

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT TO

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Flagstaff, AZ

October 22-24, 2007

For The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit was a comprehensive evaluation of Northern Arizona University.

B. Organizational Context

Northern Arizona University (NAU) is a public, residential, comprehensive baccalaureate and focused graduate research university that has a commitment to professional programs including those in education, the health professions, sustainable technologies, and selected areas of biological sciences. It is the only public university located in northern Arizona. It enrolls over 20,500 students across its Flagstaff and Yuma campuses, its 36 additional statewide locations, and its distance offerings.

Like many institutions over the past decade, NAU has been faced with growing competition, changing constituency needs, demands for greater accountability, increasing costs, and decreased state support. The University experienced new presidential and provostal leadership in 2001. Structural changes have included a new Executive Vice President, a new Vice President for Extended Programs and Dean of Distance Learning, a new Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, a new Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, a new Vice President for Advancement, a new Vice President for Research, reorganization of colleges including a new College of Health and Human Services, a new Division of Information Technology and Chief Technology Officer, a new Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, a new graduate dean, a new Vice Provost for International Initiatives, a new Associate Vice President and Campus Executive Officer for the Yuma Campus, and a new Associate Vice President for Diversity and Equity.

A new marketing effort has been associated with increased enrollment, grants, donations, and state recognition. State support has increased somewhat in the last three years, but in areas of interest to the state. Substantial tuition increases from a low base in 2003-04 and 2004-05 and moderate increases since have improved NAU's revenue. A state sales tax increase has led to the provision of the Technology and Research Initiative Fund, which has been designated for research and programs to benefit economic development, access to higher education, and workforce development in education, health care, and technical occupations. NAU has significantly renovated older facilities and invested in new buildings. The University has revised its Liberal Studies program and has initiated several new degree programs, especially in health sciences, education, and technology.

Extended education has become a keystone of NAU's mission and activities, with 91 academic programs offered outside of the Flagstaff Campus, 38 available entirely online, and 37 offsite locations provided. Sponsored research and service have grown from \$18.9 million in 1997-98 to \$53.6 million in 2005-06. Numerous research and service centers and institutes have been added, along with numerous statewide partnerships. Community engagement activities have increased substantially and include partnerships with educational service providers, a hotel and conference center with participation by the city of Flagstaff, the Translational Genomics Research Institute, the Merriam-Powell Center for Environmental Research, and the Rural Policy Institute. In keeping with state

demographic changes, NAU has experienced increases in the enrollment and success of underrepresented students and has an impressive record of service to Native Americans and Hispanics.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

As NAU responds to state needs and directives from the Arizona Board of Regents, its outreach activities and academic program offerings at Yuma and perhaps other state sites may continue to expand. If increasing accessibility of academic program offerings in response to state need includes changing Yuma and perhaps other areas from a site to a full branch campus, NAU will need to participate in the Commission's institutional change process.

As NAU continues to pursue international collaborative relationships (e.g. partnerships with Chinese institutions) and delivers more courses at an international site, it may need to participate in the Commission's institutional change process, 7.2-2 Changes in Educational Sites.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

Team members visited the University's Yuma Campus and its North Valley (Phoenix) site.

E. Distance Education Reviewed

Extended education--including off-campus sites, online instruction, and interactive television--is a signature activity at NAU and figures prominently in its mission statement. Over 50 degree, certification, and endorsement programs are offered at 37 different locations, with nearly 40 other programs offered online. NAU's extended education enrollment has grown from approximately 3,400 students in fall 1996 to 6,400 students in fall 2005. Extended education is NAU's key strategy to serve expanding student populations throughout the state.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

President's Cabinet

Assistant to the Provost and Special Assistant to the President, Associate Vice President and Campus Executive Officer, NAU-Yuma, Associate Vice President for Diversity and Equity, Associate Vice President for Economic Development, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Chief Information Technology Officer, Dean, College of Arts and Letters, Dean, College of Business, Dean, College of Education, Dean, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Dean, Graduate College, Director of Athletics, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs, Director of Public Affairs, Executive Director, Academic Chairs Council, Executive Vice President, Faculty Senate President, Interim Dean, College of Health and Human Services, Interim Vice President for Research, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Administration and Finance, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Vice President for Extended Programs and Dean of Distance Learning, Vice President for Planning, Budget and Institutional Research, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, University Legal Counsel

Self-Study Steering Committee

Assistant to the Provost and Special Assistant to the President, Associate Dean, Student Life, Associate Professor, Sociology and Social Work, Associate Vice President for Diversity and Equity, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Chair, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Dean and University Librarian, Director, Academic Assessment, Director, e-Learning, Director, Honors Program, Director, Human Resources, Director of Academic Computing, Director of Development, College of Business, Director of Operations, NAU-Yuma, Education Student, Executive Vice President, Faculty Athletics Representative and Professor of Psychology, Faculty Senate Representative and Professor of Geology, Research Specialist, Vice President for Extended Programs and Dean of Distance Learning, Vice President for Planning, Budget and Institutional Research, Vice Provost, Academic Personnel, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Academic Leadership

Assistant to the Provost and Special Assistant to the President, Associate Provost, Academic Administration, Dean, College of Arts and Letters, Dean, College of Business, Dean, College of Education, Dean, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Dean, Graduate College, Dean and University Librarian, Executive Director, Academic Chairs Council, Interim Dean, College of Health and Human Services, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice Provost, Academic Personnel, Vice Provost, International Initiatives, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Administration and Finance

Administrative Associate, Administration and Finance, Assistant Vice President for Financial Services, Director, Central Ticket Office, Chief, NAU Police Department, Director of Human Resources, Director, Office of Regulatory Compliance, Director, Parking Services, Director, Skydome, Interim Director, Center for Sustainable Environments, Vice President, Administration and Finance, University Auditor

College of Arts and Letters

Senior Advisor to the Dean, Associate Dean, Chair, Department of English, Chair, Department of History, Chair, Department of Modern Languages, Chair, Department of Philosophy, Chair, Department of Theatre, Dean, Director, Martin-Springer Institute, Director, Master of Liberal Studies Program, Director, School of Art, Director, School of Music

W. A. Franke College of Business

Administrative Director, Undergraduate Programs, Assistant Dean and Director, Center for Outreach, Associate Dean, Dean, Director of Development, Director, IT, Director, MBA Programs, Executive Director, Hotel and Restaurant Management,

College of Education

Assistant Dean for Assessment, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement, Associate Dean, Chair, Educational Leadership, Chair, Educational Specialties, Chair, Teaching and Learning, Dean, Development Officer, Director, Student Services, Director, Summer Enrichment Program, Interim Chair, Educational Psychology

College of Engineering and Natural Sciences

Associate Director, Center for Microbial Genetics and Genomics, Chair, Biological Sciences, Chair, Chemistry, Chair, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Chair, Electrical Engineering, Chair, Geology, Chair, Mathematics and Statistics, Chair, Physics and Astronomy, Dean, Director, Merriam-Powell Center for Environmental Research, Interim Director, Center for Sustainable Environments

____, National Park Service, Professor, Physics and Astronomy

School of Forestry

Professor (2), Vice Provost for Academic Personnel

College of Health and Human Services

Associate Director, School of Nursing, Associate Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Chair, Dental Hygiene, Chair, Health Sciences, Chair, Rehabilitation Services Development Officer, Interim Dean, Interim Executive Director, School of Nursing

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Assistant to the Dean, Associate Dean, Chair, Anthropology, Chair, Applied Indigenous Studies, Chair, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Chair, Geography, Planning, and Recreation, Chair, Political Science, Chair, Psychology, Chair, Sociology and Social Work, Dean, Director, Ethnic Studies, Director, Gerontology/Senior Companion, Director, Institute for Future Work Force Development, Director, School of Communication, Director, Social Research Laboratory, Director, Women's and Gender Studies, Executive Director, Human Development Institute

Student Affairs

Assessment Coordinator, Assistant Director, Unions and Activities, Associate Dean of Students, Associate Dean, Student Life, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Director, Campus Health Services, Director, Campus Recreation Services, Director, Counseling and Testing Center, Director, Educational Support Programs, Director, Multicultural Student Center, Director, Residence Life

Institutional Effectiveness

Assistant to the Provost and Special Assistant to the President, Associate Executive Director for Academic and Student Affairs, Arizona Board of Regents, Director, Office of Budget Senior Business Analyst, Vice President for Planning, Budget and Institutional Research, Vice Provost, Undergraduate Studies

Arizona Board of Regents

Executive Director, Deputy Director, Regents (4)

Strategic Planning

Administrative Associate, Engineering Administration, Associate Vice President and Campus Executive Officer, NAU-Yuma, Associate Vice President for Diversity and Equity, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Chief Information Technology Officer, Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Dean, Graduate College, Director, Academic Assessment, Director, Fronske Health Center, Director, Honors Program, Director, Human Resources, Executive Vice President, Interim Vice President for Research, PC Support

Team Lead, Planning and Policy Analyst, President, Professor, School of Communication, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Senior Vice President for University Advancement, Vice President for Administration and Finance, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Vice President for Extended Programs and Dean of Distance Learning, Vice President for Planning, Budget and Institutional Research, Vice Provost, Undergraduate Studies

Globalization

Associate Director, Center for International Education, Chair, Computer Science, Chair, Diversity Requirement Subcommittee, Chair, Liberal Studies Committee, Executive Director, Hotel and Restaurant Management, Professor, College of Education, _____, **Senate Liberal Studies Review Committee**, Vice Provost, International Initiatives, Vice Provost, Undergraduate Studies

Undergraduate Studies

Associate Director, e-Learning, Associate Director, Gateway Student Success Center (2), Coordinator, American Democracy Project, Coordinator, First-Year Seminar, Director, Class-Linked Academic Support, Director, e-Learning, _____, **e-Learning**, Director, Faculty Development, Director, Honors Program, Director, Office of Academic Assessment, Director, University Academic and Career Advising and Gateway Student Success Center, _____, **Liberal Studies Committee**, Senior Associate Director, Gateway Student Success Center

Community Partners (19)

Facilities Planning

Assistant to the Provost and Special Assistant to the President, Associate Vice President, Economic Development, Director, Administrative Services, Director, Capital Assets Maintenance, Director, Planning and Development, Executive Director, Capital Assets and Services, Vice President, Administration and Finance

Assessment

Administrative Associate, Academic Assessment, Director, Academic Assessment, Graduate Student, Members of the University Assessment Committee from Biological Sciences, Business, Communications, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Dental Hygiene, Distance Learning, e-Learning, Education, Educational Specialties, Electrical Engineering, English, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Health and Human Services, Health Sciences, Hotel and Restaurant management, Library, and Psychology

Library

Associate University Librarian, Dean and University Librarian, Coordinator, Director of Head of Special Collections and Archives, Library Planning, Librarian, Library Specialist, Library Supervisor, Senior Library Specialist, Senior Support Systems Analyst

Diversity

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Specialist, Assistant Director, Gateway Student Success Center, Associate University Librarian and Member of the Commission on the Status of Women, Associate Vice President for Diversity and Equity, Chair, Applied

Indigenous Studies, Dean, Engineering and Natural Sciences, Dean, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Director, Disability Resource Center, Director, Multicultural Student Center, Director, University Academic and Career Advising and Gateway Student Success Center, Director, Women's and Gender Studies, **___, Diversity Requirement Subcommittee**, Residence Hall Director, Tribal Liaison, Institute for Native Americans, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel, Vice Provost, International Initiatives

General Education

Chair, University Curriculum Committee, Coordinator, First Year Seminar, Director, Academic Assessment, **___, English, ___, Ethnic Studies, ___, Office of Academic Assessment, ___, Senate Liberal Studies Review Committee** (3), Director, University Honors Program, Vice Provost, Undergraduate Studies

Sustainability

Assistant to the Provost and Special Assistant to the President, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, Associate Professor of Engineering, Associate Vice President for Economic Development, **___, Capital Assets**, Chair, Political Science/Environmental Studies, Development Officer, Center for Sustainable Environments, Director, Master of Liberal Studies Program, Director, Merriam-Powell Center for Environmental Research, Interim Director, Center for Sustainable Environments, Professor, Biological Sciences, Professor of Engineering, Professor, Humanities, Art, and Religion, Student, Center for Sustainable Environments

Advising

Academic Advisor, College of Business, Academic Services Coordinator, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Advising Coordinator, College of Health and Human Services, Assistant Director, Gateway Student Success Center, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Letters, Coordinator, Gateway Student Success Center, Director, University Academic and Career Advising and Gateway Student Success Center, Professor, Biological Sciences, Senior Academic Advisor, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Senior Lecturer, Health Sciences, Senior Program Coordinator, Distance Learning, Senior Program Coordinator, University Honors Program

First Year Experience and Student Support

Advisor, University Honors Program, Associate Director, Gateway Student Success Center, Associate Director, Residence Life, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, Coordinator, Freshman Academic Programs, Coordinator, Residence Life, Coordinator, First Year Seminar, Dean, Engineering and Natural Sciences, Director, Education, Support Programs, Director, Multicultural Student Center, **___, Learning Assistance Center/Supplemental Instruction**, Professor, Anthropology, Senior Associate Director, Gateway Student Success Center

Information Technology

Application Systems Analyst, Chief Information Officer, Dean and University Librarian, Director, Distance Learning, Director, e-Learning Center, Director, Information Technology Services (3), Director, Library Planning, Director, University Budget Office, Help Desk Team Lead, IT Systems Manager, Franke College of Business

Enrollment Services

Assistant Vice President and Executive Director Enrollment Services, Associate Director, Enrollment Services, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Director, New Student Programs, EMSA Fiscal and Operations Director, Registrar, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

Research

Assistant to the Provost and Special Assistant to the President, **Coordinator, _____**, Director, Center for Teaching of Science and Mathematics, Director, Grants and Contracts Services, Director, IRB, Director, Sponsored Projects, Interim Vice President, Research, Regents Professor, English, Regents Professor, Physical Therapy

Extended Programs

Assistant Dean, Distance Learning, Associate Dean, College of Education, Associate Dean, Distance Learning, Associate Director, Distance Learning, Associate Vice President, Distance Learning, Business Analyst, Distance Learning, Director, Distance Learning

Graduate Education

Associate Dean, Graduate College, **Associate Director, _____**, Chair, Political Science, Chair, University Graduate Committee, Dean, Graduate College

Advancement and Alumni Relations

Assistant Director, KNAU, Associate Vice President, University Development, Director, Alumni Relations, Director, Center for High Altitude Training, Fiscal Operations Manager, Advancement, Senior Vice President for Advancement

Athletics

Academic Coordinator, Associate Director, Co-Chair, SAAC, Director, Head Coach, Football, Head Coach, Track and Field, Head Coach, Women's Basketball, Professor and Faculty Athletics Representative, Professor and Member, Institutional Athletic Committee, Student Athlete (2)

Faculty Development

Assistant Clinical Professor of Nursing, Associate Dean, College of Education, Coordinator, Library, Director, Academic Assessment, Director, Center for Teaching of Science and Mathematics, Director, Faculty Development, Director, University Academic and Career, Advising and Gateway Student Success Center, Director, e-Learning, Program Coordinator, Faculty Development, Senior Instructional Designer, e-Learning, Vice Provost, Academic Personnel

Yuma Leadership Team

Associate Vice President and Campus Executive Officer, Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment, Director of Operations, Education Coordinator, Librarian, Professor of Biology, Vice President for Extended Programs and Dean of Distance Learning

Yuma Faculty (11)**Yuma Community Partners (7)**

Yuma Students (6)**North Valley Distance Learning**

Area Coordinator, NAU-North Valley, Area Coordinator, NAU-Mohave, Assistant Dean, Rural Programs, Assistant Dean, Urban Programs, Program Coordinator, Technology Support Team

North Valley Faculty (5)**North Valley Community Partners (5)****North Valley Students (8)****G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed**

1997 HLC Comprehensive Visit Report
 1998-99 through 2005-06 Financial Reports
 2002 HLC Focused Visit Report
 2005 Campus Master Plan Executive Summary
 2005 HLC Focused Visit Report for Institutional Change
 2005 Long Term Campus Plan
 2005-2010 Strategic Plan
 2006-2001 Strategic Plan
 2006-2007 Aggregate Outcomes Assessment Report
 2006-2007 Graduate Catalog
 2006-2007 Student Planner and Handbook
 2006-2007 Undergraduate Catalog
 2006 Compensation Market Analysis
 2007 Graduating Senior Survey Report
 Academic program review Guidelines
 Agenda Item ABOR June 21-22, 2007 on FY2008 Capital Development Plan
 Aggregate Student Outcomes Assessment Report
 ABOR Accountability Reports 2001
 ABOR Accountability Reports 2004-05
 Arizona Universities Network Materials
 Campus Master Plan Report 2005
 Campus Sustainability Report
 Campus Visit Planner 2007-08
 Capital Development Plan 2005
 Capital Improvement Plan 2006-2008
 Capital Improvement Plan Fiscal Years 2009-2011
Changing Directions Concept Paper
 Charts - Capital Development Process for Projects Greater Than \$2 Million 9/10/07
 Classified Staff and Service Professional Performance Appraisal Forms
 CLA Interim Institutional Report
 Collier Report on Allied Health Sciences (appendices only)
 Distance Learning Student Reference Guide
 Distance Learning Student Satisfaction Survey Fall 2006

Divisional Strategic Plans
Enterprise and Education
Fact Book, 2006-2007
A Feasibility and Demand Study for the State of Arizona
Faculty and Staff Guide to the Liberal Studies Program
Faculty Survey of Student Engagement 2003 Pilot Survey
Financial Status Update, Fiscal 2007-2008, Interim 9/30/07
Greater Expectations Team Action Plan
Historic Mission Statements
IT and eLearning Web Sites
Information Technology Strategic Plan
Institutional Research Data and Reports
Institutional Snapshot
Long Range Planning Subcommittee Report, Fall 2005
Lumberjack Student Newspaper
Map of Project Status & Deferred Maintenance Needs, September 2007
Market Analysis Report
Master Plan, Department of Residence Life
Minutes of Major Organizational Committees
Moody's Rating July 2, 2007
National Survey of Student Engagement 2003 Report
Navigating the Green Road
NAU Internal Audit Charter
NAU's Response to the ABOR Redesign Document
NAU Strategic Planning Process
NAU Summary 2006 Regents Accountability Measures ABOR
Office of Academic Assessment Seals of Assessment printout from web site
Organization Chart for Administration and Finance, August 2007
A Parent's Guide
Passport to Global Learning, Discovery, and Engagement (strategic plan)
The Path to Achievement and Excellence in Assessing Student Learning at NAU
Personnel and Policy Manual, 5th Edition, 2000
President's Cabinet Reports
Presidential Task Force on Athletic Facilities
Project Critical Path Chart, October 2007
Program Review Documents
Promotion and Tenure Guidelines for Departments and Colleges
Promotional Materials
A Redesigned Public University System (Arizona Board of Regents)
Report on Diversity and Equity 2004-2005
Research and Graduate Education Task Force Report
Roster of Faculty Members and Their Teaching Assignments
School of Health Professions Annual Report 2006-2007
School of Nursing Annual Report 2006-2007
Self-Study
Student Handbook
University Budget Allocations FY 2007-2008
Update to Self Study pp. 40-43

www.nau.edu/assessment
www2.nau.edu/~nca-p/selfstudy/index.php?
www4nau.edu/pair/StatisticReport/SurveyReport.htm
<http://www4nau.edu/pair/StatisticReport/SurveyReport.htm>

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The self-study report was comprehensive, and the process of completing it involved administrators, faculty and staff members, and students. The structure of the steering committee, working groups, and teams provided broad representation, involvement, and comprehensive review and feedback. The process was thorough and included every aspect of the institution. The structure of the self-study report provided an effective tool for the team's evaluation and consultation.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The self-study report and supporting documents were thorough and moderately evaluative, which indicates that the process was conducted with integrity. The evidence presented in the report including its assessment of NAU's strengths, challenges, and suggested actions were verified during the campus visit by team members. Reflective observations and identified challenges in the self-study report were less frequent and less prominent than warranted given the magnitude of recent changes at NAU resulting in team on-site follow-up as needed.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The 1997 team identified concerns relating to assessment of student learning, general education, strategic planning, faculty support for the statewide mission, qualifications of faculty members teaching graduate-level courses in statewide programs, and diversity. Two progress reports were accepted by the HLC staff in 1999. A 2002 focused visit concentrated on assessment of student learning and strategic planning; the team recommended that no further action be required.

Based on additional information in the self-study report and related evidence, the current team considers the response of the institution to previously identified challenges to be adequate. While implementation of student learning outcomes assessment as demonstrated by the preparation of an outcomes assessment plan is not complete (85%), there is notable progress in not only implementing student learning outcomes assessment in the academic major programs, but also in implementing student learning outcomes assessment in the liberal studies (general education) program.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

Requirements were fulfilled.

Comments: No third party comments were received.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team reviewed documents online and in the resource room for Title IV compliance. Requirements were fulfilled.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- Northern Arizona University's (NAU) mission as provided in the Self-Study and on the NAU website is "to provide an outstanding undergraduate residential education strengthened by research, graduate, and professional programs, and by sophisticated methods of distance delivery." These attributes are not only consistent with the general purposes of higher learning institutions, but they also convey the unique characteristics and priority for NAU.
- NAU's stated purposes and other planning documents make it clear that the University serves Arizona's growing population. The University focuses on students first and then other internal and external stakeholders. Undergraduate, graduate and professional programs are delivered through a network of statewide sites and distance learning methods. Scholarship is carried out by faculty and students.
- Through its own documents NAU stresses its commitment to student success and regularly assesses its policies, procedures and practices. All mission documents are available through various means, including print and electronic. Although the Self-Study did indicate some inconsistencies in the statements offered on the NAU website and public documents, the review team did not identify any substantive inconsistencies. Moreover, in the interviews with faculty, staff and students, there was a remarkable shared understanding of the NAU mission.
- NAU has taken active steps to affirm and fulfill its mission through the self-study process, the recent NAU strategic planning process, and its participation in the Lumina *Changing Directions* grant and the statewide Arizona University System strategic planning process. Mission documents are regularly reviewed and evaluated by the NAU Strategic Planning Council, the Board of Regents, and members of the university community in annual open sessions.
- The evidence, offered in the Self-Study and other documents and in team members' conversations demonstrate that strategic planning has matured over that past five years and is embedded throughout the University. NAU ensures that fiscal priorities are aligned with the mission and strategic planning process through the creation of a Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, an inclusive annual budget process, and annual retreats with key university stakeholders.
- It is clear from the mission statement document, a public diversity and equity statement on the university website, NAU's efforts to reach diverse populations through distance learning curricula, its recent growth in minority student enrollment (particularly Hispanic students), its equal opportunity employment policies and

employee training programs, and its creation of multicultural programs and requirements that NAU not only recognizes the diversity of its learners, but is fostering an ongoing culture of inclusion. NAU knows that its students are changing demographically. The University has created changes in structures administratively and in delivery that will continue to enhance its responsibilities to student success.

- NAU exercises its responsibilities through appropriate policies, procedures and practices. The Board of Regents provides direction for each of the three universities in the System and delegates, with enabling action, to each President to lead and manage with flexibility to achieve the distinct mission of their respective universities.
- There appear to be appropriate organizational structures at NAU to carry out its myriad of functions and complexities. In response to the findings of the 2003-2004 Blue Ribbon Task Force, NAU has taken the initiative to significantly reduce and restructure the academic divisions to foster cross-disciplinary collaboration and greater efficiency and to improve recruitment and retention concerns. In our on-site interviews, faculty members and administrators noted the challenge inherent in this transition but lauded the benefits of these changes.
- Faculty governance is exercised and supported by Board policy. There are clear statements of the role of the faculty members in shared governance. This was reinforced in conversations with Regents. Curriculum and other academic responsibilities are defined under the purview of faculty.
- Administrative structures have at their root to enable and enhance communication, set policy, develop practice and assess student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Repeatedly acknowledged among members of the NAU community is accountability and measurement. When gaps or challenges appear action is exercised. One example of NAU's ability to respond quickly to problems, captured in the self-study and confirmed through the on-campus interviews, occurred in the area of strategic enrollment management and resulted in improvement.
- One of the critical functions of a university is to continually uphold its institutional integrity. Accountability is rightfully demanded from the Board, the legislature, students, families, benefactors, industry and business leaders and others. NAU makes every effort to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations. NAU implements fair and ethical policies that are congruent with local, state and federal laws and regulations, including Affirmative Action, ADA, and Clery Act. Evidence of this includes an internal auditing process, a financial management system, regular postings of financial statements, and a robust array of compliance and ethical policies and employee training programs. NAU strives to be responsive and open to complaints and grievances as well as to commit itself to internal and external audits. Its policies and procedures are well-designed and administered through appropriate offices and professional staff.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

None

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- An extensive strategic planning process that occurs at the unit, divisional and university-wide levels, where it is strongest, and that is aligned with budget priorities and informed by demographic and other assessment data ensures that NAU is planning for the future in a thoughtful, innovative and fiscally responsible manner. NAU has articulated general principles for resource allocation that are clear and utilized, as specified in the self-study (p. 75) and are demonstrated in the specific allocations since FY 2003-2004 which support appropriate educational programs.
- Since the last accreditation review, NAU has made significant strides in cultivating a culture of assessment and data-driven improvement through new information resource management systems, the development of consistent reporting protocols, the institution of annual assessment reporting across all units, and the creation of new assessment support structures (e.g., training, committees, incentives, and offices).
- Minutes of the Presidents Cabinet reflect monthly review of the strategic plans and how they are being addressed. The strategic plans of the University reflect realistic assessments of significant societal and economic trends. The value of diversification of revenue sources is understood and is being addressed in the strategic plans. For example, the elevation of the areas of development, enrollment management and research to vice presidential divisions and the continuation of Extended Learning as a vice presidential division are clear examples of resources following strategic planning. Minutes of the various groups on campus from the President's Council to the Administrative and Finance Council to the Academic Chairs Council regularly discuss strategic plans. University priorities funded over the period FY2003-2004 to present clearly indicate new budget that follows priorities. The strategic plan of 2007 reflects issues that can be traced back to the Long Range Planning Subcommittee Report of Fall 2005 and to the plans of the Arizona Board of Regents and realistically prepares the University for the future.

- Through a recently enhanced information technology infrastructure and oversight center and committees, NAU is poised to serve as a national leader in applying technology to enhance program and course delivery consistent with e-learning best practice.
- To address the increasing need for a globally competent citizenry, NAU has instituted a new diversity requirement for undergraduates, developed partnerships with Chinese institutions, reorganized its Center for International Education, created a new administrative position for international efforts, and forged new initiatives to advance sustainability practices.
- Increased tuition rates in specific years in excess of the average tuition increase of 3.8%, the Technology and Research Initiative Fund, the increased return on investment of reserves and balances and strategic financial planning have provided the resource base for NAU to maintain quality across the institution and improve the quality of its research efforts and services.
- Regardless of the source of funds, capital investment is informed by strategic planning and supports the University's educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening its quality in the future. The process of gaining specific project approval begins on campus with conversations between facilities planning and deans or vice presidents with the latter defining needs that support the strategic planning. Projects on a three- to- five year time horizon become part of a Capital Development Plan that is presented to the Arizona Board of Regents. Shorter term and more specific requests are considered as funding begins to be identified. While the specific requests are generally consistent with the Capital Development Plan, the campus is able to revise the specific requests depending on circumstances that continue to address strategic planning. For example the Capital Development Plan 2005 states that "These projects [new laboratory and new housing projects] reflect the university's commitment to teaching and research, as well as the environment and diversity. In addition, these projects directly address NAU's dedication to its core mission of undergraduate residential education."
- In managing its human resources, NAU maintains comparative salaries for its staff classification system and seeks to provide competitive salaries to preserve its human capital. There was sufficient anecdotal evidence from discussions on campus that staff development is understood to be essential for effective management of human resources. The reorganization described in the self study is good evidence of effective use of human resources.
- The self study features evidence of resources used to support the University's educational programs which demonstrates its effective planning for maintaining and strengthening the quality of student learning. Recently, NAU has enabled tenure and tenure-track faculty to teach slightly smaller classes and fewer sections to promote better contact on a per student basis. This reduction was accompanied by an increase in other types of faculty producing increased student credit hours. This change provides greater cost effectiveness and overall use of resources. The University will have to be vigilant in the future to keep teaching quality and cost

effectiveness in proper balance to achieve its strategic goals.

- The University has identified 57 key performance accountability measurements across its 7 major goals. Of this total, 33 measures are considered satisfactory, 11 require further attention, and 13 are not yet in place. By monitoring these measures, the University should be able to inform strategies for continuous improvement. The ongoing budget increases in support of diversity clearly indicate that budgeting is aligned with the goal of continuous improvement.
- Priorities for demolition and renovation are guided by a Facility Condition Index (FCI) equal to the deferred maintenance divided by the replacement costs on each building. This formula clearly identifies the buildings that are most at risk of failure or are non-functioning and thus requiring the most attention.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- As NAU responds to state needs and the direction of the Arizona Board of Regents by continuing to expand its outreach activities in terms of changing Yuma from a site to a branch campus, it will need to participate in the Commission's institutional change process.
- As NAU continues to pursue international collaborative relationships (e.g., partnerships with Chinese institutions) and delivers more than five courses at an international site, it may need to participate in the Commission's institutional change process, 7.2-2 Changes in Educational Sites.
- Although NAU has managed its human and financial resources very effectively, and the review team was highly impressed with the diligence and energy of its staff and faculty, the review team urges the University to review the staffing needs in key offices, such as Residence Life and Advancement, which seem well below the norm.
- NAU has made exemplary progress in instituting strategic planning processes at the institutional level. The review team applauds these important progress steps and encourages the University to institute strategic planning process consistently at the unit level.
- NAU must remain vigilant to continue the significant progress relating to faculty development and support, faculty salaries, the faculty-student ratio, and faculty productivity (in terms of student credit hours and research) it has made since the last accreditation review and continue.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- Conversations with NAU Deans, other academic leaders, and faculty members suggest that there is emphasis on student learning outcomes assessment for all academic major programs at NAU across all the colleges. As evidenced by conversations with the Deans of Education, Engineering and Natural Sciences, Business, and Health and Human Sciences and their faculty, student learning outcomes assessment is more fully integrated with curriculum planning, particularly in professional programs and colleges that are also subject to other external professional or discipline-specific accreditation. More concerted effort needs to be made in programs and colleges that are not overseen by professional or disciplinary accrediting bodies.
- While resistance to the implementation of student learning outcomes assessment was noted in the past, faculty members expressed in interviews with team members that they now see advantages of student learning outcomes assessment in improving their teaching. The use of rubrics for written assignments, for example, makes the criteria more transparent to students participating in a class and assisting them in better managing their time and producing higher quality work. The College of Business reported that in response to their evaluation of student writing products, they are establishing a Business Communication Center that will concentrate on improving student writing skills and abilities.
- To help foster a culture of assessment, NAU has offered awards for submission of exemplary outcomes assessment plans, which include a “seal” for display in the academic department. This modest form of recognition has been warmly received by faculty members in at least two colleges.
- The University Assessment Committee provides mentoring and coaching to faculty and departments across the NAU colleges in the implementation of student learning outcomes assessment plans and strategies. The recent appointment of a full-time outcomes assessment director and subsequent appointment of a support person to provide statistical analysis of aggregate outcomes demonstrate the University’s serious commitment to assessment.
- Recently, the Liberal Studies program was revised to focus on 5 learning objectives rather than the prior 11. To help ensure quality, the Liberal Studies Committee is steadily reviewing courses (approximately 30 a year) currently listed to determine whether they advance the five learning objectives or need revision. In addition, the Liberal Studies Committee has asked that all the liberal studies courses include

rubrics for assessment of student work. Although not all courses include the use of rubrics, some faculty members are using them as a means of student learning outcomes assessment.

- NAU has identified retention and student success as important goals for improvement and set in number an impressive array of initiatives (e.g., Summer Reading Program, Living Learning Communities, first-year seminars, targeted recruitment strategies, and increased advisement). Given that the retention rates have remained relatively stagnant for the past four years, NAU may need to consider new options, such as an increase in developmental course offerings and a lower student-faculty ratio.
- NAU values effective teaching and works to retain effective teaching faculty. As articulated by the President in his philosophy on effective teaching, the Faculty Development Program has been expanded to include increased access to development opportunities and, in some instances, small grant support to pursue innovation and enhanced instructional strategies.
- Strong support systems are in place to enhance students' opportunities for academic success. Through programs and institutional units such as the Multicultural Student Center, Center for International Education, Native American Student Services, the Gateway Student Success Center and Student Support Services, collaborative academic intervention is provided when it is needed.
- The Cline Library system is extensive and includes state of the art technology to provide access for students in distant locations served by the institution. The library system is well managed and central to NAU's efforts to achieve its academic and research related goals.
- Through an inventory of support services and multicultural curricular programs (e.g., Women's Studies, Applied Indigenous Studies (AIS), Ethnic Studies, Southwest Studies, Asian Studies, and Latin American Studies), NAU clearly works to provide an environment that supports all learners and respects diversity.
- NAU has established seven Living Learning Communities that provide first-year students who share common academic or other interests the opportunity to live together in residential settings and to experience a more intensive learning environment. Plans are being reviewed to increase the overall number of learning communities.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.

- Examination of the self-study, numerous documents, and several conversations reveals that although NAU has made remarkable progress in its assessment efforts, the University needs to continue to work toward full implementation of the assessment cycle that includes using the results of assessment to improve curricula,

pedagogy, etc. in all units to deepen student learning. The University Assessment Committee and the Director of Academic Assessment are well situated to help NAU continue to make progress in this area.

- NAU has identified retention and student success as important goals for improvement and set in number an impressive array of initiatives (e.g., Summer Reading Program, Living Learning Communities, first-year seminars, targeted recruitment strategies, and increased advisement). Given that the retention rates have remained relatively stagnant for the past four years, NAU may need to consider new options, such as an increase in developmental course offerings and a lower student-faculty ratio.
- Although the Liberal Studies Committee has made laudable progress in reforming the program, the number of courses that count toward Liberal Studies requirements seems excessive. Careful consideration and effort will need to be made during the reform process to ensure that all courses are clearly advancing the goals of liberal education and that students are deepening their engagement with the five learning objectives throughout their experience at NAU.
- The Cline Library staff has done an exemplary job in forging critical partnerships with other universities, community groups as well as NAU departments, information technology services, the E-learning Center and other units in order to serve the faculty, students, and staff of NAU in a cost-efficient, collaborative and helpful way. They have taken remarkable progress steps including free delivery of materials in off-site locations, the institution of digital medias to assist the learning environment, the acquisition of a new Native American Special Collection Series. As the student body continues to grow and new majors and programs are developed, considerable attention needs to be given to increasing the resources allocated to the library. In particular, funds are needed to support graduate and research initiatives.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

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

Evidence that Core Components are met

- NAU demonstrates in a variety of ways that it values a life of learning. The institution promotes scholarly and creative activities for students, faculty, administrators and staff by offering challenging curricula with a range of incentives such as sabbaticals, administrative leave opportunities and tuition scholarships. Staff members may enroll in up to nine credit hours per semester at a special rate. The Office of Human Resources arranges training and career development programs that enable employees to further their education and enhance job prospects. Since 2000, university policy has extended the opportunity for all employees to complete 16 hours of training. Offerings range from Employee Assistance and Wellness workshops to computer applications courses. With TRIF funding, the institution supports five initiatives with an emphasis on research, access, workforce development, and infrastructure.
- Two research initiatives, Growing Biotechnology Initiative (GBI) and Environmental Research, Development and Education (ERDENE), expand research capabilities in an interdisciplinary manner in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences and in engineering. Grant and Contract Services and the Bilby Research Center facilitate creative projects from original proposal submission to completion. According to a Research and Graduate Education Report, 71% of faculty research projects received financial support from the university. Undergraduate research receives support from departments, colleges and the Office of the Vice President for Research. Representing a significant investment in research infrastructure, the 2007 opening of the Applied Research and Development and Lab Science buildings on the Flagstaff campus gives testimony to the institution's strong commitment to research activities.
- The Board of Regents, President and administrative staff, faculty, and staff of Northern Arizona University value a life of learning. Data from student (NSSE) and alumni surveys indicate that NAU students are prepared to live and work in a changing, diverse global environment. The articulation agreements with community colleges encourage students to pursue a college education, either through 2+2 transfer programs, or on-line baccalaureate completion programs. This option for career advancement is particularly relevant to associate degree graduates of dental hygiene and nursing programs and is in line with the University's focus on education of health care workers for the state. All told, about 1000 students transfer into the mountain campus per year. For residential students, support programs for incoming freshmen provide reading and writing skills needed to transition into their academic programs. Many of these programs target low income, first generation college students. This year, 645 high school students were brought to campus for summer college experiences. Not only is there evidence that the summer students are more likely to graduate from high school, but one hundred students who attended this summer program in the past have already enrolled at NAU.
- NAU demonstrates commitment to the development of its faculty. The Faculty Development Program (FDP) presents organized programs around the scholarship of teaching and learning. These programs are open to faculty members across the campus, and specific programs can be developed for colleges or departments. The

program brings in a national speaker each year. In 2006, FDP ran a series of 33 discussions (led by 61 faculty members) to share 'teaching wisdom.' 300 individual faculty members participated, with a total attendance of 700 at all 33 sessions. The FDP also offers programs to guide graduate students and teaching assistants to become effective teachers. The E-Learning Center and the library collaborate with the FDP as well as individual departments and colleges to offer training in technology resources for classroom and on-line teaching and course development. Each college has a mentoring program for new faculty.

- Several Colleges offer on-site and distance/extended post-baccalaureate courses, graduate programs, and certificate programs for career advancement and increased work opportunities, especially in education and health professions. All distance sections use the same syllabus and 'signature' course activities as courses offered on the NAU campus. The Cline Library staff works with each college to ensure information resources are accessible and to maintain an array of creative and cost effective ways to advance student and faculty research and scholarly inquiry.
- A very strong facet of the undergraduate programs is the emphasis on research and hands-on experiences where students learn the skills of intellectual inquiry and data-based approaches to problem solving. In 2006, for example, 80% of graduating seniors reported completing either a senior capstone experience or an undergraduate research experience. The campus recently invested \$77 million in buildings to house research in the sciences and \$16 million of University reserves to cover additional project costs. Faculty highly endorsed their commitment to providing research experiences or involving students in their service and research projects in various settings and programs. There is the expectation of scholarly productivity that applies to all faculty members, not just those in the tenure track. Publishing, grant writing, and funding workshops are held by the Office of the Vice President for Research. Travel funds for presentation of scholarship at one professional or research meeting are available at the campus and college level.
- There are several innovative interdisciplinary and experiential learning opportunities, such as the Grand Canyon Semester, staffed by faculty from anthropology, ecology, forestry, and the arts, and the Fossil Creek restoration project; the involvement of dental hygiene and nursing students and faculty in the Flagstaff Community Health Center; the Applied Indigenous Studies major, and the Southwest Studies program.
- Many NAU educational programs connect students with external communities and the curricula of various units prepare students to live in a global, diverse, and technological society. Most remarkable is the extensive number of projects involving outreach to Native American communities. The program on tribal leadership (Elders Program), the Tribal Environmental Professionals, and the Applied Indigenous Studies department merit recognition. In 2006 there were 440 international students. Assessment data confirm that 71% of sophomore students have developed tolerance for diversity. Proposition 301 and TRIF ensure competency in technological skills, with 65% of sophomores reporting skills in information technology. This effort is in line with NAU's focus on biotechnology, and encourages student and faculty involvement with the learning resources and

experience available with the development of the Arizona biotechnology corridor.

- The University's Strategic Plan provides for the strengthening of graduate and professional education and research. The University Graduate Committee establishes and maintains standards and policies and serves as the curriculum committee for graduate study. All graduate programs culminate with capstone experiences that are aligned with the programs' learning goals and the students' career paths. Academic units are responsible for assessment of learning in graduate programs while assessment of graduate programs is supported by the Office of Academic Assessment and the University Assessment Committee. The Research and Graduate Education Task Force Report recommended assessment of graduate programs for academic rigor, quality, and relevance to the university's stated priorities and research themes/strengths as identified by the task force. Since most graduate students take courses via distance education, assessment needs to focus on a variety of delivery systems.
- A commitment to diversity is central to NAU's mission and receives strong administrative support. The institution's geographic location offers a unique opportunity to create a model climate for higher learning serving a diverse population. The President's Advisory Council on Diversity and Equity produced the University Diversity Requirement in recognition of the need for inclusiveness. This requirement consists of six credits of U.S. and global diversity. Pedagogical approaches appropriate for a diverse student population are encouraged. Supporting funds contribute to the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty. Drawing on faculty expertise, the College of Social and Behavioral Science has taken a leading role in championing diversity and embedding it into the curriculum. Teacher training courses designed for the Hopi tribe have produced the first elementary teachers on the reservation and the institution offers the only Elders Program in the U.S. with training provided on tribal leadership. On a national level, the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) serves more than 230 recognized tribes providing technical expertise to set up environmental and resource monitoring systems and trains and supports staff to maintain them. The Multicultural Student Center which houses the Successful Transition and Academic Readiness (STAR) program and the Native American Student Services provide academic interventions in response to student need. The Office of Faculty Development provides workshops and expertise on a variety of pedagogical approaches that are effective with multicultural students. A three-year study of 19,000 students in the *2008 Best 290 Business Schools* ranked accredited MBA-granting colleges placing the NAU W.A. Franke's College of Business among the top ten in three categories: greatest opportunity for minority students, best professors and best campus facilities.
- Proposition 301 provides Arizona State funding to ensure competency in technological skills through the Center for Research, Assessment and Development of Learning and Electronic Environments. The institution supports technological literacy by means of the Technology and Research Initiative Fund's eLearning Initiative which has integrated these skills into the first year composition course required of all undergraduates. Distance support includes online tutoring, library access, a 24-hour help desk, and 12-hour advising and support services availability.

NAU faculty members are engaged in such research as the impact of online programs on student learning, student retention, and student employability.

- The institution demonstrates a strong commitment to internationalization and faculty highly value global perspectives. The number of international students has risen by 22% over the past five years and now stands at 440. The newly created position of Vice Provost for International Initiatives testifies to the importance NAU places on international exchanges. The Center for International Education promotes the internationalization of the curriculum by recruiting international faculty and by fostering study abroad. 85% of freshmen and 83% of seniors reported that their education contributed to their understanding of people of other races and ethnic backgrounds. In 2006, 96% of employers who were surveyed confirmed that NAU alumni employees were adequately prepared for their positions. According to the findings of the 2007 Graduating Senior Survey of 1150 students, 92% expressed satisfaction with the quality of instruction, while 71% reported that they developed skills that included a tolerance for diversity.
- Documentation confirms that the organization provides support to ensure responsible academic activity and adherence to a code of conduct. The University has invested over \$90 million in its research infrastructure over a six-year period, resulting in an increased profile for institutional research. The addition of a Vice President for Research, who also serves as the intellectual property rights official, gives evidence of the University's commitment to integrity of research practice. The Intellectual Property Committee ensures ethical conduct and promotes awareness of ABOR policy and its parameters. Information on the use of copyrighted works in Distance Education is included on the eLearning Center's Web site. All Web courses developed with university support are subject to a quality review that includes assurance of copyright compliance. With the assistance of two institutional committees, the VP for Research will provide effective oversight for the conduct of research by faculty, staff and students. The IRB provides information, training and consultation for research projects along with the Office of Grant and Contract Services. In 2006, the University installed a dedicated IRB administrator and a bio-security officer. By mentoring and serving faculty on the parameters of ethical scholarship, the Faculty Development Program plays a key role in the design, conduct and application of knowledge.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- Discussions with faculty members and administrators in Extended Education, at the Yuma Campus, and within several academic departments indicate the need to maintain very strong cooperation and oversight of extended education activities with the academic departments of the university. One example of this concern lies in the development of the baccalaureate program in business at the Yuma Campus. This issue must be addressed as NAU participates in the HLC Institutional Change process as it seeks to elevate Yuma, and perhaps other sites, to full-service campuses.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- In April, 2005, NAU submitted a Request for Institutional Change to the Higher Learning Commission as justification to “increase programs to respond to the needs of learners, employers, communities and other stakeholders regardless of location.” The current mission of NAU provides the foundation for the institution’s focus on engagement and service and reflects the mission expansion of the institution.
- NAU aligns capacity with the identified needs of stakeholders and communities throughout the state through research and environmental scans. The university uses focus groups, marketing surveys, and on-going conversation with community college personnel and business leaders to determine areas of interest for curricular expansion. Additional information and feedback are obtained through formal and informal meetings between institutional leadership and community and business leaders, and institutional involvement in local and state organizations (e.g., chambers, social service organizations, economic development boards, etc.). Community leaders verified in meetings with the review team that the leadership, faculty, and staff of the institution are highly woven into the fabric of the community. To further stimulate community relations, members of local communities are invited to serve on the institutional and discipline specific advisory boards of the University. The phrase “NAU and Flagstaff – One Community” is a reflection of the interaction, respect, and value that the community of Flagstaff and NAU share.
- NAU is well connected to minority and traditionally underserved populations in Arizona. The institution regularly brings programs and services to reservations in Arizona in response to identified needs of Native populations. These services include a unique collaboration between NAU faculty and Native American reservation leadership. Programs are provided that assist Native American teachers and researchers in achieving greater success in writing competitive grant and contract proposals. Other examples of program services include specialized services such as speech and hearing clinics, Health Psychology Clinic, the Dental Hygiene Clinic, and the Institution of Human Development

Interdisciplinary Training Clinic provided to Native communities. Work occurring at the Yuma branch of NAU has resulted in it being designated as an Hispanic Serving Institution. The institution is ranked 5th in the nation for graduating Native Americans with bachelor's degrees and 7th in providing degrees in education to all minorities (*Black Issues in Higher Education*, June 2005).

- NAU offers a variety of instructional venues, customized instruction and research that are based on the needs of its constituencies. One of the true strengths of the University is its ability to respond quickly to needs through innovative programs that link the resources of the institution with critical state and local needs. The considerable distance delivery capacity of NAU is considered a significant state asset in accommodating the expected 180,000 new students expected within the next 15 years as well as the economic, health care, and general quality of life goals that have been articulated for the state of Arizona.
- NAU has made considerable investments in its infrastructure supporting distance delivery of programs, off-site instruction and services, and research that is specifically targeted to identify state needs. The institution responds to community needs through nontraditional programs such as customized training, clinics, and distance learning offerings – on-site traditional delivery and electronic delivery. These services are often taken directly to places where constituencies work and live, such as the program in the School of Forestry to train workers in the parks and monuments. A number of institutes and centers enable the University to bring its services and expertise into communities and special locations where services are critically needed.
- Co-curricular activities are offered throughout northern Arizona with students and student organizations volunteering services. Students obtain “real-world” experience through collaborations with businesses and service agencies to “help meet specific workforce development needs in high-demand fields...” The community is used extensively as a learning site for several programs, some requiring internships and other representing voluntary service learning for credit. Students who complete these community/business-based experiences are reported to often stay in the communities where the service was performed, thus adding to the trained workforce. Work that is performed by students in the state's communities and businesses is perceived as valuable, although greater attention needs to be given to assessing the actual value in contrast to the perceived value.
- NAU utilized several excellent vehicles for community input, including “The Alliance.” This is a group of community leaders and upper University administrators that considers issues and fosters collaboration between the institution and community entities. The group includes representatives from the Flagstaff School District, Greater Flagstaff Economic Council, the Flagstaff Forty leadership team, and the city-sponsored Business Technology Incubator. An excellent example of collaboration between the University and its community is the joint venture in building a hotel and conference center with the city of Flagstaff.

- The Flagstaff community is very openly appreciative of the University's efforts to deal with local issues, promote quality of life, and drive economic development. These efforts are diverse and include individual faculty involvement on committees, performing and visual arts events, extension of the institutions expertise into the community such as assisting in writing competitive grant proposals, and collaborations leading to community infrastructure improvements. Academic units such as the College of Education have developed a significant presence in local schools and social service agencies, helping add value to these organizations through direct teaching, professional development, and other services.
- NAU interacts broadly with its constituencies across the State and is the State's primary source of distance delivered instruction. Programs and services delivered by NAU are often in collaboration with external entities that leverage their resources with those of the University to enhance overall services. A number of academic articulation agreements with community colleges help to facilitate a smooth transfer of students from the two year institutions to NAU. The University also provides dual enrollment with Arizona Western College, shares programming with the Western Governors' University, and offers 55 Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) programs. Actions of the Arizona Board of Regents mandate that NAU continue to expand statewide services and partnerships to meet needs arising from population growth and other state needs.
- The institution's transfer policies and practices allow students to transfer from any Arizona community college. The Arizona Transfer Articulation Support System and the University's Academic Information Office web site provide information to students, advisors, faculty, and the institution's Articulation Task Force members about state-wide policies and practices, as well as specific conditions of transfer. The transfer policy certifies that students who have satisfied the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) have also satisfied NAU's Liberal Studies requirement.
- Several centers and institutes are identified that work with local or state organizations to address workforce and "shared service" needs. Especially impressive is the Institute for Future Workforce Development that provides on-site customized training as well as other workforce development services. Several centers and institutes provide business support and assist in the translation of intellectual property to business opportunities.
- Oversight of cooperative agreements is provided by the Office of Grant and Contract Services. Agreements with government entities are administered through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and private organizations use a Memorandum of Understanding. Authorization to sign agreements is limited so that institutional control is adequately maintained. However, it is less clear how the various agreements, contracts, and locally initiated programs are coordinated across campus to maximize the institution's impact on its communities.

- Proposition 301, the Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF) is noted as evidence of confidence in the University. It does not necessarily demonstrate the value of each current program or service. The University does make considerable effort to solicit feedback from all constituencies, such as students, university leaders, university employees, alumni, and community leaders about the value of its services and programs. Examples of feedback events are provided and are verified in conversations with a wide variety of local constituencies. The mechanism for collecting and using this information seems to be specific to the institutional unit that is providing the service. General feedback from public entities, businesses, and other constituencies that interact with the University is more systematically collected through scheduled interaction between community leaders and institutional leadership. For example, the President regularly schedules breakfast meetings with community leaders to discuss shared issues and opportunities. In summary, important information is available and is used in guiding future engagements with constituencies.
- The Northern Arizona Task Force on Higher Education is a group of community leaders that were assembled by the University to increase the awareness of the institution's engagement with its communities and to attest to the usefulness of the University in the communities it serves. This group appears to offer useful impressions of the value of NAU's engagement, and is encouraged to access data related to outcomes achieved or value of services. The Task Force certainly plays a useful role in working with NAU's leadership to continue the rather steep trajectory of services and programs that the University is developing on behalf of its constituencies.
- In addition to other venues for collecting feedback on the usefulness of programs and services offered by NAU, the institution is collecting information about the effectiveness of its Access and Workforce Development (AWD) and e-Learning initiatives. Training programs target specific workforce development needs, are specifically designed for unique audiences, and are available throughout the state. Instructional venues vary depending on the need, audience, and location of the training. Public workshops and private training are provided at the institution's Computer Training Center. The Center for American Indian Economic Development offers "hands-on grant writing and research training" (NAU GrantSmart). These programs are well attended by Native organizations. The institution also provides direct services that are aimed at needs that may extend beyond the state of Arizona, such as the Ecological Restoration Institutes work to heal damaged environments and other ecosystems in western North America.
- The University enhances the quality of life in northern Arizona through culture, athletics, and the arts. Other University community activities include the Auto Show, Home Show, Pow-Wow and Miss Indian Scholarship Pageant. University student athletes contributed 3,116 hours of community service from 2004-2005. Overall, NAU is actively engaged with its communities and other constituencies in providing programs and services that appear to bring considerable value to

those served. Although the University is encouraged to continue to enhance the assessment of the outcomes of its engagement efforts and to measure the actual, as opposed to the perceived, value of these activities, NAU is to be commended for the depth and breadth of its engagement with a wide variety of constituencies. Its programs are in many cases innovative and reflect the agility of the institution to respond to the state's needs as they are identified. Clearly, NAU is meeting the HLC Criterion 5 and, in many cases, serves as a model for community engagement for other institutions of higher education.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- While much progress is evident, the University needs to remain attentive to embracing diversity and inclusiveness throughout its operations. For example, the Liberal Studies Committee needs to ensure that multicultural and global outcomes are being promoted and assessed in courses. Campus climate surveys and dashboard indicators needs to be conducted regularly to ensure that NAU is continuing to make progress on welcoming diverse members to its community and advancing diversity as an educational resource. NAU should take advantage of its unique location and draw on the collective expertise of the faculty of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences to ensure that diversity becomes integrated into every facet of the institution.
- While NAU's volume of community service is very respectable, the commitment is uneven across the campus, with some programs requiring internships and field experiences, others considering off-campus experiences as optional, and still other disciplines having no expectations for off-campus learning. If the University intends to demonstrate a true commitment to field-based learning, off-campus experiences will need to become a general expectation for completion of undergraduate degree programs.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met, no Commission follow-up recommended.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. Affiliation Status No change

B. Nature of Organization

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Legal status | No change |
| 2. Degrees awarded | No change |

C. Conditions of Affiliation

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Stipulation on affiliation status | No change |
| 2. Approval of degree sites | No change |
| 3. Approval of distance education degree | No change |
| 4. Reports required | None |
| 5. Visits required | None |
| 6. Organization change request | None |

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action None

E. Summary of Commission Review

The team recommends continued accreditation for Northern Arizona University. Next comprehensive visit: 2017-2018.

Rationale for recommendation:

Northern Arizona University meets all of the criteria for continued accreditation. The University has an appropriate mission, operates with integrity, has appropriate and well functioning governance and administrative structures, effectively plans for its future, maintains an adequate resource base, evaluates its activities in ways that facilitate continuous improvement, values and supports effective teaching, adequately assesses student learning, offers effective learning environments, supports scholarship and creative activities, and engages and serves its communities in mutually beneficial ways.

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT TO

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Flagstaff, AZ

October 22-24, 2007

For The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

NAU has clearly progressed along many fronts since the 1997 HLC visit. It has proactively and effectively responded to the challenge of differentiated missions among the State's higher education institutions with a justifiable sense of pride. It has been highly creative and strategic with its use of resources. Our interactions across the institution have revealed a strong sense of collaboration and an unusually rich sense of community among all of its constituents.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

DIVERSITY

In its documents, policies and practices, Northern Arizona University is emphasizing its commitment to diversity, inclusion and globalization. The President has committed additional resources to enhance "an environment of inclusion." The Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity has been charged with leadership, on behalf of the NAU President and executive administration, in most matters related to diversity and inclusion. The addition of a Vice Provost for International Initiatives reflects NAU's dedicated emphasis on globalization and the inherent institutional and community benefits associated with this appointment. The institution's diversity and inclusion efforts are decentralized (quite normal) with representatives from academic affairs, student affairs, human resources, the Provost's office and the Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity and other campus units, holding regular meetings to collaborate on programs, activities, policy development, and strategic directions.

Given this foundation of collaboration, the President's commitment toward diversity and inclusion and the myriad of community cultural and ethnic activities NAU faculty, staff and students participate in, a culture of diversity and inclusion may soon begin to permeate the institution's climate, from academics to student affairs to campus student organizations, and continue to move from the strategic framework to one of "naturally" occurring operational events and services. The direction (trajectory) of this important area is positive and the Team strongly encourages the campus central administration to continue devoting the resources, energy and leadership toward achieving the identified strategic goals and objectives.

INTERNAL AUDITING

Although the University Auditor reports directly to the Arizona Board of Regents and secondarily to the Vice President for Administration and Finance, the Audit Charter also indicates that all audits must be approved by the Vice President for Administration and Finance as being the highest priority. Although there is no evidence that one has occurred, this has the potential to create a conflict of interest. While the University Auditor has the right to go to the President or the ABOR Audit Committee should such a conflict of interest occur, it is recommended that the reporting structure continue to be reviewed to ensure that the system of checks and balances remains effective.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

NAU demonstrates a remarkable commitment to student success. The recent transition from a faculty-led and decentralized advising model to a more centralized one, the elimination of the university colloquium and the institution of first-year seminars, the new degree-completion plans, the developmental advising approach of the Gateway Student Success Center, the development of the Council for Academic Resources and Services (CARS), as well as a host of other initiatives and services testify to the University's desire to meet the needs of its (particularly first-year) students. Although considerable progress has been made, the review team urges NAU to continue its progress by identifying strategies for transitioning from the professional advisors in the Gateway Center to departmental advising. Course capacity management would also help to ensure that students could enroll in needed courses, and some form of clear advisement intervention prior to graduation would be desirable. In addition, although NAU has a long-term and important commitment to reaching underserved populations (including those who might not normally attend college), it is also important that the University continue to make concerted efforts to attract high-ability students through a robust honors program, merit aid, international learning opportunities, undergraduate research support, and other key incentives.

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

The team wishes to conclude by commending NAU for

- its commitment to student success and the outstanding work done through cross-University partnerships by the Gateway Student Success Center;
- a strong and pervasive sense of engagement with multiple external constituencies for which extended education activities are central;
- careful and long-term management of its fiscal, capital, and human resources to achieve its strategic plan; and
- the focus on student learning advanced by the Cline Library staff.