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May 8, 2023

Dr. Chato Hazelbaker
President
Northland Pioneer College
2251 East Navajo Boulevard
Holbrook, AZ 86025-0610

Dear President Hazelbaker:

Attached is a copy of the Multi-location Visit Report completed following the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) visit to Northland Pioneer College (the institution). As detailed in the report, the pattern of operations at the locations appears to be adequate and no further review or monitoring is necessary.

Within the Multi-location Visit Report, you will find brief comments on the instructional oversight, academic services, student services, facilities, marketing and recruitment information and adequacy of assessment of student performance. Please consider these comments as advice for continued improvement of the additional locations.

Per HLC policy, completion of these visits and fulfillment of the requirement will be noted in your institution's history record and the completed report will be included in your institution's permanent file.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Multi-location Visit or the attached report, please contact accreditation@hlcommission.org.

Sincerely,
Higher Learning Commission

cc: Judy Yip-Reyes, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Jamie Stanesa, HLC Staff Liaison



Multi-Location Visit Peer Review Report

Institution: Northland Pioneer College

Additional Locations Visited:

| Location Name | Location Address (<i>street, city, state and ZIP code</i>) | Date Reviewed |
|-----------------|--|---------------|
| Kayenta Center | ¼ mile north on Hwy 163, Kayenta, AZ 86033 | 4/3/2023 |
| Hopi | State Hwy 264 @ Junction to Hopi Jr/Sr High School, Keams Canyon, AZ 86034 | 4/4/2023 |
| Little Colorado | 1400 E Third St, Winslow, AZ 86047 | 4/5/2023 |

Peer Reviewer

Name: Dr. Donald M. Bird

Institution: Retired from U. S. Air Force Academy Title: Professor Emeritus

Instructions

In order to document effective administrative systems for managing multiple additional locations, please complete the following. For each item, check **adequate** or **attention needed**, and indicate in Comments the institution's strengths and/or opportunities for improvement in controlling and delivering degree programs off-campus. If comments pertain to a specific location, they should be included along with the identity of that location.

Submit the completed report as a PDF file at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Final Reports" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The report is due within 30 days after the last additional location is visited.

Overview Statement

Provide information about current additional locations and the institution's general approach to off-campus instruction. Describe the growth pattern at the institution since the last review of off-campus instruction. Provide information about the involvement of external organizations or other higher education institutions.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Northland Pioneer College (NPC) serves two counties in Arizona, encompassing more than 21,000 square miles and includes three large Native American reservations. In order to serve its diverse and expansive population, NPC has 15 locations, including its main campus in Holbrook, AZ. This visit included the three locations noted above. Through a Federal grant, NPC has developed Technology to Advance Learning Outcomes (TALON) classrooms which use Cisco Systems Webex technology. This technology is available at most additional locations and, importantly, at several high schools in the region. The TALON classrooms have allowed NPC to offer courses taught by NPC faculty to more than 6000 high school students in 17 high schools in the region. The 2021-2024 strategic plan set a goal of 4% growth however NPC reported that growth has been flat since the last HLC locations review. NPC leadership believes the pandemic has had a negative impact on growth and the institution continues to target growth as a top priority. While there are currently no external organizations or other higher education institutions involved with NPC, the organization is exploring the possibility of a partnership with Waypoint, an organization which serves individuals working to overcome substance abuse addictions.

Institutional Planning

What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively plans for growth and maintenance of additional locations? Identify whether the institution has adequate controls in place to ensure that information presented to students is adequate. Describe whether the financial planning and budgeting process has proven effective at additional locations.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

NPC periodically reviews and updates its Master Facilities Plan based on identified needs at all locations. All locations have Cisco-connected classroom technology which allows every student to choose the education delivery method which best suits their learning and personal needs. As a result of this process, most courses are accessible to NPC students through multiple in-person and online methods to include variations of in-class, synchronous distance, and asynchronous modalities. NPC's development of so many modalities speaks to the institution's sensitivity and attentiveness to the needs and abilities of all of its students and positions the institution to grow as it continues to recover from the pandemic. Facility needs are normally managed through the annual budgeting process with input from each financial unit of the institution. Deans have the authority to adjust their budgets if short-notice facility issues occur.

Facilities

What evidence demonstrates that the facilities at the additional locations meet the needs of the students and the curriculum? Consider, in particular, classrooms and laboratories (size, maintenance, temperature, etc.); faculty and administrative offices (site, visibility, privacy for meetings, etc.); parking or

access to public transit; bookstore or text purchasing services; security; handicapped access; and other (food or snack services, study and meeting areas, etc.)

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Each of the locations visited had connected classrooms available to allow students to not only take a class online but to be engaged with classmates and faculty in the educational process. All of the locations had up-to-date computer labs for student use. Although classrooms at all three facilities are modern, the Kayenta location did not have a laboratory (for chemistry or biology classes) classroom, thereby requiring students to travel to a property equipped lab at Hopi, Winslow or some other location. While it can be inconvenient for students to travel to Winslow, Holbrook, or some other location for lab classes, NPC recognized the financial burden that can cause and implemented a process whereby students can qualify to use an NPC vehicle for transportation from Hopi to a location where the appropriate lab class is being held. When vehicles are not available, NPC can assist the students by providing gas money for their travel.

All facilities are in excellent condition. The Hopi site was built some 24 years ago and looks brand new. Staff at all locations reported that maintenance issues are handled through the Holbrook campus and that response times are generally within a few hours. Of the three locations visited, the Kayenta location is the only one which is rented from the local township. Kayenta staff reported that they have an excellent relationship with the township. In addition to being very responsive when issues arise, the township maintenance staff visit at least monthly to ensure that there are no issues with the facility. The Hopi and Winslow locations have laboratory space which is ample to serve the needs of the students and support the lab classes which are taught each semester. All facilities provide sufficient office space for faculty and staff to include lounge areas for faculty, staff, and students.

Instructional Oversight

What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively oversees instruction at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, consistency of curricular expectations and policies, availability of courses needed for program and graduation requirements, faculty qualifications, performance of instructional duties, availability of faculty to students, orientation of faculty/professional development, attention to student concerns.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Courses and programs are advertised and published in locally available media and college materials to advise and inform students and prospective students about NPC offerings. Each location has the ability to admit and enroll students. Except for the St. Johns and Springerville locations (not formally part of this review), students have access to academic advisors to help them with course selection and enrollment in courses as well as guidance in program selection. Students also have the ability to determine the modality of course presentation which best fits with their personal and learning style preferences.

Students at the St. Johns and Springerville locations are able to make appointments to speak with advisors and complete their course enrollment and plan their academic programs. It is important to note that the Cisco-connected classrooms are available at all locations and are central to NPC's ability to serve students in the remote areas of NPC's service region by aggregating students from multiple areas and teaching them simultaneously through multiple modalities. All offerings of a course are taught with the same syllabus, learning outcomes, and tests/evaluations to ensure consistency of instruction and fairness of evaluations across the institution.

Deans are primarily responsible for the courses taught within their divisions, to include the assignment of qualified faculty. All faculty meet the established HLC qualification standards, regardless of the courses being taught or where in the college they are being taught, to include the 23 dual enrollment faculty at the 21 participating high schools. All faculty, along with the course itself, are evaluated by students at the end of each course. Deans and instructors review course evaluations to determine how course instruction can be improved and to be sure that any student issues with instructors are addressed. NPC uses a course scheduling vendor (Ad Astra) to manage course offerings and scheduling to ensure that the right courses are offered at the right times to meet student needs and to ensure that student progress toward program completion is not adversely impacted by a lack of course offerings.

New faculty complete a comprehensive orientation to expose them to all of the processes of the college with a primary focus on their teaching responsibilities and service to students. New instructors are assigned an experienced mentor to monitor progress and performance and to advise the new instructors as needed. NPC has also implemented a liaison program for dual enrollment faculty to mentor them as college faculty, to assist and advise them, and to ensure that their classes present the high school students with the same content and level of quality as courses taught by full-time NPC faculty.

Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support

What evidence demonstrates that the institution has appropriately qualified and sufficient staff and faculty in place for the location, and that the institution supports and evaluates personnel at off-campus locations? Consider the processes in place for selecting, training, and orienting faculty at the location.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Deans are responsible for managing all program offerings throughout the NPC region. In this capacity, Deans verify that all faculty, to include adjuncts and faculty teaching in the dual education program, have HLC compliant credentials for each course that they teach. Deans also coordinate with campus and additional location managers to ensure that the needs for each class are consistent with the classroom size and available technology needed for successful execution of the course. All full-time faculty are able to identify continuing education and professional development programs to enhance and continue their teaching and learning within their disciplines. Once a faculty member has identified an opportunity, they make a formal request which is reviewed by the NPC Professional Development Committee and forwarded to the Vice President for Learning and Student Services for final review and approval. The NPC budget for this program is currently \$25,000 per year. NPC's Instructional Innovation Division also offers Instructional Skills Workshops which are available to all faculty to improve their effectiveness in the classroom.

Each faculty member is hired, trained and evaluated using identical procedures across all college campuses and additional locations. Faculty in their first 4 years with NPC are probationary faculty and are placed with a probationary committee which oversees the probationary faculty member's goal development. The probationary committee also provides multiple observations of instruction and gives appropriate feedback to the faculty member as well as to the supervising Dean.

Each location has a dedicated academic advisor. Student comments indicated that they have strong ties to the faculty advisors and that they feel comfortable going to the academic advisors for advice and help. In addition to the location manager and the academic advisor, each location has a librarian, a technology support liaison, and a staff assistant who are in part time positions. While there are short videos and training manuals for all of the staff positions, the NPC leadership should invest in more intentional and detailed training for these positions. It was obvious that all of the employees in the support staff positions are fully invested in the mission of NPC even though they feel that their training has been inadequate. For example, they report that the short videos and other training materials are not current and are often lacking the detail necessary for them to accomplish their assigned duties. NPC leadership should engage the staff members at the locations to chart a way forward in developing and delivering the job training which will help the staff be more effective in performing their duties.

Student Support

What evidence demonstrates that the institution delivers, supports, and manages necessary student services at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, the level of student access (in person, by computer, by phone, etc.) to academic advising/placement, remedial/tutorial services, and library materials/services. Also, consider the level of access to admissions, registration/student records, financial aid, and job placement services, as well as attention to student concerns.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Regardless of location, student access to advisors and location managers is excellent. Students, in general, feel a genuine connection to the staff at their primary location. Staff are always available to support students and help them get their questions answered in a timely manner. Tutoring is available from tutor.com and faculty have online and in person office hours. Faculty showed a keen willingness to be available for their students, despite the distance between locations. Faculty reported that they, along with most of their colleagues, are available online and in person for regular office hours in addition to being willing to make appointments to accommodate the schedules of their students. As previously mentioned, each location has a part time librarian to assist with reference resources as well as to help with interlibrary loans. The students interviewed did not report any issues with access to student services and, in fact, expressed a genuine appreciation for the supportive atmosphere of NPC.

Evaluation and Assessment

What evidence demonstrates that the institution measures, documents, and analyzes student academic performance sufficiently to maintain academic quality at the additional locations? How are measures and techniques employed at a location equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation on the main

campus? Consider, in particular, the setting of measurable learning objectives, the actual measurement of performance, and the analysis and use of assessment data to maintain/improve quality.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

Because of the model used by NPC to provide education at multiple locations, any given class may have students attending from several different locations through their Cisco systems supported classrooms. This method results in consistency of delivery as well as consistency of evaluation of student performance. Another result of the methodology used by NPC is that there are no differences in locations in terms of assessment or student performance since all students and locations are in a single pool for assessment and evaluation purposes.

Continuous Improvement

What evidence demonstrates that the institution encourages and ensures continuous quality improvement at its additional locations? Consider in particular the institution's planning and evaluation processes that ensure regular review and improvement of additional locations and ensure alignment of additional locations with the mission and goals of the institution as a whole.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

As noted in the Evaluation and Assessment section, the use of the NPC connected classrooms using the Cisco systems technology creates a homogeneous environment for the administration and delivery of each class and essentially eliminates the impact of the location on the administration and delivery of the class material. The college operates on a three year strategic plan and the NPC leadership reviews the plan and the college's progress in accomplishing the goals of that plan on a semi-annual basis. The multiple locations and their needs, to include facilities and enrollments, are a critical part of this review. NPC also has a 5-year program review cycle which provides a comprehensive review of courses, learning outcomes, and program effectiveness.

Marketing and Recruiting Information

What evidence confirms that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications is accurate?

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

Comments:

The NPC Marketing and Public Relations Office must review and approve all college marketing materials before publication. The Director of Communications has final approval over all print, web, and social media materials to ensure that there is a consistent and accurate marketing message. All publications that contain student-specific information is reviewed for accuracy by the departments responsible for that content before public release. The staff, faculty, and students at the locations report that they are strong advocates for NPC and that they advocate in their communities for the value of NPC programs.

Summary Recommendation

Select one of the following statements. Include, as appropriate, a summary of findings.

- ☒ Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary.
- ☐ Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations needs some attention as defined in this report. The institution can be expected to follow up on these matters without monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission. The next scheduled comprehensive review can serve to document that the matters identified have been addressed. **[Identify specific areas needing organizational attention.]**
- ☐ The overall pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations is inadequate and requires attention from the Higher Learning Commission. **[Identify the specific concerns and provide a recommendation for HLC follow-up monitoring.]**

Summary of Findings:

Notification Program for Additional Locations Approval Form

Complete this form **only** if an institution has been granted access to the Notification Program for Additional Locations. The Institutional Status and Requirements Report for the institution will indicate whether the institution has access to the Program under "Location Stipulation."

| | |
|--|---|
| The institution has been accredited by HLC for at least 10 consecutive years with no record of any action during that period for sanction or show-cause. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| HLC has not required monitoring of issues related to the quality of instruction or to the oversight of existing additional locations or campuses in the past 10 years. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The institution has demonstrated success in overseeing at least three locations. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

| | |
|---|---|
| The institution has no other HLC or other legal restrictions on additional locations and/or programs offered off campus. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The institution has appropriate systems to ensure quality control of locations that include clearly identified academic controls; regular evaluation by the institution of its locations; a pattern of adequate faculty, facilities, resources and academic/support systems; financial stability; and long-range planning for future expansion. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |