

Northland Pioneer College  
Strategic Planning and Accreditation Steering Committee (SPASC)  
Retreat  
10-16-09

Members in attendance: Donna Ashcraft, Peggy Belknap, Trudy Bender, Eric Bishop, Pat Canary, Leslie Collins, Russell Dickerson, Blaine Hatch, Eric Henderson, Cindy Hildebrand, Barbara Hockabout, Rickey Jackson, Kenney Keith, Sandra Johnson, Mary Mathias, Jeannie McCabe, Don Richie, MiAnna Tyler, Mark Vest, Melissa Webb, Mira White

Advisory members in attendance: Ann Hess, Jeanne Swarthout

Guests: Hallie Lucas (recorder)

I. Welcome

- a. Jeanne said that the purpose of the SPASC Retreat is so that we can be sure we all have fresh answers to questions that may be asked by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Team and inform everyone of the HLC schedule.
- b. Jeanne reminded everyone to wear their nametags while the HLC Team is here.
- c. AllNPC received the e-mail regarding the list of people the HLC Team wants to meet with, and times and locations will be determined in the very near future.
  - i. On 10-27-09, the HLC Team members will meet with community members at all four campuses at 4:30 p.m. If you have connections with various community members, please encourage them to attend.

II. Identification of Known Issues and Possible Questions to Anticipate

- a. Eric B. briefly discussed the 19-page, Cliff Notes version of the Self Study, humorously titled "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere", which will be e-mailed to AllNPC.
  - i. This synopsis of the Self Study includes the HLC concerns addressed after our last visit (October, 1999), as well as our response to those concerns.
  - ii. A major part of the synopsis includes recommendations from each SPASC Criterion Team.
  - iii. Task: Russell will print this synopsis out for the District Governing Board (DGB) for today's meeting.
- b. Donna created a list of questions that the HLC Team members may ask and individuals should be prepared to respond. The list is broken down into various groups within the college.
  - i. Many of the questions were derived from Deb McGinty's potential questions for the National League of Nursing visit and adapted for the HLC visit.
  - ii. Task: Russell will print these questions out for the DGB for today.
- c. There are some known concerns that were addressed in the Self Study.

- i. Areas of concern that NPC needs to address are program review, online learning/ degree programs and Institutional Research (IR); we requested consultation from the HLC Team in all three of these areas.
- III. Solicitation of Issues/Concerns
  - a. Team members, especially those new to their area, asked for input regarding the questions the HLC Team will probably ask.
  - b. There was discussion regarding the college's emergency plans. Blaine reported that there is a procedure regarding emergencies which states that you should use your judgment, call 911 if necessary and contact the campus or center office. At that point, the campus or center would coordinate the response. In addition, NPC utilized the Honeywell Alert System where text messages, voice messages and e-mails are sent out notifying everyone of the emergency.
  - c. We want to make sure to encourage student participation in the HLC student meetings.
    - i. In order to ensure good attendance, teachers may want to start class a little later or end class early.
    - ii. Jeanne noted that, with her past experience, student groups typically have 10-12 students, unless there is some type of huge problem at the college or university.
  - d. In response to a question regarding potential budget questions, we were reminded that all schools in our country are facing the same types of budget issues. In addition, the documents that we have sent them contain our current budget concerns.
  - e. Trudy indicated that some students have complained about difficulties getting wireless access in the libraries.
  - f. HLC meetings with faculty, students, staff and community are planned for 10-27-09 and campus managers will coordinate these meetings with the Faculty Association, Student Government Association and CASO. In addition, campus tours will be early on Tuesday afternoon before these meetings start.
  - g. Some of the questions the HLC Team may ask are:
    - i. How is the morale at NPC?
    - ii. What has NPC done about the budget and how do you feel about it?
    - iii. What is the nature of NPC's students – are they prepared or ill-prepared?
    - iv. How do you deal with grade dispute issues, and what is the process for it?
  - h. The question was asked if subcommittee chairpersons will likely receive questions. It was noted that they might be asked about the process that NPC uses for sub teams.
  - i. There may be questions regarding programs and how you feel that our students are doing in terms of transferring.
  - j. Questions regarding shared governance will probably be asked at all levels.
    - i. It was suggested that information go out to AllNPC with a list of committee members who serve under shared governance and an update regarding where we are with shared governance changes.
  - k. For those individuals who are either new to NPC or new to their current positions, responses may include:
    - i. "I am still getting a handle on this position."
    - ii. "I encountered some difficulties when I assumed this position, and it will take me some time to work through things; however, this is the direction that I plan to take."
  - l. Everyone was encouraged to attend the HLC exit interview, if at all possible.

- m. Great strides have been made in the last three years in terms of record keeping and institutional research, including the online HLC Resource Room and paper archives. In addition, Trudy, Donna and Eric B. worked on an archiving procedure to insure that future archiving will be continued. The proposed procedure is on the NPC public Web site.
    - i. In addition to the 10-year accreditation process and the AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program), Jeanne noted that the HLC is considering at least one new pathway to accreditation. Keeping the archives constantly updated would be a big step forward to this new accreditation, if we choose that pathway.
    - ii. Trudy added that after the HLC accreditation visit, the name of the HLC Resource Room will change to Archives.
  - n. The DGB will review the Strategic Plan this afternoon and it will be on the next board meeting for adoption.
  - o. Regarding Dual Enrollment assessment, we need two more committee members. The focus of this assessment will be to review curriculum and course offerings.
- IV. Tour: Resource Room/HLC Visiting Team Work Area
- a. Harold Hoover gave a demonstration of the network projector capabilities.
  - b. Documentation was set up all around the room, enhanced with signs and color coding.
  - c. Computers and workspaces were set up in the center of the room.
  - d. The consensus was that the committee did a wonderful job preparing the Resource Room for the HLC visit.
- V. Discussion: Celebration Planning
- a. Mary Bresslin has given permission for the whole college to come to the exit interview, and we will have a celebration of our fine institution immediately following.
  - b. Peggy Belknap and Deb Fisher worked together and planned a balloon drop, suitable music, cake, fruit and vegetable trays, M&M's, goldfish and drinks.
- VI. Other
- a. The press will not be notified of the results of the accreditation visit until we receive the final report from the HLC.
  - b. Russell will be the runner to provide for anything the HLC needs (including acquiring data or scheduling appointments with groups or individuals).
  - c. The Institutional Research meeting with the HLC will consist of Debbie Myers, Jake Hinton-Rivera, Larry Romo and Cindy Hildebrand.
    - i. In response to a question, it was noted that we do not have data on how much committee work the faculty and staff do in addition to their regular work. Sandra can get a count of faculty members serving on committees and give that information to Donna.
  - d. We still need to pull together adjunct faculty members to meet with the HLC.
  - e. Nice gift bags have been prepared for the HLC Team and includes an Ernie Eagle, mugs made by NPC art students, tiny Navajo rugs (woven by Jaye Taylor's grandmother who is 103 years old), Zuni animal carvings, munchies and canteen water bottles.
  - f. Each Campus and Center manager provided a list of restaurants in their area for the team's convenience, as they travel to various locations.
  - g. Specifics regarding the Resource Room:
    - i. Someone will give the HLC Team a brief orientation of where everything is and how to operate the equipment.
    - ii. Snacks and drinks will also be provided.

- iii. The HLC Team members are the only ones that have access to the Resource Room (unless someone is invited in).

VII. Jeanne's Pep Talk

- a. We have gone through a lot to get ready for this day; however, much of our preparation for the visit is really "business as usual".
- b. As an institution, we look good and perform exceptionally well. We ARE an outstanding institution.
- c. The team will likely be perplexed by the size of our geographical area, the complexity of the institution and the culture diversity; they will see that we are doing amazing things with very little.
- d. Jeanne feels very comfortable going into this visit.
- e. The team will prepare a compliance report and a consultation report. The consultation report is especially valuable, as it gives the team an opportunity to give us advise for improvement.
- f. Have fun with the visit. Everyone is ready for the visit. The institution is ready for the visit.
- g. We are born warriors!