**Improvement Plan Feedback 2012**

**For Grants & Research Dept**

This Improvement Plan is reviewed and requires some revisions before it can be approved. **Please submit a revised Plan by Monday Nov. 19** via the SHARE website using a separate dropbox labeled, “Resubmission of revised departmental files.”

*Service Assessment Committee*

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| General Comments: |
| The Grant’s objective #1 is quite lengthy for this type of document and one paragraph was suggested for deletion. The 1st step in the Means of Assessment was moved to Obj #2. If you agree, please remove the crossed-out text and the comments – that is all the revisions needed.  The McNair objective needs more information. If the comments/questions are addressed in a revision, the revision should be accepted.  The new mission statement is noted.  NOTE: When you write the report next year, please attempt to do some peer or national comparisons in order to put NMU into perspective. |

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| **Effective Objectives meet the following criteria** | Obj #1  Met? | Obj #2  Met? | Obj #3 Met? |
| Identifies a measured goal (target statistic) or process development (impact and purpose) or study (scope and purpose) | Y | Y |  |
| Objective wording is one simple and straightforward goal. Avoids “and.” Uses an active verb (create, present, review, collect, analyze, interpret, recommend, solve, design, explain, etc. in defining the objective) | A bit lengthy | Y |  |
| States a rationale aligned with objective | Y | Y |  |
| Identifies AQIP Portfolio category this objective will improve or Road Map for an initiative | Y | Y |  |

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| **Effective Means of Assessment meet the following criteria** (Do not rely solely on indirect methods, e.g. satisfaction surveys, for all objectives) | Obj #1  Met? | Obj #2  Met? | Obj #3 Met? |
| For a measured goal, the data collection and analysis processes are described | Y | Y |  |
| For a process or product development or a study, a timeline is given with interim milestones, assigned unit responsibilities and dates to ensure that the objective will stay on track and get completed. |
| For a survey, indicates the implementation steps and survey methods and expected participants |
| Measures (2 are preferred) are given that will be used by the unit (in next year’s report) to evaluate whether the goal was actually achieved, i.e. did the intervention work. | Y(one was moved) | Y |  |
| Ties or aligns with objective, i.e. the plan appears to be a rational approach for achieving the objective. | Y | Y |  |

(Your Plan and detailed comments begin on the next page)

**Northern Michigan University**

**Improvement Plan / Assessment Report Form**

**Administrative or Educational Support Unit**

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| Name of Department or Unit | | Grants & Research Office | | | |
| This document is the | 🗹 PLAN or 🞎 REPORT for July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 | | | Date Submitted: | 9/26/12 |
| Submitted by (Unit Representative) | | | Erica Franich, Director | | |

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| **Department or Unit Mission Statement: Was this mission statement revised this year? X Yes \_\_ No** |
| The mission of the Northern Michigan University Grants and Research Office is to provide support to NMU faculty, staff and students in applying for internal and external funds for research and other scholarly activities, bringing integrity, clarity and ease to research and grant administration processes at NMU.  The Grants and Research Office:   * Sets research expectations and directions for basic and applied research and development as well as research and programmatic outreach to help meet the broader goals of the University; * Promotes integrity in the research enterprise by assuring compliance with applicable regulations and requirements for sponsored funding. The office is responsible for protecting NMU’s interests by reviewing proposals to external funding agencies (sponsors), initiating and implementing pre-award policies and procedures, providing training and outreach, and serving as a liaison between sponsors and NMU. * Advocates for research and graduate education through execution of policies that support successful funding searchers and award administration. The office coordinates with the NMU Controller’s Office to facilitate effective award setup and management of sponsored projects.   Through these activities the Grants and Research Office guides the university’s research endeavors on this forward path to fostering effective scholarly research, program development and student success. |

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| **Improvement Plan** |  |  | |
| **Administrative Objective #1** *(State an ongoing goal by which the unit gauges its overall performance in a key role year after year, i.e. your “bottom line” measure.)* |  | **Action Plan/Evidence of Assessment for Objective** *(Describe the statistic or criteria that measures success in achieving this goal. What is the desired and/or minimum target you expect*? *What method is used to collect the data for the statistic*?) | |
| *Objective*: A key immediate goal for this office is to increase the number of proposals, both internal and external, submitted overall with effort heavily weighted toward external funding. While increasing total proposals submitted is a goal, a key factor of measured growth for the upcoming year, FY12-13, will be to set an upward trend in the number of applied/basic research proposals to external funding sources.  According to records within the office, the grant majority of the ~50 proposals submitted annually were either internal (Reassigned Time Awards, Faculty Grants; just re-allocating internal resources) or small projects worth <$10,000 in the instruction, development or “other sponsored activity” category (i.e. Motorcycle Safety Training Course, College Day, Law Enforcement Training, Bus Driver Safety Program, etc.) There were very few applied research projects. Of the 69 total submissions in FY10-11 (including fellowships) 51 were awarded. This is a grand success rate overall, but only 8 were applied or basic research proposals submitted to external agencies (NIH, NSF, NASA, etc). Of these 8 only 1 was awarded. This suggests it is time to re-evaluate the support offered faculty attempting these larger, more involved submissions and increase 1) the number of large research proposals submitted and 2) the success rate by increasing the quality of proposals submitted.  These goals (increases) apply both to applied/basic research in sciences as well as submissions to humanities agencies. There are similar statistics for substantial requests (~$100K) for humanities projects (publishing for example), and the same approach applies: Increase support offered, increase quality and quantity of submissions, eventually increase success rate.  Our intent is to dvelop new methods, policies and procedures that will increase ease and efficiency of all internal and external proposal submissions. By making the proposal submission process more attainable for faculty, students and staff, proposals will increase in quality, which will increase competitiveness for funding, thus increasing the success rate of proposals. An increase in funded projects, both internal and external, will result in greater quantity of applied and basic research projects, faculty and student development, outreach and other sponsored projects. Such projects, whether applied research in the sciences or community outreach activities, would connect with a number of NMU Strategic Plan Road Map to 2015 Goals:  *Rationale (Why you are setting this objective; mark with “X”)*:  × Effectiveness/quality action Efficiency/cost action  × Compliance issue Satisfaction measure Create baseline  Other (explain):  *Alignment (Refer to last pages)*   1. *Which AQIP category does this address? Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives; Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations; Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement; and Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships* 2. *Does this objective relate to a Road Map goal? If yes, type the related Road Map codes here*: CA-2, CA-3; CE-1, CE-3, CE-4 |  | *Measures*:  This will be achieved through focus on infrastructure development: efforts to develop more effective methods, policies and procedures for proposal submission:   1. Develop document templates: Creating necessary pieces of a proposal can hinder faculty’s willingness to attempt proposal submission, as well as the quality and potential compliance with university, funding agency and federal funding policies. By mid-September 2012 templates for budget, budget narrative, CV (NSF compliant), cover sheet, Proposal Summary (NSF/Federal compliant) and Proposal Narrative (NSF/Federal compliant) will be available to all faculty to assist in every proposal submission. These templates will also ensure proposals are compliant with university, funding agency and federal (OMB Circulars) regulations regarding sponsored projects and regulated funding. 2. Policies regarding office support: Previously faculty were largely responsible for much of the pre-award (proposal preparation) work, while the G&R office largely facilitated filing of documents and garnering necessary approval signatures. As of hire of the new director (8/29/12) the G&R office will provide all levels of support necessary to ensure quality, competitive proposals are submitted to varied funding agencies. This will include searches for funding opportunities, task management and preparation of required documents, editing/proofing of all text, budget preparation, internal approval and proposal submission. The office will also support postaward management by working with the Controller’s Office for award setup and budget tracking, as well as support for all required award/project reporting. 3. Interaction with faculty- Increased communication with faculty/researchers is necessary to implement and utilize these policy and procedural changes. A number of meetings, workshops, small group and one-on-one interactions between faculty and G&R Office staff will be held throughout the year to communicate changes and offer guidance for new available tools (templates). Meetings with department heads and deans throughout campus will also help share information regarding services available and potential benefits to faculty and colleges/departments. This will be initiated in 2012-2013 and continue in upcoming years. 4. Website improvements: All templates will be made available on the Grants & Research website, as well as information regarding staffing changes, adjustments to mission statement and explanation of policies and procedures. The website will be utilized as a communication tool for interaction with faculty, further increasing opportunities to utilize tools and support. Announcements and scheduling for workshops will also be added to the website. | |
| **Assessment Report** |  |  | |
| **Summary of Data Collected** *(Provide trend data and summary)* |  | **Description of how results were used to improve services** *(Offers conclusions or interpretation and explains how data was used to make changes for improvement as related to the objective)* | |
| (Fill this cell only for the REPORT at the end of the year.) |  | (Fill this cell only for the REPORT at the end of the year.) | |
| **Improvement Plan** |  |  | |
| **Administrative Objective #2** *(State a 1-2 year objective intended to improve a unit process, service, or output.)* |  | **Action Plan/Evidence of Assessment for Objective** | |
| *Objective*: The long-term goal is to continue growing the office and effectively prioritizing efforts to maximize external funding coming into the university, while best utilizing the resources available in the office. While specific numbers for overall proposal submission growth have not yet been assigned, tremendous growth, for example from 50/year to 150/year, would hinder the ability of the staff (2 full time, 1 graduate assistant) to provide the necessary support to submit quality proposals for large research proposals. Support for smaller awards in the few thousand dollar range and internal awards will always be available but to increase competitiveness and success of the larger research awards (>$100,000 to federal agencies and private industry/corporations) will need to be prioritized. The new tracking systems, Banner particularly, will allow this office to track information regarding reasons for rejection and comments from reviewers for such proposals so the G&R office can consider what proposals have the best chance of success through resubmission. Efforts will then be focused on such “high priority” proposals while not neglecting other awards.  *Rationale (Why you are setting this objective; mark with “X”)*:  🗹 Effectiveness/quality action Efficiency/cost action  Compliance issue Satisfaction measure 🗹 Create baseline  Other (explain):  *Alignment (Refer to last pages)*   1. *Which AQIP category does this address?* 2. *Does this objective relate to a Road Map goal? If yes, type the related Road Map codes here*: |  | *Describe timetable plans to achieve objective*.  a. FY13: Begin tracking all proposal submissions utilizing new organization and support infrastructure  Develop more efficient organization and proposal tracking structures: Working closely with the Controller’s Office, this office will develop a new system for initiating proposals and tracking them throughout the pre- and post-award process. A proposal tracking spreadsheet will provide a proposal ID number and generate key information (researcher, proposal title, funding agency, amount, project start/end dates, etc.) to be used in quarterly reports provided to the Board of Trustees. A new system within the Banner database will be used to track proposals that will allow all grant administration representatives (Grants & Research and Controller’s Office) to work on proposal management. This will increase efficiency in tracking proposals and support greater fluid communication between all members of the grant management team. It will also localize all statistics (proposals submitted, awarded, declined, incomplete, funding agencies, amounts, etc.) for easier reporting and tracking.  b.FY13-14*:* Look at rejected proposals throughout the year to help guide proposal preparation efforts for all future proposals, and determine which had the most positive feedback from reviewers. During this year it is unlikely that growth in proposal submission would be so great that any perspective proposals would be deemed “low priority” or left unaddressed/supported. This year will simply be a time of reflection to see what types of proposals are receiving strong reviews and what direction our funding success is taking, if any.  c. FY15: At this point it is more likely that proposal load could reach, or approach, a capacity that overwhelms the staffing in the office. If increased staffing is not an option, the prioritization system will be used to focus efforts on the most successful proposals. [a core step is missing: when/where is the prioritization plan created? Who would be involved in its development? Who would be the decision-makers? ]  d. FY16~~:~~Time will tell what the levels of staffing and prioritization will be, but this overall plan will guide the office in preparation for continued growth.  etc.  *Beyond completing the above steps, how will you judge whether the objective was a success? Examples: If the rationale was Efficiency/cost, what is the desired and/or minimum target criteria for savings in time or cost? If the rationale was Satisfaction, what is the measure and what increase is desired*?  At this point the number of proposal submissions is the focus. Once we get to that stage where money starts to come in and we can get an idea of what proposals are working, we can start to focus on dollar amounts, i.e. how much money total do we expect or want to see coming into the university from external sponsors in FY-x, FY-y, FY-z etc. | |
| **Assessment Report** |  |  |
| **Summary of Data Collected #2** (*Summarize the evidence)* |  | **Description of how results were used to improve services** | |
| (Fill this cell only for the REPORT at the end of the year.) |  | (Fill this cell only for the REPORT at the end of the year.) | |
| **Improvement Plan** |  |  |
| **Administrative Objective #3** *(State a 1-2 year objective intended to improve a unit process, service, or output.)* |  | **Action Plan/Evidence of Assessment for Objective** | |
| *Objective*: McNair Scholars Program Annual Assessment Objective  The McNair Scholars Program seeks to increase research activity by undergraduate students and prepare program participants for graduate program acceptance, persistence, and degree attainment.  *Rationale (Why you are setting this objective; mark with “X”)*:  X Effectiveness/quality action Efficiency/cost action  Compliance issue Satisfaction measure X Create baseline  Other (explain):  *Alignment (Refer to last pages)*   1. *Which AQIP category does this address?* 2. *Does this objective relate to a Road Map goal? If yes, type the related Road Map codes here*: |  | *Means of Assessment for Objective* The program will use direct and indirect measures to evaluate effectiveness in affecting positive growth in the areas of preparedness for graduate study, GPA & GRE scores, research capability, and academic resilience. McNair program staff will use these measures to gauge performance on grant objectives and to make adjustments to services accordingly. As a grant funded program under the Graduate Education and Research Department, the program will use direct and indirect measures to evaluate effectiveness in affecting positive growth in the areas of preparedness for graduate study, GPA, GRE scores and research capability. McNair program staff will use these measures to gauge performance on grant objectives and to make adjustments to services accordingly.  1a. Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education – Self Assessment for TRIO programs: Using the CAS instrument, program services are assessed by program staff, and provided to the Graduate Education and Research office on a 3 year rotating basis. Self-assessment areas are:  Mission  Program  Organization and Leadership  Ethics  Law, Policy, and Governance  Diversity, Equity, and Access  Institutional and External Relations  Financial Resources  Technology  Facilities and Equipment  Assessment and Evaluation  1b. Evaluation of McNair objectives: Individual and group services are evaluated by students. Survey instruments and rubrics to evaluate progress in meeting the objectives to which the program is held by the Department of Education. Student self-report data on academic skills are taken at the beginning of their participation and throughout their participation in the program.  1c. Comparative analysis of performance on targeted outcomes by McNair participants versus a control group. Measures include:  GPA  Credit Completion  Time to completion of baccalaureate degree  Course repeats  GRE Scores  This year involves collection of baseline data.  *Beyond completing the above steps, how will you judge whether the objective was a success*?  Comments: Course repeats seems unusual; wouldn’t students in the McNair program be very unlikely to have many, if any, course repeats by self-selection of who is in McNair? –I included course repeats because it is included in the data set collected by Paul Duby. He had mentioned that this data would be available to me as comparative data so I (Heather Pickett, director of McNair Program) thought my data set needed to include the same measures. | |
| **Assessment Report** |  |  |
| **Summary of Data Collected #3** (*Summarize the evidence)* |  | **Description of how results were used to improve services** | |
| (Fill this cell only for the REPORT at the end of the year.) |  | (Fill this cell only for the REPORT at the end of the year.) | |

**AQIP Functions within the University:**

Some unit objectives address specific operational issues directly related to AQIP reporting. Listed below are AQIP categories. Use these category numbers to describe the context of each objective, i.e. which category does that objective address?  
 (A full description of the Portfolio’s categories and its detailed topics are available at [www.nmu.edu/aqip](http://www.nmu.edu/aqip) under the Current Document

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| ***AQIP Categories*** | |
| Category 1 | Helping Students Learn documents the curricular and co-curricular processes and student learning support. |
| Category 2 | Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives documents the key non-curricular functions by which NMU serves the region, e.g. community engagement initiatives of students and employees, and department outreach. |
| Category 3 | Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs documents how NMU builds relationships with students, alumni and employers and identifies, targets and meets their needs. |
| Category 4 | Valuing People documents NMU personnel recruitment, training, satisfaction, services and programs. |
| Category 5 | Leading and Communicating documents processes that guide NMU in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and communicating decisions and actions. |
| Category 6 | Supporting Institutional Operations documents student and administrative support services, safety, and facilities. |
| Category 7 | Measuring Effectiveness documents IT systems and institutional research NMU employs to collect, analyze, and distribute, and how departments use them to manage improvement, e.g. use of charts, “cubes,” dashboards. |
| Category 8 | Planning Continuous Improvement documents NMU’s strategic and administrative planning processes. |
| Category 9 | Building Collaborative Relationships documents how NMU works with external organizations from which we receive students (school systems) or goods and services (vendors and utilities), send our graduates (schools and employers), and support or regulate our programs (agencies). |

(A full description of the Portfolio’s categories and its detailed topics are available at [www.nmu.edu/aqip](http://www.nmu.edu/aqip) under the Current Document

**Road Map Codes to Tie to Unit Objectives**

Some unit objectives are strategic initiatives that align with goals in the University strategic plan - Road Map to 2015. Listed below are Road Map categories and goals, preceded with a code. Use these codes when describing Objectives #2 and #3. (Note: Even if your objective is not an exactly itemized as a Road Map priority, still use the code if it applies to that goal.) The full Road Map is at [www.nmu.edu/roadmap2015](http://www.nmu.edu/roadmap2015).

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| ***Road Map to 2015 Goals*** | |
| ***Code*** | ***Innovation Goals*** |
| **I-1** | Balance successful programs with new offerings |
| **I-2** | Professional development program that rewards innovation and collaboration |
| **I-3** | A growing portfolio of corporate collaborations that exploit NMU’s technical expertise, enhance academic programs and facilitate global engagement for students and faculty both on campus and abroad |
| **I-4** | Develop the financial resources to support innovation and student success |
|  | ***Meaningful Lives Goals*** |
| **ML-1** | A Liberal Studies Program that provides students with the abilities and knowledge necessary for lifelong learning and effective citizenship in a challenging and rapidly changing world |
| **ML-2** | Develop a new academic advising system that integrates the advising assets of academic departments and student services to contribute to a new, effective retention management network—similar to our enrollment management network |
| **ML-3** | Integrate the highest possible level of information technology skills and competencies throughout the university |
|  | ***Campus Attributes Goals*** |
| **CA-1** | Utilize the Campus Master Plan and related initiatives to continue to build and develop a greener and more learner-centered campus |
| **CA-2** | Enhance processes throughout campus operations to guide the use of resources and inform resource allocation |
| **CA-3** | Enhance the portfolio of academic programs, research and other activities that leverage the university’s location |
| **CA-4** | Be a model community for sustainable education and practices |
|  | ***Community Engagement Goals*** |
| **CE-1** | Include all units of the campus in the process of community engagement for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. |
| **CE-2** | Increase faculty, staff and student involvement in the Superior Edge program, academic service learning and other community engagement and leadership development initiatives. |
| **CE-3** | Put into action a commitment to be an inclusive community where differences are recognized as assets of the institution, respected attributes of the person and a valuable part of the university experience |
| **CE-4** | Increase collaboration with local communities, schools, governments, development groups and other partners to enhance community and economic development in the Upper Peninsula. |