best features of Northwest College is their openness to the public. From the basketball games to the theater to the art exhibits, it is a people friendly campus that received national attention."[14] Examples of activities attended by the public include but are not limited to athletic events, Foundation events, theater, art, music, multicultural, and forensics events, and capstone presentations. College events are typically well attended, but tracking attendance at all events is a process in progress. Many programs have regularly tracked and reported attendance. Most of the college's non-academic programming has traditionally occurred on the Powell campus, but the new facilities in Cody have created opportunities for more events there, such as the Interdisciplinary Café held at the Cody Center.
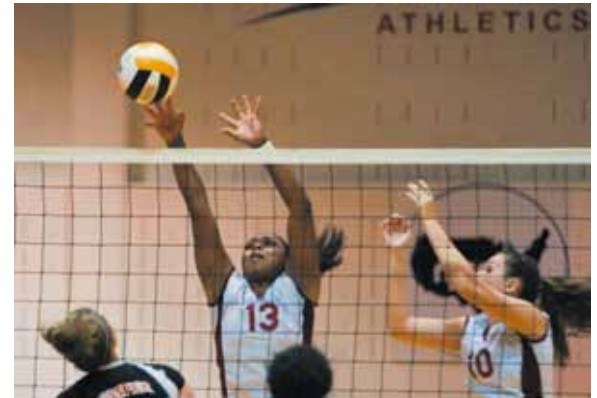
Northwest's facilities are available to and used by the community; indeed, all facilities are available for reservation though some fees may apply to cover custodial and utility expenses. Examples of campus facilities often used by the community include

- Johnson Fitness Center

- DeWitt Student Center

- Hinckley Library

- Cody and Worland Centers

- Nelson Performing Arts Center Auditorium

- Equine Center

- Stock Agriculture Pavilion

- Mickelson Field Station

- Child Care Center (through some partnerships)

- Out-of-State College and University Summer Geology Field Studies

Examples of community-initiated events held on campus include but are not limited to League of Women Voters Candidate Forums, the Powell's Centennial Celebration Lecture Series, Girls' State, the American Association of University Women meetings and activities, Cornerstone Church, and the Women's Expo.

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14 See Community Letters File in the Resource Room.

Northwest provides programs to meet the continuing education needs of licensed professionals in its community. Examples include but are not limited to teacher education workshops, teacher endorsements, insurance classes, MSHA and OSHA trainings, and real estate trainings.

Final Thoughts

The Empty Bowls project reflects Northwest's commitment to being an effective partner in its service area. The College, its students, faculty, and staff embrace the opportunity to give back to the community. Northwest has experienced broad changes over the years, but its commitment to the communities it serves has remained a constant throughout its 64-year history. Evidence of this commitment is found through its mission documents and other documentation, including accreditation self-studies, and is evidenced by learning opportunities provided throughout the communities it serves. Northwest is and remains an institution committed to serving its service area.

However, the College also has grown and adapted to meet needs of students for global perspectives and international collaboration. The College has responded to this need with increased international partnerships, expanded internet offerings, increased commitment to multicultural programming and expanded emphasis on the diversity of the student body. The College recently expanded its commitment by adding a half-time multicultural advisor to the program and providing, for a second year, a full-time ESL instructor. This expansion of effort will need to continue.

The College does face challenges with career and transfer issues as a result of current position shifts. These are the kind of ongoing problems that institutions will face as budgets become more scarce. The College is confident, however, that strong planning will play a major role in helping the institution make decisions in the best interests of students and the community.

Appendices

Northwest College
WYOMING

NORTHWEST COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN
Academic Years 2008-11

Vision
Mission
Enduring Values
Priorities
Strategic Goals

VISION

Through a superior teaching, learning, and living environment, Northwest College will be a dynamic and distinguished educational leader that shapes a positive future for students and the many communities it serves.

MISSION

Through exceptional, dynamic living and learning environments, Northwest College dedicates itself to individual student achievement, diversity, global citizenship, and community vitality.

ENDURING VALUES

High expectations

We set high standards for our students and ourselves. We blend challenge and support to create success. We each strive to be an inspiration and positive role model for others.

Purposeful learning

We dedicate ourselves to self improvement and the support of others as they progress toward their goals. We promote education that fosters satisfying work, creative interests, and continued learning. We are committed to the development of the whole person—mind, body, and spirit.

Social responsibility

We value social responsibility on a local and global scale and are dedicated to building a more humane society and world. We foster both individual and organizational social responsibility through our interactions, use of resources, and consideration for others near and far.

Intellectual curiosity

We welcome change, the open exchange of ideas, inclusion of multiple points of view, consideration of existing knowledge, and the generation of new ideas.

Diversity and inclusion

We promote equal access to educational services and programs. We model civility, mutual respect, and appreciation of differences. We offer a welcoming, safe, and inviting campus community and dedicate resources to provide an attractive, collegiate environment that supports learning.

Community engagement and vitality

We enrich our service-area communities through educational and cultural offerings and partnerships. We create educational opportunities both within and beyond the classroom for those in the College and service-area communities.

Celebration of accomplishment

We honor the College's rich history of student success in academic transfer, applied arts, science and technology fields, and workforce training. We continue to build on the positive legacy of the productive College members who have come before us. Moving forward, we dedicate ourselves to providing a culture of excellence and mutual support that will continue to inspire our students, staff, faculty, and service communities.

2008–2011 PRIORITIES & STRATEGIC GOALS

– PRIORITY –
Access

Strategic Goals:

- Increase the number of part-time students by 1% per year
- Implement the new scholarship plan and assess its impact on year-to-year retention
- Develop two new instructional degree and/or certificate programs to expand technical and transfer options
- Increase distance education FTE enrollment by 2% per year
  Amended goal: Increase distance education FTE enrollment by 7% per year (for 2nd & 3rd years)

– PRIORITY –
Support

Strategic Goals:

- Actively collaborate with the NWC Foundation to fully use the Legislature's new appropriation in the "Wyoming Community College Endowment Challenge Program"
  Amended goal: In addition, conduct targeted fundraising campaign in FY10
- Create a plan during FY 09 prior to a campaign for public funds for an Applied Science and Technology Building, student center, and related facilities
- Develop a phased approach to implementing the *Facilities Master Plan* priorities to facilitate new program development and services to students
- Develop and implement a college-wide professional development plan
- Develop a succession plan for key positions to ensure organizational continuity and quality

Appendix 1.1

Mission, Vision, Enduring Values, Priorities, and Strategic Goals

– PRIORITY –
Partnerships

Strategic Goals:
- Implement a three-year pilot program to provide new concurrent enrollment (CE) options in the high schools
- Collaborate with service area high schools and the Wyoming Department of Education to clearly define and articulate pathways to facilitate smooth transitions from high school to our programs of study
- Expand collaboration with businesses on the design and delivery of new workforce training programs that lead to two new or redesigned certificates and degrees
- Expand partnerships with businesses and organizations to produce a 2% annual increase in the number of participants in workforce training programs
  Amended goal: 1,255 duplicated headcount for 2nd year & 1,400 duplicated for 3rd year

– PRIORITY –
Institutional Vitality

Strategic Goals:
- Increase FTE enrollment by 2% per year
- Increase minority student head-count enrollment by 2% per year
- Enhance and streamline shared governance by clarifying the advisory roles of constituency groups, College Council, and standing committees
- Produce a comprehensive self-study accreditation document through broad College involvement

– PRIORITY –
Student Achievement

Strategic Goals:
- Increase the number of degree/certificate student completers by 1% per year
  Amended goal: By 3rd year, increase numbers to 07-08 levels
- Increase the first-time, full-time student fall-to-spring retention rate by 1.5% per year
  Amended goal: 84.0% retention rate for 2nd & 3rd years
- Increase the first-time, full-time student fall-to-fall retention rate by 1.5% per year
  Amended goal: 62.0% retention rate for 2nd & 3rd years
- Implement new cross-college initiatives designed to enhance the academic success of students who test into developmental courses:
  - Reduce by 1% per year the number of these students who drop out of college in their first year
  - Increase by 1% per year the number of these students who successfully complete the college-level course that follows completion of related developmental courses

– PRIORITY –
Communication and Image

Strategic Goals:
- Evaluate website redesign and the new content management system in terms of increased internal and external usability
- Develop a new initiative to improve internal communication
- Implement additional digital communication strategies to enhance communication with prospective and current students

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Northwest College is deeply committed to student success. Our mission statement says it well — Northwest College truly *does* offer "dynamic living and learning environments," and we dedicate ourselves to "individual student achievement, diversity, global citizenship, and community vitality."

NWC's many qualities that advance student learning — from high quality personal instruction, to residential living on a beautiful campus, and more — are imbedded in our mission documents found in these pages. Our strategic plan guides decisions about how we use precious human and financial resources. We're committed to achieving the plan's strategic goals within the context of our mission and with guidance from the Board of Trustees.

Thank you for reading. If you'd like more information about the contents of these web pages or any College issue, I'd enjoy visiting with you.

Sincerely,

Paul B. Prestwich, Ph.D.
President

Appendix 2.1

2008–2011 Strategic Plan Implementation and Tracking Plan

I. ACCESS

Strategic Goal	Baseline Data	First-Year Target	First-Year Data	Second-Year Target (rev.)	Third-Year Target	Key Responsibility
1.1. Increase the number of part-time students by 1% per year	596 students *(Fall 2008)*	602 students *(Fall 2009)*	726 students (22% increase) *(Fall 2009)*	733 students *(Fall 2010)*	740 students *(Fall 2011)*	VPSA, VPAA[1]
1.2. Implement the new scholarship plan and assess its impact on year-to-year retention	2008-09 scholarship plan *(2008-09)*	Implement new Trapper Scholarship Program *(2009-10)*	Trapper Scholarship Program implemented	Assess effectiveness *(2009-10)*		VPSA, Exec Dir of Foundation
1.3. Develop two new instructional degree and/or certificate programs to expand technical and transfer options	*(Fall 2008)*	Two new degree or certificate programs *(Fall 2009)*	Nine new programs begun[2]	Assess new degrees programs *(Fall 2010)*	One more degree or certificate program *(Fall 2011)*	VPAA
1.4. Increase distance education FTE enrollment by 2% per year *Amended goal: Increase distance education FTE enrollment by 7% per year (for 2nd & 3rd years)*	185 FTE *(Fall 2008)*	189 FTE *(Fall 2009)*	270.6 FTE (46% increase) *(Fall 2009)*	289.5 FTE *(Fall 2010)*	309.8 FTE *(Fall 2011)*	VPAA, VPSA

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[1] *VPAA = Vice President for Academic Affairs, VPSA = Vice President for Student Affairs, VPAS = Vice President for Administrative Services, VPCR = Vice President for College Relations, BOT = NWC Board of Trustees*

[2] *A.A.-Criminal Justice, A.A.-Film Production, A.A.-Screenwriting, A.A.S.-Radio Production, A.A.S.-Television Production, Advanced Welding Technology Certificate, Horse Owner Basic Hoof Care Certificate, Professional Farrier Certificate, and Comprehensive Skills Certificate in Radio Production.*

March 2010

2. SUPPORT

Strategic Goal	Baseline Data	First-Year Target	First-Year Data	Second-Year Target (rev.)	Third-Year Target	Key Responsibility
2.1. Actively collaborate with the NWC Foundation to fully use the Legislature's new appropriation in the "Wyoming Community College Endowment Challenge Program" *Amended goal: In addition, conduct targeted fundraising campaign in FY10*	$6.5 million raised for endowment challenge program *(June 2008)*	Additional $1.3 million raised *(2008-09)*	$829,645 raised *(2008-09)*	Additional $750,000 raised $300,000 *(2009-10)*	Remaining $775,000 raised *(2010-11)*	President, Exec Dir of Foundation, VPCR
2.2. Create a plan during FY 09 prior to a campaign for public funds for an Applied Science and Technology Building, student center, and related facilities		Board decision; implement plan	No action due to state economy			President, BOT, VPCR
2.3. Develop a phased approach to implementing the Facilities Master Plan priorities to facilitate new program development and services to students	Existing Facilities Master Plan (FMP)	Review & revise FMP into phases	Simpson Hall expansion completed: five other FMP projects initiated	Completion of 6 facilities improvement projects	Revise FMP	President, PAC, BOT
2.4. Develop and implement a college-wide professional development plan		Develop plan	Initial change to evaluation system initiated	Implement new evaluation system	Create college-wide professional development plan	President, HR Director
2.5. Develop a succession plan for key positions to ensure organizational continuity and quality		Develop plan	Initial planning meetings held	Begin revision of policies to make succession planning possible	Develop succession plan for key positions	President, HR Director

March 2010

Appendix 2.1

2008–2011 Strategic Plan Implementation and Tracking Plan

3. PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Goal	Baseline Data	First-Year Target	First-Year Data	Second-Year Target (rev.)	Third-Year Target	Key Responsibility
3.1. Implement a three-year pilot program to provide new concurrent enrollment (CE) options in the high schools[3]	2.7 FTE *(Fall 2008)*	5.4 FTE *(Fall 2009)*	25.7 FTE (852% increase) *(Fall 2009)*	38.0 FTE *(Fall 2010)*	42.0 FTE *(Fall 2011)*	VPAA
3.2. Collaborate with service area high schools and the Wyoming Department of Education to clearly define and articulate pathways to facilitate smooth transitions from high school to our programs of study		Complete pathway for Construction Trades program	Did not receive Construction Trades Program grant; did not receive sufficient interest in the program to continue development	Replace Wyo. Tech-Prep articulation agreements w/ CE options that address student movement from HS to college in any of the pathways	Enhance CE options for Wyo. students by adding additional enrollment options	VPAA
3.3. Expand collaboration with businesses on the design and delivery of new workforce training programs that lead to two new or redesigned certificates and degrees	*(Fall 2008)*	*(Fall 2009)*	Seven programs are in various stages of development or delivery[4]	Add college credit to 1 workforce cert. & strengthen workforce-to-college pathways w/ 2 additional workforce programs *(Fall 2010)*	Stabilize delivery of 3 new workforce cert. programs & determine appropriateness of college credit for these content areas & skills	President, VPAA
3.4. Expand partnerships with businesses and organizations to produce a 2% annual increase in the number of participants in workforce training programs *Amended goal: 1,255 duplicated headcount for 2nd year & 1,400 duplicated for 3rd year*	1,255 duplicated headcount *(2007-08)*	1,280 duplicated headcount *(2008-09)*	848 duplicated headcount (32% decrease) *(2008-09)*	1,255 duplicated headcount *(2009-10)*	1,400 duplicated headcount *(2010-11)*	President, VPAA

[3] *Additional relevant data: Dual enrollment for Fall 2008 = 22.3 FTE, Fall 2009 = 24.2 FTE (9% increase)*
[4] *Building Analyst Certification, Pharmacy Technician, Food & Hospitality Training, Barista Training, Certified Medical Assistant, Work Readiness Program, and Survey Technician*

4. INSTITUTIONAL VITALITY

Strategic Goal	Baseline Data	First-Year Target	First-Year Data	Second-Year Target (rev.)	Third-Year Target	Key Responsibility
4.1. Increase FTE enrollment by 2% per year	1,759 FTE (Fall 2008)	1,794 FTE (Fall 2009)	2,043.3 FTE (16% increase) (Fall 2009)	2,084.2 FTE (Fall 2010)	2,125.8 FTE (Fall 2011)	President, PAC
4.2. Increase minority student head-count enrollment by 2% per year[5]	131 students (Fall 2008)	134 students (Fall 2009)	196 students (50% increase) (Fall 2009)	200 students (Fall 2010)	204 students (Fall 2011)	VPSA
4.3. Enhance and streamline shared governance by clarifying the advisory roles of constituency groups, College Council, and standing committees		Develop restructured system	Discussions on "mapping" of shared governance have occurred	Clarify shared governance system	Communicate broadly to College community	President, VPAA
4.4. Produce a comprehensive self-study accreditation document through broad College involvement		Complete preliminary draft of self-study	Review of first draft completed	Finalize self-study; plan HLC campus visit	Use results in creation of next strategic plan	President, VPAA

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[5] *For this strategic goal, minority student head-count includes only U.S. students. The total minority student enrollment—including international students—is 277 in Fall 2009.*

March 2010

5. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Strategic Goal	Baseline Data	First-Year Target	First-Year Data	Second-Year Target (rev.)	Third-Year Target	Key Responsibility
5.1. Increase the number of degree/certificate student completers by 1% per year *Amended goal: By 3rd year, increase numbers to 07-08 levels*	343 degrees; 95 certificates *(2007-08)*	346 degrees; 96 certificates *(2008-09)*	323 degrees (6% decrease); 81 certificates (15% decrease) *(2008-09)*	333 degrees; 88 certificates *(2009-10)*	343 degrees; 95 certificates *(2010-11)*	President, VPAA, VPSA
5.2. Increase the first-time, full-time student fall-to-spring retention rate by 1.5% per year *Amended goal: 84.0% retention rate for 2nd & 3rd years*	81.0% *(Fa 07-Sp 08)*	82.5% *(Fa 08-Sp 09)*	82.6% (1.6% increase) *(Fa 08-Sp 09)*	84.0% *(Fa 09-Sp 10)*	84.0% *(Fa 10-Sp 11)*	VPAA, VPSA
5.3. Increase the first-time, full-time student fall-to-fall retention rate by 1.5% per year[6] *Amended goal: 62.0% retention rate for 2nd & 3rd years*	59.0% *(Fa 07-Fa 08)*	60.5% *(Fa 08-Fa 09)*	62.7% (3.7% increase) *(Fa 08-Fa 09)*	62.0% *(Fa 09-Fa 10)*	62.0% *(Fa 10-Fa 11)*	VPAA, VPSA
5.4. Implement new cross-college initiatives designed to enhance the academic success of students who test into developmental courses: a. Reduce by 1% per year the number of these students who drop out of college in their first year *Amended goal: 61.0% retention rate for 2nd & 3rd years*	53.6% retention rate *(Fa 07-Fa 08)*	54.6% retention rate *(Fa 08-Fa 09)*	60.6% retention rate (7% increase) *(Fa 08-Fa 09)*	61.0% retention rate *(Fa 09-Fa 10)*	61.0% retention rate *(Fa 10-Fa 11)*	VPAA, VPSA
b. Increase by 1% per year the number of these students who successfully complete the college-level course that follows completion of related developmental courses[7] *Amended goal: Math – 18.1% for 2nd year, 19.1% for 3rd year; English – 25.0% for 2nd & 3rd years*	Math: 15.5% Engl: 24.7% *(Fa 07-Fa 08)*	Math: 16.5% Engl: 25.7% *(Fa 08-Fa 09)*	Math: 17.1% (1.6% increase) Engl: 17.7% (7.0% decrease) *(Fa 08-Fa 09)*	Math: 18.1% Engl: 25.0% *(Fa 09-Fa 10)*	Math: 19.1% Engl: 25.0% *(Fa 10-Fa 11)*	

[6] *Fall-to-fall retention rate is generally called "persistence rate."*
[7] *This data is the percentage of students who were enrolled in at least one developmental course during the initial fall semester indicated and who completed the respective college-level course that follows within one calendar year.*

March 2010

6. COMMUNICATION & IMAGE

Strategic Goal	Baseline Data	First-Year Target	First-Year Data	Second-Year Target	Third-Year Target	Key Responsibility
6.1. Evaluate Web site redesign and the new content management system in terms of increased internal and external usability	New web design & content management system	Staff training; usability testing	Staff training and usability testing has occurred; Web site award received[8]	Usability testing continues	Usability testing continues	VPCR
6.2. Develop a new initiative to improve internal communication		Software identification for electronic forum	Electronic forum ("Yammer") identified	Implement forum; assess effectiveness	Continue to nurture internal communication initiatives	VPCR
6.3. Implement additional digital communication strategies to enhance communication with prospective and current students		Implement *Active Admissions* by Spring 2009	*Active Admissions* implemented	Assess effectiveness	Continue to develop content in *Active Admissions*	VPSA, VPAS

[8] *NWC's Web site earned the 2009 "Gold Medallion of Excellence" from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (District 4).*

March 2010

2008-2010 Strategic Plan
FIRST-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

Paul B. Prestwich, Ph.D., President
Lisa Smith, Institutional Researcher

November 2009

The Northwest College *2008-2010 Strategic Plan* recently concluded its first of two years. The plan's 24 strategic goals—which include both quantitative and qualitative goals within six priorities—have provided an effective guide for institutional decision-making and resource allocation.

This progress report provides details regarding the level of achievement of each of the strategic goals. Included are baseline data (where appropriate), first-year data, and analyses. The analyses are not intended to be comprehensive; rather, the objective is to provide a brief explanation and/or context for the statistics associated with the strategic goals.

The companion document to this report is the *Strategic Plan: Implementation and Tracking Plan (with First-Year Data)*. The *Implementation and Tracking Plan* contains most of the information in this report (e.g., baseline data, first-year goal, first-year data), but also provides information on second-year goals and key personnel responsible for achieving goals.

Overall, the College met or exceeded targets for the great majority of the strategic goals. Nearly all enrollment numbers (i.e., part-time students, distance education, concurrent enrollment program, total FTE, and minority students) exceeded the respective goal. Additionally, most of the retention numbers also increased. Given the importance of retaining students and given the high statistics NWC typically demonstrates relative to retention, these were some of the most positive first-year outcomes.

I. ACCESS

1.1. **Increase the number of part-time students by 1% per year**
   Baseline data: 596 students
   First-year goal: 602 students
   First-year data: 726 students (22% increase)
   Analysis: The modest first-year strategic goal was significantly surpassed. Strong enrollment numbers in the concurrent enrollment program (see Strategic Goal 3.1) aided the increase.

1.2. **Implement the new scholarship plan and assess its impact on year-to-year retention**
   Baseline data: 2008-09 scholarship plan

First-year goal: Implement new Trapper Scholarship Program

First-year data: Trapper Scholarship Program implemented

Analysis: NWC successfully implemented the Trapper Scholarship program in Fall 2009 with a total 2009-10 budget of $973,405, including $471,485 from the NWC Foundation. In addition, an online scholarship application system—Scholarship Tracking and Review System (STARS)—was implemented in Fall 2009, following two years of research and pilot-testing. For Fall 2009, 624 students received financial assistance through the Trapper Scholarship program, an increase of 38% from the 451 students who had received similar scholarships the previous year.

1.3. **Develop two new instructional degree and/or certificate programs to expand technical and transfer options**

First-year goal: Two new degree or certificate programs

First-year data: Nine new programs begun

Analysis: The new programs initiated by Fall 2009 were the following: A.A.-Criminal Justice, A.A.-Film Production, A.A.-Screenwriting, A.A.S.-Radio Production, A.A.S.-Television Production, Advanced Welding Technology Certificate, Horse Owner Basic Hoof Care Certificate, Professional Farrier Certificate, and Comprehensive Skills Certificate in Radio Production.

1.4. **Increase distance education FTE enrollment by 2% per year**

Baseline data: 185 FTE

First-year goal: 189 FTE

First-year data: 270.6 FTE (46% increase)

Analysis: Distance education continues to be one of the College's largest enrollment-growth areas. The large increase was driven primarily by enrollment in online courses; enrollment in compressed-video courses decreased slightly. The expanded course access serves on- and off-campus NWC students as well as students who are primarily enrolled at other colleges and universities.

2. SUPPORT

2.1. **Actively collaborate with the NWC Foundation to fully use the Legislature's new appropriation in the "Wyoming Community College Endowment Challenge Program"**

Baseline data: $6.5 million raised for endowment challenge program

First-year goal: Additional $1.3 million raised

First-year data: $829,645 raised

Analysis: The NWC Foundation achieved a remarkable milestone on June 30, 2009, the close of the five-year "Toward New Vistas" fundraising campaign. The campaign raised $9,136,177, exceeding the initial goal of $6 million by 52% and the updated goal of $8 million by 14%.

2.2. **Create a plan during FY 09 prior to a campaign for public funds for an**

Appendix 2.2

**2008–2010
Strategic Plan
First-year
Progress Report**

Applied Science and Technology Building, student center, and related facilities

First-year goal: Board decision; implement plan

First-year data: No action due to state economy

Analysis: Although the Applied Science and Technology Building is the 2nd-ranked priority in the *Facilities Master Plan*, the worsening economic conditions have created a less-than-optimal time to pursue public funding. However, in the absence of a new classroom building, the College has continued to renovate and update current instructional spaces (e.g., Nursing Building, Fagerberg Building room 25, Photography Lab, etc.).

2.3. **Develop a phased approach to implementing the *Facilities Master Plan* priorities to facilitate new program development and services to students**

Baseline data: Existing *Facilities Master Plan* (FMP)

First-year goal: Review & revise FMP into phases

First-year data: Simpson Hall expansion completed; five other FMP projects initiated

Analysis: The Simpson Hall expansion—part of the 1st-ranked priority project in the FMP—was completed on time and under budget in the summer of 2009. In addition, five projects from the FMP were initiated during the Strategic Plan's first year: Hinckley Library expansion (included in the 4th-ranked FMP project), creation of a sound and recording studio in the Nelson Performing Arts Center (modification of the 10th-ranked project), Orendorff Building entrance remodel (modification of the 3rd-ranked project), creation of new athletic fields (included in the 1st-ranked project), and Equine Center expansion (included in the 5th-ranked project).

2.4. **Develop and implement a college-wide professional development plan**

First-year goal: Develop plan

First-year data: Initial change to evaluation system initiated; next phase of plan creation to occur in FY10

Analysis: During the Strategic Plan's first year, the administration decided to implement a new performance evaluation system, which is being piloted with senior administrators before being utilized with all staff next year. The new system has a professional development component, which, when collected and analyzed, could provide the basis for a college-wide professional development plan.

2.5. **Develop a succession plan for key positions to ensure organizational continuity and quality**

First-year goal: Develop plan

First-year data: Initial planning meetings held

Analysis: This goal was not accomplished during the first year, although planning meetings were held. One challenge to the College creating a true succession plan is that College policy requires all open positions to have an

open search. If a true succession plan remains a goal, College policy would need to be changed.

3. PARTNERSHIPS

3.1. Implement a three-year pilot program to provide new concurrent enrollment options in the high schools

Baseline data: 2.7 FTE

First-year goal: 5.4 FTE

First-year data: 25.7 FTE (852% increase)

Analysis: All high schools in the College's service area have agreed to the concurrent enrollment program, and Memoranda of Agreement have been signed by five high schools. In Fall 2009, 95 high school students are enrolled in concurrent courses.

Other relevant data: Dual enrollment is also strong, showing a 9% increase from Fall 2008 (22.3 FTE) to Fall 2009 (24.2 FTE). In Fall 2009, 68 high school students are dual enrolled.

3.2. Collaborate with service area high schools and the Wyoming Department of Education to clearly define and articulate pathways to facilitate smooth transitions from high school to our programs of study

First-year goal: Complete pathway for Construction Trades program

First-year data: Did not receive Construction Trades Program grant; did not receive sufficient interest in the program to continue development

Analysis: Instead of Construction Trades Programs, the College focused on implementation of concurrent enrollment program, which secures high school-to-college pathways in any area of interest (i.e., career-technical education as well as transfer education).

3.3. Expand collaboration with businesses on the design and delivery of new workforce training programs that lead to two new or redesigned certificates and degrees

First-year data: Seven programs are in various stages of development or delivery

Analysis: The Strategic Plan's goal is for two new or redesigned certificates or degrees to be realized by 2010; no first-year goal was identified. Seven programs, however, are in various stages of development or delivery: Building Analyst Certification, Pharmacy Technician, Food & Hospitality Training, Barista Training, Certified Medical Assistant, Work Readiness Program, and Survey Technician.

3.4. Expand partnerships with businesses and organizations to produce a 2% annual increase in the number of participants in workforce training programs

Baseline data: 1,255 duplicated headcount

First-year goal: 1,280 duplicated headcount

First-year data: 848 duplicated headcount (32% decrease)

Analysis: The decrease is explained by a shift in management and personnel during 2008-09, which led to decreased program offerings during the transition. The changes included temporary position vacancies and implementation of new more consistent program-wide workshop enrollment reporting guidelines. Program delivery and enrollment numbers are expected to increase compared to 2008-09.

4. INSTITUTIONAL VITALITY

4.1.   Increase FTE enrollment by 2% per year

Baseline data: 1,759 FTE

First-year goal: 1,794 FTE

First-year data: 2,043.3 FTE (16% increase)

Analysis: The dramatic increase in FTE to near historic highs is the result of both positive internal factors—e.g., retention efforts, effective recruiting, new academic programs, Trapper Scholarship Program, an effective advertising campaign, strong efforts by faculty and staff to accommodate enrollment growth, etc.—and negative factors such as the declining U.S. and state economy.

4.2.   Increase minority student head-count enrollment by 2% per year

Baseline data: 131 students

First-year goal: 134 students

First-year data: 196 students (50% increase)

Analysis: The College recently implemented specific strategies to recruit Hispanic students. As NWC attempts to expand access, the increase in minority student head-count is a positive development.

Other relevant data: For this strategic goal, minority student head-count includes only U.S. students. The total minority student enrollment—including international students—is 277 in Fall 2009.

4.3.   Enhance and streamline shared governance by clarifying the advisory roles of constituency groups, College Council, and standing committees

First-year goal: Develop restructured system

First-year data: Discussions on "mapping" of shared governance have occurred

Analysis: A document providing detailed information on the various committees and work groups that have a role in shared governance is being compiled. Once this document—and the diagram that "maps" shared governance—have been reviewed by constituency groups and College Council, the College will be in a better position to determine whether changes to our current shared governance processes are desired.

4.4. **Produce a comprehensive self-study accreditation document through broad College involvement**

First-year goal: Complete preliminary draft of self-study

First-year data: Review of first draft completed

Analysis: Initial institutional strengths and weaknesses in relation to each of the accreditation criteria were considered by the Accreditation Executive Committee. This work laid the foundation for the development and review of full self-study report drafts in the 2009-10 academic year. The self-study process remains on schedule in anticipation of the November 2010 visit by a Higher Learning Commission evaluation team.

5. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

5.1. **Increase the number of degree/certificate student completers by 1% per year**

Baseline data: 343 degrees; 95 certificates

First-year goal: 346 degrees; 96 certificates

First-year data: 323 degrees (6% decrease); 81 certificates (15% decrease)

Analysis: The graduating class of 2007-08 was the largest in recent history. The decrease in completers in the first year of the Strategic Plan (2008-09) is not highly concerning: The increase in enrollment, increase in fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention, and implementation of a scholarship program that generally provides two years of financial support should lead to increased graduation numbers in the next several years.

5.2. **Increase the first-time, full-time student fall-to-spring retention rate by 1.5% per year**

Baseline data: 81.0%

First-year goal: 82.5%

First-year data: 82.6% (1.6% increase)

Analysis: The College's goal of increasing the fall-to-spring retention rate to 82.5% was—along with Strategic Goal 5.3—perhaps the most ambitious, given that the 81.0% "baseline" rate is high compared to national data. The fact that the College exceeded the goal is one of the highlights of the first year of the Strategic Plan.

5.3. **Increase the first-time, full-time student fall-to-fall retention rate by 1.5% per year**

Baseline data: 59.0%

First-year goal: 60.5%

First-year data: 62.7% increase (3.7% increase)

Analysis: Creating programs, services, and an environment that encourage students to persist into their second year should be a focus of any institution of higher education. Like Strategic Goal 5.2, Strategic Goal 5.3 was very ambitious. The increase in fall-to-fall retention from 59.0% to 62.7% is

perhaps the most significant outcome of the first year of the Strategic Plan.

5.4. **Implement new cross-college initiatives designed to enhance the academic success of students who test into developmental courses:**

a. **Reduce by 1% per year the number of these students who drop out of college in their first year**

Baseline data: 53.6% retention rate

First-year goal: 54.6% retention rate

First-year data: 60.6% retention rate (7.0% increase)

Analysis: Students who test into developmental courses are among those most at-risk for dropping out of college in their first year. Data in this area are very positive in two ways: (1) the "baseline" retention rate for these students (53.6%) was surprisingly high compared to the retention rate of all students (59.0%); and (2) the 7% increase in the retention rate, to 60.6%, is significant.

b. **Increase by 1% per year the number of these students who successfully complete the college-level course that follows completion of related developmental courses**

Baseline data: Math: 15.5%; English: 24.7%

First-year goal: Math: 16.5%; English 25.7%

First-year data: Math: 17.1% (1.6% increase); English: 17.7% (7.0% decrease)

Analysis: This is one of the more complicated strategic goals to fully understand. The increase in retention in math (exceeding the strategic goal) is a positive development. English has traditionally had higher student transition success from developmental to college-level courses than math. Like all of our strategic goals, longitudinal data for the retention rate for English is needed to better understand the dynamics involved.

6. COMMUNICATION & IMAGE

6.1. **Evaluate website redesign and the new content management system in terms of increased internal and external usability**

Baseline data: New web design & content management system

First-year goal: Staff training; usability testing

First-year data: Staff training and usability testing has occurred; website award received

Analysis: The College's new website was successfully redesigned and a content management system implemented, and numerous hours of staff training and usability testing have been accomplished. The College also received external validation on the high quality of the new website: NWC's site earned the 2009 "Gold Medallion of Excellence" from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (District 4).

6.2. **Develop a new initiative to improve internal communication**

First-year goal: Software identification for electronic forum

First-year data: Electronic forum ("Yammer") identified

Analysis: After consideration of various possibilities, and as the result of several faculty and staff employing it, "Yammer" was selected as a means for college employees to communicate with one another regarding unofficial, yet important, matters of interest.

6.3. **Implement additional digital communication strategies to enhance communication with prospective and current students**

First-year goal: Implement "Active Admissions" by Spring 2009

First-year data: "Active Admissions" implemented

Analysis: After extensive research, pilot-testing, and collaboration, "Active Admissions" was successfully implemented. Through an integrated electronic prospect and application process, prospective students have instantaneous access to customized information about academic programs, activities, and scholarships of interest.

Appendix 2.3

FY 2004–2010 Revenues and Expenditures

	FY 2010 Budget $	%	FY 2009 $	%	FY 2008 $	%	FY 2007 $	%	FY 2006 $	%
REVENUE:										
Tuition and Fees	4,459,475	14%	3,825,142	12%	3,416,542	11%	3,223,122	12%	3,017,605	14%
State Appropriations	11,581,560	37%	15,408,910	48%	13,559,738	45%	11,285,756	43%	9,182,256	41%
Local Appropriations	5,597,296	18%	4,300,912	13%	4,007,257	13%	3,557,887	13%	3,004,107	14%
Federal Grants and Contracts	4,069,047	13%	2,726,140	8%	2,822,688	9%	2,757,113	10%	2,651,769	12%
State Grants and Contracts	810,894	3%	918,599	3%	1,287,465	4%	913,810	3%	46,223	0%
Local Grants and Contracts	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%
Auxiliary Enterprises	4,331,975	14%	4,193,047	13%	3,892,707	13%	3,814,128	14%	3,579,276	16%
Other Revenue and Funding Sources	860,935	3%	752,131	2%	1,148,905	4%	949,135	4%	655,611	3%
TOTAL REVENUE	31,239,984	99%	31,909,041	99%	29,898,144	99%	26,289,711	99%	21,959,084	99%
OTHER FUNDING SOURCES:										
Carryover	153,453	0%	35,239	0%	44,345	0%	38,936	0%	11,729	0%
Transfers	16,382	0%	167,999	1%	181,275	1%	147,197	1%	129,375	1%
Other	301,363	1%	12,603	0%	11,537	0%	25,107	0%	36,659	0%
TOTAL OTHER FUNDING SOURCES:	471,198	1%	215,842	1%	237,158	1%	211,240	1%	177,763	1%
TOTAL CURRENT FUNDS REVENUE & OTHER	31,711,182	100%	32,124,882	100%	30,135,302	100%	26,500,951	100%	22,136,847	100%

	FY 2010 Budget $	%	FY 2009 $	%	FY 2008 $	%	FY 2007 $	%	FY 2006 $	%
EXPENDITURES:										
Instruction	9,944,223.00	31.8%	9,681,843.00	34.1%	9,500,415.00	34.9%	8,284,127.00	32.7%	7,257,935.00	31.5%
Public Service	157,141.00	0.5%	137,137.00	0.5%	169,734.00	0.6%	155,721.00	0.6%	191,041.00	0.8%
Academic Support	2,022,677.00	6.5%	1,829,438.00	6.4%	1,766,209.00	6.5%	1,592,841.00	6.3%	1,570,954.00	6.8%
TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS	12,124,041.00	38.8%	11,648,418.00	41.0%	11,436,358.00	42.0%	10,032,689.00	39.6%	9,019,930.00	39.2%
Student Services	3,099,971.00	9.9%	2,854,348.00	10.0%	2,690,025.00	9.9%	2,819,027.00	11.1%	2,200,736.00	9.6%
Institutional Support	4,831,347.00	15.5%	4,367,410.00	15.4%	4,242,790.00	15.6%	3,971,610.00	15.7%	3,362,179.00	14.6%
Plant Operations	2,427,813.00	7.8%	2,188,502.00	7.7%	2,204,313.00	8.1%	2,211,159.00	8.7%	2,014,765.00	8.8%
Scholarships	4,289,402.00	13.7%	2,991,801.00	10.5%	2,866,320.00	10.5%	2,594,031.00	10.2%	2,515,595.00	10.9%
Transfers	210,500.00	0.7%	271,474.00	1.0%	115,056.00	0.4%	120,581.00	0.5%	124,465.00	0.5%
TOTAL OTHER PROGRAMS	14,859,033.00	47.5%	12,673,535.00	44.6%	12,118,504.00	44.5%	11,716,408.00	46.3%	10,217,740.00	44.4%
TOTAL AUXILIARY PROGRAMS	4,277,966.00	13.7%	4,089,197.00	14.4%	3,660,098.00	13.4%	3,563,850.00	14.1%	3,776,751.00	16.4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	31,261,040.00	100.0%	28,411,150.00	100.0%	27,214,960.00	100.0%	25,312,947.00	100.0%	23,014,421.00	100.0%

2007 Capstone Paper Assessment Report
submitted by Jennifer Sheridan
10 October 2007

1. Introduction
Since all students at Northwest College are required to take a capstone course to graduate, it was determined that capstone courses might be an appropriate site for assessing all-college outcomes, particularly the Oral Communication and Writing outcomes. In Spring 2006, Communications Division faculty assessed the oral presentation component of capstone courses for the first time. In Spring 2007, members of the Humanities Division were charged with the task of assessing the written component of the courses.

2. Procedure
2.1 Development of the Rubric
A rubric that could be used to assess papers from all capstone courses was designed by Rob Koelling and Jennifer Sheridan with some preliminary feedback from the rest of the Humanities Division and was based on the following all-college outcomes:

 1. Students will produce informative, analytical, and critical prose to respond to a particular task or audience.
 2. Students will produce writing that conforms to discipline-specific conventions.
 3. Students will use appropriate research skills in at least one substantial writing assignment.
 4. Students will observe the conventions of standard written English.

These outcomes were the basis for the four categories of assessment on the rubric (Appendix A):

 • Analysis (appropriate thesis, organization, level of analysis, etc.): based on outcome 1
 • Research (choice and incorporation of sources): based on outcomes 2 and 3
 • Documentation (in-text and Works Cited entries): based on outcomes 2 and 3
 • Conventions (professional presentation, editing, etc.): based on outcomes 2 and 4.

For each category, a paper could receive a score of 1 (poor), 2 (acceptable), or 3 (good).

Appendix 3.1

2007 Capstone Paper Assessment Report

2.2 Assessment Training

Papers were assessed by two teams; each team had a faculty member from the Humanities Division and a faculty member from another division, in this case Physical Science and Visual and Performing Arts. In addition, teams were divided so that each had a relatively new faculty member and a more seasoned faculty member. (Coincidentally, this also created teams that each had a male and a female faculty member.)

Because few capstone papers were collected from 2006, we used those papers for training and calibration (rather than for assessment). They were divided into five piles based on the course (Agriculture, Communications, Computer Applications, Music History, and Social Science). The papers in each pile were arranged in alphabetical order by author's last name. The fourth paper from each pile was chosen for assessment training (with one exception: there was only one Computer Applications paper, so that one was used for training). Each assessor was given a copy of each paper.

On May 16, 2007, all four faculty members met to discuss the rubric and to practice applying it to the five sample papers.

2.3 Assessment

The plan was to collect copies of all capstone papers from Spring 2007 and to randomly select 50 of those papers for assessment. However, when we asked capstone instructors for copies of student papers, it quickly became clear that some of the courses required writing projects that would not lend themselves to our assessment rubric. (Since our rubric is designed to assess academic research papers based on the all-college Writing outcomes, it would be difficult to apply it to portfolios, personal reflective writing, etc.) Therefore, we advised capstone instructors to notify us if they thought their students' writing projects should not be included in the assessment. Out of the 21 capstone courses taught during the semester, four (ART 2479, BADM 2395, EDUC 2100, and PHTO 2720) were excluded from the assessment process because instructors declined having their papers included. For similar reasons, we excluded GRAR 2750 and JOUR 2270. Finally, we did not receive papers from AGEC 2020 or PSYC 2000. This left papers from 13 courses for the assessment.

Papers were randomly selected (using a table of random

numbers) from each course so that each would be proportionately represented in the sample. For example, SOSC 2395 papers comprised about 17% of the total number of papers collected; thus they also made up about 17% of the sample chosen. Ultimately, a sample of 53 papers was chosen. Each paper selected for assessment was assigned a number. Then the paper was photocopied.

One pair of readers was assigned to read the odd-numbered papers (totaling 27); the other pair read the even-numbered papers (totaling 26). Each reader filled out one rubric for each paper.

An Excel spreadsheet was used to keep track of scores. While some discrepancy in ratings was expected, we did not in any case expect to see one rating of "good" and one rating of "poor" for the same paper in any of the four categories of the rubric. However, this discrepancy did occur in the case of 13 papers. Those papers went to a third reader (the English faculty member from the other team of readers). The two ratings that were closest in agreement to each other were used in calculating results.

After completing the assessment, all four faculty members met (on July 10, 2007) to discuss the process and results (discussed below).

3. Results
Of the sample of 53 papers selected, two were ultimately excluded from the assessment. One "paper" was actually the assignment rather than the paper written by a student. The second paper was excluded because, even after three readers, there was not enough agreement about the scores the paper should receive. Thus, 51 papers were used in calculating results.

For each capstone paper and each category, the assessors' scores were averaged. Each paper, then, had an overall average score and an average score for each category. We first looked at the overall averages and found that 45.1% of the papers had an average score between a 2 and a 3. In other words, 45.1% of the papers had an average score that ranged from "acceptable" to "good." The remaining 54.90% of the papers had an average score between 1 and 1.99.

It seemed more useful, however, to look at the average scores for

Appendix 3.1

2007 Capstone Paper Assessment Report

the individual categories of the rubric. In this way, we could identify a specific category (or categories) that might be lowering the overall average scores. Also, while the assessors were required to assign a score for each category to each paper, assessors had the option of identifying a particular rubric category as "not applicable" (N/A) to individual papers (in such cases, the score of "1" was assigned in that category). We did this when it seemed clear that the assignment given to the students did not (for example) seem to require a research component.

The average scores for each category, then, were calculated twice—once including all scores and once excluding the scores of "1" that were also identified as "N/A." For the first set of scores:

- 72.56% of the papers received a score between 2 ("acceptable") and 3 ("good") in the Conventions category.
- 66.67% received a score between 2 and 3 for Analysis.
- 58.83% received a score between 2 and 3 for Research.
- 41.19% received the same score for Documentation.

When the scores of N/A were excluded, the numbers were different for the Analysis, Research, and Documentation categories. In this case:

- 73.81% of papers received a score between 2 ("acceptable") and 3 ("good") for Analysis.
- 78.95% received a score between 2 and 3 for Research.
- 52.50% received the same score for Documentation.

See Appendices B and C for detailed results.

4. Conclusion

Overall, analysis of the results indicates that the majority of students in capstone courses are producing papers that are analytical, well-developed, well-researched, and carefully written, edited, and proofread. This means that the majority of papers in capstone courses are meeting the following all-college Writing outcomes:

- Students will produce informative, analytical, and critical prose to respond to a particular task or audience (outcome 1).
- Students will produce writing that conforms to discipline-specific conventions (outcome 2).

- Students will observe the conventions of standard written English (outcome 4).

The largest area of concern is in the Documentation category, since 58.84% of papers scored below "acceptable" in this category (47.5% if we exclude papers receiving an N/A in this category). This category of the rubric reflects the following outcome:

- Students will use appropriate research skills in at least one substantial writing assignment (outcome 3).

For a paper to receive an acceptable or a good score in the Documentation category, the paper needed to indicate material from sources through the use of in-text citations and a Works Cited page (or bibliography). We did not look for any particular style of documentation; we were simply concerned that a style sheet of some kind had been used.

Papers received low scores in the Documentation category for various reasons. Eleven of the 30 papers receiving low scores for Documentation appeared to be written in response to an assignment that didn't require incorporation and documentation of research. Some papers that appeared to be well-researched lacked in-text citations and/or Works Cited/bibliography pages. Other papers had citations but followed no clear style sheet. In some cases, it was obvious that information had been pulled verbatim from sources without the use of quotation marks, sometimes without citations.

While the assessment procedure did not require assessors to try to identify or track cases of plagiarism, we think the large number of low scores in the Documentation category highlights how serious the issue of plagiarism is. It was obvious that some cases were of unintentional plagiarism resulting from poor documentation; however, we were concerned about papers that lacked documentation entirely or that appeared to contain large chunks of text from sources.

After assessing the papers, we discussed possible explanations for the low Documentation scores. There is some concern that students may be coming to Northwest College with credit for ENGL 1010. This is the course in which students tend to get the most

Appendix 3.1

2007 Capstone Paper Assessment Report

practice with research and documentation, but we don't know how much experience students are getting if they take the course elsewhere. Another concern is that many students don't seem to practice their research skills between taking ENGL 1010 and their capstone courses. Indeed, Robert Rumbolz revealed that he spent a large portion of his Music Technology capstone course in "writing remediation." While he feels that his students' papers were significantly stronger because of this, he also had to sacrifice Music Technology course content to teach the writing skills. Finally, we discussed the reality that some students will opt for plagiarized material when the stakes are high (e.g. when taking a class required for graduation) and when the chances of "getting caught" are low. We agreed that an anti-plagiarism program such as Turnitin (www.turnitin.com) would be especially useful in holding students accountable for their writing. Turnitin would work both as a deterrent against plagiarism and as a way of revealing plagiarized content in student papers.

Finally, we discussed the limitations of our assessment. It's important to keep in mind that this was the College's first attempt at assessing capstone papers. Redesigning the rubric and/or assessment process may be necessary.

We should also note that only 13 of the 21 capstone courses (or 62%) were represented in the sample of papers assessed. Of those 13 courses, five (ENTK 2685, EQST 2820, PEPR 2200, MATH 2310, and WELD 2985) produced student writing that our rubric was not entirely applicable to. In other words, one could argue that the results of the assessment only provide useful information for about eight, or 38%, of the 21 capstone courses.

While it was difficult to apply the rubric to papers that were not traditional academic research papers, it seems an impossible task to re-design the rubric so that it both reflects the all-college Writing outcomes *and* can be applied to the wide range of writing that students currently produce in capstone courses. Some students write academic research papers, but others compose portfolios, engage in personal reflective writing, solve math problems, etc. If we will continue to use the capstone courses for assessment of all-college Writing outcomes, then there needs to be serious, college-wide discussion about how writing assignments in those courses reflect the outcomes.

2009 Capstone Paper Assessment Report
submitted by Jennifer Sheridan
25 August 2009

1. Introduction
Since all students at Northwest College are required to take a capstone course to graduate, in 2006 we started using capstone courses for assessing the Oral Communication and Writing all-college outcomes. In Spring 2007, our first assessment of Writing outcomes was conducted. After some college-wide initiatives aimed at improving student writing, we conducted our second assessment in Spring 2009.

2. Procedure
2.1 Development of the Rubric
For the 2007 capstone study, Rob Koelling and Jennifer Sheridan, with feedback from other Humanities Division members, developed a rubric for assessing capstone papers. The rubric was based on the following all-college outcomes:

> 1. Students will produce informative, analytical, and critical prose to respond to a particular task or audience.
> 2. Students will produce writing that conforms to discipline-specific conventions.
> 3. Students will use appropriate research skills in at least one substantial writing assignment.
> 4. Students will observe the conventions of standard written English.

These outcomes were the basis for the four categories of assessment on the rubric (Appendix A):

- Analysis (appropriate thesis, organization, level of analysis, etc.): based on outcome 1
- Research (choice and incorporation of sources): based on outcomes 2 and 3
- Documentation (in-text and Works Cited entries): based on outcomes 2 and 3
- Conventions (professional presentation, grammar, mechanics, usage, etc.): based on outcomes 2 and 4.

For each category, a paper could receive a score of 1 (poor), 2 (acceptable), or 3 (good).

The same rubric was used again for the 2009 study so that results from both years could be compared.

Appendix 3.2

2009 Capstone Paper Assessment Report

2.2 Assessment Training

Papers were assessed by two teams; each team had a faculty member from the Humanities Division and a faculty member from another division, in this case Physical Life & Health Science and Social Science & Education. In addition, teams were divided so that each had a relatively new faculty member and a more seasoned faculty member.

Three capstone papers from a previous year were used for training and calibration. Each reader was given a copy of each paper, and on May 11, 2009, all four faculty members met to discuss the rubric and to practice applying it to the three sample papers.

2.3 Assessment

The goal of the first capstone assessment project was to collect copies of all capstone papers and to randomly select 50 for assessment. However, our rubric is not easily applicable to all capstone writing projects. Since the rubric is designed to assess academic research papers based on the all-college Writing outcomes, it would be difficult to apply it to portfolios, personal reflective writing, etc. Out of the 29 capstone courses, seven instructors opted out for this reason, and four others did not provide papers for unknown reasons.[1] This left papers from 18 courses for the assessment.

Papers were randomly selected (using a table of random numbers) from each course so that each would be proportionately represented in the sample. For example, SOSC 2395 papers comprised about 5% of the total number of papers collected; thus they also made up about 5% of the sample chosen. Ultimately, a sample of 54 papers was selected. Each paper was assigned a number. Then the paper was photocopied.

One pair of readers was assigned to read the odd-numbered papers; the other pair read the even-numbered papers.[2] Each reader filled out one rubric for each paper.

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[1] Courses for which instructors opted out were BOTK 2950-80, EDUC 2100-01 and 02, GRAR 2750-01, JOUR 2270-01, and PHTO 2720-01 and 02. We also did not receive papers from AGEC 2020-01, CMAP 2720-01, ENTK 2685-01, and PSYC 2000-01.

[2] Because two readers were capstone instructors, adjustments were made so that they were not assessing papers written by their own students.

An Excel spreadsheet was used to keep track of scores. We did not expect to see many cases in which a paper would receive one rating of "good" and one rating of "poor" for any of the four categories of the rubric, and this discrepancy occurred in only two cases. Those papers went to a third reader (the English faculty member from the other team of readers). The two ratings that were closest in agreement to each other were used in calculating results.

3. Results

For each capstone paper and each category, the readers' scores were averaged. Each paper had an overall average score and an average score for each category. We first looked at the overall averages and found that 59% of the papers had an average score between a 2 and a 3. In other words, 59% of the papers had an average score that ranged from "acceptable" to "good." The remaining 41% of the papers had an average score between 1 and 1.99.

It is more useful, though, to look at the average scores for the individual categories of the rubric:

- 80% received a score between 2 ("acceptable") and 3 ("good") in the Analysis category.
- 64% received a score between 2 and 3 for Research.
- 63% received a score between 2 and 3 for Documentation.
- 67% of the papers received the same score for Conventions.

While the readers were required to assign a score for each category to each paper, they had the option of identifying a particular rubric category as "not applicable" (N/A) to individual papers (in such cases, the score of "1" was assigned in that category). We did this when it seemed clear that the assignment given to the students did not (for example) seem to require a research component.

When the scores of N/A were excluded, the numbers were slightly different for all categories:

- 88% received a score between 2 and 3 for Analysis.
- 72% received a score between 2 and 3 for Research.
- 74% received a score between 2 and 3 for Documentation.
- 72% received the same score for Conventions.

See Appendix B for detailed results.

4. Comparison to 2007

Appendix 3.2

2009 Capstone Paper Assessment Report

An important purpose of this study was to determine if any improvement had been made in meeting the all-college Writing outcomes since 2007. Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the comparison, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

PERCENTAGE OF PAPERS RECEIVING SCORES OF 2.0-3.0

CATEGORY	2007	2009
Analysis	67%	80%
Research	59%	64%
Documentation	41%	63%
Conventions	73%	67%

Table 1

PERCENTAGE OF PAPERS RECEIVING SCORES OF 2.0-3.0 (AFTER REMOVING "N/A" SCORES)

CATEGORY	2007	2009
Analysis	74%	88%
Research	79%	72%
Documentation	53%	74%
Conventions	73%	72%

Table 2

4.1 Analysis Category

As Charts 1 and 2 indicate, while a smaller percentage of papers received a score of 3.0 in 2009 than in 2007, the 2009 scores were, overall, better. In 2007, 67% of all papers received a "good" or "acceptable" score; this increased to 80% in 2009. Similar improvement was indicated when excluding papers for which one or more reader marked the Analysis category as "not applicable" (74% versus 88%).

Comparison of Scores in "Analysis" Category

Chart 1

Comparison of Scores in "Analysis" Category

(after removing scores of "N/A"
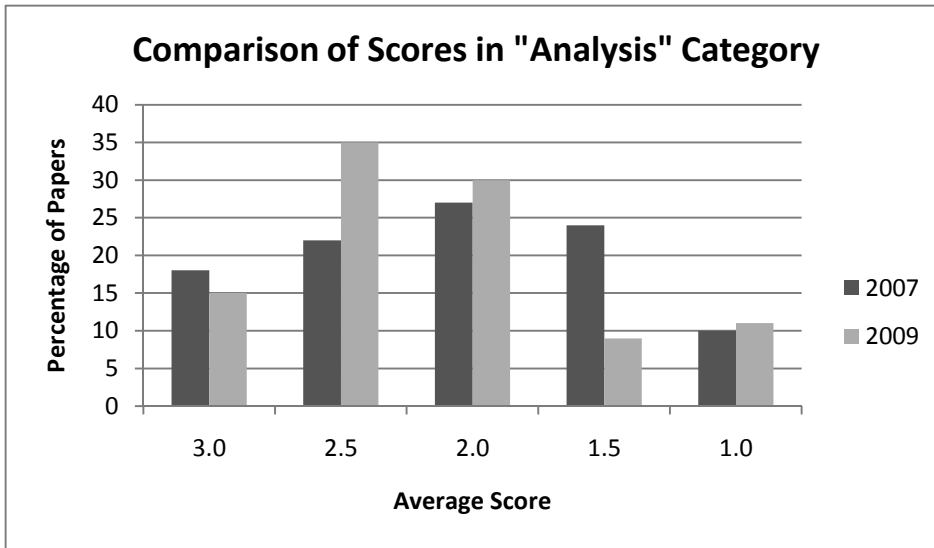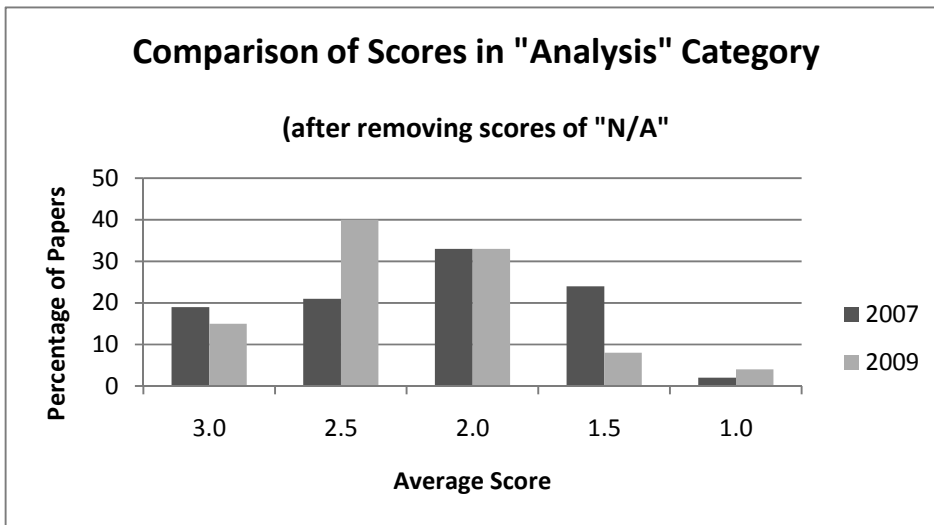
Chart 2

4.2 Research Category

The results for the Research category of the rubric were less definitive. There was a slight improvement in this category when looking at all papers, including those that did not seem to have research as a required component of the assignment given by the capstone instructor. In 2007, 59% of all papers received acceptable or good scores in the Research category; 64% of 2009 papers received the same scores. However, when looking only at papers for which research was clearly part of the assignment, the 2009

papers fare slightly worse; 79% of such papers received acceptable or good scores in 2007, but this went down to 72% in 2009.

See Charts 3 and 4 for further comparison.

Comparison of Scores in "Research" Category

Chart 3

Comparison of Scores in "Research" Category
(after removing scores of "N/A")
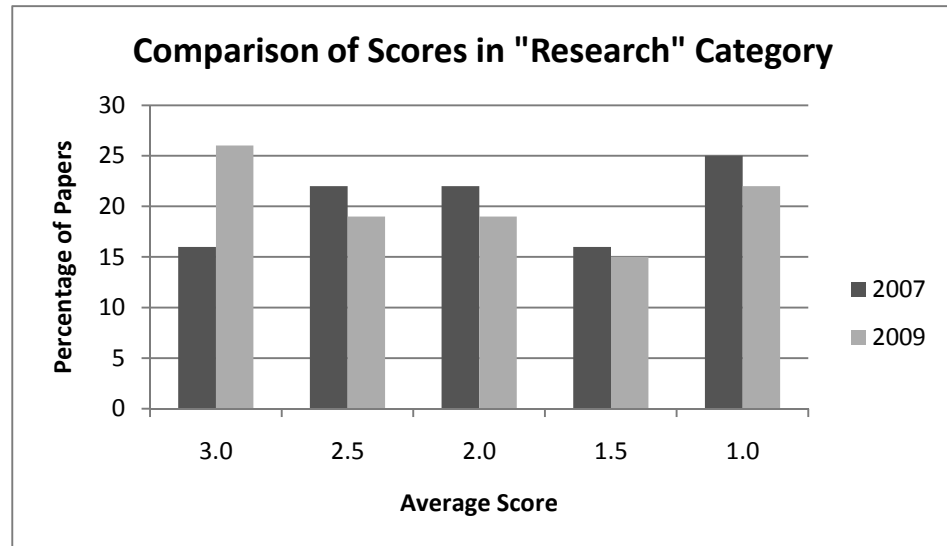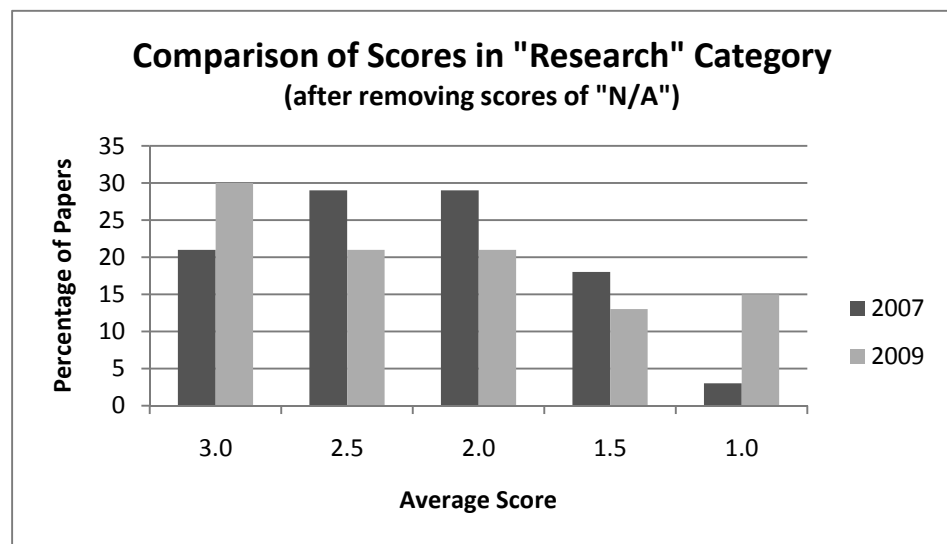
Chart 4

4.3 Documentation Category
In 2007, we identified correct and appropriate documentation of sources as the component of student papers which was most in need of improvement, and in 2009, this was the area in which we

saw the most improvement. In 2007, only 41% of all papers received good or acceptable scores for this category; the number increased to 63% in 2009. When excluding the papers for which readers marked the Documentation category as "N/A," these numbers change to 53% (in 2007) and 74% (in 2009).

Charts 5 and 6 provide further comparison.
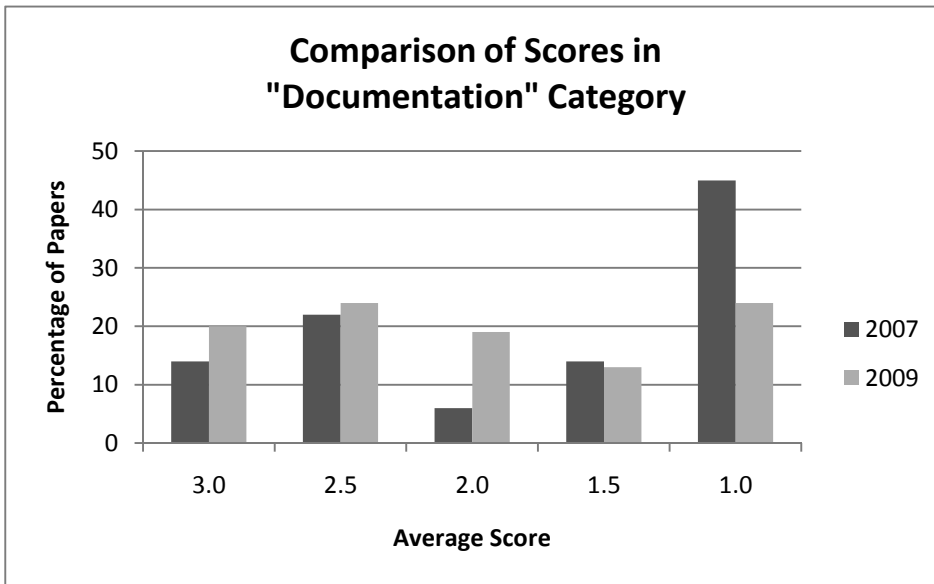
Chart 5
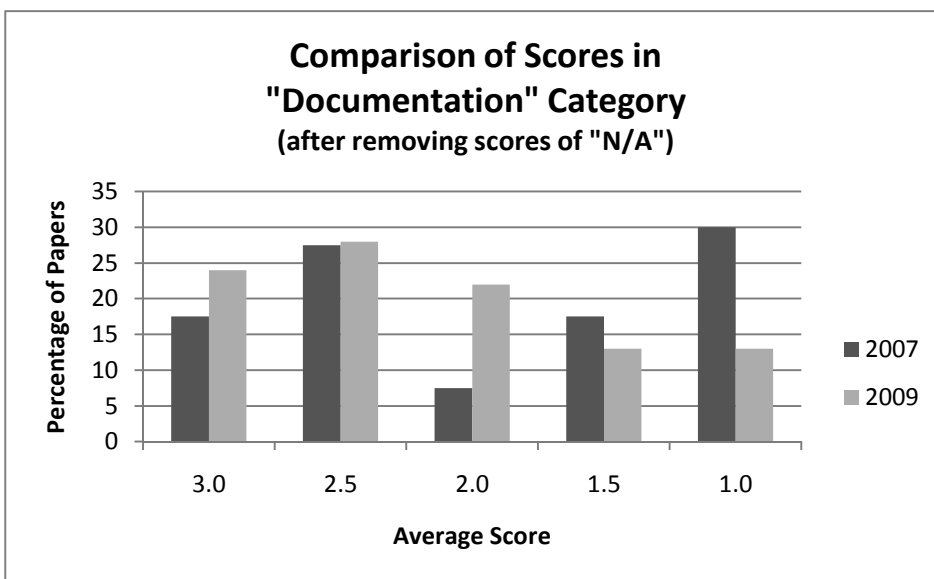
Chart 6

4.4 Conventions Category

In this category, which includes document design and issues of grammar and mechanics, papers received slightly lower scores in 2009 than in 2007. In 2007, 73% of all papers received good or acceptable scores for Conventions; this went down to 67% in 2009. One reader indicated "N/A" for this category for some papers. When excluding those papers, the 2009 percentage goes up to 72% (again compared to 73% from 2007).

See Charts 7 and 8 for more detailed comparison.

Comparison of Scores in "Conventions" Category

Chart 7

**Comparison of Scores in "Conventions"
Category**

(after removing scores of "N/A")
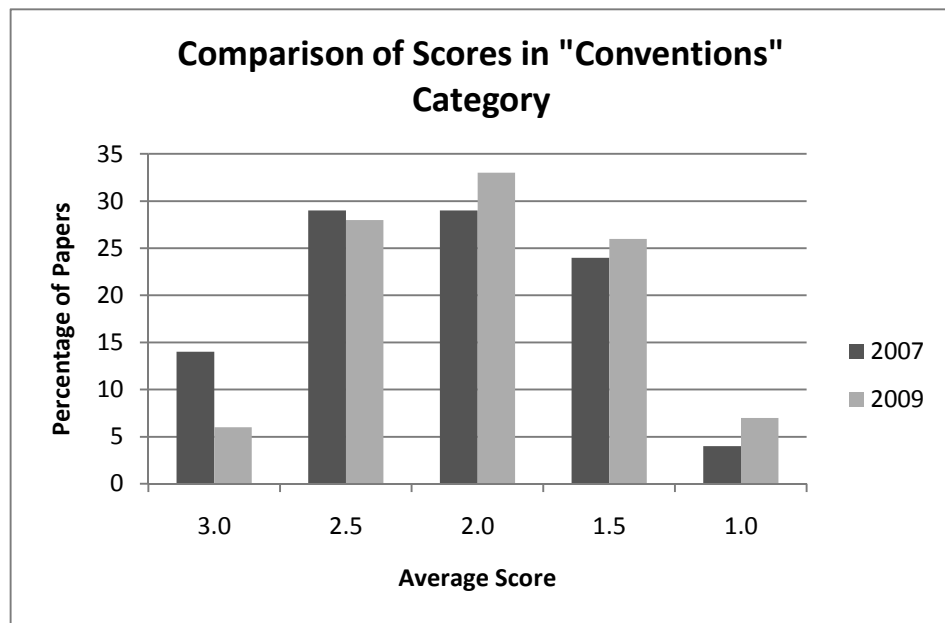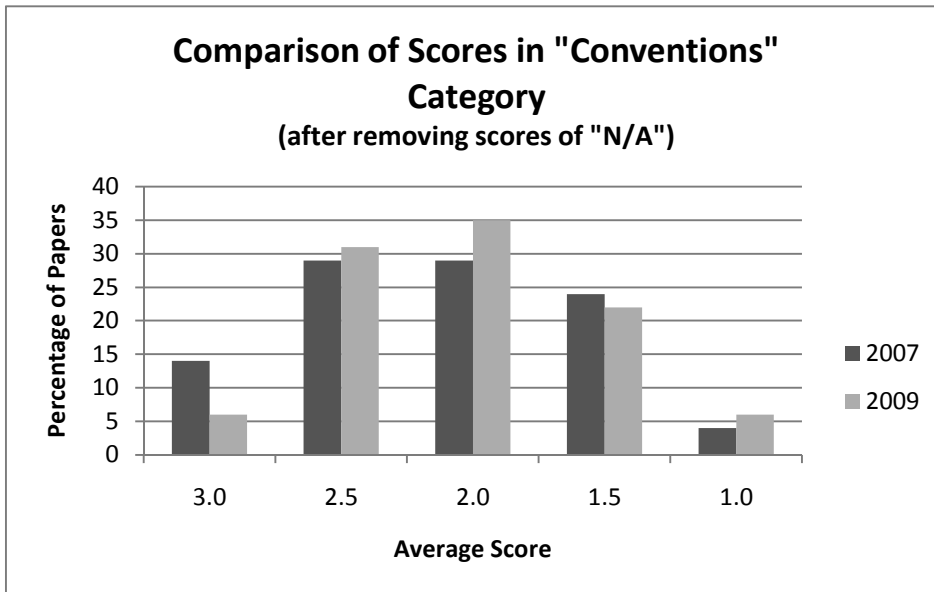
Chart 8

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the majority of students in the capstone courses are producing papers that meet the all-college Writing outcomes. Results also indicate significant overall improvement in organization, analysis, development of ideas, and documentation of sources from 2007 to 2009. The 2009 capstone papers appeared slightly weaker than the 2007 papers in terms of effective and appropriate incorporation of sources, document design, and grammar and mechanics.

There are several possible explanations for the changes between 2007 and 2009. It is possible that the improvements are the direct result of efforts by capstone instructors, library staff, and writing tutors to help students write stronger papers and correctly document sources. Even the lower scores in the research and conventions categories could be explained in this way. If students were encouraged to focus on analysis and documentation, they may have given less attention to other issues. This is a common phenomenon with writing students.

Another explanation for the changes could be the incidental differences between the 2007 and 2009 studies. The two studies did not include papers from the exact same classes. It's also important to keep in mind that we did not have the exact same *number* of papers from each class. For example, in the 2007 study, 17% of the capstone papers assessed were from SOSC 2395; only

Appendix 3.2

2009 Capstone Paper Assessment Report

5% of the papers assessed in 2009 were from that same class. We also used different readers for the 2007 and 2009 papers. Even though efforts are made to standardize readers' scores, it is impossible to guarantee that the 2009 readers had the exact same standards as the 2007 readers.

Finally, it is important to note that our rubric was not easily applicable to all of the capstone papers. We received papers from 18 classes, or 62% of the capstone courses taught. Five of those 18 classes produced student writing that our rubric was not entirely applicable to. In other words, one could argue that the results of the assessment only provide useful information for about 13, or 45%, of the 29 capstone courses.

Now that we have used the rubric twice in a row, it can be redesigned, but it seems an impossible task to get the rubric to both reflect the all-college Writing outcomes *and* be applicable to the wide range of writing that students currently produce in capstone courses. Some students write academic research papers, but others compose business plans, engage in personal reflective writing, solve math problems, etc. If we will continue to use the capstone courses for assessment of all-college Writing outcomes, we may want to have serious, college-wide discussion about how writing assignments in those courses reflect the outcomes.

To: Sher Hruska
From: Duane Fish

March 2, 2007

RE: Report for the Oral Component of Capstone.

During the spring of 2006 an evaluation of the oral presentation component of capstone courses was undertaken. This constitutes the final report for the initial baseline study done based upon the capstones that were completed during the 2006-2007 academic year.

The Process

The speech communication faculty began by developing a rubric for oral presentations. This rubric was initially developed from the one that was being used in the speech communication capstone course, Sophomore Seminar. Once this rubric was initially developed it was distributed to all members of the department in order to be evaluated and for additional feedback. After several revisions an oral presentation rubric was decided upon. The rubric consisted of seven categories: attire, preparedness, vocal delivery, physical delivery, content, organization, and supporting materials. Once the rubric was developed it was necessary to gather all of the oral presentations across all of the capstone courses offered in both the fall and the spring semester.

There was some difficulty in gathering all of these presentations and getting them all copied to DVDs. Technical problems in the copying from VHS to DVDs resulted in the loss of some capstones. In addition, some tapes had been misplaced and were not able to be copied and in one case the instructor for a capstone course refused to allow the students to be videotaped for use in this study. The end result was we were able to gain one hundred and thirty three student's recordings on DVD for use in this study. This represents a significant number of the students who participated in capstone throughout the year.

Three copies of each of the videos were made so that they could be provided to three different reviewers. Two of the reviewers were from the communication department. The third reviewer was from outside the department and two different people constituted that third reviewer. Each reviewer viewed the DVD and then filled out the rubric for each student. The data for each rubric was then compiled. This created a number of problems particularly since there was no clear identification on the DVDs

Appendix 3.3

2007 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone

of each student, their name, and project. This meant an extreme amount of detective work had to be done to identify and group the rubrics with the right individuals. Once that was done a compilation of data for each student across all three reviewers was put together. In addition each student's data was separated by category in order to make comparisons across categories.

The initial analysis of the data was to determine the levels of variance across the three reviews. There was no initial training on the rubric and how to use it so variance would provide some indication of specific problems with the rubric or with inter-rater reliability. Variance was tested by examining individual ratings from the reviewers. On a four point scale if the reviewers saw more than a one point difference given that there were 133 students evaluated across 7, that indicated 931 total categories. The variance across all three reviewers was more than 1.0 in 176 cases indicating a variance level of 18.90%. In addition to examining across all three of the reviewers, analysis also was done to check the difference between the two reviewers in the communication department. This saw only 75 out of 931 categories showing a variance level of greater than one. This meant that 8.05% of the time there was inter-rater reliability issues. It is clear that the communication faculty were closer to each other and viewed the categories in a much closer realm than the third independent reviewer. This is only to be expected given the level of training of the communication individuals in examination of oral presentations.

Results

The first set of results took student scores across all seven categories and averaged them. This average was still based upon a four-point scale. Results of the average indicate that those who were found in the superior ratings (3.5 to 4.0), constituted 7.52 % of the students assessed. The second consisted of those students who scored between 3.0 to 3.49, on the four-point scale as their average, 36.84% of the students fell within this range. The third category was 2.50 to 2.99, and 42.85% of the students fell within this category. The final category included those students below 2.50. This constituted 12.78% of the students who were assessed. This distribution indicates a fairly close standard curve for data distribution. Data analysis indicates less that half of the students (44.36%) scored an average of 3 or above. Perhaps more disturbing is the fact that at the point of their capstone project, 12.78% of the individuals did performed at the lowest level when it came to oral presentation proficiency.

In order to further analyze the data, the scores for each individual across

the seven different categories were separated in order to determine whether there were particular categories that showed problems. In order to accomplish this statistical analysis data was taken for each of the categories, for each individual, by each reviewer. Across the three reviewers those scores were averaged to come up with a score based upon a 4.0 scale. Numerical analysis consisted of determining how many students fell within the ranges for each, in other words the number of students who received an average of 4.0 was counted. Those who received an average of 3.0 to 3.99 were counted, those who received an average of between 2.0 and 2.99 were counted, and finally those who received an average of 1.0 to 1.99 were counted. This was done for each of the seven categories. A statistical analysis is found in chart one.

Analysis of this data reveals the level of achievement by Northwest College students in the oral presentation. The results indicate two to three percent of the students perform at superior levels in most of the categories. There were two notable exceptions: attire and supporting material.

In the category of attire, 12% of the students achieved the highest ratings, indicating that 12% of the students had attire that was appropriate for the capstone oral presentation. At the opposite end of the spectrum, supporting materials had 0% of the students at that superior level. For the lowest category, that indicated sub-standard work, interestingly enough the worst for this rating was also attire, which had 10% of the students. The other category which saw a significant number of students scoring in the low range was supporting material. Nine percent of the students scored in this category.

Overall analysis across the seven categories indicates that the number of students who obtained rankings averaging 3.0 or better were above 50% in all cases, except one. In attire, 51% scored above 3.0 on average, in preparedness, 67%, vocal delivery was 55%, physical delivery was 51%, content was 75%, organization was 62% and supporting materials was 38%.

Conclusion

Analysis of the data indicates that for the most part over 50% of our students are achieving quality work for the oral presentation at the time of their capstone. Analysis indicates that content is the highest rating category of the seven identified in the rubric, with three-quarters of the students achieving excellent to superior scores for their work. Obviously students are interested in the content level and are able to present quality content during their oral presentation.

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2007 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone

On the other hand, the lowest of the seven categories was supporting material. Only 38% of the students were adequate in presenting supporting material for the claims and elements within their presentation. This would suggest that this is an area in which we need to examine and identify whether this is an anomaly just for the oral presentation. In other words, they are not providing supporting materials and/or citations during their presentation. Whether it is something that is not happening in their writing or in other areas of their work is something which would require further investigation.

Further analysis of the results for attire indicates that this is a function of particular areas. For example, Social Science and Communication and Humanities presentations all scored fairly high in attire whereas those who received low marks tended to be from Physical Education and Mathematics. This would indicate that perhaps those instructors put different emphasis for the oral presentation.

Both physical and vocal delivery categories were slightly over 50% success rate for these elements. Clearly this is an area in which we need to examine and work to improve the success of our students.

Cursory analysis also indicates that different disciplines seem to score higher in some areas and not others, indicating perhaps that different instructors focus on different areas as part of their capstone experience. For example, mathematics does not seem to encourage or emphasize attire as an important part of the oral presentation. Eight out of the thirteen students who scored at the lowest level in that category were from mathematics. Similarly supporting material analysis indicates that perhaps physical education does not emphasize supporting materials as part of their oral presentation. Seven of the twelve students who were in the lowest category for that were from PEPR capstones.

Perhaps overall it suggests that we are not clear as an institution exactly what we desire from the oral presentation skills. While the Speech Communication may have a clear understanding of the elements that they believe to be important for development of oral presentations that are effective, that may not be shared across campus. Given that there is no requirement for students to take a particular course to satisfy oral communication skills perhaps that unevenness is explained.

Problem and Further Analysis

Given that this was the baseline study, several suggestions for working to improve not only the oral presentation but the method of evaluation of those are provided.

One of the biggest problems as far as conducting the study dealt with identifying students from their DVDs. This can be easily rectified by asking faculty who are taping to have students begin with a statement of their name and their topic prior to beginning their capstone presentation.

We also need to work to train faculty members in the use of the rubric evaluation. This might eliminate some of the unevenness that was seen across the various departments or departmental individuals who were evaluating the capstone. The amount of variation and the difference between variance for the communication faculty and the outside reviewers indicate significant difference between these two groups.

Further analysis and study may also indicate that faculty members in some disciplines do not emphasize or deal with presentational issues. It may also be the case that students do not get that training with their class-work. The obvious solution would be a general education requirement that includes oral communication similar to what the University of Wyoming does.

It was clear that supporting materials was by far the weakest of the seven categories. Identification of the elements and who and what was emphasized for supporting materials might provide information on why this was the case. This would also require a change in the rubric to help to identify these elements.

Much more analysis and study should be done, but this provides some baseline from which to work. More specific analysis of baseline data may be undertaken upon request.

Appendix 3.4

2009 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone

To: Sher Hruska
From: Duane Fish

December 17, 2009

RE: Report for the Oral Component of Capstone.

During the spring of 2006 an evaluation of the oral presentation component of capstone courses was undertaken. This constitutes the final report for the initial baseline study done based upon the capstones that were completed during the 2006-2007 academic year.

The Process

In the spring of 2009, the Communication Department did an assessment of the oral component for Capstone courses. This assessment was a follow up to the project that was begun in the spring of 2006. The idea is that with two years of data, we could compare the results to determine what (if any) changes had resulted in oral communication performance for capstones in the last three years.

The process for the assessment followed a similar pattern that was used in the spring of 2006. Capstone courses were recorded and placed on the server so that they may be accessed by the reviewers. This eliminated the need to copy all of the presentations while still maintaining the ability of the reviewers to access the presentations. Once the video presentations were available, assessment of each of the presentations was done by three different reviewers. Two of the reviewers were from the communication department. The third reviewer was from outside the department. Each reviewer analyzed each of the presentations and completed a standard rubric for each student. The rubric was developed by the speech communication faculty in spring of 2006. Using the same rubric allowed us to better compare results across the two trials. The rubric consisted of seven categories: attire, preparedness, vocal delivery, physical delivery, content, organization, and supporting materials. These elements have some limitations and as one reviewer noted they are "not 'perfect' for my evaluations. I would have found use for a category entitled, 'Comprehension' covering what was addressed under 'Content' in the supplied rubric." This and other possible changes will be explored later in this report.

While there were some technical problems in the material on the server and out to the reviewers, the process was still much easier and more

effective then they copying of each of the presentations to DVDs that was used in 2006. The number of usable tapes that were garnered from this process was ninety nine presentations. This was significantly lower than the one hundred and thirty three capstone presentations that were used in 2006. The use of the capstone presentation in the study was purely voluntary and even though there were more students involved in capstones, fewer faculty chose to participate in the study. Even though there were fewer and the process for selecting tapes for viewing was not random, this represents a significant sample for evaluation.

The process for analyzing the data was similar to the process used in 2006. The summary for each rubric was compiled. Each student was identified and the three reviewer results from the rubrics were identified for each of the individuals. Once that was done a compilation of data for each student across all three reviewers was put together. In addition each student's data was separated by category in order to make comparisons across categories.

The initial analysis of the data was to determine the levels of variance across the three reviews. As in 2006, there was no initial training on the rubric and how to use it so variance would provide some indication of specific problems with the rubric or with inter-rater reliability. Only one reviewer was the same across both trials. In 2006, variance was tested by examining individual ratings from the reviewers. On a four point scale, significant variance was identified as more than a one point difference between the reviewers. In this case there were 99 students across 7 categories for a total of 693 total categories. The variance across all three reviewers was more than 1.0 in 121 cases indicating a variance in 17.46% cases. This is slightly less but very comparable to the 18.90% level that was evident in the 2006 trial. In addition to examining across all three of the reviewers, analysis also was done to check the difference between the two reviewers in the communication department. The results were a variance of more than one in 52 out of the 693 cases or more than 1 raw score variance in 7.50% of the cases as compared to 75 out of 931 categories or 8.05% in 2006. It is somewhat remarkable that the variance was so similar in both trials given that the individual reviewers were different.

Of further interest is in which categories the variance seems to reside. Two of the categories account for almost half of the variance. Supporting materials (26.45%) and Content (22.41%) are the two categories that had the greatest variance while Attire (8.26%) and Preparedness (4.96%) were the lowest in terms of their variance. Further analysis of the variance may provide additional insights into the areas in which students also have difficulty.

Appendix 3.4

2009 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone

Results

The first set of results took student scores across all seven categories and averaged them. This average was still based upon a four-point scale. Results of the average indicate that those students who were found in the superior ratings (3.5 to 4.0), constituted 16.16%, as compared to 7.52 % in 2006. The second category consisted of those students who scored in the range of 3.0 to 3.49. The percentage of students falling in this range was 33.33%, compared to 36.84% in 2006. The third category was 2.50 to 2.99, and 28.28% of the students fell within this category. The figure for this category in 2006 was 42.85%. The final category included those students below 2.50. This constituted 22.22% of the students in 2009 and 12.78% of the students in 2006. Data analysis indicates still less than half of the students (49.49%) scored an average of 3 or above. Although it was up slightly from the 44.36% in 2006, it still is illustrates the lack of proficiency. Perhaps more disturbing is the fact that at the point of their capstone project, 22.22% of the performed at the lowest level of oral presentation proficiency. This is a drastic increase over 2006 levels when the percentage was 12.78%. Another illustration of the drop is seen with the lowest score. In 2006, the lowest score by any one student was 1.75 while in 2009 the range started at a low of 1.19. Overall, while the percentage of top performers increased so too did the percentage of bottom performers and at a more alarming rate. The charts found in the Appendices graphically represent these trends.

In order to further analyze the data, the scores for each individual across the seven different categories were separated in order to determine whether there were particular categories that showed problems. In order to accomplish this statistical analysis data was taken for each of the categories, for each individual, by each reviewer. Across the three reviewers those scores were averaged to come up with a score based upon a 4.0 scale. Numerical analysis consisted of determining how many students fell within the ranges for each, in other words the number of students who received an average of 4.0 was counted. Those who received an average of 3.0 to 3.99 were counted, those who received an average of between 2.0 and 2.99 were counted, and finally those who received an average of 1.0 to 1.99 were counted. This was done for each of the seven categories. A statistical analysis is found in chart one.

Analysis of this data reveals the level of achievement by Northwest College students in the oral presentation for each category. The results indicate that at the superior rating ranges from a low of 4% for physical delivery to a high of 27% for attire.

On the other hand the lowest rating from 1-1.99, which is indicative of sub-standard work, had a range of a low of 4% for Preparedness, Vocal Delivery, and Content to a high of 13% for Supportive Materials.

Analysis of areas that showed one area that exhibited statistically significant changes over the last three years. The Content criteria which had over 75% of students scoring above the midpoint in 2006 dropped to 63% in 2009. In addition, two categories showed that over half of the students scored in the substandard range. In Physical Delivery, 51% of the students fell in the bottom two categories, while 54% of the students were deemed substandard in the area of Supporting Materials.

Attire showed the biggest increase in percentage at the superior level, up from 12% in 2006 to the 27% in 2009. Preparedness also showed a significant increase at this level moving from 1% superior in 2006 to 10% in 2009.

Total Number of Students 99 – Spring

Legend: 3.50-4.00, 3.00-3.49, 2.50-2.99, 1.19-2.49

Values: 0.1616, 0.3333, 0.2828, 0.2222

Percentages (y-axis), Overall Average Scores (x-axis)

Appendix 3.4

2009 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone

Total Number of Students 99 – Spring 2009
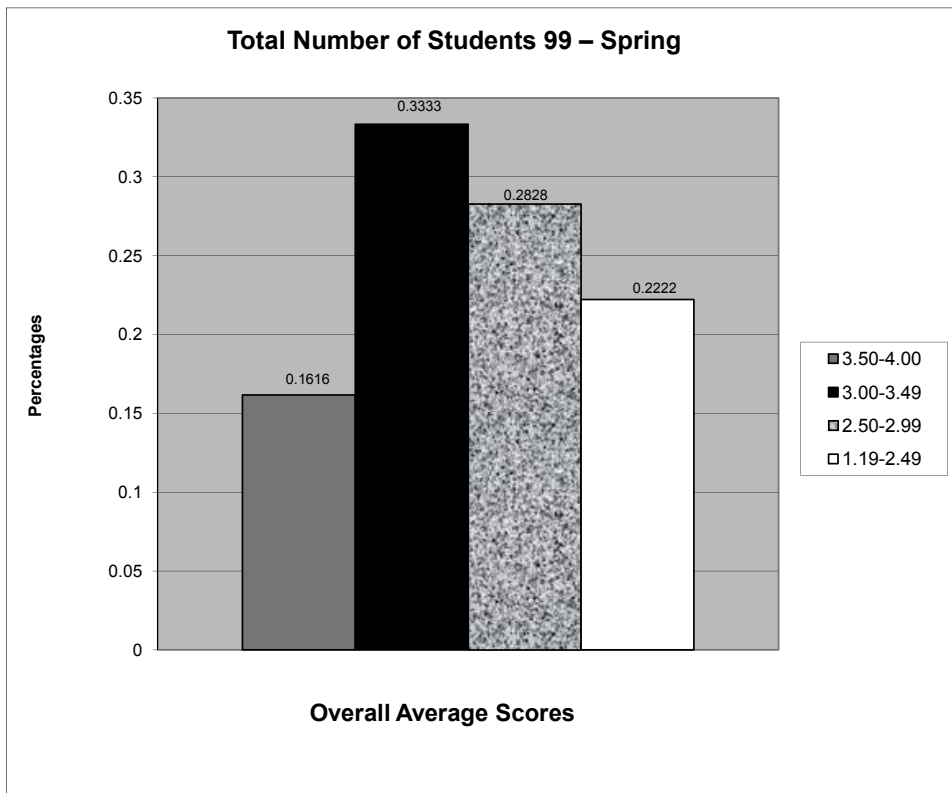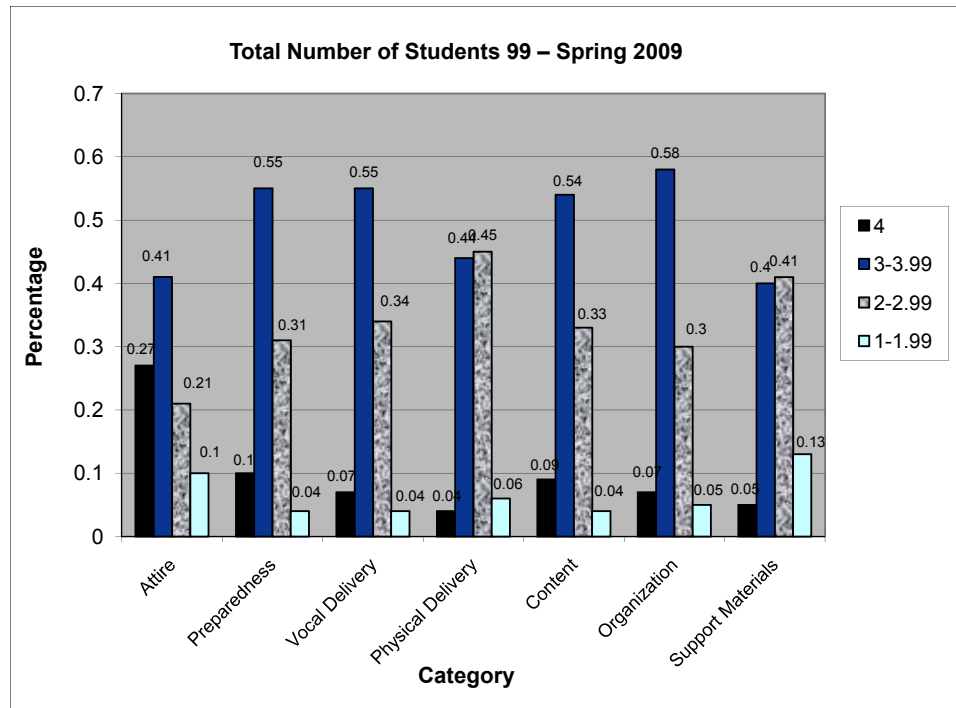
Conclusion

It was reported in 2006 that: "analysis of the data indicates that for the most part over 50% of our students are achieving quality work for the oral presentation at the time of their capstone." This is about the same in 2009. The percentage of students whose overall average score was in the top two categories was 49.49%. Perhaps if anything can be said, it is that there were not significant trends over the last three years. Students are scoring at the same levels.

However, some of the individual trends are intriguing. The increase in students at the ends of the spectrum is interesting. In every category, the number of students who scored at the top levels increased since 2009. The down side is that is also true for every category in the lowest level of proficiency. We have fewer students who scored in the middle and more students at the extremes.

The focus seems to have changed as well. While Content was the area where students had the highest rating category of the seven identified in the rubric in 2006, that was not the case in 2009. Content scores decreased to mirror success rates in Preparedness, Vocal Delivery, and Preparedness.

On the other hand, Supporting Materials and Physical Delivery tend to be two areas that were consistent low over the test period. Only 38% of the

students were adequate in presenting supporting material for the claims and elements within their presentation in 2006. That figure did jump to 45% in 2009, but the percentage of students who were very deficient increased from 9% to 13% over that three year period. Physical Delivery continued to have a majority of students who scored at a substandard level. These two areas need continued examination.

It is evident that there are still problems in the oral presentation skills of our students. While oral presentation remains as one of our General Education Outcome Skills, there are a significant number of students who score at a substandard level on this skill. Part of the difficulty is that while this is a skills outcome, Northwest does not require a course to develop those skills. While other Colleges and Universities are requiring Public Speaking, Northwest College does not. Our disjointed efforts to increase this skill do not seem to be improving the success rate of our students in this area. Our success rate has remained consistently poor over the last three years.

Final Comments

This analysis was very daunting. All of the reviewers commented on the difficulty of evaluating these students on their oral presentation. While many of the comments were technical, there were more comments this time on the inconsistency of the types of presentations being submitted.

Group projects are very difficult to evaluate given that in some cases not all of the students spoke. In other cases reviewers noted that what was touted as a presentation was not really a presentation. These tended to be discipline specific comments. What these comments indicate is that some capstones do not have a presentational component even though that is one of the requirements for each capstone course for each student.

Finally there is a vast disparity in not only the type of "oral presentation," but also in the quality. It is best summed up in the following quote from one of the reviewers:

"Honestly, I struggled with this project. As one finds in the classroom, there was such a diversity of scholarly ability. There were presentations that I found engaging and some depressing (not in subject matter but in their content and quality). The positive element to this experience was that I was able to get a peek into each area within the college (or those that recorded capstones) and I appreciated the wide variety of topics that were covered. The downside is that I felt that several

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2009 Report for the Oral Component of Capstone

significantly lacked scholarly sophistication. It made me wonder if a faculty member ever worked with the student in the process."

Clearly there are still many issues with the oral presentation skills of our students at the capstone level. It is something that needs to be addressed as our students will not be as proficient as those students who are receive the skills training they need to bridge the gap as they transfer or as they move into the workplace.

Northwest College
W Y O M I N G

Northwest College
Extended Campus

Concurrent/Dual Enrollment
Fall 2004- Spring 2010
Summary

Prepared by: Ronda Peer
Date: May 5, 2010

Semester	Concurrent Unduplicated Headcount	Concurrent Credits Hours	Concurrent FTE	Dual Unduplicated Headcount	Dual Credits Hours	Dual FTE	Total Unduplicated Headcount	Total Credit Hours	Total FTE	# of HS served
FA 04				64	240.00	20.00	64	240.00	20.00	10
SP 05				75	269.00	22.41	75	269.00	22.41	10
Total 04-05				**139**	**509.00**	**42.41**	**139**	**509.00**	**42.41**	
FA 05				40	138.00	11.50	40	138.00	11.50	10
SP 06				52	216.50	18.04	52	216.50	18.04	9
Total 05-06				**92**	**354.50**	**29.54**	**92**	**354.50**	**29.54**	
FA 06				102	364.50	30.37	102	364.50	30.37	10
SP 07				60	226.00	18.83	60	226.00	18.83	9
Total 06-07				**162**	**590.50**	**49.20**	**162**	**590.50**	**49.20**	

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Appendix 4.1

Concurrent / Dual Enrollment Trends

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Semester	Concurrent Unduplicated Headcount	Concurrent Credits Hours	Concurrent FTE	Dual Unduplicated Headcount	Dual Credits Hours	Dual FTE	Total Unduplicated Headcount	Total Credit Hours	Total FTE	# of HS served
FA 07				59	226.00	18.83	59	226.00	18.83	11
SP 08				80	317.00	26.41	80	317.00	26.41	12
Total 07-08				**139**	**543.00**	**45.25**	**139**	**543.00**	**45.25**	
Implemented Concurrent Enrollment Pilot Project										
FA 08	8	32.00	2.67	52	233.00	19.42	60	265.00	22.08	9
SP 09	21	108.00	9.00	74	286.50	23.88	95	394.50	32.88	7
Total 08-09	**26**	**140.00**	**11.67**	**126**	**519.5**	**43.30**	**155**	**659.50**	**54.96**	
FA 09	97	308.00	25.67	71	293.00	24.42	157	601.00	50.08	11
SP 10	163	612.00	50.99	86	340.00	28.34	227	952.00	79.33	11
Total 09-10	**260**	**920.00**	**76.66**	**157**	**633.00**	**52.76**	**384**	**1553.00**	**129.41**	

Distance Education Report

Prepared by: Ronda Peer
Date: September 28, 2009

Courses

Semester	Internet	ITV		Semester	Internet	ITV		Semester	Internet	ITV
Fall 2002	10	12		SP 2003	17	13		SU 2003	5	0
Fall 2003	18	11		SP 2004	14	10		SU 2004	7	0
Fall 2004	18	11		SP 2005	16	10		SU 2005	7	0
Fall 2005	23	13		SP 2006	19	12		SU 2006	8	0
Fall 2006	37	11		SP 2007	35	12		SU 2007	13	1
Fall 2007	37	12		SP 2008	43	11		SU 2008	19	0
Fall 2008	49	10		SP 2009*	48	10		SU 2009	14	0
Fall 2009	55	9		SP 2010				SU 2010		

Enrollments (duplicated)

Semester	Internet	ITV		Semester	Internet	ITV		Semester	Internet	ITV
Fall 2002	116	122		SP 2003	220	141		SU 2003	81	0
Fall 2003	221	171		SP 2004	190	190		SU 2004	90	0
Fall 2004	243	138		SP 2005	267	171		SU 2005	120	0
Fall 2005	228	144		SP 2006	398	172		SU 2006	125	0
Fall 2006	319	192		SP 2007	481	208		SU 2007	187	6
Fall 2007	554	169		SP 2008	615	153		SU 2008	190	0
Fall 2008	575	146		SP 2009*	777	122		SU 2009	268	0
Fall 2009	929	173		SP 2010				SU 2010		

*Includes Intersession 2009

Notes:

Online class offerings and enrollments continue to grow, in fact the Fall 2009 semester shows extraordinary growth with an increase of 6 additional classes and 354 additional students over Fall 2008.

ITV course delivery is stable with typically 9-13 course offerings per semester (summer offerings are by request only), and enrollments ranging from 122-208.

Distance education work this fall includes producing a written document entitled *Distance Education Guidelines*. This document is endorsed by AAC and is designed to guide all future development of programs and courses delivered via technology.

Once the *Distance Education Guidelines* is completed, we will write a 5 year plan for managed growth. This plan will include becoming accredited by the Higher Learning Commission to deliver full degrees online. Our goal is to complete this work before May 2010.

Appendix 4.3

Retention of First-Time Students Who Placed into Developmental Courses

Retention of First-Time Students Who Placed into Developmental Courses
Fall 2005 - 2008 Cohorts

	05/FA	06/FA	07/FA	08/FA*
Cohort				
# Students	431	492	476	491
# Returned for or Graduated By Following Fall	239	253	246	286
% Retention	55.5%	51.4%	51.7%	58.2%
Cohort - Placed Into Development Coursework				
# Students	404	450	432	458
# Returned for or Graduated By Following Fall	219	226	219	260
% Retention	54.2%	50.2%	50.7%	56.8%
Full-Time				
# Students			427	437
# Returned for or Graduated By Following Fall			233	271
% Retention			54.6%	62.0%
Full-Time - Placed Into Development Coursework				
# Students			384	404
# Returned for or Graduated By Following Fall			206	245
% Retention			53.6%	60.6%
Part-Time				
# Students			49	54
# Returned for or Graduated By Following Fall			13	15
% Retention			26.5%	27.8%
Part-Time - Placed Into Development Coursework				
# Students			48	54
# Returned for or Graduated By Following Fall			13	15
% Retention			27.1%	27.8%

Note: Cohorts consist of first-time freshman starting at Northwest College during the indicated fall term. 07/FA and 08/FA cohorts do not include students who dropped classes prior to or in the first week.

*Number of students who returned for or graduated by the following fall was gathered in a different way for the 08/FA cohort. The Title III Report Generator data is compiled in the summer, so 09/FA credits were not accurate in report; to determine whether a student returned in 09/FA, students' credits were pulled in a separate query.

Source: Northwest College Title III Report Generator (warehoused data)   IR: 4/23/2010

Cody – Student and FTE Count

Term	Duplicated Head Count	Unduplicated Head Count	Average Credit Hours per Student	FTE	Change from previous year #	%
Courses offered at Cody High School						
Summer 00	17	17	3.00	4.25		
Fall 00	149	133	2.60	28.91		
Spring 01	174	159	2.44	32.33		
Total 2000-01	**340**	**309**		**65.49**		
Moved to 2538 Big Horn Avenue						
Summer 01	30	29	2.67	6.46		
Fall 01	129	114	3.58	34.08		
Spring 02	185	143	3.27	39.00		
Total 2001-02	**344**	**286**		**79.54**	**+14.05**	**+21%**
Summer 02	65	61	2.27	11.58		
Fall 02	197	144	3.41	41.00		
Spring 03	254	177	3.23	47.75		
Total 2002-03	**516**	**382**		**100.33**	**+20.79**	**+26%**
Summer 03	27	24	4.04	8.08		
Fall 03	238	163	3.62	49.20		
Spring 04	193	145	4.33	52.41		
Total 2003-04	**458**	**332**		**109.69**	**+9.36**	**+9%**
Summer 04	46	43	2.83	10.16		
Fall 04	311	169	4.69	66.08		
Spring 05	166	112	4.81	44.91		
Total 2004-05	**523**	**324**		**121.15**	**+11.46**	**+10%**
Summer 05	14	14	1.92	2.25		
Fall 05	402	302	2.62	66.08		
Moved to 1501 Stampede Avenue						
Spring 06	386	227	4.15	78.58		
Total 2005-06	**802**	**543**		**146.91**	**+25.76**	**+21%**
Summer 06	24	24	2.62	5.25		
Fall 06	267	156	4.41	57.41		
Spring 07	299	199	3.52	58.45		
Total 2006-07	**590**	**379**		**121.11**	**-25.80**	**-17%**
Summer 07	27	26	1.96	4.25		
Fall 07	250	146	4.44	54.04		
Spring 08	234	140	4.02	45.91		
Total 2007-08	**511**	**312**		**104.20**	**-16.91**	**-14%**
Summer 08	20	17	1.70	2.42		
Fall 08	358	157	6.10	79.91		
Spring 09	348	221	3.70	68.25		
Total 2008-09	**726**	**395**		**150.58**	**+46.38**	**+45%**
Summer 09	68	67	1.46	8.17		
Fall 09	284	150	4.86	60.83		
Spring 10						
Total 2009-10						

Appendix 5.2

Worland Center Full-time Enrollments

Prepared by: Ronda Peer
Date: September 28, 2009

Worland – Student and FTE Count

Term	Duplicated Head Count	Unduplicated Head Count	Average Credit Hours per Student	FTE	Change from previous year	
					#	%
Courses offered at Worland High School						
Summer 00	82	77	2.57	16.50		
Fall 00	187	90	2.67	15.58		
Spring 01	136	115	2.67	25.66		
Total 2000-01	**405**	**282**		**57.74**		
Summer 01	35	32	2.73	7.29		
Fall 01	104	82	3.35	22.91		
Spring 02	138	94	4.10	32.16		
Total 2001-02	**277**	**205**		**62.36**	**+4.62**	**+8%**
Summer 02	83	60	2.82	14.12		
Fall 02	117	84	4.22	29.58		
Spring 03	122	88	3.05	22.41		
Total 2002-03	**322**	**232**		**66.11**	**+3.75**	**+6%**
Summer 03	75	64	2.97	15.87		
Fall 03	101	80	3.37	22.50		
Spring 04	97	63	3.35	17.62		
Total 2003-04	**273**	**207**		**55.99**	**-10.12**	**-15%**
Summer 04	74	71	2.71	16.08		
Fall 04	103	52	5.09	22.08		
Spring 05	68	37	5.91	18.25		
Total 2004-05	**245**	**160**		**56.41**	**+0.42**	**+1%**
Summer 05	56	53	2.67	11.83		
Moved into Worland Community Center at 1200 Culbertson- 4 classrooms & 1 computer lab						
Fall 05	77	45	5.02	18.83		
Spring 06	83	50	5.44	22.66		
Total 2005-06	**216**	**148**		**53.32**	**-3.09**	**-5%**
Summer 06	45	43	2.20	7.92		
Fall 06	111	55	4.61	21.16		
Spring 07	116	66	5.22	28.75		
Total 2006-07	**272**	**164**		**57.83**	**+4.51**	**+8%**
Summer 07	55	41	4.06	13.87		
Fall 07	59	40	5.40	18.00		
Spring 08	96	54	5.18	23.33		
Total 2007-08	**210**	**135**		**55.20**	**-2.63**	**-5%**
Summer 08	45	36	3.54	10.62		
Fall 08	50	35	5.11	14.91		
Spring 09	60	35	4.28	12.50		
Total 2008-09	**155**	**106**		**38.03**	**-17.17**	**-31%**
Summer 09	49	41	3.65	12.50		
Reduced lease at Worland Community Center to 1 classroom/computer lab						
Implemented Concurrent Enrollment program at WHS						
Fall 09	103	76	4.34	27.50		
Spring 10						
Total 2009-10						

Northwest College Workforce Training and Development
Ongoing Trainings and New Initiatives
2008-09 Report

Data

Location	Fall 2008 Participants	Spring 2009 Participants	Summer 2009 Participants	Number of offerings	Fall 2009 (To date) Participants	Number of offerings
Powell	163*	150	45	36	110	12
Cody	123	233	51	39	41	4
Worland	47	149	0	25	10	2

Note: The 2008-2009 year establishes baseline data for a new reporting method. Future reports will include comparison data.
*Includes Ed2Go and Medical Transcription Training (as reported by Stacy Gilman) not currently listed in Datatel.

2009-2010 New and Continuing Major Initiatives

- **Green Technologies – Energy Auditor**
  When the Construction Trades curriculum failed to attract students, Workforce Training personnel discussed changing directions in order to continue to train a workforce in a construction trades area, but include new initiatives supported by federal legislation. Kay Dooley and Kathy Crookshanks have begun research in green technologies, as well as Energy Auditor Certifications, to this end.

- **Lunch Programs** – in Cody, Worland, and Powell. Topics vary according to the audience. Partner with other community entities.

- **Food & Hospitality** – A group of 5-6 sclasses will be offered beginning fall and spring of 2009. Fall classes will be more general in nature and serve both the workforce and folks who just want to learn some new cooking/baking techniques. Spring classes will be more workforce oriented, providing cooking and waitstaff training, as well as customer service and community historical information.

- **Barista Training** – workshop that familiarizes students with the espresso coffee equipment, provides practice in making coffee drinks, and promotes customer service. The espresso coffee equipment used in this training is the Coffee Kiosk purchase by the NWC Foundation. We have located it in the Biblio Bistro at the Park County Complex and deliver this workshop in conjunction with the Park County Library.

- Pharmacy Technician Training – trains students to support Pharmacist's work. Successful students may obtain a national certification, though this is not currently required in the state of Wyoming.

- Truck Driving – this workshop provides students with the knowledge to successfully test for CDL. Consists of both classroom and on-the-road training.

- Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) – national certification. Completers typically do medical assistant work in a clinical setting.

- Ongoing **Trainings in Leadership & Management, Customer Service, Computer software, Ebay and Ecommerce, Advertising**

- **Survey Tech Program** to become credit bearing certificate.

Highlights for 2008-2009 through Fall 2009

- BBHC Leadership Class

- West Park Hospital Employee Training

- Career Pathway Certification in conjunction with State Department of Education

- Integrate NOW Training for Teachers

- Access Training for SwatCO in Greybull

- Command Spanish online

- Insurance Trainings

- Ed2Go online workforce training

- Medical Transcription

Updates on 2008-2009 New Initiatives

Construction Trades
This hands-on program, designed in consultation with Park County builders and contractors, did not attract an audience of new employees or continuing employees in the construction trades business. In an effort to better meet the need in the construction industry, this effort is being redesigned in green technologies and an Energy Auditor certificate. (See New Initiatives above.)

Millennial Success Program
This course teaches a basic overview and gives attendees a foundational understanding of working with a multi-generational workforce, with a focus on those employees born between 1979 and 1995. The course identifies multi-generational differences and how they affect the work environment;

ways to use generational strengths as a means of gaining the competitive advantage; and new techniques to communicate effectively with Generation Y frontline. This training runs in tandem with classes offered to high school students getting ready to enter the workforce. We are ready to train high school teachers to deliver the high school portion as a concurrent enrollment class, plus prepare students to take the WorkKeys assessment in order to receive their Career Readiness Certificate. NWC Workforce Training staff continue to provide employer training.

Executive Book Club
Northwest College Center for Training and Development offered a first of its kind opportunity in the Big Horn Basin for business, education, and agricultural leaders to meet and discuss a wide range of topics related to business and leadership. This initiative was a hit and continues in the new year.