

# Northwestern Michigan College

HLC ID 1355

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AQIP: Systems Appraisal

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# 1 - Reflective Overview

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The first section of the System's Appraisal Feedback Report is the Reflective Overview. Here the team provides summary statements that reflect its broad understanding of the institution and the constituents served. This section shows the institution that the team understood the context and priorities of the institution as it completed the review.

In the Reflective Overview, the team considers such factors as:

1. Stage in systems maturity (processes and results).
2. Utilization or deployment of processes.
3. The existence of results, trends and comparative data.
4. The use of results data as feedback.
5. Systematic improvement processes of the activities each AQIP Category covers.

## Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

During this stage of the Systems Appraisal, provide the team's consensus reflective overview statement, which should be based on the independent reflective overviews written by each team member. The consensus overview statement should communicate the team's understanding of the institution, its mission and the constituents it serves. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

## Evidence

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**Overall:** Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) is a comprehensive community college offering associate degrees, certificates, and transfer education in liberal arts and sciences and occupational studies, along with select baccalaureate programs. The College has participated in AQIP for over a decade. NMC's focus on transfer is evident in both its participation in the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA), whose purpose is to improve transferability of core courses among Michigan public and private colleges and universities, and through its University Center, which partners with seven local universities to connect students to undergraduate and graduate programs. In 2013 the College added bachelor's degrees in Maritime Technology, focused on regional assets, including the Great Lakes Maritime Academy and the Great Lakes Water Studies Institutes. International learning opportunities have recently expanded, and select programs are offered partially or exclusively online. Fall 2016 enrollment was 4,164, with 37% of students being full-time. NMC has a main campus and two additional locations, all in Traverse City, with a total of 721 employees, of which 43% are full-time. In 2016 the faculty became unionized. Since the last Systems Appraisal, the College has focused improvement efforts in the following areas: evaluation and alignment of General Education Outcomes, communication of information, identifying needs of underprepared students, peer benchmarking, and ensuring employee recognition. Focus areas for the immediate future include reviewing and revising shared governance structures, expansion of experiential learning, and addressing infrastructure and resource needs.

**Category 1:** The College has made considerable gains in assessment processes in general education and all academic programs since the last Systems Appraisal. To strengthen the integration and alignment of common learning outcomes, the Learning Outcomes Action Project Team (LOT) was

launched in 2014. This action project team transitioned to a standing committee in 2017 called the Assessment Team. This team has aligned course-level and program outcomes and continues to support academic assessment at all levels. In terms of program-level assessment processes, the College is developing systematic processes through consistent articulation of program outcomes and the creation of curriculum maps. General education outcomes are assessed in designated classes in a manner that should yield data that can be aggregated and analyzed longitudinally. Alignment of the curriculum and co-curriculum exists for key outcomes related to global competencies but remains informal or reacting for other common outcomes. Policies, training, and the use of the Maxient software support processes related to academic integrity. Processes and results in this category are considered by the College to be systematic or aligned, with the exception of co-curricular assessment, which is considered reacting.

**Category 2:** NMC has used feedback from the last Systems Appraisal to create Action Projects and make improvements within this Category. Surveys are collected from students and other constituents on a regular basis, and the information gleaned is used to improve services provided. The College has consolidated and integrated the units and processes related to admission, student records, financial aid, and registration and invested in software designed to improve student success tracking and data analysis related to progression, retention, and completion. Use of Maxient to collect and track student input supports processes for managing student complaints, but similar processes remain to be developed for broader stakeholder input. Reflective of the college's outward orientation and responsiveness to state and regional needs is the fact that the institution regards its processes for understanding and meeting external stakeholder needs as mature at the aligned level. Adoption of the Raiser's Edge software will support NMC's goal to improve its processes for building partnerships and strengthening collaborations. Processes and results in this category are considered by the College to be systematic, aligned, or integrated, with the exception of stakeholder complaint processes and building collaborations and partnerships, which are at the reacting maturity level.

**Category 3:** NMC appears to have many documented and established processes for this category, many of them due to the Talent Action project. Through the implementation of and migration to a new on-boarding software, NMC has recently examined and improved processes related to recruitment, credentialing, hiring, and orienting of employees. The college's Competency Model for attracting and hiring employees has been deployed college-wide. Processes for instructor evaluation are being systematized and improved in the course of moving to a common software for documenting reviews. Standardizing instructor evaluation processes across all programs should support efforts underway to improve employee recognition processes and review compensation and benefits for equity and competitiveness. NMC is working to develop new leaders and to provide quality professional development at all levels. Processes related to compensation and benefit systems, and hiring, training, and supporting employees are improving via the work of the Talent Action project and the addition of a Talent Development Coordinator. The College has determined that the maturity of processes and results in this category vary, primarily moving from systematic to aligned.

**Category 4:** The mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria are reviewed as part of the yearly strategic planning process at NMC. Mission and vision provide guiding principles for annual planning, budgeting, and new program and services decision making at the College. Changes in employee classification have led to a comprehensive review of shared governance structures, development of an Action Project, and creation of a new Leadership Group to update and improve communication and employee engagement. The College has focused on the development of employee leadership skills through the newly created leadership competency model and Professional Development Institute. The College's annual planning and budgeting processes appear to be strong; a wide variety of internal and external stakeholder inputs assist with ensuring college-wide engagement during the processes. Ethical behavior is woven into the college

culture and built into hiring and performance appraisal processes--along with ethical standards being written into policies and procedures college wide. NMC feels that quality processes and results in this category are moving through systematic into aligned and integrated levels of maturity.

**Category 5:** NMC ties performance data to the planning process goals and objectives, and information is available for review through the internal dashboard and intranet. The Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (ORPE) at NMC is working to improve the timeliness, availability and usefulness of information and data deployed via this dashboard and intranet. Improvements in analyzing and using data and information in decision making by all units and areas focus on tightening the alignment of each unit's performance metrics with institutional goals and targets. Additionally, ORPE and Information Technology Services staff are seeking to understand and resolve usability issues with the data management system. Although the research office posts data reports for departments internally, often the data is not what is needed for decision making and customized reports can require much time and effort to generate. Campus processes related to safety and risk management have been steadily improving beyond a base level of systematic maturity with the addition of new security and communication measures. Processes for managing resources and monitoring expenditures are stable and support prudent fiscal management. Budgeting is described as an integrated process, aligned to the strategic plan, and the NMC Foundation, one of the top twenty foundations in the country, is highly recognized for its performance. The College appears to be financially stable and very much aware of its financial limitations. It is the College's opinion that the processes and results in this category are in various stages of maturity, ranging from systematic to aligned, to totally integrated.

**Category 6:** As a college with a decade of AQIP experience behind it, NMC asserts that it has integrated continuous quality improvement thinking into its culture, most notably through wide use of the Plan-Do-Check-Adjust framework and steps to align AQIP methodology with normal strategic planning and goal-setting processes. NMC uses the Action Project process to identify college initiatives so that both are aligned with the college mission and planning processes. Through professional development efforts and training for new positions, the college works to instill a philosophy of continuous improvement in all employees. All employees are involved at some level in CQI projects; the ownership is determined by the level and area where the work is done. As the College seeks to extend institutional effectiveness processes and practices to all areas and units of the College, areas in which these principles are poorly understood or deployed are coming to light. The College is responding by forming a leadership group to understand how best to bring all units up to an acceptable maturity level according to the CQI precepts of AQIP. The College has determined that the maturity level for processes and results in this category are at the systematic or aligned level.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2 - Strategic Challenges Analysis

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Strategic Challenges are those most closely related to an institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning and quality improvement goals. Review teams formulate judgments related to strategic challenges and accreditation issues through careful analysis of the Institutional Overview and through their own feedback provided for each AQIP Pathway Category. These findings offer a framework for future improvement of processes and systems.

### Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

Strategic Challenges may be identified on the Independent Category worksheets as the review progresses. The team chair will work with the team to develop a consensus Strategic Challenges statement based on their independent reviews. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

## Evidence

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### Strategic Challenge:

**Alignment of Processes and Measures, including the use of Benchmarks.** There was not always a clear alignment between the processes, tools/methods/instruments to assess the processes, results, and their corresponding improvements. Once processes have been defined, the College has the opportunity to evaluate the feasibility of identifying a direct measure and/or external benchmark for use in monitoring process effectiveness. In cases where direct measures and/or external benchmarks do not exist or are not relevant to the process, the College could still tighten the alignment between processes and measures. Frequently, internal benchmarks can be created in cases in which external benchmarks do not exist.

By establishing direct (or very relevant) baseline and outcome metrics, including internal and external targets and benchmarks, the College will be able to determine if the process undertaken is moving from baseline and attaining the intended results. If the metrics do not show progression and target outcome attainment, the institution will know that modification of the process needs to be undertaken. Currently the maturity of Northwestern Michigan College's processes, as illustrated and mapped, are ahead of the maturity of actual implementation, therefore results, but this circumstance reflects the challenge of culture change.

### Strategic Challenge:

**Process Improvement.** While Northwestern Michigan College has undertaken a number of significant improvement efforts, the documented reasons for those improvements were not supported well by the data provided in the process outcome results. The College reports that all actions are documented with some reflection on how the implementation worked or what could be improved. How the College has employed these debriefing sessions or post-project reflections to drive changes was not clearly defined in the Portfolio. As evidenced throughout the Portfolio, data and measures are analyzed and documented via descriptive statistics but, in most cases, the insights and lessons learned are fairly superficial. There was a lack of connection between the results provided and the improvements undertaken in many categories. Analysis of process data should drive improvements

within the institution. If the reason for the improvements is not supported by process data, one could question whether the improvement activity and resources allocated result in improvements in institutional performance. The College should use the results of direct metrics to identify and drive the improvement opportunities bringing the institution to a higher level of performance.

**Strategic Challenge:**

**Partnerships.** Northwestern Michigan College has a deep involvement with the community and region, having grown up with and matured with its stakeholders. While the System Portfolio reviewers could sense this close relationship via the questions asked and the college's responses, systematic strategies for developing or maintaining partnerships with external entities were not discernible. The College does collect some information on partnerships, but how that information is used to inform change was not clear.

**Strategic Challenge:**

**Academic integrity.** The Portfolio indicates that Maxient has been used since 2013 in some way to track student code of conduct and integrity violations; however, the very low number of incidents reported compared to the size of the student population suggests that informal resolutions arrived at by instructors may distort the true numbers. The College cites the disparity in research findings regarding the frequency of integrity breeches in the general student population nationwide and the number of breeches documented at NMC. Northwestern Michigan College is clear about its need to improve processes for detecting, tracking, and lessening breeches of academic integrity and responding to the same. Improvements are planned and are being implemented. Full implementation of the Maxient reporting software could be a benefit to data collection and analysis.

**Strategic Challenge:**

**Co-curricular activities.** Articulating a process for the design and alignment of co-curricular activities to outcomes beyond the Global Endorsement was missing within the Systems Portfolio. Although Northwestern Michigan College states that co-curricular activities are aligned with the College's mission, vision, and general education philosophy, no mapping of that alignment could be found. A variety of co-curricular activities are mentioned within the Portfolio; however, there was no process detailing how they were developed. The College is aware of this opportunity, and has recently launched an Action Project to expand the use of experiential learning.

**Strategic Challenge:**

**Shared governance.** Northwestern Michigan College recognizes that its shared governance structures and processes are not fostering a shared sense of inclusion and transparency as had been hoped. Multiple factors (e.g., employee survey feedback, a change in staff classification in 2015, and the unionization of faculty in 2016) pointed to a need to review current structures and processes. An Action Project was launched in May 2017 to evaluate and clarify the shared governance structure, and a newly-charged Leadership Group consisting of department chairs and directors; committee, council, and employee group chairs; project chairs; and executive leaders has started meeting monthly to improve communication, engagement, and operational alignment. The shared governance Action Project is an opportunity to review leadership roles across the institution and to improve channels of communication, employee buy-in, and trust.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

### **3 - Accreditation Evidence Screening Summary**

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Systems Appraisal teams screen the institution's Systems Portfolio evidence in relation to the Criteria for Accreditation and the Core Components. This step is designed to position the institution for success during the subsequent review to reaffirm the institution's accreditation. In order to accomplish this task, HLC has established linkages between various Process and Results questions and the Criteria's Core Components. Systems Appraisal teams have been trained to conduct a "soft review" of the Criteria/Core Components for Systems Portfolios completed in the third year of the AQIP Pathway cycle and a more robust review for Systems Portfolios completed in the seventh year. The formal review of the Criteria and Core Components for purposes of reaffirming the institution's accreditation through the comprehensive evaluation that occurs in the eighth year of the cycle, unless serious problems are identified earlier in the cycle. As part of this Systems Appraisal screening process, teams indicate whether each Core Component is "strong, clear, and well-presented," "adequate but could be improved," or "unclear or incomplete." When the Criteria and Core Components are reviewed formally for reaffirmation of accreditation, peer reviewers must determine whether each is "met", "met with concerns", or "not met".

The full report documents in detail the Appraisal team's best judgment as to the current strength of the institution's evidence for each Core Component and thus for each Criterion. It is structured according to the Criteria for Accreditation and the Systems Appraisal procedural document. Institutions are encouraged to review this report carefully in order to guide improvement work relative to the Criteria and Core Components.

Immediately below the team provides summary statements that convey broadly its observations regarding the institution's present ability to satisfy each Criterion as well as any suggestions for improvement. Again, this feedback is based only upon information contained in the institution's Systems Portfolio and thus may be limited.

#### **Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team**

In this section, the team should create summary statements/suggestions for improvement for each of the Criteria for Accreditation.

### **Evidence**

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#### **Criterion One. Mission**

Northwestern Michigan College provides strong, clear, and well-presented evidence for all Criterion One Core Components.

#### **Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

Northwestern Michigan College provides strong, clear, and well-presented evidence regarding the integrity of operations, transparency to stakeholders, autonomy of its Board, and the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. Yet while evidence was provided regarding freedom of expression and the truth in teaching and learning, details regarding how the College ensures their stated policies are followed would add clarity and provide additional evidence to support the Core Component. The College utilizes Maxient software for reporting and tracing breeches of academic integrity. Evidence could be improved regarding enforcing policies on academic honesty and



integrity.

**Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

Northwestern Michigan College provides strong, clear, and well-presented evidence regarding degree programs being appropriate to higher education; that intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs; that there are faculty and staff for effective, high-quality programs and student services; and that there is support provided for student learning and effective teaching. Evidence could be improved regarding co-curricular programs being suited to the institution's mission and contributing to the educational experience of its students, therefore an enriched educational environment.

**Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**

Northwestern Michigan College provides strong, clear, and well-presented evidence regarding demonstrating responsibility for the quality of educational programs. Evidence regarding assessing achievement of learning outcomes was presented; however, assessment data is obtained on all students and is not disaggregated by level in order to support the College's stated goal that all graduates will perform at the "sufficient" or "proficient" level for each general education outcome. Co-curricular assessment processes could be improved. Evidence was also presented regarding the College's commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its programs; however, the College has an opportunity to ensure data is segmented at the academic program level in order to make improvements as warranted by the data.

**Criterion Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness**

Northwestern Michigan College provides strong, clear, and well-presented evidence that the institution has the resource base necessary to support its programs, that institutional planning is aligned with the assessment of performance and budgeting, and that the College works systematically to improve its performance. Evidence was adequate, but could be improved in the area of the appropriate nature of the governance and leadership structures to fulfill the mission of the institution, specifically within the context of shared governance.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4 - Quality of Systems Portfolio

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In this System Appraisal, peer review teams should acknowledge any work that the institution has begun toward addressing the Criteria for Accreditation and the Core Components. The more focused analysis remains on the AQIP Categories and the institution's evidence related to the Process (P), Results (R), and Improvement (I) questions. In cases where there was HLC follow-up stemming from the institution's previous reaffirmation review, the institution may request closer scrutiny of those items during this Systems Appraisal.

### **Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team**

Because it stands as a reflection of the institution, the Systems Portfolio should be complete and coherent, and it should provide an open and honest self-analysis on the strengths and challenges facing the institution. In this section, the peer review team provides the institution with constructive feedback on the overall quality of the Systems Portfolio, along with suggestions for improving future Systems Portfolio submissions.

### **Evidence**

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Northwestern Michigan College's Systems Portfolio was a tightly, well-written document with strategic uses of linked information throughout. Flow charts depicted the college's processes well, and it was apparent to reviewers that the College has access to a very deep and wide array of data. Additionally, employees seemed to be very engaged with continuous quality improvement efforts college wide. Northwestern Michigan has used feedback from the previous Systems Appraisal to make many improvements to processes. The two new continuous quality improvement projects (two new Action Projects) point to a deliberate effort by the College to align quality improvement projects with gaps in the Systems Portfolio.

Future portfolios could include explicit details on how the processes are periodically reviewed for improvement, which could advance systematic processes to an aligned level of maturity. It should also be noted, as stated in the strategic issues, that there was not always a clear alignment between the processes and measures, including the use of benchmarks. In several instances, the attenuated relationship between a given process and the data presented as reflecting that process prompted reviewers to downgrade results maturity.

As stated previously, there was good, strategic use of linked sources. However, providing reviewers with a blank template (e.g., the A3 template) or form (in lieu of a complete set populated with data or information) limited reviewers' confidence in the completeness of implementation of some processes. Providing more examples in future Portfolios would be useful. Finally, fall 2016 data was not included in the Systems Portfolio; therefore, reviewers could not comment on recent results and their implications for quality improvements at the College.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5 - AQIP Category Feedback

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The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report addresses each AQIP Category by identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement. Through detailed comments, which are tied to the institution's Systems Portfolio, the team offers in-depth analysis of the institution's processes, results and improvement efforts. These comments should be straightforward and consultative, and should align to the maturity tables. This allows the team to identify areas for improvement and recommend improvement strategies for the institution to consider.

### I - Helping Students Learn

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Focuses on the design, deployment, and effectiveness of teaching-learning processes (and on the processes required to support them) that underlie the institution's credit and non-credit programs and courses.

#### Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Common Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes, Academic Program Design, Academic Program Quality and Academic Integrity.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

### Evidence

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#### CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Category 1 focuses on the design, deployment and effectiveness of teaching-learning processes (and the processes required to support them) that underlie the institution's credit and non-credit programs and courses.

#### 1.1: COMMON LEARNING OUTCOMES

Common Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities expected of graduates from all programs. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.B., 3.E. and 4.B. in this section.

**1P1** Describe the processes for determining, communicating and ensuring the stated common

learning outcomes, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Aligning common outcomes (institutional or general education goals) to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution (3.B.1, 3.E.2)

**Aligned** NMC's three general education outcomes, Communication, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative Reasoning, are aligned across all Group 1 coursework and are designed to support the mission, purpose and philosophy of general education. Curriculum mapping is used to improve consistency, alignment, and documentation of processes and results. Course outlines identify GEOs. In 2014, the Learning Outcomes Action Project Team (LOT) was launched as a part of a college Action Project. The intent was to align learning outcomes, develop a comprehensive assessment plan, provide action plans for continuous improvement, and provide professional development support. The team transitioned to a standing committee (the Assessment Team) in 2017.

- Determining common outcomes (3.B.2, 4.B.4)

**Aligned** The curriculum committee, in consultation with faculty across campus and with reference to outcomes used by other colleges and endorsed by professional societies, developed the learning outcomes. The committee is also responsible for reviewing the outcomes every two years. This degree of consensus building and frequency of review places the maturity level of this process at aligned. Later, as a consequence of biannual review, NMC added the "cultural perspectives and diversity" outcome to some, but not all ,programs.

- Articulating the purposes, content and level of achievement of the outcomes (3.B.2, 4.B.1)

**Aligned** NMC articulates its general education philosophy, the GEOs, and the four levels of achievement (proficient, sufficient, developing, and deficient) on its website and in its catalog. The catalog also describes the various ways in which GEOs are measured, which includes using rubrics to define each of the four achievement levels.

- Incorporating into the curriculum opportunities for all students to achieve the outcomes (3.B.3, 3.B.5)

**Aligned** Course outlines identify course learning outcomes and may include GEOs, using the L. Dee Fink framework. In support of the communications GEO, the College has identified writing-intensive courses that use both formal and informal writing to help students learn course content. There is also a list of courses that meet the cultural perspectives and diversity requirement. Courses are designed using the L. Dee Fink framework which designs learning activities that give students opportunities to achieve the stated outcomes. There is no indication, however, of how GEO assessment results are tied back to the list of courses to ensure these classes are adequate in helping students attain achievement with the GEOs.

- Ensuring the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs (3.B.4)

**Aligned** The curriculum committee is responsible for reviewing the outcomes and confirming their relevance every two years. The process for doing this includes a public hearing for community input. The Committee also has a detailed review process for proposals that are submitted for GEO changes. Proposed changes go to the VP for Educational Services and then to the President for final approval. This process is well aligned and could be considered integrated if other sources of input, such as

professional societies, a literature review, or conferral with peer institutions, were incorporated into the process outlined.

- Designing, aligning and delivering cocurricular activities to support learning (3.E.1, 4.B.2)

**Reacting** The College lists a set of co-curricular activities to support learning, such as in the Global Endorsement. There is no explicit indication of how these activities support learning, although a connection could be inferred. NMC states that some co-curricular activities do not have clearly articulated learning outcomes or assessments. A new Action Project on experiential learning was launched in 2017 to expand the use of these types of co-curricular learning activities.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess attainment of common learning outcomes (4.B.2)

**Aligned** Assessment of common learning outcomes is implemented through the use of institutional rubrics which measure student proficiency, and the results are collected and tracked through NMC's learning management system. The institutional rubric was developed by a team of faculty and is refined as needed or on a two-year review cycle. The effectiveness of the learning management system has been evaluated by the Learning Outcomes Team.

- Assessing common learning outcomes (4.B.1, 4.B.2, 4.B.4)

**Systematic** NMC has made changes to its frequency and scope of assessment to include a continuous schedule of additional courses in order to provide more data. Since Fall 2015, all instructors teaching courses in which a GEO is supported have been required to assess all students enrolled in the course. Instructors complete a standardized GEO Report Form, and an Assessment Coordinator compiles the data. Course and/or program changes based on this data are expected in the fall semesters. Moodle allows for easy reporting of assessment results along with reviewing results longitudinally. Since fall 2015, all courses in which a GEO is supported have assessment results reported through Moodle, and effective fall 2017, all GEOs are being assessed each semester. Maturing this process into alignment will entail the longitudinal accrual and analysis of data.

**1R1** What are the results for determining if students possess the knowledge, skills and abilities that are expected at each degree level? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** GEO data is available to all internal stakeholders on the Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness website (ORPE). Communication and quantitative reasoning outcomes have been quite strong for the last six years, although there has been a huge increase in critical thinking outcomes. This spike is even more surprising since it coincides with the change from collecting data on "near graduates" to collecting data on all students. Results are only given for "sufficient" or "proficient," which raises questions about the completeness of the data published. The return rates for outcome scores is also extremely low and has been noted as an area for improvement.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** NMC has made improvements to the assessment process by utilizing internal rubrics to

measure GEO assessment and by performing assessment in all courses that support a GEO. These changes are fairly recent, yet they support the development of internal targets and determination of goal attainment. Although NMC states that the three common learning outcomes are aligned to the Michigan Transfer Agreement, the College indicates that external benchmarking does not reflect the proficiency of NMC students accurately and reliably. NMC states that rather than focusing only on graduates, it has evolved its assessment practices to encompass all students. Yet, the results from the past two years are not evident in the systems portfolio. The College could continue to review external benchmarks to inform improvement. Disaggregating the data could help to better inform this process.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Systematic** NMC has a system to collect and archive data to evaluate its progress; however, it is not clear from the evidence presented how the data is used across disciplines and campus-wide to erode institutional silos. Communication scores have fluctuated over the past 10 years; the most recent fluctuation possibly due to the large increase in sample size. Quantitative reasoning scores have remained consistent. Critical Thinking scores have increased greatly due to use of a new rubric, enhanced faculty training on the rubric use, and alignment of assignments to the rubric.

**III** Based on 1R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.B.3)

Clearly, improvements in the GEO assessment process include the frequency of assessment and use of internal rubrics, which will lead to more accurate and consistent data. An overhaul to the intranet now allows this venue to serve as an assessment resource for faculty. NMC recognizes the need for professional development in the area of assessment and the importance of engaging faculty in the process. To this end, the College has provided many opportunities for training and support. The largest improvement was the move to assess all students in relevant courses on all three outcomes each semester. This is still a work in progress, however, as data are not disaggregated by level and the new system does not have mechanisms for cross-departmental norming related to types of assignments. NMC has set achievable and laudable goals for general education assessment since assessing all outcomes in every relevant course every semester is as complete a process as can be achieved. Planned improvements hinge on the successful collection of trend data via the Moodle tool in order to provide longitudinal tracking of data and early detection of ways to improve student learning. Lastly, making the Action Project Learning Outcomes Team a standing committee, the Assessment Team, shows the college's support and investment in assessment.

## 1.2: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities graduates from particular programs are expected to possess. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.B., 3.E. and 4.B. in this section.

**1P2** Describe the processes for determining, communicating and ensuring the stated program learning outcomes and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Aligning learning outcomes for programs (e.g., nursing, business administration, elementary teaching, etc.) to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution (3.E.2)

**Systematic** A well-designed, four-stage decision-making process is used when determining if new programs should be established at NMC. Included in this decision-making process is *The Idea*

*Summary*, where the learning outcomes and their alignment to the college mission and strategy are discussed. The annual program review process helps to ensure that program outcomes remain aligned with the mission, offerings, and degree levels. However, the process for ensuring alignment for the outcomes of existing programs is not well described and appears to consist of a check-off system built into the annual program review process.

- Determining program outcomes (4.B.4)

**Systematic** Program faculty and staff establish program outcomes during the development process. For occupational programs, relevant outcomes are determined through input from key stakeholders, including advisory boards, state and federal regulating agencies, professional associations, and accrediting bodies. The liberal studies program outcomes are designed with ease of transfer in mind, the support of occupational program outcomes, achievement of the college-wide GEOs, and “any other specific programmatic outcomes deemed significant for students by faculty in those areas.”

- Articulating the purposes, content and level of achievement of the outcomes (4.B.1)

**Systematic** As described in the Portfolio, processes for articulating program outcomes appear to be systematically achieved through the publication of outcomes on program web pages and curriculum mapping; however, a look at the web pages for 10 programs revealed that roughly 50% did not post outcomes. An example of a blank course outline is given, but reviewers do not have access to the full library of completed course outlines. How the academic leadership, program coordinators, faculty members, and instructional staff work collaboratively--aside from the annual program review process--is not clear.

- Ensuring the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs (3.B.4)

**Systematic** Annual program review, advisory committee input at annual meetings, and the annual advisory committee survey, along with employer surveys for several of the health science programs, all contribute information to ensure that program outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs. The College is beginning to operate at a systematic level of maturity as this process is extended across all programs.

- Designing, aligning and delivering cocurricular activities to support learning (3.E.1, 4.B.2)

**Reacting** The Systems Portfolio states that co-curricular activities are aligned with NMC’s mission, vision, and general education philosophy, but no process for that alignment is described. A variety of co-curricular activities are mentioned; however, there is no process detailing how they were developed. There is an opportunity to develop a process for designing, aligning, and delivering co-curricular activities to support learning.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess attainment of program learning outcomes (4.B.2)

**Systematic** The program review metrics and the standardized reporting format of the completed reviews exemplified clearly support operational efficiency. How the metrics address achievement of program learning outcomes is less clear. Maturing this process could entail building a section into the template for programs to present learning outcome achievement data germane to the program. Identical metrics may not be employable, but the review process could be more directly focused on outcome attainment rather than grades, student satisfaction, or the efficient use of facilities by



tracking seats occupied versus seats available in classes. A wide range of maturity for assessing program learning outcomes exists amongst the occupational curricular programs, liberal studies programs, and co-curricular programs.

- Assessing program learning outcomes (4.B.1, 4.B.2, 4.B.4)

**Systematic** NMC has a well-defined and regular review process for both occupational programs and liberal studies programs. Processes are in place that allow for regular review and update in areas that need improvement. As noted above, program learning outcome measures are largely composed of indirect assessment. The inclusion of direct measures while students are still enrolled at the College would significantly strengthen work in this area and improve this maturity rating.

**1R2** What are the results for determining if students possess the knowledge, skills and abilities that are expected in programs? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Overall levels of deployment of the program assessment processes within the institution (i.e., how many programs are/not assessing program goals)

**Systematic** Deployment rates vary widely, with 100% of nursing and BS programs having outcomes and maps available, while only 55% of AAS programs have completed this work. Liberal studies programs use the GEOs and do not have their own program outcomes, and nothing is mentioned about how the liberal studies program learning outcomes are assessed. Maturing this process into a more solid, systematic level of maturity will entail achieving comparable processes for all programs.

- Summary results of assessments (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** Indirect measures of student learning were reported for ten programs, including pass rates on selected assessment tools and pass rates for programs with licensure/certification exams. No other results of program learning – knowledge, skills, and the abilities graduates from programs are expected to possess – were reported. There is an opportunity for the College to develop, for every program, a robust program outcomes assessment plan based on direct student learning metrics versus program metrics with very limited/indirect learning outcomes data.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** For programs with external accrediting bodies or those participating in the Perkins programs, NMC uses external benchmarks to compare its performance regularly. Processes for the liberal studies programs appear to be less mature as the Portfolio does not provide external benchmarks.

- Interpretation of assessment results and insights gained

**Reacting** NMC states that program level outcomes reflect various stages of maturity, although it is not clear how this determination was made based upon the results provided, which tend to be extremely positive. However, it is also noted that “the majority” of occupational programs have publicly-stated program outcomes which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound, although it is not clear how many programs do not meet this definition nor how those programs fail to achieve it. Additionally, only some programs have identified levels of attainment

within their curriculum map. The College has an opportunity to develop direct measures of program learning – the knowledge, skills, and abilities graduates from programs are expected to possess – in order to assess program learning outcomes and move to a higher maturity level.

**1I2** Based on 1R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.B.3)

NMC is working to reach its goal of 100% participation of programs having outcomes and curriculum maps. In the next 1-3 years, NMC expects to require new programs to identify outcomes at the onset of program development, and the College has developed a template to effectively accomplish this requirement. NMC recognizes the need to also develop a consistent process for articulating co-curricular outcomes and including levels of attainment in curriculum maps. The planned next steps in this area are logical. Although they are fairly basic and early stage in their nature, they appear to be important next steps in the process of maturing in this area. In order to be more transparent, NMC plans to increase the number of program outcomes and curriculum maps posted on their respective program websites. Furthermore, NMC plans to make improvements in how program outcomes are determined, align co-curricular programs and activities, and include levels of attainment within curriculum map templates.

### 1.3: ACADEMIC PROGRAM DESIGN

Academic Program Design focuses on developing and revising programs to meet stakeholders' needs. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 1.C. and 4.A. in this section.

**1P3** Describe the processes for ensuring new and current programs meet the needs of the institution and its diverse stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Identifying student stakeholder groups and determining their educational needs (1.C.1, 1.C.2)

**Systematic** Rather than breaking out the college's's various sub-groups based on demographics, educational goals, or levels of preparation, NMC thinks of its student stakeholders on a continuum of prospective, current, and past students that cycle and re-cycle through the institution—sometimes as recipients and sometimes of contributors to the enterprise of meeting community needs and leveraging regional resources. Nonetheless, reviewers define program design as systematic as the processes used to identify subgroups and the nature of the subgroups are not detailed in the Portfolio.

- Identifying other key stakeholder groups and determining their needs (1.C.1, 1.C.2)

**Systematic** External partners align with the framework of seeing students as stakeholders at different stages of their lifespans. Key partners are regional K-12 schools, as well as colleges and universities, employers, and economic development entities. The needs of these external partners are identified through surveys, community listening sessions, and other informal feedback methods. Maturing processes in this area will entail making the college's's queries of stakeholder needs clearly repeatable by documenting trends over time.

- Developing and improving responsive programming to meet all stakeholders' needs (1.C.1, 1.C.2)

**Aligned** NMC has number of aligned processes in place to ensure that the new program creation meets the local demand, fiscal responsibilities, and the mission of the College.

New programs are developed in response to local, regional, and national trends, along with workforce and educational partner input. A detailed process map defines the process for initiating and considering new programs at NMC, including an Idea Summary, completed by the program point of contact. This summary identifies the program's alignment with the College mission and strategic directions.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess the currency and effectiveness of academic programs

**Aligned** NMC has a detailed Annual Program Review Process, developed as a result from the Academic Program Review Action Project. NMC also relies on accreditation requirements and advisory committees to help guide this process. The current program review process was developed by the Action Project team to include an annual evaluation of quantitative metrics and a qualitative reflection on the prior year's activities. Metrics are categorized into four levels of evaluation: learner perception and behavior, learning, skill transfer, and external assessment. Feedback from advisory groups is also used to determine program effectiveness. Program review occurs annually each fall in preparation for the upcoming budget planning cycle, and program review templates for occupational programs and liberal studies programs are well-designed and include a variety of measures to inform college programming. Additionally, programs with external accreditation use identified external assessment measures to demonstrate program effectiveness.

- Reviewing the viability of courses and programs and changing or discontinuing when necessary (4.A.1)

**Aligned** The Digital Dashboard is used to monitor enrollment trends, manage course sections, and assist with making course and program-offering decisions. The Cost to Educate document provides revenue and expense data for all of NMC's academic programs and includes the ranking of programs by net contribution on an annual basis. Labor market data is also used when making decisions to change or discontinue programs, along with advisory board and other stakeholder input.

**1R3** What are the results for determining if programs are current and meet the needs of the institution's diverse stakeholders? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of assessments (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** Results of the annual program review, along with recent changes to programs in order to meet stakeholder needs, were presented. Additionally, a community survey conducted in 2014 regarding attitudes toward and awareness of the College was included in the Systems Portfolio. Although program design at this level is identified as systematic, the College could reach a higher level of maturity through the incorporation of more direct measures.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** Internal and external benchmarks were presented along with the overall program metrics summary.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Systematic** New program offerings and changes to existing courses and programs were made in response to stakeholder needs.

**1I3** Based on 1R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC has launched a Collaborative Online International Learning course and will add an Innovation Center that has specific outcomes linked to the operation; however, the College does not provide what data were used to support these improvements or how decisions were developed through the shared governance process. The plan to evaluate the program review process over the next one to three years is important. Not only is the regular assessment of the results a sign of a solid process, but review may also yield additional insight related to the need for more direct measures in several areas. In addition, a reconsideration of the program review metrics to use when external certification/licensure exams do not exist will improve the overall annual review process discussions.

#### 1.4: ACADEMIC PROGRAM QUALITY

Academic Program Quality focuses on ensuring quality across all programs, modalities and locations. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.A. and 4.A. in this section.

**1P4** Describe the processes for ensuring quality academic programming. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Determining and communicating the preparation required of students for the specific curricula, programs, courses and learning they will pursue (4.A.4)

**Systematic** Faculty members work with accrediting bodies, workforce partners, and advisory committees to determine the level of preparation needed for entry into specific courses and programs. English and math competency are required for all programs; multiple measures are used for placement into courses. Required preparation for programs and courses is stated in the college Catalog and on program websites. Prerequisite information is programmed in Banner and is available to students when they register. My Academic Plan provides students with required courses needed for their program of study. Advisors also assist with communicating preparation needed for programs and courses.

- Evaluating and ensuring program rigor for all modalities, locations, consortia and dual-credit programs (3.A.1, 3.A.3, 4.A.4)

**Systematic** NMC asserts that all processes, regardless of modality or location, follow the same standards. In order to ensure that faculty meet the appropriate discipline and degree qualifications, hiring administrators carefully review faculty credentials and document their approval through the hiring process. When new courses are created, the Curriculum Committee ensures that courses and programs demonstrate the same standards. Future Portfolios could be enhanced by clarifying how NMC routinely evaluates the effectiveness of the current process for improvement or how existing courses are evaluated routinely to ensure that an appropriate level of rigor continues to be met between the different modalities or locations.

- Awarding prior learning and transfer credits (4.A.2, 4.A.3)

**Systematic** NMC evaluates credit on transcripts through several unstated staff processes, including the awarding of experiential and prior learning credit and the acceptance of transfer credit. NMC

participates in the Michigan Transfer Agreement, a block transfer initiative where 30 credits of general education coursework will transfer automatically to universities. Multiple articulation agreements exist between NMC and other colleges/universities, and the College maintains twelve reverse transfer agreements with Michigan universities. It would help reviewers if processes for how credit is awarded for prior learning related to military experience, work experience, etc. are determined.

- Selecting, implementing and maintaining specialized accreditation(s) (4.A.5)

**Systematic** NMC offers ten programs with specialized accreditations. These specialized accreditations were selected, implemented, and are maintained in order for graduates to qualify for state and national certification exams, increase employability of graduates, and ensure degree portability. Information on the number of programs for which specialized accreditation is held compared to the number of programs for which such external accreditation or approval is available would have been helpful.

- Assessing the level of outcomes attainment by graduates at all levels (3.A.2, 4.A.6)

**Systematic** Aside from establishing degree requirements and communicating them via syllabi and curriculum maps, the ORPE tracks and posts trended data regarding (<https://www.nmc.edu/departments/orpe/effectiveness-and-assessment/index.html>) learner achievement, graduate outcomes, and technical skill attainment/certifications. The aggregated, trended, and public presentation of this data supports systematic processes in this area.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess program rigor across all modalities

**Systematic** NMC relies on course assessment and annual program review oversight to gauge program rigor. Program review metrics used for all programs annually encompass learner satisfaction, skill attainment, and other indicators of program quality, such as transfer and job placement.

**IR4** What are the results for determining the quality of academic programs? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P4. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of assessments (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** NMC provides various results, including a program review sample which demonstrates increasing satisfaction with level 1 outcomes. These improvements are attributed to the program review process. However, the Graduate Survey data shows declines in all areas provided, and NMC does not offer any insight to this trend data or cite this finding as an area in need of further analysis.

**Reacting** For assessing academic quality, NMC primarily uses course evaluation, program evaluation (for occupational programs), and graduate survey responses. While course evaluations are included in the program review process to systematically improve the outcomes, it is unclear how the Graduate Survey is incorporated into the existing system for improvement. From the portfolio it is unclear whether the liberal arts program also undergoes a program evaluation process with its students. Furthermore, it is unclear how “feedback” is gathered and used for improvement in any systematic fashion.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** For online courses, NMC uses NCCBP as a national benchmarking source to compare its pass rates with other colleges. It is unclear from the evidence provided whether NMC sets any internal targets or external benchmarks to other academic and occupational programs.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** There is essentially no interpretation of the results provided, other than to point out an increase in online success rates, which the College views as a positive. The use of more direct measures may lead to more usable insights.

**II4** Based on 1R4, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Improvements cited in this section were all related to online course instruction. While these are certainly positive changes, processes and results provided in this category of the Portfolio do not align with these improvements. An online course review process was established during 2016-17 to provide faculty with feedback on the design of online courses. The Educational Media Technologies (EMT) unit also offers a professional development workshop on both pedagogy and design. The improvements NMC has made through attention to the evaluation and support of instructional design in online classes are very important, despite the college's relatively low participation in online education. The course design institute and use of reviews conducted by instructional design specialists promises to continue to improve student success in online classes.

## 1.5: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity focuses on ethical practices while pursuing knowledge. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.D. and 2.E. in this section.

**IP5** Describe the processes for supporting ethical scholarly practices by students and faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Ensuring freedom of expression and the integrity of research and scholarly practice (2.D., 2.E.1, 2.E.3)

**Systematic** The Faculty Code of Professional Ethics and the Academic Freedom narrative in the Collective Bargaining Agreement are two detailed documents that describe freedom of expression and the integrity of research and scholarly practice. Documenting this process at a higher level of maturity will entail detailing how the ethical standards conveyed in the policies are ensured, by whom, and how violations are managed.

- Ensuring ethical learning and research practices of students (2.E.2, 2.E.3)

**Systematic** NMC has a policy on students' rights and responsibilities that outlines prohibited behaviors. Through library sessions and a freshman composition course, students are provided with information about plagiarism and the appropriate use of resources. Faculty are asked to follow college policy in reporting breaches of academic integrity, including issues of plagiarism. However, instructors are allowed to handle incidents according to preference, and no methods are described to enable academic leadership to monitor integrity or aggregate information on cheating. Standard and complete reporting by faculty could help reveal trends and areas needing focused attention.

- Ensuring ethical teaching and research practices of faculty (2.E.2, 2.E.3)

**Systematic** The Faculty Code of Professional Ethics, the staff policy on Human Subject Research, the staff policy on Intellectual Property Rights for Courses and Course Materials for the Flexible Learning Option Program, and the Collective Bargaining Agreement provide faculty standards for ethical teaching and research practices. If a faculty member violates these standards, a process for disciplinary action is provided in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Confirming this process as solidly systematic will entail clarifying the roles of the ORPE in monitoring human subject research and demonstrating that the College has an established Institutional Review Board.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to evaluate the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of supporting academic integrity

**Systematic** Through the use of Maxient software, NMC has an established process for tracking incidents of student academic misconduct as well as student complaints. From the limited data provided, it is unclear whether this system is working effectively or what improvement is being made as a result of the data analysis. Maxient was implemented in 2013; however, the process describing how Maxient was selected was not provided in the Systems Portfolio.

**1R5** What are the results for determining the quality of academic integrity? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P5. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures where appropriate)

**Reacting** The portfolio indicates that Maxient has been used since 2013 in some way to track student code of conduct and integrity violations; however, the very low number of incidents reported compared to the size of the student population suggests that informal resolutions arrived at by instructors may distort the true numbers. The College cites the disparity in research findings regarding integrity breaches in the general student population and the reporting the College maintains.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** Data collection for academic integrity focuses only on academic violations, and NMC has no internal targets or external benchmarking to drive improvement to this process. No benchmarks were provided other than a research report that stated 68% of university undergraduates admit to some type of cheating.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Systematic** NMC recognizes the relatively low number of student academic misconduct cases is likely due to underreporting, which led to a campaign to remind the college community of the need to report even minor issues. The interpretation of the academic violation data suggests NMC is considering strategies to improve data collection.

**1I5** Based on 1R5, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC reports that the College is continually educating students about academic dishonesty, which is important and necessary. The Center for Instructional Excellence has also been offering periodic

sessions on academic integrity and how to address student plagiarism and cheating in courses. However, it is not clear if this is a recent improvement or if these are initiatives that have been occurring for a longer period of time. NMC is clear about its need to improve processes for detecting breeches of academic integrity and responding to the same. The improvements planned for this area, i.e., enhanced efforts to encourage faculty to report cheating, do not seem to be commensurate with the problem. Maturing this process is an important area for improvement, and fully implementing the Maxient reporting software could be a benefit to data collection and analysis.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

As evident through the review of Category 1, NMC has used feedback from the previous Systems Appraisal to make many improvements to processes centered on common learning outcomes, (i.e., the three General Education Outcomes). These outcomes are now assessed every semester and results are entered into Moodle by faculty for longitudinal tracking. However, the institution does not appear to disaggregate these outcomes by student level or program status; thus, the College does not know if graduates have proficiency in all areas. Learning outcomes also exist at the program level, and outcomes in occupational areas are established with the assistance of key external stakeholders. Program learning outcomes and curriculum maps are being developed for all programs, although only a few appear posted on the college website. An academic program review occurs annually and contains both quantitative and qualitative components. Assessment data is informing the College of needed changes, but an opportunity lies in the area of co-curricular assessment. Processes and results related to academic integrity are reacting and offer the College an opportunity to perform internal tracking. Finally, policies to protect academic freedom and research are very strong for faculty, but do not appear to exist for non-instructional staff and for students. This appears to be an opportunity for improvement for the institution. In most subcategories, results do not support processes described, and improvements are not substantiated by data provided in the portfolio. Most processes within Category 1 are at the **systematic or aligned** levels of maturity. Results within Category 1 are **primarily systematic** with a few at the **reacting** level of maturity.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## II - Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs

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Focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of current and prospective students and other key stakeholders, such as alumni and community partners.

### Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Current and Prospective Student Needs, Retention, Persistence and Completion, Key Stakeholder Needs, Complaint Processes, and Building Collaborations and Partnerships.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

## Evidence

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### CATEGORY 2: MEETING STUDENT AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDER NEEDS

Category 2 focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of current and prospective students and other key stakeholders, such as alumni and community partners.

#### 2.1: CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENT NEED

Current and Prospective Student Need focuses on determining, understanding and meeting the non-academic needs of current and prospective students. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.C. and 3.D in this section.

**2P1** Describe the processes for serving the academic and non-academic needs of current and prospective students. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Identifying underprepared and at-risk students, and determining their academic support needs (3.D.1)

**Aligned** NMC has a comprehensive orientation process that involves both placement testing and advising, along with a variety of additional support services. The college utilizes multiple measures to assess the needs of prospective students, and provides pre-college level courses to help students become college ready in areas like math and English. NMC also utilizes mid-term alerts and early alerts to identify current at-risk students. Because of the newness of some processes the maturity level has just reached aligned.

- Deploying academic support services to help students select and successfully complete courses and programs (3.D.2)

**Systematic** NMC offers many academic support services to help students, including “My Academic Plan,” tracking tools, advising at orientation and during the semester, and success coaches. The College has had a Pathways to Completion Action Project focused on cultivating a culture of advisement. With further development of these processes over time, maturity in this area could rapidly rise to an aligned level.

- Ensuring faculty are available for student inquiry (3.C.5)

**Systematic** Faculty serve as academic advisors and are available at orientation. Faculty also are required to hold office hours and include those times in the course syllabus. It is unclear, however, how advisees are assigned, what training is provided, and how faculty are held accountable for advising students.

- Determining and addressing the learning support needs (tutoring, advising, library, laboratories, research, etc.) of students and faculty (3.D.1, 3.D.3, 3.D.4, 3.D.5)

**Systematic** NMC has a defined, repeatable, and systematic process in place to provide learning supports to students, including advising and program-specific resources. However, how these systems function in alignment with one another, and how those resources were identified as being needed, were not included in the Systems Portfolio.

- Determining new student groups to target for educational offerings and services

**Reacting** Based upon what is written in the Systems Portfolio there is no evidence of a clear process or strategy for identifying new student groups to target for educational offerings and services, which places this process at the reacting level.

- Meeting changing student needs

**Reacting** To determine changing student needs NMC has a detailed planning process that engages both internal and external stakeholders. This includes feedback from employees, community, students, and accreditation standards that is gathered through surveys, course evaluation, and advisory and other committees. Reviewers had to rate this at the reacting level of maturity because the Systems Portfolio neither details how (nor provides examples of) changing needs being identified and addressed.

- Identifying and supporting student subgroups with distinctive needs (e.g., seniors, commuters, distance learners, military veterans) (3.D.1)

**Systematic** NMC identifies a number of student groups and has a separate system to address the issues of each unique student subgroup. It is unclear from the evidence provided whether NMC reviews its student support services regularly to make improvements or whether these separate systems are interconnected.

- Deploying non-academic support services to help students be successful (3.D.2)

**Systematic** NMC has implemented a variety of non-academic support services to help students be successful. However, it is unclear from the evidence in the Systems Portfolio how these services are

linked to the overall operations of the College.

- Ensuring staff members who provide non-academic student support services are qualified, trained and supported (3.C.6)

**Aligned** NMC has a well-defined, matured system that ensures non-academic support staff are recruited, trained, and supported. The institution has clear job descriptions outlining the education, experience, competencies and other qualifications needed to fulfill the responsibilities of each staff position that provides academic and non-academic student support. On-boarding, orientation, professional development, and evaluation processes are focused on ensuring appropriate training and support are provided to staff members.

- Communicating the availability of non-academic support services (3.D.2)

**Systematic** The College lists student support services through a variety of modalities including the web, social media, classroom materials, and hallway flyers. The measures of success with these efforts are not reported in the Portfolio

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess student needs

**Systematic** The Annual Program Review process is a key method used to assess student needs. Quantitative and qualitative data regarding student success along with feedback provided to student services, assist in determining student needs. The College has an opportunity to better describe how these instruments and measures were selected in order to assess student needs.

- Assessing the degree to which student needs are met

**Systematic** The College assesses the degree to which student needs are met using survey data, student success data, and informal feedback – with some of these data checked regularly. There is an opportunity to describe how these data, especially survey data, are used to determine that needs are met.

**2R1** What are the results for determining if current and prospective students' needs are being met? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Aligned** NMC provided three years of aggregate data in areas that reflect student needs: learner assessment of the quality of the course, quality of instruction, and graduate satisfaction. Results are segmented and distributed to responsible parties to make improvements

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** Internal comparison data are provided for success and persistence rates based on the 3-year historical average. Metrics are based on NCCBP, VFA, and Perkins data. The College reviews data, and individual departments note changes made as a result of this review; however, maturity will remain at the systematic level until data-informed decision making expands beyond individual departments and faculty/staff.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Systematic** NMC offers insight related to the Learner Engagement Survey, developmental education success rates, course availability, career counseling, and transfer advising. The College may achieve a higher maturity level by identifying who analyzes these data, specifying how results are communicated to stakeholders, and by adding additional longitudinal data.

**2I1** Based on 2R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC lists and describes several recent improvements to help meet the needs of students. In addition, over the next three years NMC plans to further improve its analytical capability, create a new library and innovation center, and begin piloting a student food pantry. However, it is not always clear how data is used to substantiate the improvements, which is an opportunity for the institution.

## 2.2: RETENTION, PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION

Retention, Persistence and Completion focuses on the approach to collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence and completion to stakeholders for decision making. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 4.C. in this section.

**2P2** Describe the processes for collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence and completion. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Collecting student retention, persistence and completion data (4.C.2, 4.C.4)

**Systematic** NMC collects data on retention, persistence, and overall success rates through a repeatable process. The information is stored in Banner, is analyzed internally, and then reported to external stakeholders such as IPEDS and VFA. Moving this process to aligned may entail evaluating and reassessing the data for optimum relevance and data integrity.

- Determining targets for student retention, persistence and completion (4.C.1, 4.C.4)

**Aligned** A variety of short-term operational and long-term strategic targets were determined to support the strategic plan and student success. These targets were gathered from several external sources, including the NCCBP, VFA, IPEDS, and the Governor's Michigan Dashboard. Peer comparisons are made based on relation to budget size and institutional purpose. The NMC Board of Trustees sets strategic goal metrics based on peer comparisons, historical data, and state and national comparison information.

- Analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion

**Systematic** ORPE is primarily responsible for analyzing and presenting information to stakeholders. They use statistical software to analyze data, and findings are shared as a report or in a digital dashboard that resides on the college's intranet. Retention, persistence and completion data are analyzed on an annual basis. Current and three-year trended data are given to academic departments for further analysis with advisory committees and other stakeholders. Establishing this process as aligned could be achieved by describing how the College ensures that consumers of the data analyze and act on it.

- Meeting targets for retention, persistence and completion (4.C.1)

**Aligned** Strategic and operational goals are the focus when determining how to meet targets for retention, persistence and completion. A recent example of this is with Guided Pathways, as the College was recently selected as a member of the first Michigan Center for Student Success cohort group in the Michigan Guided Pathways Project, as six of eight targets have been met. Targets have been set using three-year national averages from the NCCBP. The college also sets internal targets based on VFA averages. From Fall 2013 to Fall 2015 targets were met for retention, persistence, and completion. Reviewers gave the institution the benefit of the doubt by rating this process as aligned but questioned whether this process is being sustained since there is no fall 2016 data.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess retention, persistence and completion (4.C.4)

**Aligned** ORPE guides evidence-based data-collection methods and offers consultations and professional development training to individuals or departments, with the tools, methods and instruments selected based on their ability to answer research questions. The PDCA model helps with the selection process, along with evidence-based practices in data collection for retention, persistence and completion. Federal and state mandated student success metrics are also used, along with national metrics tailored to community colleges.

**2R2** What are the results for student retention, persistence and completion? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Aligned** NMC measures retention, persistence, and completion on a regular basis and provides comparison data with external benchmarks and targets for most processes. The data are delivered to all stakeholders via a dashboard and are used for joint decision-making regarding improvement initiatives, including with the Board of Trustees. Because IPEDS plays a significant role in Michigan's performance funding, NMC pays particularly close attention to completion and retention data from this source.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Aligned** NMC provides comparison data with external benchmarks and targets for retention, persistence, and completion rates, with the data delivered to all stakeholders via a dashboard. The Board of Trustees' strategic performance indicators show mostly positive results over the past three years of trend data and compares to external benchmarks. Reviewers gave the institution the benefit of the doubt by rating this process as aligned but questioned why no data is provided for fall 2016.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Aligned** NMC regularly summarizes data at an institutional level and develops strategies to drive improvements. Departments use operational plan results to make improvements. This process appears to be at the aligned level of maturity even though little in-depth reflection and interpretation is included in the Portfolio.

**2I2** Based on 2R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.C.3)

In spring 2015 the College was chosen to be a member of the first Michigan Guided Pathway cohort group through the Michigan Center for Student Success. Four initiatives related to this improvement process have been implemented to date with three more coming in the near future. NMC has also recently modified the course evaluation process for use via Moodle in order to increase response rates, implemented DegreeWorks, began using a co-requisite model for developmental English courses, and had departments start using operational plan results to make program improvements.

### 2.3: KEY STAKEHOLDER NEEDS

Key Stakeholder Needs focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of key stakeholder groups, including alumni and community partners.

**2P3** Describe the processes for serving the needs of key external stakeholder groups. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Determining key external stakeholder groups (e.g., alumni, employers, community)

**Systematic** NMC lists several key external stakeholders who have a vested interest in the welfare and success of the College and its learners. However, the extent to which the process of determining key external stakeholders is systematized and repeatable is not entirely clear.

- Determining new stakeholders to target for services or partnership

**Reacting** NMC has an informal process for determining new stakeholders for services or partnerships. Because this is not described as a formal, repeatable process, this process is at the reacting maturity level.

- Meeting the changing needs of key stakeholders

**Systematic** NMC utilizes the annual planning and budgeting process to ensure that it meets the changing needs of key stakeholders. As these needs are determined, they are individually reviewed for alignment with the college mission, vision, and resource capabilities. A recent Action Project, Building Lifelong Relationships, has resulted in additional resource strategies in order to assist financially with these changing needs.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess key stakeholder needs

**Systematic** NMC utilizes several tools and surveys to assess key stakeholder needs. While informal conversations and the “grasping the situation” listening section of strategic planning provide information, it is unclear whether these processes happen organically or on a regular basis.

- Assessing the degree to which key stakeholder needs are met

**Systematic** NMC uses surveys and other outcome measures to determine how well it is meeting stakeholder needs. A repeatable process for assessing the degree to which the surveys and outcome measures meet these needs could not be found in the Systems Portfolio

**2R3** What are the results for determining if key stakeholder needs are being met? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** Results for the past three administrations of the Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey were reported, which is conducted every 2-3 years to gauge the perceptions of nearby residents. A Donor Dashboard was also provided.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** NMC provides internal trend data for all results from the Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey. There are also targets provided for the nine overall effectiveness areas, with the institution meeting or exceeding the goal in six of the areas. This is at the systematic level because targets are not provided for the other items on the survey. NMC may reach a higher maturity level by creating internal targets for all items it measures, tracks, and seeks to utilize in identifying potential improvements.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Systematic** NMC offers interpretation and insight to areas scoring lower than expected on the Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey and has identified strategies to address these deficiencies. It is not clear what insight is gained from the other data provided.

**2I3** Based on 2R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC collects data from a variety of sources and lists several improvement projects that have been targeted. Future portfolios could be enhanced by including all data available and making clearer how the listed improvements align directly with the strategic direction of the College and the meeting of stakeholder needs.

## 2.4: COMPLAINT PROCESSES

Complaint Processes focuses on collecting, analyzing and responding to complaints from students or key stakeholder groups.

**2P4** Describe the processes for collecting, analyzing and responding to complaints from students and stakeholder groups. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Collecting complaint information from students

**Aligned** NMC's policies regarding student complaints are guided by a formal policy, available on its website. The VP for Student Services and Technology is responsible for resolving student complaints and works with other leaders in cases of behavioral or conduct concerns. NMC uses Maxient software to record and track all formal complaints.

- Collecting complaint information from other key stakeholders

**Reacting** NMC does not have a systematic, repeatable process for collecting complaint information from other key stakeholders. The College acknowledges that this is an opportunity for improvement.

- Learning from complaint information and determining actions

**Aligned** NMC's Student Services teams meet regularly to review analytics, identify patterns, and take action to resolve any issues. These teams also involve other members of the College as needed and make resource allocation decisions accordingly.

- Communicating actions to students and other key stakeholders

**Systematic** All formal student complaints and incidents are resolved through direct communication and in writing and are tracked and communicated via the Maxient system. However, the process for other stakeholder complaints is still in the early stages of maturity.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to evaluate complaint resolution

**Systematic** NMC has used Maxient as the primary tool for collecting, storing, tracking, and analyzing complaint and incident data since 2013. However, the College also uses regular surveys that seek input to college services to initiate improvements when the results are found to be relevant.

**2R4** What are the results for student and key stakeholder complaints? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P4. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** NMC utilized the HEDS Campus Climate Survey for the first time in 2016 and, therefore, doesn't yet have targets, although the plan is to use this first survey as a benchmark for future survey administrations. The College also uses data from Maxient to track complaints.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** There is no evidence whether NMC establishes external benchmarks or internal targets for the student complaint process or the student climate survey. As targets are established and trend data is analyzed, this can move quickly into a systematic level of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** Although data on campus climate and student complaints is collected, it is not evident what insights are gained and whether NMC has a plan to address any possible challenges.

**2I4** Based on 2R4, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC implemented Maxient in 2013, which has assisted the College in tracking, analyzing, and acting upon student complaint information. Most complaints are handled at the department level and rarely rise to the institutional level for consideration. A more systematic collection and review process could benefit the overall continuous improvement goals of the College as complaints can often provide unique insight to the student or other stakeholder experience with the College.

## 2.5: BUILDING COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Building Collaborations and Partnerships focuses on aligning, building and determining the effectiveness of collaborations and partnerships to further the mission of the institution.



**2P5** Describe the processes for managing collaborations and partnerships to further the mission of the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Selecting partners for collaboration (e.g., other educational institutions, civic organizations, businesses)

**Systematic** NMC lists a variety of partnerships, discusses how they were developed, and describes how they are measured. The College has an opportunity to clarify the process or criteria for selecting these partners. The maturity rating is at the low level of systematic.

- Building and maintaining relationships with partners

**Reacting** Although the Systems Portfolio describes informal processes for building and maintaining relationships with partners, there is not a clear, repeatable process documented for doing this.

- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess partnership effectiveness

**Reacting** NMC utilizes the Plan-Do-Check-Adjust process to ensure continuous improvement with its partners. However, it is unclear from the Systems Portfolio if this is a standard or ad-hoc process, who is responsible for this, and who is responsible for ensuring partnership effectiveness.

- Evaluating the degree to which collaborations and partnerships are effective

**Reacting** The success of the partnership may be collected by individual departments involved in the partnership or ORPE, although the overall processes used to do this are informal. The College has an opportunity to develop repeatable processes in order to evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships.

**2R5** What are the results for determining the effectiveness of aligning and building collaborations and partnerships? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P5. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** NMC provides data related to enrollment and transfer, including high school partnerships and employer partnerships. However, it is unclear how this data is utilized to evaluate partnerships.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** NMC provides trend data for the advisory committee survey and an internal benchmark. However, no other comparison data is provided, placing this at the systematic level of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Systematic** Employers who serve on program advisory committees rate the partnership with NMC as above average or excellent, although there has been a decline in recent results.

**2I5** Based on 2R5, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC does not appear to have a systematic strategy for development or maintaining partnerships with external entities. The College does collect some information, but how that information is used to inform change is not clear. This is important to consider as the College works over the next three years to strengthen partnerships and collaborations with area high schools, specifically within Educational Services.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

Overall NMC does a good job identifying student needs and acting on them, including the student complaint process. Formal student complaints have been tracked since the implementation of the Maxient software in 2013. These processes are generally at the **systematic to aligned** level. Processes related to Building Collaborations and Partnerships could benefit from further maturing of the system, as these are largely at the **reacting** level. There does not appear to be a systematic plan for developing partnerships outside of some fund-raising activities. Student retention, persistence, and completion processes are well designed. They are primarily at the **aligned** level of maturity, and results support the stated processes. Results overall are sometimes lacking repeatable data collection methods, targets and benchmarks, and sufficient insights, which places most at the **reacting to systematic** level of maturity; however, results for retention, persistence, and completion are at the **aligned** maturity level.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## III - Valuing Employees

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Explores the institution's commitment to the hiring, development, and evaluation of faculty, staff and administrators.

### Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Hiring, Evaluation and Recognition and Development.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

## Evidence

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### CATEGORY 3: VALUING EMPLOYEES

Category 3 explores the institution's commitment to the hiring, development and evaluation of faculty, staff and administrators.

#### 3.1: HIRING

Hiring focuses on the acquisition of appropriately qualified/credentialed faculty, staff and administrators to ensure that effective, high-quality programs and student support services are provided. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 3.C. in this section.

**3P1** Describe the process for hiring faculty, staff and administrators. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Recruiting, hiring and orienting processes that result in staff and administrators who possess the required qualification, skills and values (3.C.6)

**Aligned** NMC has a set process for approving new positions and filling vacant positions, recruiting new talent, and interviewing and selecting new hires. Standardized on-boarding and orientation processes are repeatable and include staff orientation outcomes derived from the Talent Action Project in 2015. Foundational competencies that are essential for everyone are aligned with NMC's values, functional competencies that are necessary for most roles, and technical competencies that are required for specific positions are also standardized.

- Developing and meeting academic credentialing standards for faculty, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortia programs (3.C.1, 3.C.2)

**Aligned** NMC follows requirements as set forth by HLC, NISOD, and those that are industry-specific. It also follows “characteristics of an outstanding instructor” specific to NMC. The College has developed a catalog of credit courses with the required credentials to teach each course. The same credentials pertain no matter how the course is offered. A current improvement effort at NMC is ensuring faculty meet the new HLC faculty qualifications. Those not meeting the HLC guidelines are on a learning plan to bridge credential gaps. An administrative process is in place to periodically check and ensure that all faculty maintain required credentials and certifications.

- Ensuring the institution has sufficient numbers of faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom programs and activities (3.C.1)

**Systematic** Enrollment patterns and benchmarking course loads are two primary methods in which NMC ensures that there are sufficient faculty to carry out classroom and non-classroom responsibilities. The Educational Services Instructional Management Team (ESIMT) has administrative responsibility for ensuring sufficient faculty numbers. This process appears to be at the systematic level of maturity, but the Portfolio could be strengthened by clarifying how the number of faculty needed are determined and clarifying how the College manages faculty during enrollment declines.

- Ensuring the acquisition of sufficient numbers of staff to provide student support services

**Systematic** NMC indicates this determination is made during the annual planning and budgeting process as leaders review departmental metrics and ask if the right number of support personnel exist to meet student needs. The College can increase the maturity rating by developing a repeatable process with defined measures that can help make determinations regarding sufficient staff to provide student support services.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

**Systematic** NMC collects feedback on the process both “informally and formally” and the College uses four noted surveys to collect onboarding information from new hires and managers. The extent to which the College solicits feedback from employees beyond the new hire phase is not clear.

**3R1** What are the results for determining if recruitment, hiring and orienting practices ensure effective provision for programs and services? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 3P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** Three years of data regarding hiring and orientation were provided. However, NMC reports that open-ended comments are more valuable and used to drive change, such as streamlining the application process. NMC has an opportunity to determine how useful the surveys are and determine if alternate methods may be of more value. Additionally, a future Systems Portfolio can be strengthened by explaining how this data is shared and used across the institution.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** No internal targets or external benchmarks were provided, placing this in the reacting stage of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** Brief interpretations of results were provided, however, no insights are cited, which places this at the reacting stage of maturity. NMC notes the greater value of the qualitative feedback.

**3I1** Based on 3R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Human Resources at NMC has been strongly focused on improvements since 2014; significant actions include incorporating a competency model into recruitment and selection processes, implementing a job-description software, and developing use of a learning management software to train and develop staff members. The institution is to be commended for recognizing opportunities for improvement and closing those gaps. Workforce planning has also matured into processes for closely monitoring staffing needs and evaluating hiring decisions in the context of the strategic plan.

### 3.2: EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION

Evaluation and Recognition focuses on the assessment and recognition of faculty, staff and administrators' contributions to the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 3.C. within this section.

**3P2** Describe the processes that assess and recognize faculty, staff and administrators' contributions to the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Designing performance evaluation systems for all employees

**Aligned** An outcome of NMC's Talent Action Project Phase III was development of a purpose statement for the college's performance and recognition system. For staff and administrators, the myPDCA process provides a very detailed and guided process that ensures employees are evaluated against the competencies defined in the competency model for the position and set 'SMART' goals in alignment with the strategic plan and unit goals. All new instructors remain on provisional status for three years, during which they must meet specific professional development requirements and attend monthly information from classroom observations, written peer feedback, student evaluations, and a review by a supervisor. Provisional faculty follow the same annual review process; however, they are observed more frequently, receive more frequent student feedback, and have additional professional development requirements. A process exists for ensuring similar reviews of adjunct instructors. Use of the Silkroad Performance platform for staff and the thorough evaluations of instructors place processes at an aligned level of maturity.

- Soliciting input from and communicating expectations to faculty, staff and administrators

**Systematic** Expectations regarding evaluation and recognition are communicated to faculty, staff and administrators through job descriptions, on-boarding and orientation, employee guides, collective bargaining agreements, and goal-setting/performance review processes.

**Reacting** There is no discussion of the process by which input is solicited from employees. The College has an opportunity to better define processes for soliciting input from stakeholders regarding evaluation and recognition.

- Aligning the evaluation system with institutional objectives for both instructional and non-instructional programs and services

**Aligned** The myPDCA process and use of the Silkroad Performance platform ensure close alignment of staff expectations and goals to institutional objectives. A process similar to the myPDCA is followed by faculty members in that personal goal setting is done in alignment with institutional strategies and department goals. The review software manages the process for both faculty and staff, including adjunct faculty.

- Utilizing established institutional policies and procedures to regularly evaluate all faculty, staff and administrators (3.C.3)

**Systematic** Policies evidently exist that require all faculty and staff to be evaluated annually. While the process appears to be systematic, it is unclear whether or how executive administrators are reviewed. Additionally, while this process was reviewed and revised in August 2017, it is not clear that processes are routinely evaluated for effectiveness.

- Establishing employee recognition, compensation and benefit systems to promote retention and high performance

**Aligned** NMC appears to have a robust recognition system that is a combination of formal and information strategies to recognize high performance, goal achievement, and for exemplifying institutional values.

**Systematic** The Compensation Review Work Group has been established to examine employee compensation, but it is not clear who is part of this group and what the process is for determining and approving pay and benefits. The process for reviewing the effectiveness of these systems on a regular basis is not clear.

- Promoting employee satisfaction and engagement

**Systematic** Processes for promoting employee satisfaction and engagement consist of ensuring that training, recognition, compensation, and development processes are market competitive, fair, and clearly deployed. NMC has an opportunity to describe how the results of the engagement survey are analyzed to guide strategies to foster employee engagement and satisfaction.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

**Systematic** NMC uses both qualitative and quantitative measures to track and assess employee evaluation and recognition. However, the College does not provide evidence of employee satisfaction or changes that the College has made as a result of employee feedback.

**3R2** What are the results for determining if evaluation processes assess employees' contributions to the institution? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 3P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** Employee Engagement Survey results with three years of data are presented. While NMC believes that some of the recent results are due to the recent collective bargaining process, the institution has an opportunity to describe what changes have been made over time and how feedback related to those changes is processed.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** Although Appendix A provided a comparison of results to prior engagement surveys, there is no evidence that trends are identified or analyzed. Additionally, no targets are identified, which places this in the reacting stage of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** Information from the survey is processed; however, actions taken as a result of this feedback are not reported. The institution would likely be strengthened and positioned to highlight insights via a closer examination of the results.

**3I2** Based on 3R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The reporting function of the new HR software is being explored. Effective implementation of the new faculty evaluation process is a focus, and tying competency demonstration to the annual review process are additional future improvements to this area that should help strengthen college processes around employee performance and recognition.

### 3.3: DEVELOPMENT

Development focuses on processes for continually training, educating and supporting employees to remain current in their methods and to contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers at the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.C. and 5.A. in this section.

**3P3** Describe the processes for training, educating and supporting the professional development of employees. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Providing and supporting regular professional development for all employees (3.C.4, 5.A.4)

**Aligned** A professional development policy, along with an annual allocation of general fund salaries and wages points to the college's's commitment to providing and supporting professional development for all employees. Tuition benefits, sabbatical leave, workshops, conferences, webinars, and professional association memberships are some of the ways in which employees can meet their annual professional development goals. The Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE) offers professional development opportunities for faculty and has funds to allocate for select initiatives or requests.

**Systematic** It appears that each department budgets for professional development separately based on department goals, which makes it difficult for reviewers to identify a consistent process for prioritizing and approving professional development opportunities.

- Ensuring that instructors are current in instructional content in their disciplines and pedagogical processes (3.C.4)

**Systematic** The Center for Instructional Excellence and Educational Media Technology department offers a variety of professional development opportunities for all faculty, including adjunct faculty. It is not clear how often faculty or staff engage in these activities and to what extent all faculty and staff are involved. NMC has an opportunity to describe how needs are determined and if programming content is evaluated to ensure faculty training needs are being met.

- Supporting student support staff members to increase their skills and knowledge in their areas of expertise (e.g. advising, financial aid, etc.) (3.C.6)

**Systematic** The College employs a “competency model” that identifies the specific skills, behaviors, values, and credentials required for staff in three categories. The competency model is used in the hiring and position review process. A Talent Development Coordinator creates a Learning Plan for each staff member, the completion of which is tracked through NMC's goal-setting and performance software.

- Aligning employee professional development activities with institutional objectives

**Aligned** Professional development needs are identified for each employee during the annual evaluation process and aligned with department and organizational objectives. These flow from the NMC competency model. Additional support in CQI and leadership is provided through NMC’s membership in the Continuous Quality Improvement Network

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

**Reacting** Tracking of outcomes occurs during the annual review. No process is described for how data and information from the annual review is aggregated or used beyond the individual employee level, which places this at the reacting stage of maturity.

**3R3** What are the results for determining if employees are assisted and supported in their professional development? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 3P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Reacting** Professional development outcomes are tracked at the department level, so NMC does not have aggregate reports in this area. While the College is currently at the reacting level of maturity, it has an opportunity to move into a systematic level of maturity in this area as the talent management software is fed the data generated by the new faculty evaluation system implemented in fall 2017.

Another opportunity lies with the evaluation of professional development processes, such as the strategy of leaving resource allocation decisions at the department level, to determine if they are working well and meeting the needs of employees.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** No internal targets or external benchmarks are provided, which places this at the reacting level of maturity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** No insights are provided, which places this at the reacting level of maturity.

**3I3** Based on 3R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Ample professional development opportunities and resources exist for staff and instructors. A priority



for CIE is faculty professional development funding for the next few years, in order to ensure faculty meet the new HLC educational requirements. Those not meeting the HLC guidelines are on a learning plan to bridge credential gaps. The new faculty evaluation system launched Fall 2017 has all data posted through the talent management software, so by next year aggregate data will be available.

### **CATEGORY SUMMARY**

NMC has a well-defined and multi-step recruitment and hiring process, and the College solicits feedback from those involved after orientation and six weeks into a new position. Feedback is collected from surveys as well as check-in times by the supervisor. The recognition committee has been reformed and is working to design a more systematic process for employee recognition, while the process for determining benefit and compensation packages is somewhat unclear. Processes in Category 3 are mainly at the **Systematic** and **Aligned** maturity levels. Tracking faculty and staff competencies and development needs will be available with the new talent management software; this remains an opportunity for the College. Development of internal targets and external benchmarks for quality improvement efforts are needed throughout Category 3. The maturity rating for Category 3 results are primarily at the **Reacting** level.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## IV - Planning and Leading

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Focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and lives its vision through direction setting, goal development, strategic actions, threat mitigation, and capitalizing on opportunities.

### Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Mission and Vision, Strategic Planning, Leadership and Integrity.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

## Evidence

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### CATEGORY 4: PLANNING AND LEADING

Category 4 focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and vision through direction setting, goal development, strategic actions, threat mitigation and capitalizing on opportunities.

#### 4.1: MISSION AND VISION

Mission and Vision focuses on how the institution develops, communicates and reviews its mission and vision. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 1.A., 1.B. and 1.D. within this section.

**4P1** Describe the processes for developing, communicating and reviewing the institution's mission, vision and values, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Developing, deploying, and reviewing the institution's mission, vision and values (1.A.1, 1.D.2, 1.D.3)

**Aligned** NMC's mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria were developed through a process involving executive leadership faculty, staff, governance councils, the Board of Trustees, the community, and external stakeholders. These are reviewed as part of the yearly strategic planning process. A variety of communication methods are used to assist with the deployment of the mission, vision, and values, including employee orientation, the college website, and conference room postings.

- Ensuring that institutional actions reflect a commitment to its values

**Systematic** The strategic and operational plans of NMC are anchored by its mission and values. The four-phase decision-making process includes the alignment with the college's mission and values when deciding to offer a new program or service. Future Systems Portfolio can be improved by describing how the budgeting cycle reflects NMC's commitment to its values and reviewing the effectiveness of decision making process.

- Communicating the mission, vision and values (1.B.1, 1.B.2, 1.B.3)

**Systematic** NMC publicly articulates its mission, vision, and values on its website and has copies of these statements in all conference rooms. While new employees learn about these during orientation, how current employees are engaged with the mission and values outside the budgeting and strategic planning process is not clear. NMC has an opportunity to learn how well employees, students, and other stakeholders who visit the campus know and understand its mission, vision, and values.

- Ensuring that academic programs and services are consistent with the institution's mission (1.A.2)

**Systematic** The array of extended learning opportunities offered to the community demonstrates commitment to providing lifelong learning opportunities to the citizenry of the college's service area. New academic programs and services undergo a four-phase decision-making process, which embeds a check process to see whether a new offering fits with the NMC mission. Future Systems Portfolios can be improved by describing the systems for ensuring that existing academic programs are consistent with the institution's mission.

- Allocating resources to advance the institution's mission and vision, while upholding the institution's values (1.D.1, 1.A.3)

**Systematic** The NMC Board of Trustees ensures resource allocation, as seen in the 2017-18 Resource Guidelines. A Capital Outlay Allocation Team specifically monitors the allocation of capital funds, which typically address needs that are broader than the budgeting scope of individual units or divisions. The Center for Instructional Excellence oversees planning and budgeting for faculty professional development needs. However, it is unclear how all these areas of attention collaborate to create a single and consistent process used to allocate resources and advance the institution's mission and vision while also upholding the institution's values.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (e.g. brand studies, focus groups, community forums/studies and employee satisfaction surveys)

**Systematic** The College employed a branding and attitudes survey with the community in 2014, and commissions periodic economic impact studies. Performance results are posted on the metrics dashboard, which is part of the ORPE intranet site. How this information is broadly shared and discussed throughout the college population and community is not defined. The Portfolio does not share examples where data collected is discussed, vetted, and utilized by all constituent groups.

**4R1** What are the results for developing, communicating and reviewing the institution's mission, vision and values? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** The 2014 Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey (CAAS) results, along with results from the 2014 Economic Impact Study, were provided. The 2017 economic impact study is currently being processed by EMSI, Inc. The Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey was done in 2009, 2011, and 2014, but no information was provided regarding when it will be repeated again. Although these surveys provide important pieces of information, neither one directly measures the institution's mission of lifelong learning. The institution may achieve a higher level of maturity in this area by including direct measures and describing how information is used systematically to inform improvements in this area.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** Although NMC does provide one previous set of data on the CAAS, there are no external benchmarks or internal targets provided.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** Descriptive statistics and general inferences from the economic impact study and CAAS results are offered. While they are positive, no substantive interpretation or discussion of what was learned is offered.

**4I1** Based on 4R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC clearly works to align programming and services to the college mission and vision. To this end, NMC has completed several initiatives over the past few years. Over the next 1-3 years, NMC plans to create an integrated marketing communications plan, improve internal communication around mission and vision, and launch a public fundraising campaign. Many of these improvement efforts center on the need to communicate better the institution's mission, vision, and overall activities and accomplishments.

## 4.2: STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic Planning focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and vision. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 5.B. and 5.C. in this section.

**4P2** Describe the processes for communicating, planning, implementing and reviewing the institution's plans and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Engaging internal and external stakeholders in strategic planning (5.C.3)

**Aligned** NMC has a defined strategic planning process that involves the college leadership, as well as the Board of Trustees, in defining the direction of the College. The leadership reviews data from a variety of sources, and the Board of Trustees is involved during the annual planning retreat. The plan becomes the operational guide for the organization and individual departments.

A strength is seen in how NMC blends the processes for yearly planning and budgeting with strategic planning such that the "ends" and criteria of the Strategic Plan are confirmed or adjusted with each cycle.

- Aligning operations with the institution's mission, vision and values (5.C.2)

**Systematic** The process of employing the “A3” template for all programs and units, to ensure that annual goals are set in close alignment with institutional needs and that year-past goals are assessed and reflected upon, is very strong and could readily place the College at an aligned level of maturity in this area. The evidence linked in the Portfolio suggests the “A3” template has been in use for two years in some units. However, how broadly it is used across campus—and especially in the academic programs—is not clear.

- Aligning efforts across departments, divisions and colleges for optimum effectiveness and efficiency (5.B.3)

**Systematic** Vertical and horizontal alignment of institutional goals are supported via cross-functional meetings of the college’s Leadership Group, Planning and Budget Council, Policy Council, and President’s Council. Maturity in this area could be raised by clarifying how this group and these councils collaborate.

- Capitalizing on opportunities and institutional strengths and countering the impact of institutional weaknesses and potential threats (5.C.4, 5.C.5)

**Aligned** The College informs budgeting decisions with a yearly Budget Considerations portfolio of data on costs and revenues that are trended over time and benchmarked against education providers in the state. Monthly, the Board reviews the budget, actual revenues, and expenditures. Budget planning is based on three “portfolios” of data that reflect the revenue models of the different types of programming the College offers. This three-portfolio process enables NMC to simultaneously remain conservative in its planning while being able to respond nimbly to new opportunities or upward shifts in revenue.

- Creating and implementing strategies and action plans that maximize current resources and meet future needs (5.C.1, 5.C.4)

**Aligned** A detailed budget planning document (Budget Considerations) describes the many factors considered in budget development. As property tax limits have been implemented, tuition and fees have increased. In order to minimize tuition and fee increases, a variety of strategies have been created and implemented, including recruitment and retention efforts, workforce planning strategies, exploring revenue potential with unique programs, the use of differential tuition in high-cost occupational programs, and resource investment in the NMC Foundation. They have all contributed to maximizing current resources and meeting the future needs of the College.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (e.g. achievement of goals and/or satisfaction with process)

**Systematic** As noted previously, the College collects data that is reviewed and organized through the ORPE intranet site. Strategic Plan metrics are tracked, along with the metrics established for all Action Projects. The “A3” template is an important measure because of its detail, documentation of trend data, and its requirement that all units reflect upon lessons learned as well as improvements made and planned. Process in this area could be at an aligned level of maturity if all units and departments have implemented the “A3” template and process. The Portfolio does not make the status of “A3” usage clear.

**4R2** What are the results for communicating, planning, implementing and reviewing the institution’s operational plans? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also

include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** The Board-level strategic plan metrics are tracked and posted on the ORPE intranet, and an internal Institutional Effectiveness survey is levied to administrative leaders (i.e., members of the Leadership Group that meets monthly) every two years. The IE survey results (76% completion rate) for 2016-17 are provided. The main component of effective campus-wide planning processes is the “A3” template. The evidence offered in the Portfolio and the results of the IE survey suggest that the “A3”-guided process needs to be fully implemented and used over time in order to bring processes in this area to an aligned maturity level.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** Strategic planning metrics include both targets and external benchmarks, which is a strength for the metrics. Reviewers note that the most recent data is from 2016. The institutional effectiveness survey includes neither targets nor benchmarks.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** The results from the last IE survey (2016-17) compared to the last three year average show a decrease in three measures related to the planning process. Actions taken as a result of this review are not discussed or described.

**4I2** Based on 4R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The internal Leadership Group has been redefined, in part due to IE Survey results, and has started meeting monthly in order to review the alignment of the strategic plan with department and program operational plans, better coordinate work and resources to meet common goals, address college-wide issues raised by IR metrics and other sources, and enhance communication and engagement throughout the College.

#### 4.3: LEADERSHIP

Leadership focuses on governance and leadership of the institution. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.C. and 5.B. in this section.

**4P3** Describe the processes for ensuring sound and effective leadership of the institution, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Establishing appropriate relationship between the institution and its governing board to support leadership and governance (2.C.4)

**Systematic** Day-to-day management of the College is delegated to the President via Board of Trustees Policy B-100.00 The processes establishing an appropriate relationship between the College and its governing board begin in the weeks prior to the election of candidates. Information packets, informational sessions, orientation sessions, and yearly retreats all contribute to establishing and continuing this relationship. Professional development conferences through AACT and Michigan Community College Association are encouraged and supported. Maturity in this area could be raised

by clarifying how or if the process for establishing appropriate relationships is periodically reviewed or evaluated.

- Establishing oversight responsibilities and policies of the governing board (2.C.3, 5.B.1, 5.B.2)

**Systematic** The Board of Trustees, in conjunction with three executive-level councils (i.e., the Planning/Budget Council, the Policy Council, and the President's Council), comprise the top leadership of the College. The monthly Board meetings include standing agenda items designed to keep trustees current on the college's programs and accomplishments. The governance model, Policy D 502.1, was last revised in September 2011. It is not apparent when this document is regularly reviewed. NMC has an opportunity to describe the process for reviewing and revising Board policies.

- Maintaining board oversight, while delegating management responsibilities to administrators and academic matters to faculty (2.C.4)

**Systematic** Day-to-day management of the College is delegated to the President via Board of Trustees Policy B-100.00. The President delegates area oversight to members of the executive team, who in turn delegate day-to-day operational decisions to the department manager. Although academic administrators depend on faculty to carry out daily operations of instructional programs and ensure high-level oversight of academic matters, information could not be found in the Systems Portfolio regarding the Board of Trustees delegating academic matters to faculty. Future portfolios could be enhanced by clarifying the extent of faculty representation on the councils and the extent of faculty control of the curriculum.

- Ensuring open communication between and among all colleges, divisions and departments

**Systematic** NMC has multiple shared governance councils and interdisciplinary committees. Minutes and memos from these meetings are made available on the institution's intranet site and via email. However, communication between departments is described in the Systems Portfolio as taking place at the highest levels of each area. It is not clear how open, two-way communication is ensured throughout the division and departments of the College. Future Systems Portfolios can be strengthened by providing examples and details of the formal communication process.

- Collaborating across all units to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards (5.B.3)

**Systematic** The Curriculum Committee works with the VP for Educational Services and faculty Academic Chairs to set academic requirements. The Systems Portfolio states that "policies and processes to support requirements are developed, reviewed, and approved through shared governance structures," but no examples of the shared governance structures were found. The College can move to a higher level of maturity by describing these shared governance structures and the processes they use to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards.

- Providing effective leadership to all institutional stakeholders (2.C.1, 2.C.2)

**Systematic** The Systems Portfolio describes Board leadership, but does not address other means of effective leadership at the College. The College can move to a higher maturity rating by describing how the President and the executive leadership team provide effective leadership to stakeholders on a daily basis, as the Board delegates the authority to them to do. Describing how executive administrators are periodically reviewed or evaluated in regards to leadership could raise maturity in this area.

- Developing leaders at all levels within the institution

**Aligned** Through a 2011-13 Talent Action Project, NMC developed a leadership competency model which identifies the skills, knowledge, and attributes necessary for effective leadership and is based on the assumption everyone has leadership roles and responsibilities regardless of the position. The College also utilizes internal seminars and external conferences to further develop leadership abilities of its employees. The Professional Development Institute provides a variety of Leadership Development Programs. Through the annual review process, all regular employees set professional development goals.

- Ensuring the institution's ability to act in accordance with its mission and vision (2.C.3)

**Systematic** The Idea Summary and the four-step decision-making process for reviewing all college programs and programming proposals provides the trustees and college leaders with a process for handling ideas, requests, and proposals from external entities. Processes in this area could be more strongly confirmed as systematic if information were provided as to how the institution, as a whole and in all areas works to calibrate its resources and energies to align with the mission and vision.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

**Systematic** The President's annual evaluation by the Board is shared with the campus. The evaluation addresses core competencies as well as performance on goals. Sharing the evaluation is commendable; however, it is fairly general and appears to consist of trustee evaluations and input only. Campus stakeholders do not appear to be consulted. The employee engagement survey is used periodically to monitor effectiveness of supervisors. Although these are repeatable measures they appear to be indirect and limited.

**4R3** What are the results for ensuring long-term effective leadership of the institution? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** Results from the 2010, 2013, and 2016 Employee Engagement Surveys were reported, along with the 2017 President's Performance Review. Although the Employee Engagement Survey has questions that point to leadership at the College, the President's Performance Review only indirectly measures all leadership at the College through the review of one person by seven individuals. This leaves large sections of the college's leadership unmeasured, nor does it measure how well the College is doing at training new leaders.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** Results from internal surveys related to employee engagement are compared, as are the president's performance review. However, the comparison does not address benchmarks established by the College, and it is not clear how targets are set or evaluated beyond areas of the president's job performance or overall engagement within the organization.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Systematic** Through the president's performance evaluation some key areas of change were noted.



However, there were no insights provided from the Employee Engagement Survey, which is an opportunity for improvement given the large amount of data contained in that report.

**4I3** Based on 4R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

In Spring of 2017, NMC began a shared governance project because of feedback from the employee engagement survey, change in staff classification in 2015, and faculty's unionization in 2016. Members of the Action Project team have participated in the Building Trust into the Culture session at the CQI Network conference in August of 2017 and have begun gathering employee feedback. In addition the Leadership Group has been given a new charge to improve communication, engagement, and operational alignment.

#### 4.4: INTEGRITY

Integrity focuses on how the institution ensures legal and ethical behavior and fulfills its societal responsibilities. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 2.A. and 2.B. in this section.

**4P4** Describe the processes for developing and communicating legal and ethical standards and monitoring behavior to ensure standards are met. In addition, identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Developing and communicating standards

**Aligned** NMC's values, which include ethics, integrity, and personal responsibility, were developed through a campus-wide strategic planning session in 2006/2007. These values are communicated to employees in a variety of ways including orientation; Foundational Competencies found in job postings, job descriptions, and annual performance reviews; Conflict of Interest statements; Faculty Code of Professional Ethics; Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy; and guidelines on the appropriate use of computer and network systems. Beginning in Spring 2017, students cannot register for classes without first reading and agreeing to abide by alcohol, drug, and Title IX policies.

**Systematic** The College clearly has aligned processes for developing and promulgating standards; however, NMC has an opportunity to evaluate these communication methods to determine effectiveness.

- Training employees and modeling for ethical and legal behavior across all levels of the institution

**Aligned** NMC has policy statements related to ethical and legal behavior. The College requires training in all areas as a part of the on-boarding process, and there is ongoing training for Title IX and alcohol and drug policies. All employees undergo training in maintaining network security. The skills are tested via mock phishing emails, and employees who do not demonstrate competence in network security are provided additional training. FERPA training is also provided as needed and employees with responsibility for money or purchases are trained in ethical practices.

- Operating financial, academic, personnel and auxiliary functions with integrity, including following fair and ethical policies and adhering to processes for the governing board, administration, faculty and staff (2.A.)

**Aligned** NMC has robust processes for ensuring the ethical practices of those working in payroll and

purchasing, which involve multiple levels of review and approval. The College also undergoes an external annual financial audit. Multiple policies guide the processes of the Board of Trustees. MOUs with partners address potential conflicts of interest, as well as Extended Education Services. The talent management software tracks employee completion of required training, and supervisors and/or team leaders have an explicit responsibility to monitor for breeches in ethical standards. These are strong and aligned processes. Future Portfolios could be enhanced with more detail on what the “red flag” system is and how it functions.

- Making information about programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships readily and clearly available to all constituents (2.B.)

**Systematic** Information about program requirements, costs, and accreditation is available on NMC’s website and catalog. NMC has an opportunity to evaluate effectiveness of how it communicates this information to students and ensure that the correct name of the HLC is reflected in their online catalog, along with the correct website address.

**4R4** What are the results for ensuring institutional integrity? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 4P4. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Reacting** Financial audits and the Title IX report filed in response to being put on notice due to multiple cases of harassment are offered as evidence or results. No data on incidences of academic integrity violations is provided. Training is discussed in connection with integrity processes, but no data on training completion is offered. As presented, the results in this area are at a reacting level of maturity.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** No benchmarks or targets are provided for processes related to integrity.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** NMC provides multiple years of data relating to financial audits and one year’s worth of data for Title IX report. Minimal insights are demonstrated in the Systems Portfolio. While the College has a clear focus on training and ensuring that there is clear oversight involving multiple levels of review, how the College collects information related to policy infractions and how this information is shared with the college community is not clear.

**4I4** Based on 4R4, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC’s talent management software allows for improved tracking of completion of required training. Given the issues with complaints under Title IX and the college’s awareness of the need to improve in this area, NMC would be well served by exploring how to more closely monitor or inquire into employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the training and the institution’s other efforts to improve adherence to behavioral standards. In regards to recent improvements in this area, NMC has strengthened its Title IX training for students and employees and online training was provided in 2016 and 2017. In addition, the College scheduled face-to-face sessions with a content expert in August

2017.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

Numerous processes and policies support the college's efforts to achieve its mission and vision through direction setting, goal development, strategic actions, threat mitigation, and capitalizing on opportunities. Most of NMC's processes regarding Planning and Leading are at either a **Systematic or an Aligned** level of maturity. Based on the open comments from the 2016-17 Institutional Effectiveness survey, NMC may wish to ensure that more employees are engaged in the strategic planning process through the shared governance process. Full implementation of and buy-in to the "A3" template and process could also provide a critical common process to support effective planning and communication across all units and programs. The shared governance Action Project is an opportunity to review leadership roles across the institution. Data collected from the employee engagement survey indicates the need to improve channels of communication, employee buy-in, and trust. Future portfolios can be further enhanced by demonstrating how processes itself are evaluated regularly for improvement. The Results area of Category 4 are at **Systematic and Reacting** levels of maturity. The College has an opportunity to reflect on the appropriate measures for its stated processes, ensure that the results are shared widely across the campus, and to set targets and use benchmarks in order to make quality improvements as needed.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## V - Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship

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Addresses management of the fiscal, physical, technological, and information infrastructures designed to provide an environment in which learning can thrive.

### Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Knowledge Management, Resource Management and Operational Effectiveness.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

## Evidence

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### CATEGORY 5: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Category 5 addresses management of the fiscal, physical, technological and information infrastructures designed to provide an environment in which learning can thrive.

#### 5.1: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge Management focuses on how data, information and performance results are used in decision-making processes at all levels and in all parts of the institution.

**5P1** Describe the processes for knowledge management, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Selecting, organizing, analyzing and sharing data and performance information to support planning, process improvement and decision making

**Systematic** Executive-level decision makers are guided by the strategic plan and the Board of Trustees-approved metrics and targets in selecting data and information to support planning, process improvement and decision making. The Office of Research, Planning, & Effectiveness (ORPE) distributes data through intranet dashboards. This is a strong systematic process by which executive leaders can select and access performance measures. Dashboards display data only once relevant metrics and data are selected; therefore, a better description of processes for how units and programs across campus are supported or guided in selecting relevant data and information could indicate a higher level of maturity in this area.

- Determining data, information and performance results that units and departments need to plan and manage effectively.

**Systematic** ORPE department representatives work with Action Project teams and academic and service unit leaders in order to determine the data, information, and performance results needed to plan and manage effectively. The drivers are the strategic plan and goals/objectives for each unit. Some units establish individualized metrics related to specific unit initiatives or functions. An ORPE representative assists Action Project teams with matching measures to project objectives. The College could advance this strong, systematic process to a higher level of maturity by describing how the current process used is reviewed for improvement opportunities.

- Making data, information and performance results readily and reliably available to the units and departments that depend upon this information for operational effectiveness, planning and improvements

**Systematic** Information Technology Services (ITS) and ORPE compile, manage, and distribute the majority of the information to support planning and improvements at NMC. The ORPE oversees the research agenda, while ITS creates reports that users can run as needed and maintains a dashboard with real-time information. The Talent Portal assists with human resource planning and talent management, along with Banner customized reports. While the ORPE reviews its processes periodically so data is easier to find and understand, raising this process to an aligned level of maturity could be supported by regularly evaluating how well these processes meet the needs of various departments and units across the campus.

- Ensuring the timeliness, accuracy, reliability and security of the institution's knowledge management system(s) and related processes

**Aligned** NMC has aligned processes for ensuring timeliness and security of information, as evidenced with the online application and registration process. ITS centrally manages the multiple operational processes of the knowledge management systems at NMC. The Banner software system is continuously being updated and refreshed; other systems processes follow a batched process flow for data entry. Network system security is ensured through a variety of means including uninterruptible electrical power supply, entrance security protection, fire suppression system, firewall and intrusion prevention system. Additionally, a password change policy, system back-up processes, network security training to all employees, and an annual third-party audit of the information systems security all contribute to secure systems.

**Systematic** Future Portfolios will be enhanced by clarifying how data accuracy is regularly checked or audited. Attention to this area will confirm that processes in this area are fully aligned.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools (including software platforms and/or contracted services)

**Systematic** NMC uses Banner to store student, employee, and financial data, and uses components of that system for reporting and supplements it with customized reporting. Additional software systems / platforms and the college's intranet are used to track specific outcomes/measures for various functional units. As noted in the Portfolio, customized reports can be challenging to create and the College has been looking for some compatible software to allow for more report generation outside those provided through the database and related software packages. Improvements to the college's knowledge management systems is supported via conversations with executives and unit administrators and through the Institutional Effectiveness Survey.

**5R1** What are the results for determining how data, information and performance results are used in decision-making processes at all levels and in all parts of the institution? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 5P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** The 2016 Employee Engagement Survey and the 2017 Institutional Effectiveness Survey have three questions related to the college's knowledge management systems. Results were reported for these three questions.

**Reacting** These survey questions measure or reflect employee perceptions but capture a relatively small portion of the results necessary to fully assess processes in this area. Developing the means of understanding the relevance, usefulness, timeliness, of the data or information and querying into employees' ability to understand and apply the data could raise this process to a systematic level of maturity.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Reacting** No internal targets or external benchmarks are provided.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** Little interpretation of results are presented other than indicating low scores are areas for improvement. By creating targets and benchmarking results the institution may find it easier to gain insights into the data.

**5I1** Based on 5R1, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC recognizes that there is a need to improve the availability and use of information to inform the planning and decision-making processes. The College has recently taken steps to improve accessibility of information, including modifying the ORPE website, creation of a Talent Portal, and purchasing new student analytics software. The ORPE group appears diligent in its efforts to make data available; however, processes that support the ability of administrators in programs and units to understand and select the most relevant and useful data are not well described. The results from the IE Survey point to the need to ensure end-users get data that inform improvement; therefore, the college's Leadership Group turning its attention to formulating appropriate overall performance targets for the College. Identifying measures for data accuracy will help to more fully address processes in this area.

## 5.2: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Resource Management focuses on how the resource base of an institution supports and improves its educational programs and operations. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.A. in this section.

**5P2** Describe the processes for managing resources, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Maintaining fiscal, physical and technological infrastructures sufficient to support operations (5.A.1)

**Systematic** NMC follows the annual Board- approved Resource Guidelines document when creating its budget. The Guidelines are designed to support the building of financial reserves for NMC and preparing the College for potential shortfalls in state funding or other revenue. The Guidelines explicitly address the physical infrastructure and technology, which is supported via a Technology Plant Fund funded by student fees.

**Reacting** While guidelines and resources are described in the Portfolio, the processes by which dedicated funds are allocated, how the amount is determined, and how regularly this occurs are not described, and only the results of management (e.g., financial ratios) are presented as results.

- Setting goals aligned with the institutional mission, resources, opportunities and emerging needs (5.A.3)

**Aligned** NMC has a planning process that ties the mission, vision, and values to the strategic goals of the institution, which filters down to operational goals. The Guiding Principles Map drives the process for planning and budgeting, and the A3 template links operational goals with the resource allocation process. All new programs or new service proposals undergo a four-step decision-making process that analyzes fit with mission, strategic agenda, market, and resources. These processes, as described, meet the criteria for an aligned level of maturity; however, use of the A3 template is not yet fully deployed. Confirming these processes as aligned will entail full deployment and periodic reviews of the effectiveness of both the A3 templates and the four-step decision-making process.

- Allocating and assigning resources to achieve organizational goals, while ensuring that educational purposes are not adversely affected (5.A.2)

**Aligned** NMC's Board-approved Resource Guidelines, reviewed and revised on an annual basis, reflect the mission and values of the College. The Guidelines also allow for the College to respond to market opportunities without adversely affecting current programs. Resources needed to deploy strategic and operational priorities are regularly checked; the President's Council has authority to adjust goals mid-year if resources become tight or if the resources needed to achieve a goal increase. Additionally, NMC has created two funds for funding needs outside of the regular operational budget: the Strategic Fund (President-managed fund for strategic initiatives not funded through the regular budget) and the Fund for Transformation (Board designated fund for transformation initiatives). The Foundation also provides funds for scholarships, programs, and facilities which are aligned with the strategic directions of the College. While processes defined by the Resource Guidelines, steps for review and approval, and strategies for supporting initiatives that may fall out of the budget approval cycle, all reflect an aligned level of maturity, future Portfolios could describe how internal and external stakeholders are informed or involved in the process and how the institution sets aside emergency funds for unexpected expenses.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

**Systematic** NMC monitors its finances through the Primary Reserves ratio, Composite Financial Index, and Net Operating Ratio. Monthly financial reports are given to the Planning and Budget Council, President's Council, and Board. The College contracts with a third party to conduct annual financial audits. These processes reflect good practices and a solidly systematic level of maturity. Strategies to advance maturity in this area may include utilizing input from the Community Attitudes and Awareness survey or developing strategies for soliciting broader input on perceptions of resource

management.

**5R2** What are the results for resource management? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 5P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** NMC shares three measures: Primary Reserves Ratios, Composite financial indices, and Net Operating Ratios are presented for FY14, FY15, and FY16. Results are largely within the target range, although the composite index has fluctuated due to enrollment decreases. The College has intentionally increased debt to support the international student recruiting and retention effort.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** Internal targets are provided for all three main financial measures, although the most recent data (FY17) are not provided in the portfolio.

- Interpretation results and insights gained

**Reacting** Scant interpretation of results is provided. Declining state support and the property tax lid are cited as factors that place much of the revenue burden with students in terms of tuition and fees. Decreases in the net operating ratio and the composite financial index are apparently related to a decrease in enrollment and an increase in debt. Systematic processes for interpreting and learning from data gathered would include comments on financial plans or strategies for mitigating future enrollment losses.

**5I2** Based on 5R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The financial indicator results allude to making improvements in revenue generation to offset revenues lost by decreased enrollments. Although the College is clearly financially stable, tuition and fees have steadily increased to offset enrollment losses and property tax caps. To minimize tuition increases, the College has proactively sought out new potential revenue sources from unique programs, the use of differential tuition in high-cost occupational programs, and by investing in the NMC Foundation work to support the raising of additional funds.

### 5.3: OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Operational Effectiveness focuses on how an institution ensures effective management of its operations in the present and plans for continuity of operations into the future. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.A. in this section.

**5P3** Describe the processes for operational effectiveness, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Building budgets to accomplish institutional goals

**Systematic** A detailed, well-established and stable budgeting process exists at NMC. A detailed document, Budget Considerations, is prepared on an annual basis. Each year, Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) provides training and online resources to budget managers and



department heads. The Planning and Budget Council (PBC) functions as a shared governance group that prioritizes new position requests consistent with the strategic plan, provides feedback regarding revenues and expenses, and submits budget recommendations to the president. The Board of Trustees approves the General Fund operating budget each summer. These processes are at a high systematic level of maturity and could be readily advanced by describing when and how the budget-building process is reviewed for improvement.

- Monitoring financial position and adjusting budgets (5.A.5)

**Systematic** Finance and Administrative Services closely monitors the budget and provides monthly actual-to-plan summaries to the Planning and Budget Council, the president, and the Board of Trustees. President's Council regularly reviews resources deployed to meet strategic and operational goals and adjusts goals mid-year if needed, due to resource challenges. These processes reflect a solidly systematic level of maturity; notwithstanding, processes are depicted at a high level with minimal detail. Future Portfolios could support an aligned level of maturity by more clearly describing the criteria or thresholds the President's Council employs in evaluating resource deployment relative to strategic and operational priorities.

- Maintaining a technological infrastructure that is reliable, secure and user-friendly

**Systematic** The College has a student technology fee that is collected and maintained through the Technology Plant Fund, and network security was described in 5P1. The Technology Plant Fund, funded by student fees, finances ongoing technology-based initiatives and provides a solid funding stream for IT. The Fall 2016 Student Technology Use Survey and Help Desk Ticket data are two technology feedback mechanisms. This section of the Portfolio describes funding sources and two feedback mechanisms. Reviewers placed this process at a systematic level of maturity because network security is thoroughly described under 5P1.

- Maintaining a physical infrastructure that is reliable, secure and user-friendly

**Systematic** A comprehensive facilities assessment was done in 2012 and the master plan was updated. A Physical Plant Major Maintenance and Future Buildings fund ensures resources are available for infrastructure maintenance and improvements, especially in the classroom and in support services. A process overseen by the Capital Outlay Allocation Team (COAT) exists for approving funding requests, and the Resource Guidelines outline what needs to be completed. The portfolio 5P3.4 notes that there is a Working Capital Reserve Fund to mitigate risks with building projects or needs. Raising the maturity level for these processes would be supported by describing how daily maintenance issues are reported or managed and clarifying how often the facilities assessment is performed.

- Managing risks to ensure operational stability, including emergency preparedness

**Aligned** To manage risks arising from changes in enrollment, retention, revenue sources, operating costs, and other unforeseen expenses, maintains a Working Capital Reserve Fund and holds additional reserves for building projects and other significant purchases of products and/or services. The campus employs robust emergency preparedness processes which include regular reviews by the Emergency Management Team (EMT) in conjunction with local authorities. The Behavioral Incident Report Team was started in 2008 for early intervention in behavioral issues, and this team is poised to act on information reported through the Red Flag reporting system. A flowchart describes the processes that occur when the team is activated, including documentation in Maxient. A detailed Emergency Management Org Chart guides actions in the case of an emergency, and a process to communicate

time-sensitive information to internal and external stakeholders exists. Regular fire and lock down drills occur. All academic courses show a 12-minute security video to students at the beginning of the semester. Maturity in this area could be further supported by describing planning processes for more global emergencies that could threaten operational continuity.

- Tracking outcomes/measures utilizing appropriate tools

**Systematic** NMC tracks outcomes in a variety of ways, including monthly financial reports, annual financial audits, student and community survey feedback, and Emergency Management data available on the website. Firmly establishing processes in this area as systematic will entail depicting measures for managing the technological or physical infrastructures of the institution.

**5R3** What are the results for ensuring effective management of operations on an ongoing basis and for the future? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 5P3. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)

**Systematic** The Fall 2014 Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey, the Learner Engagement Survey, and the 2016 Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium Campus Climate Survey results are reported. The Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey uses 3 indirect measures (campus appearance, managing finances, managing tax dollars) to assess operational effectiveness. One safety question on the HEDS survey is comparable to a similar question on the Learner Engagement Survey, and Campus Climate Survey results indicate students generally feel safe on campus. Reviewers regard processes in this area as generally systematic although results for measuring the management of the technological or physical infrastructures of the institution or for emergency preparedness are notably absent.

- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

**Systematic** Internal comparison data is provided for the Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey. External benchmarks for the Campus Climate Survey are absent as it has been levied just one time. For the Learner Engagement Survey, which has now been levied three times, the College has set a benchmark for 2018 related to safety. Processes appear generally systematic although targets or benchmarks provided for measuring the management of the technological or physical infrastructures of the institution and emergency preparedness are notably absent.

- Interpretation of results and insights gained

**Reacting** The Portfolio interprets the data pertaining to operations to point out that the College has exceeded its target of 95% in all but two areas: managing finances and tax dollars received 89% approval ratings. Insights and/or discussion of how the data were analyzed are not offered.

**5I3** Based on 5R3, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC lists many actions related to improving operational excellence, including the following:

- Creation of a new dormitory and an Innovation Center
- Initiating a new lock-down training procedure

- Updating the phone alert system and increasing the number of security cameras
- Improving safety training for employees and expanding Title IX training for all students and employees
- Installing security film and blinds on all interior windows and new locks on campus doors that can be locked remotely
- Hiring a consultant to review building security on all campuses

The Resource Guidelines, adopted by the Board of Trustees, provide guidance for priority and expenditure decisions. The College collects perception survey information from the community and the students, and benchmarks set for next year have been increased to spur further improvement.

### CATEGORY SUMMARY

NMC has financial and physical plant plans in place to help inform the decision-making process and resource allocations, and processes within Category 5 vary from **systematic to aligned**. The Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness works with college personnel in providing data, information, and performance results via Intranet dashboards and other paper documents so that decision-making processes can be made college-wide. Board-approved Resource Guidelines, with oversight from the President's Council and the Finance and Administrative Services Department, provide the needed direction for financial management. Effective management of operations is accomplished via regular monitoring of budgetary income and expenses and having appropriate processes to mitigate risks. Results vary from **reacting to systematic**. NMC could advance the maturity of processes by ensuring they are regularly reviewed for improvement. Results could be matured through additional work on setting targets and benchmarks, by ensuring that measures are directly related to stated processes, and by linking improvements more explicitly to results.

#### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## VI - Quality Overview

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Focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement culture and infrastructure of the institution. This category gives the institution a chance to reflect on all its quality improvement initiatives, how they are integrated, and how they contribute to improvement of the institution.

### Instructions for Systems Appraisal Team

In this section, the team should provide a consensus narrative that focuses on the processes, results and improvements for Quality Improvement Initiatives and Culture of Quality.

Independent Category Feedback for each AQIP Category from each team member should be synthesized into an in-depth narrative that includes an analysis of the institution's processes, results and quality improvement efforts for each category. Wording from the Stages in Systems Maturity tables for both processes and results should be incorporated into the narrative to help the institution understand how the maturity of processes and results have been rated. The narrative should also include recommendations to assist the institution in improving its processes and/or results. It is from this work that the team will develop a consensus on the Strategic Challenges analysis, noting three to five strategic issues that are crucial for the future of the institution. Please see additional directions in the [Systems Appraisal procedural document](#) provided by HLC.

## Evidence

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### CATEGORY 6: QUALITY OVERVIEW

Category 6 focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement culture and infrastructure of the institution. This category gives the institution a chance to reflect on all its quality improvement initiatives, how they are integrated and how they contribute to improvement of the institution.

#### 6.1: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

Quality Improvement Initiatives focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) initiatives the institution is engaged in and how they work together within the institution.

**6P1** Describe the processes for determining and integrating CQI initiatives, and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Selecting, deploying and evaluating quality improvement initiatives

**Aligned** NMC selects all quality improvement initiatives through the “grasping the situation” process, which includes reviewing inputs from various sources including the CQR, systems appraisal feedback, environmental scans, stakeholder feedback, and internal reviews. All selected initiatives follow the PDCA process while continuing the “grasping the situation” process for ongoing analysis. Each CQI initiative is evaluated and documented. All quality projects are vetted through the Aligned Planning and Decision-Making Processes. The CQI Activities Table summarizes who is involved in the selection and deployment of quality improvement processes, and how the activity is evaluated.

- Aligning the Systems Portfolio, Action Projects, Comprehensive Quality Review and Strategy Forums

**Systematic** Organizational measures and performance targets for each AQIP category are posted on an intranet dashboard and are informed by the Systems Portfolio, Action Projects, and strategic planning. The CQI table helps to explain how the Strategy Forum fits into the array of mechanisms (e.g., department and unit plans, the strategic plan, action projects) for generating improvement initiatives. However, it is not clear how these are aligned to support CQI.

**6R1** What are the results for continuous quality improvement initiatives? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 6P1. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared.

**Systematic** Five major CQI activities since the 2013 Portfolio were presented; four Action Projects were integrated into these activities. The outcomes vary, with additional or re-designed work continuing on four of the five activities. All the improvement initiatives cited in the results are clearly manifested in the data and information provided in the Portfolio, with the exception of the “Developing a more robust peer bench-marking process.” Evidence of this initiative having borne fruit is scant in the Portfolio.

**6I1** Based on 6R1, what quality improvement initiatives have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC has well-conceived and well described processes for gathering data and information from the programs and units (e.g., via the A3 template) and ‘rolling up’ these sources of input for planning, budgeting, and risk management. The college’s Action Projects appear logically developed to address areas in need of improvement. The continuous quality improvement projects (two new Action Projects) mentioned both in this section as well as in the results area point to a deliberate effort by NMC to align quality improvement projects with gaps in the Systems Portfolio. The College recognizes that Shared Governance is not accomplishing the inclusion and transparency hoped for, and the goal to enhance experiential learning opportunities for students at all levels of the College is consistent with feedback collected over time.

## 6.2: CULTURE OF QUALITY

Culture of Quality focuses on how the institution integrates continuous quality improvement into its culture. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 5.D. in this section.

**6P2** Describe how a culture of quality is ensured within the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Developing an infrastructure and providing resources to support a culture of quality

**Aligned** Creation of the Office of Research, Planning & Effectiveness (ORPE) in 2008 was clearly a critically positive move in creating and supporting a quality culture at NMC. In 2011 NMC began its aligned planning process. The planning process, the A3 template, and decision-making flow chart all provide channels and pathways for the use of data generated by the ORPE. The College is at a fledgling level of alignment in maturity in this area. Once administrators at all levels and in all units and programs understand and follow the processes illustrated and build skills in identifying and using the data the ORPE can provide, processes in this area could readily rise to an integrated level of

maturity.

- Ensuring continuous quality improvement is making an evident and widely understood impact on institutional culture and operations (5.D.1)

**Systematic** The PDCA framework is utilized in almost all processes, and goals are set college wide using SMART methodology, which supports continuous quality improvement. All employees are involved in CQI efforts at varying levels. Documentation of outcomes and reflections are part of all CQI efforts. The Employee Engagement Survey serves as evidence that NMC employees are committed to continuous improvement, and indicates that CQI is part of institutional operations. With time and the generation of more data to confirm improvements, maturity in this area will rise quickly.

- Ensuring the institution learns from its experiences with CQI initiatives (5.D.2)

**Systematic** The college reports that all actions are documented with some reflection on how the implementation worked or what could be improved. The reflection process is a positive step in promoting organizational communication and a culture of quality improvement. How the college has implemented this systematically or how changes have been made as a result of the reflection process is not clearly defined. As evidenced throughout the portfolio, data and measures are analyzed and documented via descriptive statistics, but in most cases, the insights and lessons learned are fairly superficial.

- Reviewing, reaffirming and understanding the role and vitality of the AQIP Pathway within the institution

**Systematic** The college became an AQIP institution in 2005 and has sustained that focus since the beginning. The intent in joining AQIP was to learn how to be better at all they do, and the commitment has remained over time. The College is poised to achieve an aligned level of maturity in this area once the many CQI processes now in place are fully implemented in all units and programs, and clear explanations address the alignment of those processes with AQIP.

**6R2** What are the results for continuous quality improvement to evidence a culture of quality? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 6P2. All data presented should include the population studied, the response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared.

**Systematic** The data and information the College cites as results clearly reflect an institution of good quality. Being systematically mature in this area is hard for any public higher education institution. The College notes that not all units and programs use IR data at the same level and recognizes this as a goal for improvement in the future.

**6I2** Based on 6R2, what process improvements to the quality culture have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NMC has reached an important threshold in its quality journey with the revitalization of the Leadership Group. The members of this very large group are the administrators from which buy-in to the many processes (e.g., the A3 template, the PDCA process, the setting of SMART goals, etc.) is critical and necessary. An effective and well-led Leadership Group could drive the College forward in its strategic use and analysis of data. The infrastructure in the form of the ORPE already exists to support rapid progress.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

NMC has grown a culture of quality over the last 12 years and, overall, has sustained its commitment to the AQIP framework. Having one area reporting data, a documented planning process, and a newly-charged group focusing on quality initiatives are all important steps in this process. NMC's processes regarding Quality Overview are at a **Systematic or Aligned** level of maturity. The Results area of Category 6 are at a **Systematic** level of maturity. The College has an opportunity to reflect on the appropriate measures for its stated processes and ensure that the results are shared widely across the campus. Currently the maturity of its processes, as illustrated and mapped, are ahead of the maturity of actual implementation; however, this circumstance reflects the challenge of culture change.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

# 1 - Mission

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

## Rating

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Clear

## Evidence

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The mission, vision, and value statements were developed through participation of external and internal stakeholders, including faculty, staff, executive leadership, and approved by the Board of Trustees.

NMC's mission, vision, and value statements were developed through broad-based participation of executive leadership, faculty, staff, governance councils, the Board of Trustees, the community, and external stakeholders. All are approved by the Board of Trustees and a policy exists.

NMC's new academic programs or student support services are vetted through a formal evaluation process where alignment of the mission is considered in the decision-making process. NMC also meets its mission to provide lifelong learning opportunities to its communities by offering a number of programs that meets the community needs.

NMC's stated mission is to provide lifelong learning opportunities to its communities. This is done through a variety of offerings, including College for kids, Extended Education non-credit courses, credit programs in liberal arts and sciences and occupational studies, organizational and customized training for business and industry, and Life Academy for the over 50 population.

NMC follows its Resource Guidelines and Guiding Principles Map to ensure planning and budgeting align with the mission, vision, and values. These Resource Guidelines are approved yearly by the Board of Trustees.

The Guiding Principle Map indicates that the NMC strategic plan is based on mission, vision, and values.



**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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NMC publicly articulates its Mission, Vision, Values, Purposes, Strategic Directions, and Institutional Effectiveness Criteria in a detailed page on its website. Together these documents explain the College's priorities and identify what NMC does for whom.

New employees learn about NMC's mission, vision, and values during orientation.

Mission, vision, and value statements are distributed throughout campus in conference rooms and offices.

NMC leadership and the Board review the mission, vision, and values as a part of the strategic planning process each year.

The mission statement makes very clear that the College is committed to providing quality, affordable education to stakeholders of all ages and backgrounds. Further, the mission makes clear its commitment to being integral to the region as a source of culture, support, economic development, and leadership.

NMC Mission, Vision, Values, Purposes, Strategic Directions, and Institutional Effectiveness Criteria webpage does identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The "Ends" statements of the Board of Trustees are specific enough to function as criteria against which the college's actions and initiatives can be judged for alignment or non-alignment with institutional values.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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NMC has developed programming based upon its service area's geography and demographics. This includes the creation of the Great Lakes Water Studies Institute, which offers a variety of degrees and programming.

Students can earn a global endorsement on their transcript through academic and experiential learning, activities and event participation, and a final capstone presentation.

The college's Associate of Science and Arts (ASA), Associate of General Studies (AGS), and the Bachelor of science (BS) degrees have a cultural perspectives and diversity course requirement. These courses require students to evaluate connections between worldviews, power structures, and experiences of multiple cultures historically or in contemporary contexts.

NMC presents as source of support for all residents at some point in their development and participation in the regional economy. The one distinct minority group singled out for custom services is Native Americans, and for this group the College provides programming in languages and cultural studies.

Most programs have advisory committees, and all programs employ market and employment research in designing or modifying programs. Market research identifies and considers the diversity of the communities the College serves.

The College complies with ADA requirements and provides a dedicated staff person for students who require accommodations. NMC has a BRIDGE Learning Experience for non-traditional adult learners, Outreach Services, and veteran specific support services.

The College also provides multiple delivery modes to address different student schedules and learning styles.

NMC clearly understands its role in a diverse and global society, and programs as well as co-curricular opportunities exist that address this awareness.

The college degree programs are designed to meet the needs of the community served and the diversity of the student body.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

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The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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The mission, vision, and values reflect the community served and are well connected to the college purpose within its region and state.

The mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria statements, found on the College website, work together to articulate that providing lifelong learning is NMC's primary purpose. The purpose and strategic directions statements further clarify who the College serves and how the College serves them.

In Spring 2013, NMC's purposes, revised by the Board of Trustees, include providing Bachelor's degrees in select areas. This change was a direct result of feedback from students, industry, and a change in State of Michigan law.

NMC actively listens to the community in a variety of ways including through Board of Trustees leadership, Community Attitudes and Awareness Survey responses, and through community participation on the Foundation Board and advisory groups.

NMC has multiple policies and processes in place for financial planning, determining capital outlays, and soliciting community feedback.

NMC regularly surveys the community to evaluate how well it is upholding its mission.

NMC's mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria are reviewed as part of the strategic planning process and approved by the Board of Trustees. Feedback from both internal and external stakeholders are incorporated into this process.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### Rating

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Clear

#### Evidence

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NMC has clearly established policies and procedures that ensure the college operates with integrity and ethically. Management and faculty responsibilities are well defined and appropriate to institutions of higher education.

All new employees receive orientation to NMC's values at the New Faculty and Staff Institute and also through the online orientation process.

Executive staff and Board of Trustees are required annually to affirm that they follow the College's conflict of interest policies.

NMC's policies on academic honesty and integrity are documented in the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics and in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy section, Academic Code of Conduct. Faculty members include a statement on the syllabus stating policies related to academic honesty. This syllabus language is pre-loaded on all Moodle course shells.

NMC's hiring processes were developed based on federal and state guidelines and NMC policies. The College ensures these guidelines are followed through hiring manager and search team training, close monitoring of search team activities by the Recruitment Specialist, and the inclusion of Human Resource representatives in all final decision meetings.

All employees receive initial training on FERPA, Title IX, Sexual Harassment, and Alcohol and Drug policies and procedures as part of the on-boarding process. Annual refresher training is conducted on Title IX and alcohol and drug policies as required by federal guidelines.

To protect external access to personal identifying information or other sensitive information, NMC required comprehensive online/network security training for all employees beginning in 2015.

The College requires specialized training related to ethical handling of money/payments for those working with any type of financial transactions.



NMC ensures ethical practices by intentionally designing work processes so that duties involving payroll processing and purchasing are handled by different people and require levels of review and approval. Procurement card guidelines define specific use and the steps taken to monitor such use. The purchasing policy states the allowable limits on purchases by employee classification.

External audits, such as the annual financial audit, review the College's practices in light of ethical guidelines. The college's financial audits consistently receive a clean opinion with no findings.

NMC's value statements does articulate its commitment to integrity, personal responsibility, transparency, openness, and trust.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **2.B - Core Component 2.B**

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### **Rating**

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Clear

### **Evidence**

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The College website and online catalog provide information about program requirements and costs. The college website also notes its accreditation relationships and HLC status.

Students and the community can find a list of all faculty and staff members, their role, and their credentials in the Faculty and Staff section of the online catalog.

The College website makes note that it is a publicly funded community college that serves people, organizations and businesses, and that it is governed by a publicly elected board of trustees from Grand Traverse County that serve six-year terms.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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The Board of Trustees are elected individuals and represent the community served. The board members participate in orientation and have opportunities for involvement at the state and national level.

Board Policy C-104.00, the "Ends Policy," provides a very detailed explanation of the standards and attributes the College, with the support of the trustees, is to achieve. This policy commits the trustees to act in support of the institution. The agenda of the trustees' meetings include standing agenda items designed to ensure the trustees are kept informed of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

Monthly Board of Trustees meetings include updates to insure the Board is knowledgeable about the College's daily operations, opportunities, and challenges. Meetings follow a standard procedure/agenda to ensure the Board spends its time focusing on its priorities. Board meetings are open to the public, allowing community members to provide input. Additionally, some Board members serve on NMC's Foundation Board and provide service to the community in other ways to keep engaged.

The Board of Trustees in conjunction with three executive-level councils (i.e., the Planning/Budget Council, the Policy Council, and the President's Council) comprise the top leadership of the College. Information is fed to the trustees via these councils, and direct public input is given to the trustees during the open comment session included in every monthly meeting.

The trustees of NMC adhere to open meeting practices and makes public meeting agendas and minutes. A separate conflict of interest policy must be read and signed by each trustee. This policy requires any trustee with a conflict of interest to recuse him or herself from Board deliberations.

Management of the College is delegated to institutional leaders via policy. The Board and the

executive-level councils manage institutional operations, while academic and curriculum matters are delegated to the curriculum committee and faculty council. Newly elected trustees are provided an orientation immediately prior to the Board of Trustees retreat held at the beginning of each new academic year. All trustees are encouraged to engage in professional development in support of their role.

The Board Policy B-100.00, “Board-President Relationship,” is very detailed about the roles of the trustees and the extent of their involvement with day-to-day institutional operations. The trustees have the ability to remain informed and seek out information to support decision making but are entrusted to support and guide the institution’s executive leadership.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### Rating

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Adequate

### Evidence

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NMC employs standard policies and practices to convey and enforce expectations related to freedom of expression and integrity. This includes an article on Academic Freedom in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The College has several policies in place to ensure ethical teaching, including the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics. Details regarding how the College ensures the policies are followed would add clarity and provide additional evidence to support the Core Component.

Students are guided by faculty and library staff in the ethical use of information resources, with librarians instructing all freshman in information literacy using standards from the American College and Research Libraries. The goal of the freshman information literacy curriculum is to have students leave NMC responsible, ethical users and purveyors of information.

The Maxient software supports efforts to improve the reporting and tracing of breeches of academic integrity.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Rating

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Adequate

### Evidence

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The college has several policies in place to ensure ethical teaching and research practices. This includes a policy covering human subjects research which supports the integrity of research and scholarly practice of students, employees and community foundations and organizations. This policy does not appear to extend to non-human subjects' research. There is an opportunity to expand upon the role of the ORPE in monitoring human subject research.

An intellectual property rights for courses and course materials exists and is detailed in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Students are guided by faculty and library staff in the ethical use of information resources, with librarians instructing all freshman in information literacy using standards from the American College and Research Libraries.

NMC's policies on academic honesty and integrity are documented in the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics and in the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy (section #5 of the Academic Code of Conduct D-602.10). The College's commitment to academic freedom is described in the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics. The College has detailed policies to convey expectations for ethical conduct and academic integrity. Employee handbooks outlining NMC policies and procedures are available on the College's website.

The Academic Code of Behavior, embedded in the Student Rights and Responsibilities document, addresses issues of academic honesty and integrity. This information is found in the College catalog, website, all syllabi, and each Moodle course shell.

The Maxient software supports efforts to improve the reporting and tracing of breeches of academic integrity. Northwestern Michigan cites the disparity in research findings regarding the frequency of integrity breeches in the general student population nationwide and the number of breeches documented at the College. The College has planned improvements regarding processes for detecting, tracking, responding to, and lessening breeches of academic integrity.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

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The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

### **Rating**

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Clear

### **Evidence**

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The catalog, model schedules, and course prerequisites convey and enforce preparation needed for NMC's academic programs. Placement testing is used for math and English skills. Course outlines establish and maintain quality for all modalities of a given course.

Faculty members work with business/industry/educational members, advisory committees and program accrediting agencies to determine the level of preparation students are required to have for specific programs and courses.

NMC has established policies to ensure course outcomes and general education outcomes are consistent across delivery modalities and locations.

The rigor and level of each program is established initially through the program approval process and maintained thereafter through annual program review.

All academic programs go through a thorough approval and annual review process to assure appropriateness and need. The Curriculum Committee reviews all course outlines, which define the course learning outcomes and map to the general education outcomes that the course supports.

The three general education outcomes and the standard rubrics designed to convey skills and levels of attainment were developed with reference to national standards and peer institutions.



**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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NMC's general education offerings and common learning outcomes align with the mission, as evidenced in Board Policies. Since the last review, the College has worked to define critical skills for workers in the 21st Century; the College believes that all courses should support these outcomes.

The College participates in the Michigan Transfer Agreement, which benefits students transferring to another college in Michigan. NMC has various partnerships with universities for transfer opportunities as well as workforce development.

NMC articulates the purpose and content of General Education Outcomes (GEO) on the NMC website and in the NMC catalog. The level of GEO achievement is measured through a common rubric. GEOs are identified, including cultural perspectives and diversity, and are part of all degrees. The initial development of GEOs was led by the Faculty Council subcommittee based on NMC's strategic directions and input from stakeholders. In addition, L. Dee Fink's framework for identifying significant learning outcomes is incorporated in all credit courses.

Course curriculum is designed by faculty with GEOs and program learning outcomes in mind. These courses are designed with various learning activities that give students opportunities to achieve the stated outcomes. GEOs are embedded in all curriculum, offering students the opportunity to graduate with proficiency in all outcomes.

NMC recently added a "cultural perspectives and diversity" course requirement as part of the ASA,

AGS, and BS degrees. NMC offers various courses to meet this requirement, and offers students the opportunity to acquire a Global Endorsement on their transcript through curricular and co-curricular experiences. The Curriculum Committee is charged with reviewing degree requirements to ensure outcomes are aligned with societal needs. This is also ensured through Annual Program Review and stakeholder feedback.

Faculty consider degree requirements, GEOs, and program learning outcomes (PLO) as they create course outlines. A variety of learning activities are offered to students so that the discovery of knowledge is aligned to the GEOs and PLOs.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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NMC's annual planning processes entails tracking enrollment patterns, course loads, and the efficient use of classroom capacity, and these data are used in determining faculty needs. The Educational Services Instructional Management Team (ESIMT) has administrative responsibility for ensuring sufficient faculty numbers.

The Faculty Load Policy defines workload in terms of contact hours consistent with industry standards in Michigan; the policy accounts for the non-classroom responsibilities of instructors, and release time is granted for extensive non-classroom programs and activities.

Workforce planning processes are guided by the strategic plan and informed by data on anticipated needs due to projected retirements, turnover, or enrollment changes. Needs anticipated via these data are addressed during the annual planning and budgeting process.

All position announcements are accompanied by a clear job description outlining the education, experience, competencies and other qualifications required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. The recruitment, on-boarding, orientation, development, and evaluation processes are all designed to ensure employees are qualified, trained, and supported.

In determining or updating requirements for a position, the hiring manager/supervisor works with HR to clarify key responsibilities and required credentials and experience. The College uses the following sources in setting standards: the HLC, industry-specific requirements, and the National Institute for

## Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD).

All faculty (including adjuncts) and staff provide official transcripts to verify their academic credentials as well as other official licenses and certifications. Experience and credentials are confirmed via the reference check process during the hiring process. An administrative process is in place to periodically check and ensure that all faculty and staff maintain required credentials and certifications.

The College publishes a 'hiring catalog' listing all courses along with the requirements needed to teach each course. These requirements apply to all modes and roles, i.e., full-time, adjunct, dual credit instructors and those teaching in contractual and consortial credit programs.

Annual reviews of regular faculty members include information from classroom observations, written peer feedback, student evaluations, and a review by a supervisor. Provisional faculty follow the same annual review process; however, they are observed more frequently, receive more frequent student feedback, and have additional professional development requirements. A process exists for ensuring similar reviews of adjunct instructors.

All new instructors remain on provisional status for three years, during which they must meet specific professional development requirements and attend monthly Friday Forums and the three professional development days per year sponsored by the Center for Instructional Effectiveness. A New Faculty Learning Community was established in 2017 to support these processes.

NMC allocates 2.25% of general fund salaries and wages for professional development. Faculty and staff have access to a tuition benefit and sabbatical leave (after 7 years of full-time service); these benefits promote continued professional development.

As part of the annual review process, all employees set professional development goals. Full-time faculty members must detail goals to ensure they are current in their fields and pedagogical processes and that they maintain any required licensure or certification. This requirement is applied in adapted form to provisional and adjunct faculty. The allocation of professional development funds to support the meeting of these goals is left to the supervisor of the department or unit since certifications and needs vary. The Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE) offers professional development opportunities for faculty and has funds to allocate for select initiatives or requests.

The Educational Media Technology department works with Center for Instructional Effectiveness to offer the TeachingSOLUTIONS program, which addresses issues such as teaching and assessing the General Education Outcomes and strategies to support student persistence and retention.

Instructors are required to hold posted office hours for students in their classes; these are included in the course syllabus although it is unclear how many are required or if there is a policy for this. No results or evidence pertaining to adherence to policies or student satisfaction with instructor availability is offered. The Learner Engagement Survey contains an item on academic advising, but the results for this item are not provided.

NMC offers a variety of support services to meet the needs of its students. The institution has a hiring process in place to ensure all staff providing non-academic student support services have a clear job description, necessary experience, and possess the required competencies to fulfill job responsibilities.

The College employs a "competency model" that identifies the specific skills, behaviors, values, and credentials required for staff in three categories: 1) foundational competencies, 2) functional

competencies (i.e., skills specific to role), and 3) technical competencies, expertise, and/or credentials specific to the position. Member of a search or hiring committee independently review an applicant's portfolio using the competency model for the position and an evaluation rubric.

A new staff member is in the "Learning Zone," for their first three years, during which the staff member works with the Talent Development Coordinator to create a Learning Plan tracked through NMC's goal-setting and performance software. Upon review and supervisor recommendation, the staff member transitions to the "Experienced Zone," which indicates the staff member demonstrates all essential competencies.

NMC's annual performance planning and assessment process (MyPDCA) ensures that all staff members and administrators complete professional development and/ or maintain certifications appropriate to their roles and responsibilities. The College also encourages employees to be active in state and national professional organizations related to their area of employment. Many student support staff not only attend these organizations' conferences but serve in a leadership capacity as well.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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NMC provides typical student support services for its students, including tutoring, students with disabilities, veterans, early college students, support for students in need of remediation and students who have below a 2.0 high school grade point average. NMC also provides support for career exploration and planning courses.

NMC offers a variety of student support services, many which are determined by placement scores. Others services are available to those on probation or in need of tutoring and advising. Processes are in place to identify at-risk students, including early alerts and mid-term alerts. Services are available for veterans, international students, and Early College students. Non-academic services are also available, such as financial aid, personal counseling, and child care.

NMC uses multiple methods to assess students' preparation for college. Academic preparation is evaluated by means of ACT or SAT test scores, high school GPA, GED scores, writing samples, and the Accuplacer placement test. English and math faculty set cut scores for determining placement into specific courses to increase the likelihood of student success. Developmental English and math courses are available for students whose placement scores do not place them into transfer-level work. NMC partners with Michigan Works to provide Basic Adult Education to help students who do not place into developmental courses.

Advising responsibilities are shared among professional and faculty advisors. Faculty advise students in their discipline while the professional advisors primarily advise students in general and transfer programs. Every student is assigned an academic advisor and students are encouraged to meet with them regularly. Meeting with an advisor is required for those on probation. The College utilizes DegreeWorks and My Academic Plan to ensure that students are directed to the courses and programs

for which they are prepared.

The college provides adequate internships/ clinicals needed to support effective teaching and learning. A full-time coordinator supports internships for business and technical programs. A part-time position supports these types of career services for all other students. Appropriate and adequate health occupations clinical placements are secured via educational agreements with hospitals, clinics, dental practices, and other healthcare providers as needed.

NMC has adequate classroom, lab space and equipment to meet student learning needs. These are determined partly by advisory group feedback and program accreditation requirements. A new Innovation Center is planned to serve a variety of students and partners with state-of-the-art teaching and learning areas. Dedicated laboratories and equipment for CTE programs are provided for effective teaching and learning activities. \$2.8 million in technical and nursing program equipment upgrades were recently made via a CSTEP grant.

NMC instructs students about the ethical use of information sources and academic integrity in freshman composition from both faculty and library staff. Librarians instruct all freshman in information literacy using standards from the American College and Research Libraries. Web-based LibGuides provide this information to students outside of the classroom.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

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The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

### Rating

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Adequate

### Evidence

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NMC offers a broad spectrum of offerings to meet the mission of providing lifelong learning opportunities to its communities. General Education Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes, and co-curricular activities are designed with the mission of the institution in mind.

The International Services division of Outreach Services creates, develops, and facilitates programs, study abroad opportunities, and intercultural exchanges and events.

Students are offered a variety of experiences to support their academic learning through student groups and co-curricular activities related to their academic program and areas of interest. NMC lists a number of co-curricular activities that it currently offers; much of the programming is in support of NMC Global Endorsement activity. The curriculum is clearly mapped to the learning encompassed in the Global Endorsement, and other learning-relevant activities, such as the service-learning project on homelessness, support the view that progress is being made to align the curriculum and co-curriculum. NMC has an Action Project in place to expand the use of experiential learning.

The College notes that some co-curricular activities do not clearly articulate the intended learning outcomes or have a regular process for assessing achievement of learning outcomes. The College recognizes this is an opportunity and has plans to develop a repeatable process that will support systematic continuous improvement of these programs.

Significant Learning Outcomes, embedded in credit courses, include Knowledge, Application, Integration, Learning to Learn, Caring-Civic Learning, and Human Dimension. These are defined as critical skills for workers in the 21st Century, and the College believes all NMC courses should support these outcomes.

The College utilizes a well-defined, sequential four-stage internal decision-making process for the development of new programs. The process begins with creation of an Idea Summary where those proposing new academic programs describe the program, outcomes, and its fit with college mission and strategy. This process vets potential new programs against institutional resources, capabilities, and priorities while aligning to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the College.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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NMC has an annual program review process that uses both quantitative metrics and qualitative reflection on prior-year activities and outcomes. This review includes consideration of Learner Perception and Behavior, Learning and Program Outcomes, Skill Transfer, and Results. Goals and action plans are then set for the coming year. The program review process is well defined with clear oversight and accountability on the part of faculty and administration.

Most academic programs have an advisory board to assure that the program's curriculum and programs are responsive to community, employer, and student needs.

Based on portfolio evidence, it appears that most or all NMC programs for which external accreditation is available are nationally accredited.

The Michigan schools transfer guide and work on a state-encompassing Michigan Transfer Agreement inform NMC's systematic processes for evaluating and awarding transfer credits.

NMC has policies and procedures in place to govern the awarding of transfer credits and the acceptance of credit.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Rating

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Adequate

### Evidence

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NMC has developed a set of institutional rubrics that align with the general education outcomes. All of the rubrics are reviewed every two years with refinements made as needed. Previously the college assessed one general education outcome every three semesters. However, NMC is moving towards a continuous assessment cycle for each outcome, with all three being assessed in Fall 2017. Since Fall 2015 all instructors teaching courses in which a general education outcome is supported have been required to assess all students enrolled in the course. The Assessment Coordinator compiles scores and identifies trends. Instructors are asked to review results and identify their plan for improvement opportunities for students.

The GEOs identify four levels of achievement: proficient, sufficient, developing, and deficient. These levels are defined through rubrics. The GEOs are embedded in all degrees, and NMC aspires to ensure that all graduates will demonstrate sufficiency or higher on each of the outcomes. Although NMC has a stated goal that all graduates will perform at the "sufficient" or "proficient" level for each general education outcome, assessment data is obtained on all students and is not disaggregated by level.

NMC has a well-defined process of regular review for both occupational programs and liberal studies program in place. Academic leadership, program coordinators, faculty members, and instructional staff work collaboratively to assure the purpose, content, and levels of achievement meet the needs and quality of all stakeholders. Annual Program Review ensures programs sustain continuous improvement to meet targeted needs and subsequent goals.

An opportunity exists for the College to develop enhanced processes for assessing co-curricular activities.

The processes and methodology to assess common learning outcomes and program learning outcomes includes a substantial participation of faculty through a subcommittee of faculty council.

Faculty develop a variety of learning outcome assessment activities such as case studies, simulations,

research projects, portfolios, or capstone projects appropriate to their courses and use a set of institutional rubrics to measure student proficiency. Results are collected and tracked through NMC's learning management system, Moodle. At the end of each semester, instructors are asked to submit a GEO Report Form summarizing their student's strengths and weaknesses in terms of the outcomes. The report also asks instructors to identify and document how they plan to address opportunities for improvement of their students and how the College may help support these efforts.

Occupational programs are subject to external accreditation requirements, in many cases, as well as state and federal regulations related to Perkins funding.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

### Rating

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Adequate

### Evidence

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The college monitors retention and completion data and compares its numbers through established processes. Faculty are involved in the review of these numbers, along with college administration.

NMC has created internal targets for all four graduation metrics the institution uses. All targets are set at the median/average for the respective metric.

NMC uses data from a variety of state and national sources to benchmark student retention, persistence, and completion. These sources are linked to the funding model that includes a completion component.

NMC uses a number of sources for benchmarking its retention, persistence, and completion, including IPEDS and NCCBP. The College states that it considers both strategic and operational benchmarks and, in the past, has used benchmarks set by the Board of Trustees. Reviewers noted that the most recent targets provided are for fall 2016.

NMC has a target completion date of spring 2018 for the implementation of new software analytics to identify key student success trends, predictive identification of students who need additional support, and to evaluate the efficacy of current interventions.

NMC collects retention persistence and completion data as required for state and national reporting. However, it is not clear if the data are segmented at a department or program level and shared accordingly.

NMC describes the process of how data is used in PDCA to assess retention, persistence, and completion to support data driven decision making. Examples of improvements includes guided pathways, course evaluations response rates, and program completion

NMC uses retention, persistence, and completion data as defined by many of the national reporting guidelines such as IPEDS, NCCBP, VFA, etcetera.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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NMC develops its budget following its Resource Guidelines, and budgets conservatively with built-in reserves to accommodate fluctuations in revenue from state funding and expenses while still providing resources for current and future programs, services, and infrastructure. The College has two separate funds, the Strategic Fund and the Fund for Transformation, to ensure educational purposes are not adversely affected. A Technology Plant fund helps ensure ongoing technology needs are met. The NMC Foundation is also a significant contributor of resources for scholarships, resources, and facilities aligned with NMC's strategic goals.

NMC's allocation of resources to support faculty and staff training and development are guided by the myPDCA process for staff and for an equivalent process for faculty members. The College allocates 2.25% of general fund salaries and wages for professional development. The College helps ensure optimum use of resources devoted to training and development by focusing those resources in a Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE), an Educational Media Technology department, and the TeachingSOLUTIONS program, which addresses issues such as teaching and assessing the General Education Outcomes and strategies to support student persistence and retention.

The Guiding Principles Map demonstrate how the mission, vision, and values guide the planning and

budgeting process. Annual budgets are reviewed by the Planning and Budget Council, recommended by the President's Council, and approved by the Board. A3 templates are utilized to align organizational goals with strategic goals, and also take budgetary implications into consideration. Finances are monitored by tracking Primary Reserves Ratio, Composite Financial Index, and Net Operating Ratio. The Finance and Administrative Services Department monitors the budget and provides monthly updates to the PBC, President's Council, and Board. The COAT oversees general fund allocation.

All faculty (including adjuncts) and staff provide official transcripts to verify their academic credentials as well as other official licenses and certifications. Experience and credentials are confirmed via the reference check process during the hiring process. An administrative process is in place to periodically check and ensure that all faculty and staff maintain required credentials and certifications.

All position announcements are accompanied by a clear job description outlining the education, experience, competencies and other qualifications required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. The recruitment, on-boarding, orientation, development, and evaluation processes are all designed to ensure employees are qualified, trained, and supported.

NMC's Competency Model is utilized to determine skills, behaviors, values, and credentials needed of staff and administrators, in three categories: 1) foundational competencies, 2) functional competencies (i.e., skills specific to role), and 3) technical competencies, expertise, and/or credentials specific to the position. New employees participate in the New Employee Orientation. Professional development needs of staff are identified annually through the MyPDCA performance planning process and align with department goals.

A new staff member is in the "Learning Zone," for their first three years, during which the staff member works with the Talent Development Coordinator to create a Learning Plan tracked through NMC's goal-setting and performance software. Upon review and supervisor recommendation, the staff member transitions to the "Experienced Zone," which indicates the staff member demonstrates all essential competencies.

NMC has budget planning processes in place with published guidelines. The college also has budget allocations to address IT upgrades and facility needs. In addition, the college collects feedback from the community and students to inform the quality of its operations.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

### Rating

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Adequate

### Evidence

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Monthly Board of Trustees meetings include updates to insure the Board is knowledgeable about the College's daily operations, opportunities, and challenges. Semi-annual meetings give the Board an opportunity to review progress on Board-level goals.

Board policy guides the role of the Board members as it relates to legal and fiduciary matters. NMC follows a shared governance model that includes three internal Councils composed of administration, faculty, staff, and students.

The approach for decision-making among the shared governance councils is to gather input from broad perspectives, formulate a recommendation based on discussion and consensus, and communicate the results of discussions through committee minutes and memos made available on NMC's Intranet site and via email.

Based on the shared governance model, setting academic requirements involves the Board, faculty, staff and students. A Curriculum Committee, part of the Faculty Council, is responsible for recommending, monitoring, and reviewing curriculum, and works with the VP for Educational Services and Academic Chairs to set academic requirements.

The governing board has clear policies that define both the scope and purpose, and board meetings provide transparency to the public. The college regularly seeks feedback on the quality of its programs and services, both internally and from external stakeholders. NMC has a stated commitment to shared governance and the inclusion of leaders at all levels in the decision-making process. The College has recently recognized that the current shared governance structures and processes were not fostering a shared sense of inclusion and transparency as the college had hoped. A shared governance Action Project was launched in May 2017, along with a newly-charged Leadership Group, to review leadership roles across the institution and to improve channels of communication, employee buy-in, and trust.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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NMC has a well-defined strategic planning process that begins with the mission and vision of the college. Leaders are involved in the annual planning process, along with the Board of Trustees, and plans are disseminated to ensure that all operations and departments align their work to be mission relevant and consistent with the strategic direction of the college.

NMC sets strategic goals and develops a budget that ensures allocation of resources is aligned with the college's mission and priorities. Factors such as tax revenue, state funding, and tuition are considered and are explained in the Budget Considerations document. The NMC Foundation provides a significant portion of funding as well. The Resource Guidelines document sets standards for development of the budget and resource allocations.

Cross-functional meetings of the Leadership Group, including Academic Chairs, directors, council chairs, Action Project chairs, and other leaders from across the College, as well as Planning and Budget Council, Policy Council, and President's Council helps identify potential resources, gaps, and areas for collaboration. Once goals are clarified, the College develops its budget to ensure that the allocation of resources is aligned with the College's mission and priorities.

NMC has created performance metrics for the strategic plan, each Action Project team determines outcome and process targets, and individual programs or units identify metrics and targets through annual planning. NMC uses a stoplight color coding system to quickly show where goals are meeting targets.

Annual operational plans include departmental goals that summarize metrics, targets, goals, and action plans. Budgetary implications and requests are identified during this process.

Departments use both organizational and area goals to develop annual operational plans, with some

departments also reviewing success metrics and targets to identify opportunities for improvement.

NMC's Aligned Planning Process ensures engagement of internal and external stakeholders. This process has multiple steps and is complex in nature to ensure thorough vetting and alignment with the college's mission, vision, and values. Feedback is obtained and NMC's executive team analyzes data and aligns it with strategic goals based on the Guiding Principles Map. A Summary of Planning Involvement and Planning Calendar indicates who is involved in the planning process and when.

In addition to various data, the ORPE tracks performance metrics to identify strengths, opportunities, threats, and shortcomings to inform planning. Shifts in technology and funding, anticipated enrollment, projected revenue, state aid, taxes, and other sources, and costs, are displayed on the Cost to Educate Model on NMC's dashboard. This gives an understanding of its capacity and helps anticipate fluctuations so adjustments can be made.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

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The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

### Rating

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Clear

### Evidence

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The NMC portfolio provides a number of examples where the college is working in a continuous improvement culture. The leadership is committed to the AQIP process and has been involved for many years. The college has integrated Action Projects with the planning and goal setting process so as to ensure the value and commitment is strong.

NMC created an Office of Research, Planning & Effectiveness (ORPE) in 2008 and has tasked this office with generating and disseminating data for use in planning and budgeting via the campus intranet. A key process for documenting evidence of performance at the program and unit level is use of the A3 template. Full implementation and effective use of the A3 Template is progressing.

PDCA is the foundation for aligned planning, for identifying specific areas for improvement through Action Projects, and for daily incremental improvements in the classroom, service areas, and administrative units. All employees are involved in CQI efforts, at the individual and department level, and many are part of cross-functional teams. Documenting outcomes and reflections/learning points is built into all CQI efforts.

All continuous improvement planning and report documents have a space to record reflections. Project teams record lessons learned as part of closing the project. Departments capture learning points from the prior year as they plan for the coming year (A3 Template). Individuals document lessons learned as they evaluate goal progress and set new goals during annual reviews.

NMC uses its intranet, Action Project reports, the sharing of results regarding strategic plan measures, debriefing sessions, and meetings to document, track, and share the learning generated by improvement initiatives.

The revitalized Leadership Group provides a highly representative campus-wide venue for generating and sharing institutional learning. As this Group is cultivated and increasingly utilized as an institutional hub of cross-unit communication and collaboration, the College will be able to strengthen its processes for applying institutional learning.

The college's Action Projects are logically developed to address areas in need of improvement, and the results of projects are shared in order to help the institution learn from experience. At a more global level, the College is working to align the AQIP framework with institutional processes in order

to optimize investments in time, energy, and resources and improve institutional effectiveness.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## Review Dashboard

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Number	Title	Rating
1	Reflective Overview	
2	Strategic Challenges Analysis	
3	Accreditation Evidence Screening Summary	
4	Quality of Systems Portfolio	
5	AQIP Category Feedback	
I	Helping Students Learn	
II	Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs	
III	Valuing Employees	
IV	Planning and Leading	
V	Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship	
VI	Quality Overview	
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Clear
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Clear
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Clear
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Clear
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Clear
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Clear
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Clear
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Adequate
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Adequate
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Clear
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Clear
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Clear
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Clear
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Adequate
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Clear
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Adequate
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Adequate
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Clear

5.B	Core Component 5.B	Adequate
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Clear
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Clear

## Review Summary

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### Conclusion

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Northwestern Michigan College prepared a well-written Systems Portfolio that contained numerous flow charts and linked information, all used strategically, to provide the reviewers with needed information regarding college processes. Continuous quality improvement appears to be embedded within the culture of the college via employee engagement with improvement efforts, and the use of improvement projects, including Action Projects, to alleviate identified opportunities.

The maturity of processes at NMC are ahead of the maturity of actual implementation, therefore results. Many times this circumstance reflects the challenge of culture change. There was not always a clear alignment between processes and measures, including the use of benchmarks. Often the documented reasons for improvements were not well-supported by the data provided in the process outcome results. Fall 2016 data was not included in the Systems Portfolio so reviewers could not comment on recent results and their implications for quality improvements.

Lastly, Criterion One had strong, clear, and well-presented evidence for all Core Components. Core Components 2.D, 2.E, 3.E, 4.B, 4.C, and 5.B had evidence that was adequate but could be improved. Additional details are presented in the Systems Appraisal.

### Overall Recommendations

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#### Criteria For Accreditation

Adequate

#### Sanctions Recommendation

N/A

#### Pathways Recommendation

Not Set

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*