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Northern
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2009 Quality Program Summary



Academic
Quality Improvement
Program

The Higher Learning Commission 

Northern Michigan University

Quality Program Summary

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Quality Program Summary

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Response to 2006 System Portfolio Appraisal Feedback Report

Introduction

The NMU response to the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report began in January 2007 and is documented in the following timetable. Awareness of AQIP and the Continuous Improvement Process has evolved from a narrow focus on Outcomes Assessment and Action Projects to a fuller understanding of the process – results – feedback cycle. Oversight of AQIP has expanded from one individual to two coordinators and, at the current time, thirteen AQIP teams with many people representing all units of the University. Finally, we note that the President’s Council, which includes representatives from across the campus, is actively involved in AQIP events.

Response Timetable to the AQIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Report

Time Frame	Responsive Action
January-April 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Cynthia Prosen assumed AQIP responsibility from the recently deceased AQIP coordinator and author of the 2006 Systems Portfolio. • Feedback was reviewed and discussed by Executive Management, Academic Cabinet, and the Finance and Budget Team. These groups acknowledged that the Systems Portfolio did not meet the requirements as written. • A summary of the Systems Appraisal was posted on the NMU AQIP website
May 2007- April 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant AQIP coordinator with expertise in outcomes assessment was added to the coordination team for one year. • Ten-person team, including the President, Provost, Vice President for Finance, and a Board of Trustees member, attended an AQIP Strategy Forum. • Emphasis was placed upon outcomes assessment, implementing one full cycle of the Outcomes Assessment Action Project plan and Liberal Studies Assessment Plan. • AQIP Update becomes a standing item on the President’s Council Agenda.
April 2008 - July 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched rewrite of Systems Portfolio, and subsequently adopted the new AQIP Systems Portfolio questions. • Assistant AQIP coordinator with experience in information systems and technical writing was added to the coordination team for one year. • Strategy for approaching the Systems Portfolio and Quality Checkup Visit was developed and groundwork laid for AQIP education. • A Federal Compliance Report team (see Appendix A) was created and work commenced on the report. • President’s Council Annual Retreat focused on AQIP activities.
August – December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the campus community’s understanding of AQIP, the Systems Portfolio Appraisal Feedback Report and the Quality Checkup Visit were the early foci through a series of educational presentations. Recipients were the President’s Council, the Finance and Budget Team, the Academic Cabinet, the Academic Senate ,the Deans, Directors and Department Heads, and several community/campus forums • Strategic issues were reviewed, consolidated, and three Action Projects were chosen for 2008-09 based upon the Appraisal Feedback. • Nine teams (see Appendix A) were created, one for each Category, to rewrite the Systems Portfolio. Work progressed with input sought from executive management, as appropriate. This exercise entailed documenting existing procedures, creating new procedures, putting performance results into one document, and documenting data usage. This will become a standing activity, with a process developed to update the Systems Portfolio annually. • Action Project Annual Updates filed; three new Action Projects commenced.
January 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Compliance Report team members concluded their work; report dispatched to AQIP Evaluation Team. • AQIP coordinators and executive management compiled and edited the AQIP team reports into a 2009 interim Systems Portfolio. Multiple teams had the opportunity to review and provide feedback to the coordinators. Interim Portfolio dispatched to the AQIP Evaluation Visitor Team. • Quality Summary was drafted by the AQIP coordinators, with input from executive management.
February 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Summary was reviewed by executive management and dispatched to the AQIP Evaluation Visitor Team. • Preparation continued for the Quality Checkup Visit in March 2009

Accreditation Issues

Accreditation Issue 1 - Criterion 2, Core Component C, stipulates "...The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement."

Response. Our Systems Appraisal states that our explanation of our compliance with this criterion needed clarification. In particular, the Appraisal suggested that NMU provided inadequate data to demonstrate how we support student and administrative initiatives, and how we use and analyze data. It also noted our lack of benchmarking and utilization of peer data. In part as a response to this AQIP notation of an accreditation issue, a 2008-09 Action Project "Benchmarking the NMU Road Map to 2015," was chosen to help us carefully consider the types of data we need to collect to evaluate our progress on the Road Map to 2015, our academic master plan, to establish internal and external benchmarks for all goals and priorities described therein, to identify the people whose task it will be to evaluate the progress towards the benchmarks over time, and to develop a readily accessible online website that tracks goal and priority progress.

Our Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Budget and Finance regularly conduct analyses both internally and using peer data (Overview Question 7 and 7P4). As noted in 7P1 and 7P3, this systematic data collection has been supplemented with data querying tools, such as Cognos Business Intelligence, used by trained staff to generate dashboards and reports to measure progress. These tools are described in Overview Question 7 and 7P2. Information in 7P3 tables list our comparative data sources and how we use them. Sections 7I1 and 7I2 describe recent improvements we have instituted to ensure that we have adequate resources to measure our effectiveness.

We have a systematic process in place to assess all academic departments and service units (1P11, 1P18 and 2P4). Further, key student and stakeholder needs are regularly measured through surveys, and electronic newsletters, and campus forums (3P1 and 3P3). Data we use to evaluate student learning are described in Category 1 (see particularly tables in 1R2 -1R5). While we acknowledge that our data analyses and benchmarking efforts present an ongoing opportunity for improvement, our 2009 interim Systems Portfolio provides a more accurate portrayal of ongoing efforts than did our 2006 Portfolio.

Accreditation Issue 2 - Criterion 2, Core Component D, states that "...All levels of planning (should) align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission."

Response. Our Feedback Appraisal noted that this component needed an expanded treatment in our Systems Portfolio. In particular, it stated that NMU provided poor documentation of how college and university missions were aligned, presented only anecdotal information about large-scale university initiatives, and omitted information about financial, human and physical resources needed to support our operations. The report went on to note that, "As a result, the Portfolio suggests that a gap exists between vision and implementation."

The recent adoption of three significant documents in 2008 (Roadmap to 2015, the Campus Master Plan and a revised University Mission statement) have helped NMU establish a new and functional framework for both micro-level and macro-level planning. These documents did not exist when our 2006 Portfolio was submitted. Further, a new President, new Provost, new Vice President for Finance, two new academic deans, and a nearly 30% change in the President's Council composition (administrative infrastructure) reflected a time for broad discussion and formulation of the University's identity and its desired direction. This more active President's Council provided the foundation for strategic planning that acknowledged NMU traditions and our need to establish new directions. The three documents were created through broad campus and community engagement (Overview Question 5, 5P1 and 8P5). The Road Map to 2015, with its four components (Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Leveraging Campus Attributes and Community Engagement) provides evidence of our awareness of the relationships between educational quality, student learning, and the diverse, complex global and technological world in which our students exist now, and upon their graduation. A vital aspect of the successful adoption of

these documents was the broad sense that bottom-up recommendations, as well as strategic reactions to the financial crisis in Michigan and throughout the nation, were posed, vetted and incorporated effectively. These documents are now in a position to inform, define, guide and prioritize macro-level planning for the University. A 2008-09 Action Project "Aligning unit mission statements with revised University mission," was undertaken to ensure that all levels of college planning are in alignment with the revised University mission. An advantage of this project is that it involves all University employees as they re-evaluate the mission of their unit. The documents do not define specific initiatives at the departmental level, but department initiatives are evaluated and funded by the degree to which local goals are linked to these major planning documents.

The coordination between our long- and short-term planning processes, and their relationship to the mission, vision, and Road Map are documented in 8P1 and 8P2, along with a table of planning bodies to demonstrate oversight and accountability. The interrelationships between these bodies (8P4) during the planning process help to describe the setting of targets and refinement of priorities at NMU. In difficult economic times, the planning processes that link to budget and resources are particularly scrutinized and described in 8P6. At present, every proposal must be accompanied with a sustainable budget and staffing plan. Regular internal and external audits, risk assessment (8P7) and assessment of operations (6R1-6R5) aid the feedback loop. While refining our institutional planning at levels encompassing human, financial, and physical resources needed to achieve our initiatives remains an ongoing challenge, those planning processes as described in our 2009 interim Portfolio present a more accurate portrayal of our activities than did our 2006 Portfolio.

Accreditation Issue 3 - Criterion 3 Core Component A stipulates "...The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible."

Response. In contrast, our Appraisal comments found that NMU had not reported the details of its campus-wide assessment plan, nor provided sufficient data and analyses of the student learning outcomes process. It also noted that we had not described our common student learning outcomes goals and objectives, and how those goals and objectives were measured. Upon receipt of these comments, we evaluated our current methods of assessing student-learning outcomes and have made campus-wide changes. Updates to the Systems Portfolio Category 1 highlight outcomes assessment improvements.

Assessment occurs at multiple levels across campus, and our common learning objectives are stated and assessed at the university level (see Overview Question 1, and 1P1, 1P15, 1P18, 1R2). Every academic program is required to submit an Annual Outcomes Assessment Report and Plan. These plans lists 5 types of information: congruence of the departmental and university mission statements, student-learning outcomes objectives per program, means of assessing those objectives, data collected pertaining to the objectives, and use of data to improve student learning. After consideration at the departmental level, the report is reviewed by the Provost's Academic Cabinet, which provides the department with feedback from at least two primary reviewers (1P2, 1P13, 1P17, 1P18, 1R3 and 1R4). Our assessment of student learning includes multiple direct and indirect measures (1R1, 1R2, 1R3 and 1R4). Apart from our programmatic assessment, the institution collects and makes public on the web our graduation and retention rates (1R1 and 7P4). Some of our programs (e.g., Nursing, Education, Business, Music) are externally accredited, and our processes for assessing student learning have been refined by those external review processes (1P17, 1R1 and 1R4).

The organization's assessment of student learning extends to all educational offerings, including credit and non-credit certificate programs (2R1, 2R2 and 3R1). Finally, and to underscore our concern about the assessment of student learning, we note that one of our first AQIP Action Projects concerned Outcomes Assessment. Upon evaluation of our current processes, we determined that while they were adequate, they could be improved upon, and hence we adopted "Documenting and Benchmarking the NMU Outcomes Assessment Process" as one of our 2008-09 Action Projects. We formed three committees as a part of that project; one to review the reports from academic departments, a second to review the reports from service departments, and a third to evaluate our current processes and

make recommendations for improvements. We also invited a nationally known outcomes assessment expert to campus to help us in our improvement efforts. While acknowledging that our work thus far is not complete, the multiple steps we have taken to improve our processes have focused the academic campus community on the importance of student learning at NMU.

Accreditation Issue 4, while not citing a specific Criteria and Component, stated that “NMU needs to better demonstrate its active engagement with AQIP at the highest leadership levels and, therefore, throughout the University.”

Response. We note that the apparent fluidity of decision making at NMU should not be misinterpreted as undervaluing the institutional structures and data-driven processes that characterize NMU’s successes. The continuing economic challenges in Michigan often result in budgetary adjustments that sometimes lag institutional operational activity by as much as 4 months (e.g., the 2008 budget was authorized and dispensed in mid-October, nearly 4 months into the University’s fiscal year). Governor Granholm has implemented executive order budget reductions 2-3 months after initial appropriation in each of the past 4 years. The number of planning models presented to the Board of Trustees each year, and revised at nearly every meeting, reflects the continuing changes in the fiscal appropriation process. By necessity, our institutional structures are lean, and our decision-making is dynamic; these features enable quick adjustments to legislative changes made at the executive levels of leadership. We have made these changes with minimal impact on student learning and the academic progress of our students. We have met these challenges as the University continues to improve its activities and position itself for continued success.

We have integrated the AQIP process of continuous quality improvement into our daily working habits. We discuss AQIP progress at every meeting of the President’s Council, a bi-weekly advisory group representing all units across campus. The Provost’s Academic Cabinet is also well versed in AQIP issues; during 2008-09, the Cabinet held additional 1-hour weekly meetings to ensure that NMU is compliant with both our accreditation issues and addressed those of continuous improvement particularly as they relate to student learning. Finally, all Board of Trustees meetings include an “AQIP Update” section; many of our Board members who are familiar with the business world have applauded our adoption of a Continuous Quality Improvement model.

Accreditation Issue 5 also did not denote an accreditation Criteria and Component, but it suggested that NMU should more actively ensure that its Action Projects accomplish the goals and objectives that they were designed to meet.

Response. After receiving our Systems Appraisal, we made a commitment to use the NMU AQIP website as a vehicle for timely conveyance of issues of university-wide importance. Our AQIP website is now regularly updated, coordinated by the AQIP liaison and the NMU Office of Communications and Marketing. All Action Projects are listed on our website, along with the membership of the Action Project committees, the final reports of “retired” projects and the ongoing progress of active projects. The selection process of 2008-09 projects, while inclusive of the NMU campus community, also specifically reflected comments received from our 2006 Systems Appraisal, as stated in the section entitled “Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies.” The processes that we used to select the 2008-09 Action Projects are as described below in the Strategic Issues section. While a serious commitment to the systems and processes involved in continuous quality improvement perhaps did not exist at the outset of our commitment to AQIP, we have made considerable progress in that direction since the submission of our 2006 Systems Portfolio.

Strategic Issues

Our Systems Appraisal Feedback Report identified 17 “Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies.” The Feedback Report also noted that “...implementing these strategies may call for specific actions ... (including)that your institutions be engaged in three or four vital Action Projects...” To best respond to these Strategic Issues, the Provost’s Academic Cabinet and the President’s Council engaged in a vigorous and lengthy debate, which included discussion of the Accreditation Issues noted above. As a result of our discussions, we condensed many of the Strategic Issues into 6 potential Action Projects. A second category of Strategic Issues was identified as those about which we believe our processes and data are adequate, but about which we had not included information in sufficient detail in our first Systems Portfolio. The first section of our “Strategic Issues” response, below, describes the process we used to select our 2008-09 Action -Projects. The second section discusses the six potential Action Projects, and subsequent responses. The third section details the Strategic Issues that are addressed in an expanded format in our 2009 interim Portfolio.

Selection Process for 2008-09 Action Projects

1. Identify six potential Action Projects. The process we followed to derive these projects, and select three for implementation, began in the Academic Cabinet and the President’s Council. In July 2008, the six potential projects that were identified as most urgent to address were discussed at the President’s Council Annual Retreat.
2. Solicit campus input. In August 2008, descriptions of these projects were posted on the NMU AQIP website, and the entire NMU community was asked to submit comments about them. Comments were electronically posted, resulting in a campus deliberation about the merits of the proposals.
3. Select three projects. In September 2008, all of the comments were considered by Academic Cabinet and three of the projects were forwarded to the President’s Council as Action Projects for that academic year. Following debate, the President’s Council approved these projects.
4. Solicit external input. Projects were submitted for external review by other AQIP institutions, and after addressing suggested changes from the reviewers, the projects were submitted to AQIP.

Strategic Issues Condensed Into Six Potential Action Projects

1. Mission Alignment Throughout the University.

Strategic Issue 3, and Accreditation Issue 2 (Criterion 2, Core Component D), addressed the University mission and how new strategic initiatives and unit mission statements should be aligned with a revised University mission statement. In September 2008, the NMU Board of Trustees approved a revised mission statement for the University (see 5P1 for a description of all stakeholders involved in the mission statement revision process).

Action: An Action Project “Aligning unit mission statements with a revised University mission statement,” devised and chosen as one of the 2008-09 projects, defined the process the University would follow to align all unit mission statements with the revised University mission statement. The alignment process began with higher levels, and progressed to lower levels, to insure that lower levels reflected the mission of higher units. To date, the Board of Trustees, the President, and all direct reports to the President have revised their mission statements. Units that report to those supervisors are currently revising their statements. The anticipated end date of this Action Project is May 2009. Our new initiatives proposed for potential implementation are currently evaluated with respect to their congruence with our Road Map to 2015 Strategic Plan. A benefit to the Mission Statement Action Project is that the project will receive input from all University employees.

2. Providing Internal and External Benchmarks for Strategic Projects.

Strategic Issues 4, 5, 8, and 9, and Accreditation Issue 1 (Criterion 2, Core Component C) noted that NMU has “...rarely used benchmarking and comparative data from external sources... (or) internal benchmarking to determine progress”.

Action: Given our commitment to four strategic directions as a part of the Road Map to 2015, a second Action Project, “Benchmarking the NMU Road Map to 2015,” was composed, chosen, externally debated and implemented according to the process described above. The four committees associated with this Action Project have been tasked with assigning benchmark measurements to the goals and priorities described in the Road Map. These internally and externally defined benchmarks will be used to evaluate progress in our new initiatives, ensuring that measurement data are collected, analyzed and used. Representatives from across campus were assigned to the four committees, with each group representing one Road Map element (Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Leveraging Campus Attributes and Community Engagement). This project will ensure that adequate human resources, a financial commitment and facilities necessary for implementation are identified for all new initiatives. In addition, the project will help NMU refine its process for implementing future initiatives. We anticipate that our overall strategic planning processes will be improved as a function of this Action Project.

3. Improving the Outcomes Assessment Process.

While no specific Strategic Issue addressed our Outcomes Assessment Process, Accreditation Issue 3 (Criterion 3, Core Component A) noted that our current processes to evaluate student learning were “weak.” This criticism formed the basis for our third 2008-09 Action Project. One of our initial Action Projects involved outcomes assessment. An important result of that project was that all departments submit annual outcomes assessment reports.

Action: This third Action Project, “Documenting and Benchmarking the NMU Outcomes Assessment Process,” recognizes the need to continually improve the means by which departments use the data they collect, and includes a mechanism for administrative review of internal and external benchmarks and progress towards meeting stated goals. The AQIP committee includes representation from academic and service units across campus. An external consultant, Dr. Susan Hatfield, the Director of Assessment at Winona State University, visited our campus in January 2009 to help departments adopt sound objectives and determine how to evaluate those objectives. Dr. Hatfield will return to campus after the Action Project is underway, to ensure that the project is on track. Outcomes assessment reports from all academic and service departments have been evaluated using a scoring rubric developed in 2007-08; the committee will assess the rubric for its effectiveness, by comparing feedback evaluations from the current year for each department with those from the previous year. By identifying our level of assessment abilities with Dr. Hatfield, and then targeting those levels with continued coaching, this Action Project will strengthen our ability to assess student learning.

4. Valuing Employees.

Comments in Strategic Issues 10, 11 and 16 all concerned employee relationships at NMU. Our processes and systems for valuing employees are defined in 4P1 - 4P13, while one of our means of communicating that we value faculty – through our faculty awards programs – is defined in 1P11. The results of our efforts (4R1 – 4R4) are measured with respect to employment longevity, union grievances, promotions, performance evaluation outcomes, employee satisfaction and productivity.

Action: Under the guidance of a new Human Resources Director, we recently adopted a new leadership development model (see 5P9). With respect to the Feedback comment that many NMU promotions have occurred from within the institution, we note that even during the current difficult financial climate, we have nationally advertised all senior-level vacancies (5P10). Recent improvements in this Category are described in 4I1-4I2.

5. Academic Program Review.

Strategic Issue 12 noted that departments have primary responsibility for review of curricular issues, with little oversight of the curriculum from higher levels. Section 1P3 of the 2009 interim Systems Portfolio describes the oversight that several standing Senate sub-committees play in the design of new programs and courses within our curriculum; these committees include CUP (the Committee on Undergraduate Programs), GPC (the Graduate Programs Committee), the Senate itself, and EPC (Educational Policies Committee). Section 1P14 discusses the roles of these oversight bodies in changing or discontinuing

current programs and courses. We acknowledge that NMU does not have a formal system of Academic Program Review.

Action: In October 2008, Provost Koch formed an ad hoc Task Force to explore Program Review at NMU, and charged the Task Force with submitting recommendations to her by March 2009 concerning the optimal Academic Program Review process that NMU should adopt.

6. Strategic Planning.

Strategic Issue 17 of the Feedback report noted that some of our processes – such as strategic planning – are too top-down. The structure of any university, by definition and as revealed in an organizational chart, assumes a hierarchy. However, various characteristics at NMU help us flatten that hierarchy and encourage inclusivity with our stakeholders. These characteristics include our system of shared governance, committees with representative membership and our culture of openness in campus and community forums.

Action: The process that we use in strategic planning is perhaps best exemplified in Figure O.7 of our 2009 interim Systems Portfolio, which depicts the development of our Road Map to 2015. The process began when all units across campus were encouraged to consider their goals, objectives and means of obtaining those objectives within the next 5 years. These conversations then migrated to other venues, including departmental- and dean-convened groups, and the President's Council Annual Retreat. The President then charged an ad hoc committee with distilling the several hundred pages that had been generated in these debates into a 7-page document. That document was presented to the Board of Trustees for debate, after which the President held a community forum to solicit feedback; interested parties also provided comments via a website. Finally, after considering input from all of these sources, President Wong presented a preliminary Road Map in March 2008, indicating that the final Road Map would be revealed in September. Describing the Road Map as an “evolving” document, one of our 2008-09 Action Projects is to benchmark the goals and priorities of the Road Map so that we will know when we have reached our final destination.

Responses to Strategic Issues now addressed in the 2009 interim Systems Portfolio

As noted above, our conversations about the Feedback revealed several strategic issues about which we had developed processes and collected data, but had not included this information in the 2006 Systems Portfolio. These included two issues concerning our collaborative and stakeholder relationships (Issues 1 and 2), insufficient discussion and use of data (Issues 6 and 7), efforts to meet the needs of non-traditional students (Issues 13 and 15), and off-campus programming resources (Issue 14). The following text locates the responses to these Issues in the 2009 interim Systems Portfolio.

1. Collaborator and Stakeholder Needs.

Strategic Issues 1 and 2 suggest that while NMU has established collaborators, stakeholders and constituents, we did not provide good descriptions about the processes, results and improvements that are involved in these external relationships.

Clarifications: Category 2 of our 2009 interim Systems Portfolio focuses on our economic, workforce, and community partners. Section 2P3 describes the venues we use to communicate with collaborators and stakeholders. Sections 2R1–2R2 focus on the results of our collaborations – grants, outreach centers, and relevant academic programs that support economic development; number of continuing education units, workers educated, courses offered in Workforce Development areas; volunteer hours, Superior Edge participation, youth outreach activities, and community-focused grants. Our recent Carnegie classification as a “Community Engaged University” provides external verification of the extent of our involvement in our community.

Category 3 describes employers of our students as an important stakeholder group. Data in Section 3P3 and 3P4 describe how we identify stakeholder needs, and build and maintain relationships with our stakeholders, while Section 3P6 notes how we address stakeholder complaints. Employer satisfaction is

described in 3R4-3R5,

Category 9 elaborates upon our relationships with high schools and community colleges, which are an important resource for NMU for new students. The long-term results of our outreach programs (job fair attendance and satisfaction; high school counselor weekend feedback) to high schools and community colleges are denoted in 9R2.

2. Data and Results.

The Systems Appraisal noted in Strategic Issues 6 and 7 that the results and improvements sections in the 2006 Systems Portfolio were limited, with little data presented in tables and charts, and an excessive reliance on survey information.

Clarifications: While recognizing that a simple count of these items does not comment on the overall quality of our data presentation, we note that our 2006 Portfolio included 7 tables and 3 graphs, while our 2009 interim Portfolio includes 110 tables and 49 graphs. We recently purchased Qualtric software, which will permit us to conduct more targeted surveys. We believe that our enhanced emphasis on graphic and numeric presentation of results represents an improvement that NMU has undertaken, as evident in our Outcomes Assessment Reports and Plans, towards collecting data and using them to drive improvements throughout the University.

3. Non-traditional Student Needs.

Strategic Issue 13 stated that we did not indicate how we provide equal and appropriate access to educational opportunities for under-served, non-traditional, disabled and at-risk students. Strategic Issue 15 suggested that equal wireless access for all students was insufficiently documented.

Clarifications: With respect to issue 13, Section 1P8 of our revised Systems Portfolio describes Freshman Probation and College Transitions Program for those students admitted to NMU whose academic credentials are less than the minimum University admissions requirements. Section 1P9 discusses how we uncover and then address different learning styles of our students, while 1P10 describes our efforts towards evaluating the special needs of handicapped, senior and commuter students. Table 1.3 (see 1P15) denotes a variety of tutoring and support programs available for general and special-need students.

With respect to wireless accessibility, as noted in 7R2, our goal for student access to the wireless network is 24x7 access throughout the entire campus, a goal we have achieved. To address the access needs of students who live off-campus, in 2008 NMU was granted an Educational Broadband Service (EBS) license by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC); EBS is a type of wireless spectrum that supports high-speed Internet access using "WiMAX" technology. The license will allow us to better serve the University's growing commuter and off-campus populations with broadband access to critical course-related materials currently available to on-campus students, and to expand the collaborative efforts between area K-12 schools and NMU students fulfilling course requirements related to student teaching activities. Reliable broadband Internet connections have not been uniformly available in Marquette County, and this new service will permit us to bridge the Internet service gap that past students encountered.

4. Off-campus Programming.

Strategic issue 14 indicated that we provided little information about off-campus programming.

Clarification: While NMU only offers 3 programs in which over 50% of instruction is provided off-campus, as noted in 1P12, we employ the same standards and policies when creating and monitoring these programs, and they are awarded the same resources, as are our on-campus offerings (see 1P3 for course and program design issues, and 3P5 for monitoring concerns).

Portfolio Categories Updates

Category 1: Helping Students Learn

Comments in the Systems Appraisal indicated that NMU has a thorough process for curriculum development and that academic departments keep courses and programs current. Noted strengths are in providing learning support for at risk students, advising to students who are undecided on their career goals, and well-integrated library services and our laptop technology program. NMU has processes for documenting teaching effectiveness and peer-evaluation, and addresses student needs when designing course delivery systems.

Significant progress has occurred in outcomes assessment. As a result of a 2003-07 Action Project on outcomes assessments, a **formal process for annual Outcomes Assessment reporting and plan updating now exists**. This process includes both academic and service departments, uses a rubric for consistency and provides feedback to every unit for appropriate response. In Fall 2006, the Academic Senate approved a revised set of **common learning objectives** for six divisions within a Liberal Studies Program, documented in 1P1 and 1P2, and **adopted a rotational method to assess outcomes**, given in 1P18. One full rotation is almost completed, and assessment results were moved to the appropriate departments for deliberation; results appear in 1R2. Specific program outcomes assessment has also improved over the past four years. Two rotations of the new rubric-based Outcomes Assessment process have been conducted, with some results listed in 1R3 and 1R4. Two 2007-2008 Action Projects were retired after making recommendations on online education and scholarship. A rubric for quality control of online courses is being piloted using validated models, such as qualitymatters.org. NMU accepted advice in the Systems Appraisal and enlisted the aid of an outcomes assessment expert, Dr. Susan Hatfield, who has three scheduled visits to NMU; the first occurred in January 2009.

Northern serves a largely rural population base with the second-highest Pell Grant awards per Michigan campus. About 33% of NMU students are first-generation college attendees and just under 20% enter the University as academically at-risk students. Historically, a priority has been given to providing learning support programs. In the past two years, efforts were successfully made to assess learning support needs and formalize processes for academic service learning, short-term study abroad and the comprehensive student civic engagement program, the Superior Edge. These efforts involved personnel, procedures, and benchmarking; further improvements will assess outcomes from these programs. Portfolio revisions in 1P15, 1P16, and 1I1 describe these changes. Longitudinal data from the past decade and beyond for graduation rates and cohort performance data are now included in 1R2, 1R3 and 1R5 to show the impact of improvements in student support initiatives, specifically the success of First Year Experience and probationary programs. Related data is found in Categories 3 and 6.

NMU pursued the suggestion of using more peer data to evaluate effectiveness. NSSE data provide both a longitudinal and peer comparison view. NSSE data from 2004 and 2007 have been shared with appropriate units, such as Center for Student Enrichment, First Year Experience, Teaching & Learning Advisory Council, deans and requesting academic departments. Select measures are included in 1R6 and will be compared with the 2010 collection. Other peer data and its usage by departments in their outcomes assessment plan are now in 1R6, including results from EBI and board and certification exams.

We acknowledge that our assessment methods are not yet mature. However, we have extended new efforts to assist all academic departments with their assessment of student learning; in 2008-09, all academic departments submitted Outcomes Assessment Reports and received feedback on their work. Additional assessment training, collection of best practices, and improved procedures are needed and are a part of a 2008-09 Action Project.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To demonstrate progress on outcomes assessment through clarified measures, data usage, and processes for common and specific program learning objectives, and co-curricular programs.
- To use a coordinated program review for monitoring currency, consistency, and effectiveness.
- To provide longitudinal results for programs and initiatives, and thus to demonstrate the impact of these improvements.
- To provide peer comparison data.

Category 2: Other Distinctive Objectives

Category 2 has been completely rewritten using the revised AQIP category questions. At the time of writing the 2006 Systems Portfolio, the focus of Category 2 was misinterpreted. The current version documents different Other Distinctive Objectives. However, the observations in the System Appraisal for both strengths and opportunities for improvements are still applicable when viewed in a more generic sense.

The System Appraisal noted that NMU considers its needs through a systematic review, uses task groups to define and implement goals and outcomes and uses advisory groups to oversee and review effectiveness of other distinctive objectives.

While we provide numerous services to external stakeholders, three areas were agreed upon as our Other Distinctive Objectives, which are summarized in Overview Question 2. For many years, NMU has been involved with Community Engagement and Workforce Development for people living in our community. In the past five years, we have undertaken an increased role in the Economic Development of the Upper Peninsula. Longitudinal data are now included in 2R2 for all three objectives.

In March 2008, to improve the processes, assessment and decision-making associated with our strategic objectives, President Wong announced the Road Map to 2015, with four components: Innovation, Meaningful Lives, Leveraging Campus Attributes and Community Engagement—all four of which integrate into our Other Distinctive Objectives. In September 2008, an Action Project was approved to set benchmarks for each goal and priority within the Road Map, to enable us to build effectiveness measures into all new initiatives. This Action Project will provide NMU with a system that will document our progress towards our goals and priorities. In December 2008, the Provost announced the Wildcat Innovation Fund to provide new opportunities for faculty and staff to implement new initiatives that will advance NMU's Road Map to 2015.

In 2006, our student-related community outreach programs were clustered into a new Center for Student Enrichment for better coordination. These include the Student Leader Fellowship Program, Volunteer Center, Academic Service Learning (ASL), Superior Edge and Health Promotions. ASL was institutionalized with course designation in the schedule book and on transcripts, and a standing advisory board. In December 2008, NMU received the elective Carnegie Community Engagement Designation for both Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships. The inventory taken to complete that application stretched across the campus and its divisions—an endeavor that benchmarked our current state and will be used in the Road Map benchmarking Action Project. Community-based research and scholarship are increasing, as well as grant receipts. Increased efforts to monitor peer comparison have occurred using NSSE results and a study comparing federal funding received for research at NMU and at nine peer institutions, shown in 2R3. Further use of NSSE data is under way by multiple units, but peer comparisons for our Other Distinctive Objectives prove more difficult.

Processes to identify faculty and staff needs are better articulated by drawing the connection between our center-based infrastructure, explained in 2P1, and our initiative proposal budget requirements, described in 2P5. Process development is also tied to strategic planning within resource constraints (8P6). Center staff members, and faculty who work with them, are involved at the day-to-day and decision-making levels.

These Other Distinctive Objectives have improved the curriculum by introducing a real-world component to complement classroom and textbook learning. They have brought faculty, staff and administrators into regular contact with the external community. They have improved the job opportunities for our students and increased on-campus recruiting and placement. Finally, they have increased the availability of resources – financial, technical, knowledge, and human – to the campus.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To clarify assessing needs, reviewing assessments, incorporating feedback and measures to collect and analyze data related to their distinct objectives.
- To provide longitudinal results for programs and initiatives, and thus to demonstrate the impact of these improvements.
- To determine faculty and staff needs.
- To provide peer comparison data.

Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

The Systems Appraisal recognized that NMU builds and maintains relationships with students through programs focused on increasing student success, and with regional and local employers and stakeholders through communications and inclusion. The report also stated NMU uses NSSE, employer and alumni surveys, market research, forums, and other avenues to solicit stakeholder needs.

Key Stakeholders	
Students	Prospective
	Transfer
	Current
Community	Regional
	Alumni
Employers	

To more precisely analyze and document our processes relating to understanding the needs of student and other stakeholders, a key stakeholder classification scheme was identified. It is described in Overview Question 3 and applied throughout Category 3. This framework made it

much easier to identify requirements and expectations, processes used to determine needs, measures taken and uses of our data, placing this information in a tabular form for each question. Faculty and staff are excluded from this framework since these stakeholders are addressed in 1P15, 4P8, 4R2, 7P3 and 7R2.

Our student needs and relationship building are aligned with the two divisions within the Provost office: Academic Affairs, and Student Services and Enrollment. The units within the Student Services and Enrollment are closely intertwined, and the majority of their programs are collaborative. While each unit is responsible for gathering and analyzing data for their respective program, including annual outcomes assessment plans/reports, the unit heads discuss their data, problems and ideas at weekly meetings. Broad-based programs, such as Freshman Orientation and First Year Experience, involve the Dean of Students, Admissions, Academic Career and Advising Center, Career Services, Center for Student Enrichment, Registrar's Office, academic departments, and faculty advisors. Measures for all stakeholders are being used and are described in 3R1, along with the frequency with which we complete these analyses. Student satisfaction data are reported for the First Year Experience Program and Housing and Residence Life. A more systematic and standardized process has evolved for alumni surveys conducted by the Institutional Research Office, as described in Category 1 and supplemented in 3R2 and 3R3. Additional longitudinal alumni satisfaction measures are collected by the Alumni Association Office and reported in 3R4 and 3R5, along with satisfaction results from other stakeholders.

The Student Handbook already included a section for student complaints, spelling out procedures for both academic and non-academic complaints, and associated appeal procedures. In addition, a more coordinated logging procedure has been instituted since our 2006 Portfolio was written, to monitor formal student complaints. Section 3P6 also describes complaint venues and procedures for use by other stakeholders.

As result of reviewing the Systems Appraisal Report, there is an increased awareness of the importance of peer data (NSSE and EBI), plans for increasing usage of a common alumni survey, and better tracking of satisfaction. NSSE data are now used as one set of measures for student satisfaction with faculty/student relationships, advising, and effectiveness of the Superior Edge and other student enrichment programs.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To describe who systematically gathers, analyzes, formally reviews, and disseminates data for decision-making regarding the changing needs of students.
- To clarify measures and include results; specifically to support claims about progress in retention and graduation, correlated to student satisfaction.
- To expand the stakeholder complaint process through analysis, action, and communication to stakeholders, and creation of an appeals process.
- To use comparative data from peers.
- To determine faculty and staff satisfaction levels.

Category 4: Valuing People

The Systems Appraisal indicated several areas in need of elaboration with respect to Valuing People. We note that NMU provides a comprehensive benefits package for full-time employees, recognizes employee and student contributions and achievements, and utilizes a thorough hiring process.

The University expects employees to maintain skills and knowledge levels required for their position, and it funds these efforts, e.g., by encouraging attendance at conferences and seminars, and acquiring training materials. Each faculty member has an annual professional development allowance, which is frequently supplemented from various levels in the division of Academic Affairs. Section 4P9 describes NMU-funded development; in particular the Student Support and Enrollment Services units that are subject to government and regulatory agencies. Mandatory training and awareness programs exist for ethics, safety and wellness. Overseen by the Equal Opportunity Office, Public Safety, the Health Care and Wellness Committee, and the Safety Committee, these programs are described in 4P7, 4P13 and 6P3.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To develop a detailed process to determine credentials, skills, and values required of new hires.
- To develop processes related to valuing people that measure, document, analyze, and communicate results at a deeper, substantive level.
- To benchmark and provide peer comparison data.
- To create a comprehensive process to align training activities with improvement plans.

Longitudinal productivity data in 4R3 demonstrates that NMU has consistently had higher productivity levels in all three categories (administrative, staff, and faculty) than our state peers. The improvements in productivity have been possible through leveraging technology and improving processes. NMU has maintained or improved its delivery of products and services to students in both instructional and non-instructional areas, now demonstrated in Category 1, 3 and 6 Results, while concurrently having the fifth largest increase in state enrollment figures for 2001-07. Longitudinal and peer comparison data of our faculty mix are explained in 4P5 and 4R4.

With regard to administrative personnel evaluation, an automated, online performance evaluation system was launched in 2006 to create a standardized instrument and process. Overall results appear in 4R2; these findings enhance the validity of the process by systematically soliciting input from subordinates, and they provide a basis for individual growth. They also alerted Human Resources of a need for administrative training, which is currently underway (5P9). The faculty evaluation process is dictated by both the Master Agreements and departmental bylaws. While the Master Agreement requires evaluation in areas of teaching, professional development, and service, departmental bylaws must stipulate the evidence necessary to demonstrate fulfillment towards helping students learn and accomplishing other objectives. All bylaws are approved by the Provost, who confirms that they align with NMU's mission and vision, and more recently with the Road Map to 2015.

A 2006 employee survey was mentioned in the 2006 Systems Portfolio, but analysis had not taken place. The results are now given in 4R2 and led Human Resources to set the following five priorities:

1. Streamline and standardize the staffing process;
2. Establish a training/development strategy, needs analysis, and appropriate offerings;
3. Complete the classification project and review compensation approach;
4. Meet with key groups and open avenues for on-going communication and feedback; and
5. Build the HR team and shift perspective to a more proactive, strategic partnership with employees, leaders, and the University as a whole.

Two external consultants were retained to improve the staffing process, (PeopleAdmin for hiring process and HireRight for background checks), and a third firm, Sibson, to address the classification project. Use of consultants will help assure that NMU processes are comparable to our peers. The data also prompted an increased use of external market matches to the CUPA-HR data and development of a new NMU Leadership Model, which is discussed in 5P9. Item 2 in the above priorities list, "Establish a training/development strategy, needs analysis, and offerings," was also noted in the System Appraisal Report. While a process of leadership training has been approved and is ongoing, further progress remains a significant, but recognized, outstanding task, mentioned in Category 5 below.

Category 5: Leadership and Communication

The Systems Appraisal noted NMU strengths as having a formal and well-established committee structure, possessing a timely communication system, and fostering an atmosphere of open communication. Section 5P8 describes the role of campus forums, held five to eight times per year, as a dialog with the campus and community on mission, vision and strategies. As an explicit sign of leadership's support of the NMU mission and vision, the Wildcat Innovator Fund was established in 2009 to encourage solutions aligned with the Road Map to 2015.

Category 5's leadership issues are a reflection and compilation of data-driven decision-making in other categories. We have attempted to better document data usage throughout our institution in our 2009 interim Portfolio. Section 5P6 recounts primary information collections, such as enrollment and retention data, productivity measures, and state budget allocations, and it describes how this information is used to make decisions.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To develop a Leadership Succession process.
- To demonstrate the use of data in decision-making.
- To provide supporting data as evidence of effectiveness of leading and communicating.
- To use comparative data from peers to affirm areas of strength and reveal shortcomings.

In response to the identification of leadership succession as an area for improvement, section 5P10 now better documents and describes leadership transition procedures for the Board of Trustees, senior administrators and academic department, and the Lake Superior Leadership Academy. Since its inception in 1999, 30 administrators, faculty and staff had NMU funding to complete the 8-month Academy program. To improve leadership succession, Human Resources initiated a formal succession planning process. To date, the following actions have occurred:

- Workforce analyses done to identify planned turnovers (retirements) in leadership areas;
- Performance reviews now include explicit discussion of needed employee development;
- A Leadership Model was developed as a framework for leadership talent assessment and evaluation;
- A newly developed evaluation tool for non-represented employees is used during merit-increase discussions; and
- A Professional Development Program for academic department heads began in 2009.

Continued progress on leadership succession plans is expected. In part due to concerns expressed on internal promotions, NMU made a commitment to conduct national searches for academic leadership positions at the rank of Department Head or above. The College of Arts and Sciences is currently conducting five national searches for academic department heads.

The NMU President, Provost and Vice President for Administration and Finance are active members of their respective national higher education organizations and regularly use their organizational meetings for communications to assess issues relevant to higher education nationally to make appropriate decisions at our University. NMU's President, Dr. Les Wong, is currently a member of the Board of Directors of American Council of Educators.

NMU administrators use the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan to access research and information services that enhance decision-making, to collaborate with other Michigan public institutions, and to permit comparisons of our progress with our Michigan peer institutions. The University recently decided to participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), a national voluntary initiative for 4-year public colleges and universities. This new effort and investment will permit us to enhance our accountability and support ongoing institutional efforts for continuous improvement.

Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations

MU has a strong infrastructure for student support, identifying student needs through e-mails, meetings, surveys, forums and focus and discussion groups. NMU support units possess Outcomes Assessment objectives, collect data and measure progress towards improvements.

NMU identifies faculty, staff and administrative needs through strategic development, annual planning processes, feedback venues and its well-established structure of advisory committees. Overview Question 7 and 6P2 list and describe these key support areas and needs identification. Other categories also relate to support needs: 4P8 for training, and 7P3 and 7P5 for information. The outstanding task, discussed in Category 4, to establish a training/development strategy, also addresses supporting institutional operations.

For each key administrative support systems (Student Services, Budget and Financial Services, Technology Support Services, Facilities, and University Services), 6P4 provides details and/or samples of day-to-day processes. Section 6R1 lists measures; 6R2 and 6R3 provide results; and 6R4 documents evidence of their use. NMU's reliance on technology is further described in the Category 7 discussion on resources. When utilizing automated systems for all core support activities, the benefits are standardized and streamlined processes.

Outcomes Assessment Plans for NMU student support units have measurable objectives, and the software and databases needed to generate reports are in place. Longitudinal examples of three initiatives (All Campus Tutoring, the Freshman Probation and the Peer Assisted Learning System Programs) are included (6R2 and 6R4) as an example of how we evaluate their effectiveness. Since service units are included in the 2008-09 Outcomes Assessment Action Project, knowledge and continued use of these systems will help determine where further improvements can be made.

Many recent achievements at NMU reflect our reliance on data. Based on analysis of P-Card volumes and the dollar amounts of transactions for office supplies, Purchasing issued a bid for office supplies. Departments now order online and have purchases delivered to the department office to reduce lost internal transit time. Calculated cost savings totaled \$165,825 for FY2007. Via space utilization software during the summer of 2008, staff evaluated classrooms use in the Jacobetti Center. With the data provided by the system, the University consolidated classroom space within the facility and identified approximately 10,000 square feet to be adapted for other uses.

Comparative data for Michigan peers is more readily available for budget and financial services, university services, and facilities. Some of these peer data are now included in 6R5.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To identify processes which determine faculty, staff and administrative needs.
- To develop processes that supply data to determine if needs are met.
- To provide evidence that data is used to drive decisions.
- To use comparative data from peers.

Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness

NMU's Office of Institutional Research was noted to regularly collect, analyze, use and disseminate data. NMU has a secure, centralized Oracle database with report generation tools available to departments. Overview Question 7 documents software resources that were purchased or developed in-house to support operations; when data overlap, these systems are integrated with the Banner SCT system. It is common for units to use query software to extract data from the central database and then use EXCEL for decision-support data analysis.

In addition to regular data collections of traditional productivity indices, the Institutional Research Office (IR) conducts many customized data collections and studies to meet departmental informational needs. Services range from selection of data to interpretive results, tailored to the department and purpose of the study (i.e., solve a problem, identify a trend, or assess outcomes). In the fall of 2008, IR acquired Qualtrics survey software for both academic and administrative purposes.

The role of Administrative Information Technology (AdIT) unit and their procedures are further explained throughout Category 7; they are the primary point of contact for information services across all university units and they maintain all administrative application software. In 2007, AdIT began creating Cognos Business Intelligence reporting cubes to meet departmental needs. These cubes have the ability to view data from multiple perspectives and drill down to underlying data. Section 7P1 and 7P2 describe these processes and usages. Admissions and Orientation dashboards are used by the Enrollment Management Team to compare admitted students by year, type, college, region, major and program. Cubes for student retention and workforce planning are in development. A continuing IT goal is to empower end users to select data relevant to their needs and create their own reports using a centralized database. Following a suggestion in the Systems Appraisal, a 2008-09 Action Project will create a dashboard for our Road Map to 2015 progress.

Employing online self-service applications for the majority of university transactions, we have expanded service hours to 24X7 and contained personnel costs. Continued investment in e-Library services such as ARES and OneSearch software services and MelCat membership have enabled the Academic Information Services division to increase library holdings while keeping costs at par with our peers.

A much clearer set of measures for assuring systems effectiveness are given in 7P7, grouped by timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and security, with results given in 7R2. Section 7P5 contains a list of peer institutions and comparative data resources used by NMU units. Finance and Planning uses the HEIDI (state of Michigan higher education database) cube to benchmark NMU against the other Michigan public universities. National information Technology statistics annually generated by EDUCAUSE are used to determine NMU's status of IT compared with both our Carnegie peers and national averages. These are now documented in 7R3.

Implementation of an automated system must include a cost/benefit estimate; however, we recognize a need for more efforts to determine actual cost/benefit figures of information technology.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To use centralized databases.
- To document processes that select, measure, and analyze data for continuous improvement.
- To better organize and use in-depth data, beyond traditional measures.
- To provide evidence that technology systems are effective in managing the institution and driving performance improvement.
- To use comparative data from national sources.

Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement

NMU has annual planning budget allocation processes that include the top three administrative teams: the President's Council, Academic Cabinet, and the Budget and Finance Team. These groups also consider input collected from the campus community. The Systems Appraisal noted that a strong committee structure encourages participation and representation in planning and alignment at various levels. NMU provides professional development for administrators, faculty and staff, recognizes innovation, and communicates changing strategies to its stakeholders.

Overview Question 8 presents a realistic view of NMU's strengths and weaknesses, challenges and opportunities; both long- and short-term strategic planning have to exist within that context and be sustainable by available and foreseeable resources. Revisions to Category 8 expand on processes and provide data and financial indicators regularly used in strategic planning. Short-term planning is more clearly defined and differentiated from long-term planning in 8P1 and 8P2. These sections also better describe the role of the Board of Trustees, illustrate the long-short guide-revise relationship, and present the internal committees responsible for planning and their foci.

Information used for decision-making includes historical data, projection trends, current activity levels, risk assessment, and comparative data from peers collected electronically and from regular meetings with administrators at those universities. Computer software and modeling tools are heavily used for "what-if" analyses. Through the interwoven layers of our committee structure (8P2 and 8P4), data and knowledge are shared, targets are set and decisions made (8P5). Extended content in 8P6 and 8P7 describe our budget allocation process for both initiatives and annual planning, and risk assessment processes. Section 8R2 provides a table of our cost containment measures for the past decade.

While the 2006 Systems Portfolio lacked evidence of data, the 2009 interim Systems Portfolio lists key financial indicators (see 8R1), including appropriations per FYES and revenues from tuition, fees, dining and residence halls. This information is presented to the Board of Trustee at every meeting, along with other measures of institutional health, including graduation rates, orientation numbers, student applicant information by region, quality of incoming student students, Faculty mix and productivity results, and University bond ratings. Sections 8R2 and 8R3 further explain data usage.

NMU created an internal database using HEIDI information from 1987-2008, enabling us to generate regular and ad hoc reports for decision-making using peer data. Statewide peer data are compared to us enrollment and financial performance data, as discussed in 8R4.

NMU measures itself against the performance of previous years and peer institutions in Michigan, and it and evaluates operational activity and initiatives on an ongoing schedule. Because of a lean administrative structure and the effective use of wireless technologies, program administrators can communicate activities more broadly, increasing transparency among constituencies (8R5, 8I1 and 8I2). Since the Systems Appraisal, NMU has developed an Academic Master Plan (Road Map to 2015) and a Campus Master Plan, and instituted the Wildcat Innovation Fund. The Systems Appraisal was instrumental in helping us develop a habit of documenting processes for new initiatives. Under the direction of a new Provost, new Vice President of Finance and Administration, and new directors for International Programs and Human Resources, procedures are being created, streamlined and/or documented.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To better describe processes for short-term planning.
- To establish a clear link between short-term and long-term planning.
- To demonstrate and document evidence of data-driven decision-making throughout NMU.
- To provide evidence of data-driven processes for resource allocation.
- To provide longitudinal evidence of success of continuous improvement.
- To compare with peer institutions.

Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships

NMU was noted as providing supporting resources for its collaborative relationships, which exist across campus. The questions in Category 9 were split into more manageable units in the revised AQIP Portfolio guide, and this Category has been significantly rewritten accordingly.

Very specific processes exist for collaborations with organizations from which NMU gets its students. Focused primarily in the Admissions Office, processes for high schools and community colleges are described in 1P1. Processes for our collaborations with organizations to which NMU sends its students are more diffuse, and are found in Career Services and academic departments. 9P2 highlights the School of Education with long-standing collaborations as a regional leader with school districts; the Criminal Justice Department with an online Loss Prevention Program co-developed with a national advisory board; the Regional Police Academy serving officers across the Upper Peninsula; and the health-related disciplines of Nursing and Clinical Lab Sciences which have hospital and clinic affiliations across the upper Midwest. Section 9P3 describes two types of collaborations, which supply services to students, mental health care relationships and health center services; both have external regulatory agencies and must conform to standard procedures. NMU collaborates with other institutions to obtain cost-effective services for purchasing and library holdings. These are documented in 9P4, along with references to other processes documented in Categories 6 and 7. Section 9P5 is expanded to include relationships with accrediting agencies, the community, the U.S. Olympics Association and the Presidents Council Universities of Michigan.

Some portions of Category 9 overlap with Category 2 since our Other Distinctive Objectives include Workforce Development, Community Engagement and Economic Development. Nonetheless, additional measures more directly related to relationship building are given in 9R1-9R2, namely longevity of relationship, satisfaction, program impact, and program revisions based upon data results. A number of relationships have continued for over 20 years.

Guided by the Road Map to 2015 element of Community Engagement, NMU successfully applied for the Carnegie Community Engagement Designation in 2008. The in-depth application required a campus-wide inventory of all outreach and civic engagement activities, partnerships, and assessments of those. This reflective exercise helped us better frame our programs and identify ways to compare with peer institutions. Section 9R3 notes competitive awards and NSSE data as two measures of comparison. The “centers” infrastructure of NMU has worked effectively to collaborate with our local and regional institutions. We are looking towards more internal collaboration of those centers to further increase potential opportunities and impact through synergy.

Opportunities for Improvement

- To provide evidence for processes involving collaborative relationships, both internal and external.
- To develop measures to analyze the success of collaborative relationships.
- To provide data related to those measures.
- To compare with peer institutions.

Action Project Summaries

At the time of the 2006 Systems Portfolio, there were three active Action Projects, all of which have been retired.

<p>Development and Implementation of Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program 2003-07</p>	<p>Review and Revise the Student Advising Processes 2003-07</p>	<p>Superior Edge (Academic Service Learning and Community Involvement) 2006-07</p>
<p>This project resulted in all academic and service units on campus developing an assessment plan describing their objectives and submitting an annual report</p> <p>NMU will continue to implement evaluation plans and modify programmatic and departmental activities based on assessment data. This process will be monitored by the evaluation committees, the unit administrator and the AQIP coordinator.</p> <p>The Liberal Studies Committee will continue its work on identification of evaluation processes for the liberal studies program that incorporates the approved student outcomes. This project is being followed by a 2008-09 Action Plan.</p>	<p>Three effective practices that were implemented because of this Action Project include the online degree audit system, the electronic pre-requisite checking process and the Advisee List. The Advisee List allows faculty to email advisees either individually or as a group; view each student's major, course schedule and academic proficiency code; and remove or set an advisor hold.</p> <p>All of these practices were implemented following assessment and evaluation of the advising process. The final recommendations of the AQIP Advising Subcommittee have not been fully implemented due to several procedural, staffing and budget reasons.</p> <p>This project is being revisited as a priority of NMU's new academic strategic plan, the Road Map to 2015.</p>	<p>The Superior Edge Action Project has resulted in one of NMU's most successful student programs. The Superior Edge Program encompasses a wide range of in- and out-of-classroom experiences that provide NMU students with a distinct advantage by better preparing them for careers, graduate school and life as engaged citizens.</p> <p>The number of diversity programs has increased. There are more academic-service learning (ASL) courses. The University has developed a process to designate ASL courses in the course scheduling book.</p> <p>Another effective practice implemented was the development of the Student Enrichment Transcript.</p> <p>This project was discussed during a presentation at the 2008 Higher Learning Commission meeting.</p>

Three AQIP Action Projects were completed in 2007-08, as described below. We asked the entire University community to propose potential projects. All proposals were electronically posted, and input on each of the 22 proposals was solicited and posted online, fostering a virtual dialog about these proposals. The proposals and the comments were then presented to the President's Council, which ranked them, and presented the rankings to the NMU community. Very strong University support for the Sustainability Project moved it from a ranking of 20 into the top three proposals. The three projects that were selected for 2007-08 are described below; all have been retired.

Enhancing the Campus Climate for Scholarship 2007-08	Improve and Expand Online Learning 2007-08	Northern Naturally: A More Sustainable NMU 2007-08
<p>The goal of this project was to enhance the climate for scholarship and other creative activities on campus, with a focus on increasing undergraduate participation in scholarly activities mentored by the faculty.</p> <p>The final review of this project noted that "...the institution has achieved an exceptional accomplishment through this project, and its work represents an 'outstanding practice' that ought to be shared with other higher education institutions". The project will be discussed during a presentation at the 2009 Higher Learning Commission meetings.</p>	<p>This project's goals were to document the current state of NMU's online portfolio, improve the quality and consistency of online course offerings, identify stakeholders needing support/training, and find new opportunities for online offerings.</p> <p>The enthusiasm of the team that worked on this project is evidenced by the fact that although this project was officially "retired" in October of 2008, the committee has continued to meet and work during the 2008-09 academic year.</p>	<p>This project set out to help students, faculty and staff learn about sustainability and evaluate how to develop and promote a sustainable campus environment.</p> <p>The project was responsible for the implementation of the "Big Green Idea," a popular student competition on how to make NMU a greener campus. The Associated Students of NMU, our student government group, will oversee the Big Green Idea during the 2008-09 year.</p>

Careful review of our Systems Appraisal resulted in the adoption of a slightly different procedure for the 2008-09 Action Project selection. While the bodies reviewing the proposals were the same as those used for 2007-08 projects, the 17 "Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies" as described in our Feedback Appraisal formed the substance of the proposals that were deliberated. The three 2008-09 Action Projects that were selected are described below.

Aligning unit mission statements with revised University mission 2008-09	Benchmarking the NMU Road Map to 2015 2008-09	Documenting and Benchmarking the NMU Outcomes Assessment Process 2008-09
<p>Our Appraisal indicated that “Evidence relating to Criterion 2, Core Component D – all levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission – needs expansion.”</p> <p>This Action Project was undertaken to ensure that all levels of college planning are in alignment with the revised University mission. An advantage of this project is that it involves <u>all</u> University employees, when they evaluate the mission of their unit.</p>	<p>Our Appraisal indicated that our Portfolio “...provided little or no evidence of external or internal benchmarks”, and that our processes for implementing new initiatives would be strengthened by “...building effectiveness measures into all new initiatives to ensure that measurement is conducted, analyzed and used for continuous improvement”.</p> <p>Our new strategic plan – the Road Map to 2015 – was introduced in March 2008, and this Action Project will help NMU recognize the important role it plays in the continuous quality improvement of all units across campus. We also anticipate that this project will help us in future strategic planning by articulating a process by which we will set internal and external benchmarks for University initiatives. Finally, we note that both the Provost and the Vice President for Finance and Administration provide updates that document our progress towards Road Map goals as regular features at all Board of Trustees meetings.</p>	<p>The Appraisal indicated that “Evidence presented regarding Criterion 3, Core Component A – the organization’s goals for student learning outcome are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible – is weak”. This Action Project will continue to strengthen our current Outcomes Assessment Process for both Academic and Service Departments. Further, as a part of this Action Project, we will attempt to develop a process that integrates Departmental Outcomes Assessment with Academic Program Review, since our Appraisal noted that NMU shows “...little or no evidence of oversight, review and coordination of (curricular issues) at any level above the department.”</p>

Appendix A. AQIP Committees and Oversight (2007-09)

AQIP Teams

(Lead person in bold font)

AQIP Coordination	Cynthia Prosen , Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Sandra Poindexter, Professor of Business
Category One – Helping Students Learn	Sandra Poindexter, Professor of Business Paul Duby, Associate Vice President of Institutional Research Andrew Poe, Chair of Academic Senate Chairs of Academic Senate Subcommittees (LSC, OIC, CUP, AISAC, TLAC, ETRPC, AAPC)
Category Two – Accomplishing Other Distinct Objectives	Cynthia Prosen , Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Sandra Poindexter, Professor of Business Academic Deans (P. Lang, R. Sanyal, T. Seethoff, D. Walch)
Category Three - Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders Needs	Cynthia Prosen , Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Sandra Poindexter, Professor of Business William Bernard, Associate Provost for Student Services and Enrollment Academic Deans (P. Lang, R. Sanyal, T. Seethoff, D. Walch)
Category Four – Valuing People	Michael Roy, Special Projects Consultant of Finance and Admin. Ann Sherman, Director of Human Resources Gavin Leach, Vice President of Finance and Administration Cindy Polman, Senior Financial Analyst
Category Five – Leading & Communicating	Cynthia Prosen , Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Leslie Wong, President Susan Koch, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Gavin Leach, Vice President of Finance and Administration Cynthia Paavola, Director of Communications and Marketing
Category Six – Supporting Institutional Operations	Michael Roy, Special Projects Consultant of Finance and Admin. William Bernard, Associate Provost for Student Services and Enrollment Art Gischia Associate VP Business/Auxiliary Service for Purchasing Kathy Richards Associate VP Engineering, Planning and Facilities Thomas Schacht, Director of Vielmetti Health Center Darlene Walch, Dean of Academic Information Services
Category Seven – Measuring Effectiveness	Michael Roy, Special Projects Consultant of Finance and Admin. Gavin Leach, Vice President of Finance and Administration Darlene Walch, Dean of Academic Information Services David Maki, Chief Technology Officer Felecia Flack, Director of Support/Consulting Services Sandra Poindexter, Professor of Business
Category Eight – Planning Continuous Improvement	Michael Roy, Special Projects Consultant of Finance and Admin. Gavin Leach, Vice President of Finance and Administration Sherri Towers, Budget Director Cindy Polman, Senior Financial Analyst Sandra Poindexter, Professor of Business
Category Nine - Building Collaborative Relationships	Sandra Poindexter, Professor of Business Fred Joyal, Special Asst-President on Economic Development

Federal Compliance Report Team

Report Coordinator	Sandra Poindexter, Professor of Business
Title IV Requirements of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act (policy I.A.5)	Michael Rotundo, Director of Financial Aid
Federal Compliance Visits to Off-Campus Locations (policy I.C.2)	Cynthia Prosen, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
Credits, Program Length, and Tuition (policy I.C.7)	Kim Rotundo, Registrar Paul Duby, Associate Vice President of Institutional Research
Professional Accreditation (policy III.A.1.)	Cynthia Prosen, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
Third Party Comment (policy IV.A.8)	Cynthia Paavola, Director of Communications and Marketing Cynthia Prosen, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
Institution's Advertising and Recruitment Materials (policy IV.B.2)	Gerri Daniels, Director of Admissions Anne Stark, Marketing Director
Institutional Records of Student Complaints (policy IV.B.4)	William Bernard, Associate Provost for Student Services and Enrollment Christine Greer, Dean of Students
Clery Crime Statistics	Ken Chant, Director of Public Safety and Police Services

Action Projects Teams (2008-09)

Aligning unit mission statements with revised University mission	<p>Cynthia Prosen, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive management • Academic Cabinet • Finance and Budget Team • Directors of Student Services & Enrollment • Directors of Public Safety, NMU Foundation, Communications & Marketing, Human Resources, EEO, Athletics, USOEC, Risk Mgmt • Coordinators of Grants, Continuing Education, Heritage Museum
Benchmarking the NMU Road Map to 2015	<p>Terrance Seethoff, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation (7 members) • Meaningful Lives (8 members) • Campus Attributes (5 members) • Community Engagement (8 members)
Documenting and Benchmarking the NMU Outcomes Assessment Process	<p>Sheila Burns, Dept Head, Psychology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Cantrill, Dept. Head, Communication & Performance Studies • K. C. Holder, Professor, School of Education • Cindy Polman, Senior Financial Analyst. Finance & Planning Dept. • Peter Holliday, Director, Student Support Services • Robyn Stille, Director, Donor Relations & Stewardship • Gary Stark, Professor, College of Business