

# **Assurance Argument**

## **Northland Pioneer College - AZ**

**Review date: 6/3/2024**

## 1 - Mission

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

## Argument

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### 1.A.1 The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

Established in 1972 and open for enrollment in 1974, [Northland Pioneer College \(NPC\)](#) is a public, open-access community college. NPC serves students in Navajo County and, through an [intergovernmental agreement](#) (IGA), students in Apache County as well. NPC's service area consists of 21,158 square miles.

The development of NPC's mission has always been based on the educational needs of its surrounding communities. The mission has been revised as the needs and directions of the College have shifted. The revisiting and revising of the mission, vision, and values is one of the first activities in our multi-year strategy development process. The [Leadership Council \(LC\)](#) is the representative group of all shared governance groups at NPC. It is responsible for leading the College through an inclusive, college-wide planning process. Through facilitated discussions with different shared governance groups and surveys, the LC collects input and feedback from different college constituents (staff, faculty, and students) and works with the President's Cabinet to present an updated document defining the College's mission, vision, and values to the District Governing Board (DGB) for adoption.

In [January 2021](#), the DGB approved an updated mission statement. This was the culmination of a process that began in the fall of 2020 as the College developed its 2021-2024 strategic plan.

The current mission statement is:

*Northland Pioneer College provides educational excellence that is affordable and accessible for the enrichment of communities across northeastern Arizona."*

In April 2021, Dr. Chato Hazelbaker was appointed as President of NPC and began at the college in July. Immediately, he began working with the DGB, the President's Cabinet, and the LC to take the next steps in finalizing Key Result Areas (KRA's) and specific priority actions that would lead to mission fulfillment. A small subset of the LC finalized the KRA's and presented them to the DGB and all college employees in the fall of 2021. Since that time, NPC has instituted an annual planning and communication process to ensure movement toward the goals outlined in the strategic plan. This includes monthly progress updates to the DGB and all college employees, as well as presentations and discussions at fall and spring convocations, which are required meetings for all college employees.

In December 2023, the President [charged the LC](#) to begin the 2025-2030 strategy development process. Following the process described above, the LC has started the first stage of the process, which includes revisiting the current mission and vision.

**1.A.2 The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.**

NPC's mission clearly calls out "educational excellence" and speaks to the key aspects of affordability, accessibility, and commitment to improving communities in northeastern Arizona. The mission is the basis for [strategic goal areas, which are then translated into strategic initiatives](#) for action on a shorter timeline, particularly focusing on the areas of instruction, public service, economic development, and our cultural purpose.

Among the specific strategic goals related to instruction is the initiative to "Create an Academic Master Plan to guide future program development and ongoing program improvement." Other initiatives include "Implement a Certificate of Proficiency for General Education (AGEC) and create a clear map for High School/NAVIT students to complete." These strategic initiatives were developed through a shared governance process after reviewing both the mission statement and the data related to student outcomes, completions, and ongoing discussions with the [Instructional Council](#) (the academic and curricular shared governance group).

Rooted in the accessibility component of the mission, NPC has several strategic initiatives focused on public service. One accessibility-related initiative is the implementation of the federal Title III Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI) grant, [A Relational Model for Student Success \(ARMSS\)](#). Part of that grant is focused on extending community outreach, particularly at our center locations, which are primarily located in Tribal Nations.

In terms of economic development, the College is engaged in initiatives that serve our communities as we face the closure of three large power plants that currently generate electricity from coal. Our initiative “Implement a Workforce Development Task Force to align programs and services with community needs” is specifically developed to address this area. This alignment reflects the part of the mission related to enriching our communities and our commitment to northeastern Arizona.

NPC, as a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI), is committed to fulfilling our mission in northeastern Arizona, which includes serving three Tribal Nations. To actively promote and honor our cultural purpose, we have established specific strategic initiatives. One initiative is to develop and implement a “[Belonging Plan](#)” that is focused on providing everyone at the College with training opportunities on intercultural competency needed to serve our diverse student body. Through the ARMSS grant, we were able to hire a Native American Student Success Coordinator to help expand our services. This vital addition to our team allows us to further enhance the support we provide to our Native American students. In line with our cultural purpose, we are also focusing on an initiative that centers around implementing a Strategic Enrollment Management plan. This strategic approach ensures that our enrollment processes align with our commitment to serving our diverse student population, including our Native American students.

To fulfill our mission and extend our ability to reach our vision beyond academics and education, NPC encourages employees and students to engage in various [public services](#) and participate in local and regional non-profit boards.

### **1.A.3 The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.**

NPC’s mission, vision, and values statements reflect the commitment of the College to the community. As a community college, the scope of our work is found in the mission’s words “excellence”, “affordable”, and “accessible.” The scope is exemplified in the statement regarding the commitment to northeastern Arizona and is further bound by the words “provides educational . . .” which solidifies our focus on education rather than other services.

Embedded in the mission and vision of the College is a clear commitment to northeastern Arizona as the key constituency for our services, which is reflected in the actions of the DGB and board policy. For instance, the DGB has consistently affirmed a preference for services for students in our district through providing a lower tuition rate. The DGB has also specified a policy of decentralization ([Policy 1010](#)), which states that we will not have a “main” campus, but rather seek to provide services across the large geographic district as broadly as possible.

Strategic goal areas, as established by the District Governing Board (DGB) that provide additional direction are:

- Increase enrollment

- Improve completion
- Improve sustainability

The KRAs further demonstrate a focus on the nature of the institution as an educational provider as the main items being measured are related to educational attainment for constituents. Though the scope of education is large, this geographic and service-area focus drives our discussion and decision-making as we consider the priorities of the College.

All academic programs and initiatives align, through the appropriate approval process, with the mission of the College. NPC's faculty and students are engaged in a wide range of scholarly, creative, and knowledge-discovery activities. NPC's mission statement clearly communicates the nature of the institution as an educational provider to the communities that we serve in northeastern Arizona.

#### **1.A.4 The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.**

NPC's academic offerings are guided by the mission with a focus on educational excellence and the enrichment of our communities. To fulfill these aspects of the mission, NPC seeks to provide high-quality academic programs that meet the social and economic needs of the people of northeastern Arizona. Our academic offerings have demonstrated excellence in several ways. For instance, graduates of the NPC Associate Degree in Nursing program had a [96.8 percent pass rate on the NCLEX exam](#) in 2023. Further, students in our technical programs consistently earn high marks at both [regional and state SkillsUSA Competitions](#), and NPC is one of the state's top producers of [All-Arizona Academic Team](#) members.

NPC ensures that academic programs are meeting regional needs through regular advisory board meetings and participating in community organizations that help us identify regional economic development and cultural needs. For instance, our [first Bachelor's degree program](#) in Early Childhood Education is a product of our collaborative work with local schools and Head Start to address the acute and significant early and elementary education teacher shortage in northeastern Arizona. This program offers northeastern Arizonans the opportunity to earn credentials without leaving the region and gain employment in the places they are already working. A second example is our [recent revision of the Energy and Industrial Technology program](#) to provide training opportunities to workers displaced by the closure of regional coal power plants to be able to transition to new technologies such as wind, solar, or potentially even small-scale nuclear. Thirdly, two of the priority actions in our strategic plan (i.e., Workforce Development Task Force and Academic Master Planning) are coordinated efforts to ensure that our alignment in planning is systematic and not ad hoc.

The NPC approach to providing educational excellence is not restricted to high-quality academic programs and effective instructional methods within the classroom. To assist our students in their learning, we offer an array of student academic support services that are consistent with our mission to provide educational excellence. These [academic support](#) services include tutoring, the Office of Accessibility and Inclusion, physical Library Services at each of our campus and center

locations, and ongoing Academic Advising at all locations, which has been expanded in recent years.

Mindful of the high poverty rates of the two counties we serve, we are very intentional in helping our students seek affordable postsecondary education, as evidenced by our focus on *affordability* in our mission statement. Our DGB has shown an ongoing commitment to keep our tuition and fee costs low, and currently, they are the [lowest in the state of Arizona](#) and well below the national average. Students can apply for financial aid, any institutional [scholarships](#), or scholarships from other foundations and organizations by contacting the NPC Financial Aid office and NPC Friends and Family, the 501(c)(3) that supports the College. One example of institutional aid is the [“This Class Is On Us”](#) program that allows any faculty or staff member to provide one student each semester with a tuition waiver for one class to encourage completion and full-time attendance. Another example is the AndyVonn Transportation Scholarship, which provides funding for Native American students who must commute long distances to attend NPC classes.

Accessibility is another key part of the mission, and NPC is an open-access institution as stated in our catalog. NPC demonstrates its commitment to accessibility by offering courses at four campuses and five centers that are in various locations in our [large service area](#). The [use of connected classrooms and other remote learning options](#) helps with accessibility as well.

[NPC’s enrollment profile](#) is consistent with the mission as demonstrated by the fact that the vast majority of our students reside in the two counties that we serve, which are the two counties that make up the northeastern corner of Arizona. Further, the majority of individuals who engage with the College are doing so to access educational services.

**1.A.5 The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.**

NPC’s mission, vision, and values are published in numerous public venues that reach internal and external stakeholders, including the general public. The mission statement is published and updated on NPC’s public website, [www.npc.edu](http://www.npc.edu), and in the NPC college catalog. It is also posted physically on campuses and centers in prominent areas, such as campus front offices, libraries, hallways, and restrooms. The catalog is updated annually, and the website is reviewed and revised with new information to ensure accuracy.

The mission statement is printed in the NPC [Employee Handbook](#) and [Faculty Handbook](#), both of which are reviewed and revised with new information to ensure accuracy and distributed annually. Similarly, NPC incorporates the mission statement in orientation materials for new employees, including the New Hire Information Page and [New Employee presentations](#) provided by the Human Resources Department. The content of the student orientation materials, provided at new student orientation for high school students, is largely based on the College’s mission. The mission statement is also printed on the [DGB meeting agendas](#). These agendas are available online and at each DGB meeting.

## Sources

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- 06\_Internal-External Strategic Priority Actions\_F1.pdf
- 07\_Instructional Council\_F1.pdf
- 07\_Instructional Council\_F1.pdf (page number 94)
- 08\_Title III (A Relational Model to Student Success)\_F1.pdf
- 11\_Public Services
- 14\_Nursing Student Outcomes
- 15\_Student Accomplishments SkillsUSA
- 16\_Student Accomplishments All AZ Academic Team
- 17\_Early Childhood BAS ECE Degree
- 19\_Multi-student academic supports\_F1.pdf
- 21\_List of NPC scholarships
- 22\_This Class is On Us
- 23\_AY 23-24 College Catalog
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- 25\_Quick Facts
- 25\_Quick Facts (page number 3)
- 27\_Employee Handbook 2023-24
- 27\_Employee Handbook 2023-24 (page number 8)
- 28\_Faculty Handbook 2023-24
- 28\_Faculty Handbook 2023-24 (page number 7)
- 29\_New Employee Onboarding Materials
- 29\_New Employee Onboarding Materials (page number 7)
- 29\_New Employee Onboarding Materials (page number 10)

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

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#### **1.B.1 The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.**

NPC also relies on community feedback and advice through community engagement and program advisory committees to maintain its relevance and commitment to continued institutional improvement. The President, or designee, attends [monthly meetings](#) of the Navapache Superintendents, which is a gathering of the leaders of school districts in the region. Regular, industry-specific [Advisory Board meetings](#) are also an opportunity for NPC to collect input from area employers. All new programs are required to undergo [a feasibility study process](#) through which community input is sought primarily via surveys before the review of new programs by the Instructional Council.

Through the budgeting process, NPC makes decisions based on the needs of the community, while also balancing the revenues of the College. NPC offers ongoing occupational and educational training as well as cultural events. NPC's strategic priorities and mission reflect its public obligation. The following summarizes some of the ways NPC serves the needs of the public:

- Offers dual enrollment programs to [17 school districts](#) in the service area
- Uses innovative technology that links 16 high schools that lack appropriately credentialed dual enrollment instructors
- Partners with Northern Arizona Vocational Institute for Technology (NAVIT), the local Career and Technical Education District (CTED, formerly named the Joint Technical Education District [JTED]) to provide high school juniors and seniors with Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and programs at no cost to the students. Qualified high school students can achieve work-ready certificates through this partnership
- Offer a bachelor's degree program to address shortage of credentialed K-12 teachers/substitutes and to ensure high-quality educators are working in the community
- Provides support and funding for the local [Small Business Development Center](#), which provides free business training and start-up assistance for entrepreneurs



- Provides public services that range from free blood pressure screening to makeovers for individuals battling cancer
- Supports local businesses and organizations in training needs for their current or future workforce through the Community and Corporate Learning Department and the College and Career Preparation division
- Offers [online and distance-accessible courses](#), including NPCFlex and NPCsynch, when traditional classroom settings are unavailable or not feasible
- Provides personal enrichment classes and workshops for those interested in lifelong learning
- Collects feedback, advice, and guidance from [Business and Industry Advisory Boards](#) as part of curriculum development for CTE courses and programs
- Offers need-based transportation [scholarships](#) and/or access to a college vehicle to assist students taking courses that require travel for laboratory/clinical classwork
- Operates the [Performing Arts Center](#) and the [Talon Art Gallery](#), along with associated coursework, to provide the public with multiple low-cost opportunities to participate in diverse cultural events
- Helps fund a public transportation service that links the communities of Pinetop-Lakeside, Show Low, Taylor, Snowflake, and Holbrook
- Through its foundation, NPC Friends and Family, teaches classes to NPC students and students at area high schools about how to access and apply for scholarships
- Through its Financial Aid office, NPC teaches on-site classes to local high school students and their parents about how to apply for financial aid
- Allows community groups to use college facilities for meetings and gatherings
- Offers Kids' College, a menu of age-appropriate classes for students from 6 to 14 years of age, enabling them to experience a college campus while engaging in fun, enriching activities.

**1.B.2 The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.**

NPC was established in 1972 under [Arizona Revised Statute §15-1402](#) and is a publicly funded institution with no external investors in the College. The DGB for the College is publicly elected. The College enacted and maintains a [conflict of interest policy](#) that mirrors Arizona Revised Statute §38.503 to ensure that the DGB and all employees put the interest of the College first over other financial investments/opportunities. Annually, the DGB and all college employees are required to complete a [conflict of interest form](#). Additionally, [Policy 1562](#) ensures that College employees understand that it is against [Arizona Revised Statute §15-1408](#) to participate in political campaigns as employees of the College.

**1.B.3 The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.**

NPC works with external constituencies and groups to identify educational needs, training opportunities, and to obtain feedback for service improvement. The College remains aware of identified workforce opportunities, community education, and training needs through [local advisory groups](#) that meet regularly and are tied to academic programs. Business and industry leaders help review curricula and supply up-to-date information on industry trends. Through a [Workforce Development Task Force](#), newly created in the fall of 2023, NPC aims to strengthen the process of working with businesses and industries in the region. The President and other members of the college community have participated in discussions with several area groups to strategize how to best address the impacts of recent and upcoming coal-fired power plant closures in the district. Members of the Workforce Development Task Force have helped make connections between local business and industry leaders to create new certificate programs that meet area needs, such as introducing a Commercial Driver's License program. The task force also works in connection with academic programs at NPC. For instance, as mentioned in 1.A.4, due to the closure of the power plants, the [Energy and Industrial Technology program](#) that had previously focused on training employees for power plants is being transitioned to focus on renewable energy and other industries coming to the region.

As part of the new program development process through the Instructional Council, there is a feasibility study component that ensures input from the community before a program is voted on and brought forward to the DGB for final approval. This includes both a survey component and discussions with community members. One example would be the proposal for our [first bachelor's degree program in Early Childhood Education](#). During that process, we spoke with local school districts and community organizations such as Head Start and surveyed the community for potential students. Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback, we chose to start that program, and the feedback gained during that process affects the way we deliver the program today.

In the spring of 2024, [NPC started its 2025-30 strategy development process](#), led by the Leadership Council (LC). To help identify our strategic directions for the next five years, the LC engages our external constituents (e.g., chambers of commerce, high school superintendents and partners, advisory board members, Tribal communities, and clients from our Small Business Development Center). We collect their input through surveys and facilitated focus group sessions.

## Sources

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- 187\_Small Business Development Center
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- 23\_AY 23-24 College Catalog
- 23\_AY 23-24 College Catalog (page number 65)
- 32\_Navapache Superintendents Meeting Agendas\_F1.pdf
- 33\_Industry Specific Advisory Boards\_F1.pdf
- 38\_Conflict of Interest Form
- 40\_Workforce Development Task Force\_F1.pdf
- 60\_Performance Art Center Event History
- 61\_TALON Art Gallery Event History

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

### Argument

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#### 1.C.1 The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

The curriculum and cocurricular programs at the College prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success by embedding these skills into educational instruction, providing internship and practicum placements, and offering a variety of organizations and activities that all students can participate in.

NPC works closely with area businesses and organizations so that our students can get the experiences they need to complete their academic programs. For instance, our nurses work in area health care settings across the district, including [Indian Health Service facilities](#) where many students get cross-cultural training alongside learning the technical skills needed to become a nurse. Through a close partnership with the Northern Arizona Council of Governments, NPC built a [Head Start facility](#) on the Little Colorado Campus in Winslow, Arizona, and provides students with learning opportunities at other Head Start facilities across the district.

Programs such as the Presidential Scholars are one bridge between the curricular and co-curricular. This program provides a seminar-type class for students who want to dig deeper into academic topics and participate in field trips and other educational activities. An exciting new development at the college in this area is the addition of [Learning Communities](#). Funded through the federal Title III Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI) grant called A Relational Model for Student Success (ARMSS), we were able to hire a Learning Communities coordinator who is helping to establish at least two learning communities by the fall 2024 semester.

As we have come out of the pandemic, we have seen a resurgence of interest in student clubs. This year, new clubs, including a [soccer club](#) and an [art club](#), have been added to our existing clubs and student organizations. Organizations such as [Student Government Association](#) and the Eagle Club provide opportunities for students to get involved and build skills through field trips,

presentations of special events, and simply by participating in and/or governing these organizations. In the past two years, the [Eagle Club](#) has been instrumental in planning and executing cultural celebrations for [Indigenous People's Day](#) and Dia de los Muertos. The Student Government Association helps organize the [Eagle Fest](#), which is a community celebration and recruiting event. Both student groups participate in cultural events as well as field trips to colleges and universities. Students also have opportunities to participate in field trips organized by faculty. For instance, for the past two years, faculty in the sciences put together trips to the [AZ AstroBio Research](#) Symposium to supplement students' classroom learning experiences.

NPC works to ensure that career and technical degree students have opportunities embedded in the curriculum to build skills that lead to workplace success. Career and technical educational programs like Welding and Automotive build skills such as safety, teamwork, and interviewing into their curricula. Students from across the college can further hone these skills through [college-sponsored Skills USA teams](#) that compete at the regional, state, and national levels. Recognizing that many students in career and technical programs want to be entrepreneurial, we have recently begun including [presentations from our Small Business Development Center](#) into all career and technical programs, so that students can learn about starting their own businesses and what resources are available to them in the community.

### **1.C.2 The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.**

As a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI), NPC realizes that it has the responsibility to demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. This starts with the [multi-ethnic NPC District Governing Board \(DGB\)](#). The DGB is elected by district; each of the five election districts serves a distinctly unique and diverse segment of the service area. District 1 covers the northern Navajo Nation. District 2 includes the southern portion of the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Nation, and a segment of Navajo County that includes Anglo, Hispanic, and mixed-heritage individuals. District 3 brings together culturally diverse, though largely Anglo, constituents; while District 4 is primarily Anglo. District 5 includes Anglos and White Mountain Apache Tribal members. Each of NPC's nine locations serves a population distinguished by geography, ethnicity, religion, and/or culture. In response to this diversity, NPC endeavors to meet the needs of each unique location.

NPC has strong policies and procedures regarding equitable treatment and a robust Title IX reporting process led by the Vice President of Learning and Student Services. Further, the hiring of a new Associate Vice President of Human Resources, in July 2023, has had a positive impact on helping ensure our policies and procedures are up to date and providing employees with professional expertise. Over the past two years, we have made significant investments in the [Human Resources department](#), expanding the staff to include a Director of Employee Relations who can assist with any HR-related concerns. Proactively, NPC provides [annual training](#) to staff on the equitable treatment of diverse populations.

NPC's policies and procedures prohibiting discrimination acknowledge its concern for multiculturalism and diversity. NPC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and has a clear [procedure regarding Non-Discrimination](#) (Procedure 2110) that includes Title IX, Section 504 requirements, and unlawful discrimination. The College posts its non-discrimination statement in numerous places across campus and center locations and in its publications.

Innovative technological delivery modalities enable NPC to reach geographically and culturally dispersed populations and cultivate diversity in unique ways. Current distance technology brings NPC students, from different locations who are enrolled in the same course, into a shared classroom setting. Similarly, the Technology to Advance Learning Outcomes at Northland (TALON) consortium with select high school partners brings together ethnically and geographically diverse groups of high school students into shared class experiences. NPC students with different socio-cultural backgrounds come together and learn different perspectives from one another in courses across the curriculum. NPC students do not have to leave their own communities to attend college; diversity is taught and learned, directly and indirectly, in every distance class.

NPC works hand-in-hand with its foundation, NPC Friends and Family (NPCFF), to support equal opportunity scholarship funding to a diverse group of students. In 2021, the NPCFF Board took additional steps in [prioritizing equitable access to and distribution of its scholarships](#) to students at all campus and center locations by adding a transportation scholarship for students who live on Tribal lands and who must drive great distances to an NPC campus or center. In addition to scholarships for students taking college-level coursework, NPCFF supports students pursuing a high school equivalency diploma with scholarships to cover testing fees. The foundation also supports an [emergency fund](#) for students who encounter financial obstacles that threaten to interfere with their ongoing coursework. In addition to its Board-approved scholarships, NPCFF manages and administers over thirty private scholarships, some of which are designated specifically for Native American students, CTE students, university-bound students, and students who are enrolled in College and Career Preparation classes.

Although NPC's staff generally reflects the [diversity](#) of its service area, the College continually confronts the issue of faculty and administrative diversity. Attracting qualified individuals to work at a remote, rural institution like NPC is a major challenge. NPC has lost candidates to other schools that can offer more pay or better amenities, or that are located in more populous areas. In many instances, searches for open faculty and administrative positions are conducted more than once.

### **1.C.3 The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.**

Over the past three years, NPC has focused on fostering a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators, from a range of backgrounds. In the summer of 2021, recognizing the need to focus on the different success and enrollment rates of Native American Students, NPC applied for a Federal Title III grant. NPC received that grant, and several

elements have been implemented that further the work of building a climate of respect. The grant allowed the college to hire the first Director of Native American Student Success, Tonya Thacker. [She has made significant progress](#) on the grant, particularly working with the Tribal centers to improve student services. The grant also paid for the entire college to receive cultural competency training through the Utah State University TEACH program. This multi-module online training has been completed by senior administrators before going out to the remainder of the College for completion by the end of Fall 2024.

In [Fall 2022](#), NPC kicked off a recommitment to this work by bringing in a guest educator and consultant, Dr. Kyle Reyes, to the fall convocation, where the entire college had an opportunity to hear about the importance and latest research on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). We were also fortunate to make two key hires to assist with this effort in 2022. The first, our interim Associate Vice President of Human Resources Shenethia Manuel previously worked as a DEI officer and was able to introduce the group to the Inclusive Excellence framework. The second was Dr. Tabitha Stickel, an NPC associate dean and NPC alumna, whose dissertation work focuses specifically on creating belonging.

NPC also created a new shared governance group under the Leadership Council (LC) to help us grow our knowledge and lead the implementation of strategies to achieve a climate of respect. The new group is called the Belonging Subcommittee. This subcommittee has focused on creating an institutional Belonging Plan. Beyond working on developing an action plan, the Belonging Committee has undertaken significant measures to advance inclusion. In 2022, NPC began Indigenous People's Day and Día de los Muertos celebrations that incorporated educational components. Committee members also attended the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education conference. Currently, the group is presenting its [draft Belonging Plan](#) of 2024.

NPC incorporates diversity in its curriculum and educational activities. Diversity is one of NPC's six General Education Outcomes. NPC's general education course options under the Arizona General Education Curriculum reflect a wide range of subjects that address past and present [multiculturalism](#). In addition, many departments offer courses to help students understand specific cultural groups and introduce the topic of diversity. Education courses teach the role of culture and diversity in learning ([EDU220, Diversity in Education](#)). Navajo and Spanish courses include cultural information as students learn the speaking, reading, and writing skills of these languages.

In assisting students with distinct knowledge, skills, and abilities to pursue their education goals, several student services departments advocate multiculturalism and diversity to both NPC and the public. For example, the [Office of Accessibility and Inclusion](#) (OAI) facilitates equal access to NPC classes and activities for students with disabilities by providing them with registration, testing accommodations, note-takers, sign language interpreters, and class materials in audio or alternative formats. OAI also promotes the use of Ally software to improve digital content accessibility in instructional material delivered via NPC's Learning Management System (Moodle).



NPC presents diverse viewpoints and perspectives embedded in various art forms through its two venues—the Performing Arts Center and the Talon Art Gallery. The [Performing Arts Center](#) offers a variety of events, open to the public, that explore human expression and endeavor, historical events, ethical questions, and diverse perspectives, interspersed with family-friendly productions. The [Talon Art Gallery](#) presents numerous 2-D and 3-D shows featuring student, local, and invited artists, which highlight the diversity of both students and community members.

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- 193\_Draft Belonging Plan
- 21\_List of NPC scholarships
- 23\_AY 23-24 College Catalog
- 23\_AY 23-24 College Catalog (page number 136)
- 41\_Whiteriver NUR course improvement survey results
- 42\_Completed Construction Projects
- 43\_Learning Communities\_F1.pdf
- 44\_Student Government Association and Fall 2023 Convocation Presentation
- 44\_Student Government Association and Fall 2023 Convocation Presentation (page number 11)
- 45\_Eagle Club
- 46\_Indigenous People Day
- 47\_Eagle Fest
- 48\_Astro Biology Student Trip
- 49\_Small Business Development Center Presentation to CTE Program Students
- 50\_NPC human resource department staff list
- 51\_TEACH Cultural Competency Course to Employees\_F1.pdf
- 53\_NPC Friends and Family - Quaterly Reports to DGB\_F1.pdf
- 54\_NPC Staff and Faculty Diversity
- 57\_Dr. Kyle Reyes Presentation at Fall 2022 Convocation
- 58\_General Education Courses with Diversity Emphases
- 60\_Performance Art Center Event History
- 61\_TALON Art Gallery Event History



## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### Summary

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NPC operates with integrity and makes decisions that are focused on its mission. The mission statement is broadly disseminated throughout the service area and in institutional publications. The mission statement and associated documents address college-wide considerations.

The broad range of program offerings, breadth of student service activities and support, and representation of the regional demographics in its student body are evidence of the fulfillment of NPC's mission. The commitment to engage students in diverse experiences is evidenced in the many college activities and classroom experiences found at NPC.

NPC's budget, assessment, and planning each work on an annual cycle. Budgeting and assessment are both tied to planning; each is directly linked to the mission of the institution. Operational plans associated with the College's strategic priorities are established on a three-year basis with annual review, evaluation, and renewal of goals. The development, evaluation, and review of goals involve the entire college community. Annual operational plans support the strategic priorities. This integration of the mission with the assessment, planning, and budgeting cycle connects NPC to all constituencies and also facilitates continual improvement of the institution's service to its students and communities within its designated service area.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

### Argument

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#### 2.A.1 The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

NPC follows an inclusive, college-wide process to develop the college mission and present it to its District Governing Board (DGB) for adoption. The current NPC mission statement is:

*Northland Pioneer College provides educational excellence that is affordable and accessible for the enrichment of communities across northeastern Arizona.*

The process of NPC developing this mission (along with the vision and shared values) began after the 2019 comprehensive accreditation review. In June and July 2020, the Leadership Council (LC) participated in [three whole-day sessions](#) to review the mission, vision, and shared values. These sessions consisted of brainstorming, small group discussions, and guided imagery exercises. At the Fall 2020 Convocation, the LC presented a draft version of these foundational components for college planning to solicit college-wide feedback. Qualtrics surveys were distributed to all shared governance groups, college faculty, and staff, as well as external stakeholder groups (e.g., advisory groups, high school partners, Tribal Councils, and Chambers of Commerce) in the fall of 2020. Substantial input was received. In November, the LC reviewed the high-level survey results and further refined the initial draft. The final version of the new mission, vision, and shared values was presented to the DGB [in January 2021 for adoption](#).

In December 2023, the President [charged](#) the LC to begin the college's strategy development process for the 2025-2030 strategic plan. The LC led the college to review the current mission and vision statements in March 2024 as part of the strategic planning process. The vast majority of respondents agreed that these statements do not need significant revision at this time.

#### 2.A.2 The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

With integrity being our very first in our shared value statements, NPC supports this dedication to ethical and responsible behaviors through its [policies and procedures](#). NPC's DGB was established and operates under [Arizona Revised Statute §15-1402](#). By statute, and by its policies, the DGB is responsible for developing and upholding its own policies. Further, the DGB is responsible for the hiring and performance evaluation of NPC's President. The DGB oversees all matters of the college and makes informed decisions on all items referred to the DGB by policy or statute. The DGB is composed of [five elected members](#), each representing a specific geographic district of Navajo County.

NPC is [compliant](#) with all state and federal statutes and requirements and upholds best practices in ethical behavior, which often exceed compliance requirements. The DGB is responsible for [setting and reviewing policies annually](#) (see item 6.E. in evidence file). The NPC President and the President's Cabinet ([Procedure 2100](#)) are responsible for ensuring proper procedures are in place in critical areas or groups of the college (e.g., college operations; information services; business office; marketing/public relations; facilities; student services; personnel – general, non-exempt, faculty; and instructions). NPC follows an established process to develop and revise a procedure. The procedure is crafted, reviewed, and revised by the department responsible. The revised procedures are assessed by a shared governance committee (i.e., the Policy and Procedure committee) to determine the impact on the current process and employees. Revision is then assigned to an established category that determines the next steps. All employees are informed when a revision is implemented. The practice of crafting, revising, reviewing, and publishing procedures assists NPC in ensuring ethical behavior in all aspects of college performance.

One example of evidence of NPC operating with integrity in its financial functions has resulted in the College receiving favorable (either unmodified or unqualified) audit opinions since 1995. [These opinions](#), issued by independent auditors, indicate NPC's financial statements are presented fairly in all respects. Since 2014, NPC has earned the distinguished honor of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) [Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award](#), which demonstrates NPC's commitment to transparency and full disclosure for users of its financial report. [Additional strengths are identified in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](#) (ACFR), including the positive and growing unrestricted fund and the institutional focus on funding Instruction and Student Services over the last 10 years.

NPC assures academic integrity through shared governance, the Instructional Council (IC), and faculty involvement with the curriculum. The College's [Shared Governance Procedure 2125](#) requires faculty participation in all college activities. IC is [responsible for curriculum, academic policies and procedures, faculty performance, and academic standards](#). Standing committees of IC are Dual Enrollment, Academic Standards, Learning Technologies, Professional Development, and Assessment of Student Knowledge. IC is comprised primarily of faculty and is chaired by an elected faculty member. IC advisory members consist of administrators and staff members.

Students and faculty actively engage in the pursuit of truth and the free exchange of ideas through a variety of course projects, discussions, and debates that explore cultural, social, economic, and political issues relevant to our local and global communities. The [Faculty](#)

[Handbook](#), Student Code of Conduct ([Procedures 2601 & 2602](#); also in [College Catalog](#)), and the [Nursing Student Handbook](#) establish basic behavioral expectations that help guide and moderate the respectful and civil exploration of sometimes controversial and sensitive topics of intellectual inquiry that may lead to greater awareness, appreciation, and respect for diverse perspectives.

[Human Resources](#) (HR) supports and provides services to faculty and staff. Goals in this department include enhancing or establishing new processes in employee recruitment, reducing the lengthy hiring process, onboarding new employees, and providing ongoing training to all employees. All employees undergo [annual compliance training](#), including FERPA, HIPAA, Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act, and Sexual Harassment. NPC also posts crime statistics on its website annually.

In the spring of 2023, HR led a college-wide [compensation study](#) with the assistance of an independent consultant. HR maintains all approved job descriptions, which are reviewed annually by the employees and their supervisors during the [evaluation process](#). Information on annual evaluations is included in the [Employee Handbook](#), which is maintained on NPC's portal website, MyNPC.edu, for all employees to access. The Employee Handbook summarizes employment policies, procedures, and practices.

## Sources

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- 28\_Faculty Handbook 2023-24
- 50\_NPC human resource department staff list
- 62\_Mission-Vision-Values Revisited (2020-21 and most recent)\_F1.pdf
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- 71\_Nursing Student Handbooks
- 72\_SafeColleges Training\_F1.pdf

- 73\_Compensation Study Presentation by Gallagher to DGB\_F1.pdf
- 74\_Performance Review Instructions and Forms\_F1.pdf

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

### Argument

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#### **2.B.1 The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.**

NPC provides information to students, faculty, staff, and the public through many publications electronically and in print. The primary publications include the College's public website ([www.npc.edu](http://www.npc.edu)) and [social media](#). NPC's public website and web portal ([MyNPC.npc.edu](http://MyNPC.npc.edu)) provide access to the college catalog, the class schedule, costs to students, program pages, and the NPC employee handbook.

NPC's public website is the main source of information for students, faculty, staff, future students, and the community. To enable easy and clear navigation, NPC's public website is organized by audience, including future students, current students, course offerings, and information about NPC. The site offers updated content, improved site search, condensed pages, and accessibility across all mobile devices. Information is located under toggles and tabs, so users choose how much information to view. NPC's main academic areas of interest are displayed on [a single page](#), making it easy to see the range of programs and offerings. Clicking on a specialization displays additional details about a specific degree or program.

NPC's public website and printed publications seek to inform and provide easy access to all of NPC's constituents. The Marketing and Public Relations Department is primarily responsible for both internal and external publications and communication. To ensure the accuracy of the information, this department works collaboratively with the appropriate academic, student support, and/or administrative departments to review, update, and approve any new or revised materials for accurate and timely sharing of information.

NPC publications (e.g., college catalog, [program brochures](#), ["Quick Facts"](#) publication, and [staff handbook](#)) are available to the public at each campus/center front office and online, including an annual catalog, which provides information about academic and technical programs, degree requirements, course descriptions, and faculty credentials. The catalog explains [Student Rights](#)

[and Responsibilities](#), including academic honesty, FERPA Rights, student conduct code, student grievances, grade appeal, harassment, and unlawful discrimination.

NPC seeks to promptly inform its employees and students of any crisis, emergency, or weather closures. NPC uses the RAVE Emergency Alert System to send text or voice messages to subscribers' phones and/or email addresses. Upon admission to NPC, all students receive an official college email address and can provide their phone number at registration. Students can subscribe to the RAVE Emergency Alert System. NPC also sends important non-emergency student [email messages](#) about registration dates, class schedules availability, financial aid deadlines, scholarship opportunities, graduation information, college events, and more to keep students well informed about NPC.

**2.B.2 The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.**

Before publishing any data or information to the public, NPC ensures sufficient evidence is available and is treated as the source of truth. For example, all data elements displayed in our "Quick Facts" publication are collected from internal data sources and verified or reviewed by individual responsible departments before publication. Similarly, information in the college catalog is provided by internal departments that maintain the source of truth related to the specific topic areas. Where external information is included in our publication (e.g., [Annual Report](#)), we reference the source of the information. New releases are prepared by the Communication/Marketing department and quotes in the releases are obtained from verbal sources during interviews.

## Sources

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- 27\_Employee Handbook 2023-24
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- 76\_Student Log In Page on MyNPC
- 77\_NPC programs on Public NPC Website\_F1.pdf
- 78\_NPC Program Brochures\_F1.pdf
- 79\_NPC RAVE Messages - Emergency and Non-Emergency
- 80\_NPC Annual Report

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

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#### **2.C.1 The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.**

The DGB acquires and maintains its knowledge about the fiscal, instructional, and facilities/business areas of NPC in a variety of ways. For fiscal oversight, the DGB receives a [monthly update](#) on NPC's financial conditions at each month's Board meeting. The DGB also reviews [annual financial](#) summaries and the annual audit reports conducted by the Arizona Office of the Auditor General (AG). The AG provides a summary of the [audit results](#), which include findings and proposed staff corrections, to the DGB in the spring of each year. The AG also addresses any questions from the DGB. These reports assist the DGB with fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities. Biannually, the DGB conducts retreats to gain information regarding [specific topics](#) and to become more familiar with specific areas of NPC as they look to the future.

The DGB has an established process to review and adopt NPC's budget. It [adopts](#) the budget each fiscal year following a first and second reading for review and clarification. To ensure the DGB approves all large payments made by the College, NPC [Procedure 2335](#) stipulates that expenses of \$50,000 or more require DGB approval. The DGB also maintains its fiduciary oversight in NPC's [partnerships](#) with NAVIT and Apache County through intergovernmental agreements. Through component unit audits, the DGB oversees its fiduciary responsibilities with



the [Northeast Arizona Training Center, Inc. \(NATC\)](#) and with the NPC foundation, [NPC Friends and Family \(NPCFF\)](#).

The DGB receives monthly verbal or written reports from NPCFF, as well as constituent-based shared governance groups such as the [Faculty Association \(FA\)](#), [Classified and Administrative Staff Organization \(CASO\)](#), and [Student Government Association \(SGA\)](#). The DGB provides oversight for, and approval of, academic policies and procedures, often through the Vice President of Learning and Student Services, with recommendations provided by the Instructional Council and its sub-group, the Academic Standards Subcommittee. The President also gives the DGB [a monthly report](#) on a wide variety of topics including summaries of state-wide activities.

The DGB receives periodic training, primarily conducted by NPC's attorney. These trainings focus on Arizona Open Meeting Law ([Arizona Revised Statute §38-431](#)) and board best practices and behavior. The DGB is very cognizant of the Open Meeting Law and holds executive sessions only by statutory definition. The Assistant to the DGB maintains all records for executive sessions. Starting in 2022, NPC has newly elected individuals on our Board. Our Board Members [received training](#) in work sessions apart from their regular public meetings to learn about their legal and fiduciary responsibilities and how to make informed decisions concerning NPC's financial and academic policies and practices. The DGB also engages in an annual self-evaluation to improve the quality and effectiveness of their services to the institution.

## **2.C.2 The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.**

The DGB makes decisions based on established fiscal priorities, including the [Cash Reserve Policy 1092](#) and [Future Capital Reserve Policy 1094](#) which both preserve and enhance NPC resources. Below are some recent examples that demonstrate the routine practices of our DGB:

- [Construction projects](#) at the White Mountain Campus began in the fall of 2019 and are funded by utilizing the capital reserve to pay for the improvements without incurring debt. Throughout the construction of the Skills Center at the White Mountain Campus, the DGB was careful to balance the priorities to provide space for teaching and learning with priorities related to fiscal resources.
- The DGB considers the impact of their decisions as they deliberate annual budget topics such as [employee wages and salary recommendations](#) and the impact of tuition and tax rates on students and taxpayers. One example is the approval of a budget to conduct a college-wide [compensation study](#) to partially address employee recruitment and retention concerns.
- In 2023, the DGB approved a budget to purchase a new [Enterprise Resource Planning](#) (ERP) system to replace the more than 25-year-old Jenzabar system. The decision to upgrade NPC's ERP system reflects the DGB's recognition of the importance of effectively utilizing data as an institutional asset in decision-making, and the

modernization of many processes impacting our students as they navigate through our programs and services.

**2.C.3 The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.**

The DGB reviews and considers input from NPC's internal and external constituencies when board members engage in decision-making deliberations. As a standard practice, there is an open comment period in the DGB's regular meetings to invite the public to voice any comments or concerns about NPC's operations. All internal shared governance groups [make regular reports](#) to the DGB. These groups include the Leadership Council (LC), Instructional Council (IC), Student Government Association (SGA), Faculty Association (FA), and Classified and Administrative Staff Organization (CASO). The President prepares a [Board report](#) weekly to keep the DGB members apprised of current events and legislation. Internal groups are also represented during the personnel salary recommendations and negotiations.

**2.C.4 The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.**

NPC [Policy 1006](#) clearly states the rules regarding Conflict of Interest. The policy safeguards any DGB members maintaining their independence from undue influence on the part of any parties whose interests may not align with NPC's best interests. Each DGB member is required to sign a Conflict-of-Interest statement annually as required by 2 C.F.R. Part 200, §200.318. [Policy 1002](#) defines the powers and duties of the DGB, which are consistent with Arizona Revised Statute §15-1444.

**2.C.5 The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration, and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.**

DGB follows [Policy 1009](#) to delegate the management of the institution to the President. The President and the administrative team are responsible for the day-to-day management and decisions of the institution. The shared governance procedure ([Procedure 2125](#)) grants faculty oversight of academic matters through the Instructional Council. DGB members can request information related to NPC's operations or programs, but these requests need to be made via the President, instead of directly to individual NPC employees. All information requests are made public on the DGB meeting agendas.

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- 53\_NPC Friends and Family - Quaterly Reports to DGB\_F1.pdf
- 88\_President Weekly Reports to District Governing Board\_F1.pdf

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### Argument

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NPC shows a strong commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. [Policy 1810](#) affirms the freedom to teach, discuss, research, and publish without fear of censorship or discipline. The policy acknowledges that freedom of expression is a mission-critical value that is honored throughout NPC.

Many NPC courses include activities and assignments that promote and stimulate the unfettered pursuit of truth through an awareness, inquiry, discussion, and/or reporting of a variety of subjects, issues, and disciplines, including:

- • The promotion of social, political, or cultural awareness.
- • The provocation of thought and/or discussion about the human condition.
- • The provocation of thoughts and/or discussion of various contemporary issues.
- • The promotion of scientific or quantitative reasoning.

The NPC Library supplements and enhances classroom exploration and the pursuit of truth by providing access to a [variety of print, electronic, and online resources](#) that support the curricula and encourage independent research of a myriad of topics. Each September, the library promotes [Banned Book Week](#) with local displays and information on the library website. The library also provides [information literacy instruction](#) that promotes critical thinking skills and greater discernment in the evaluation of information.

In Spring 2024, our Educational Preparation Program Associate Dean, Dr. Allison Landy, hosted a session entitled [“Protecting and Promoting Academic Freedom”](#) during one of the bi-monthly All-College meetings. In this session, Dr. Landy reviewed the concepts and characteristics of academic freedom in education and discussed recent national and local attacks on academic freedom. Faculty and staff had an opportunity to identify ways to support the right to academic freedom while pursuing truth in teaching and learning.

### Sources

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- 92\_Library Services\_F1.pdf (page number 6)
- 92\_Library Services\_F1.pdf (page number 11)
- 95\_Academic Freedom Session (SP24 Convocation)

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

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#### **2.E.1 Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.**

NPC encourages faculty and students to conduct basic and applied research when it aligns with its college mission. NPC develops [Procedure 2790](#) to adhere to federal regulations to ensure the integrity of institutional research and any research that involves human subjects. The responsible acquisition and application of institutional research and the protection of the rights of human subjects is regulated by NPC's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB ensures that all phases of the acquisition and use of information are held to the highest ethical and legal standards.

To safeguard institutional data collection and reporting for institutional research, NPC takes proactive measures to ensure that all sensitive information collected and maintained is closely protected by numerous safeguards from misuse and mishandling. All NPC employees participate in [SafeColleges training](#), which reviews the appropriate, ethical use and stewardship of information under the purview of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. NPC personnel with access to sensitive personal information, such as student grades and identification numbers, must receive prior clearance from their supervisors through an NPC Technology and Support (TAS) [Service Request](#).

#### **2.E.2 The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.**

NPC supports and guides students in the ethical and scholarly use of resources. Many course offerings provide [in-class instruction](#) to help students understand the importance of the ethical

and scholarly use of information, to understand plagiarism and its consequences, and to properly cite source material in their research assignments. Learning proper citation is also part of the English Composition I and II ([ENL 101 and ENL 102](#)) curricula. Instructors also take advantage of [information literacy instruction](#) provided by the Library Department. Additional research and citation assistance are available, free to students, in the [Student Writing Centers](#) and through tutoring services. NPC provides access to additional interventional resources such as <https://www.tutor.com/tutor.com> and informative resources such as videos. To remind students of the importance of academic honesty and integrity, NPC faculty includes in their course syllabi statements that explain the requirement for students to comply with standard academic scholarship in all their coursework and research assignments. Syllabi may also list available college resources to aid the students in their compliance with these requirements.

### **2.E.3 The institution provides students with guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.**

NPC provides robust support to guide students in the effective use of research and information resources. We recognize “Information Literacy” as an area of proficiency vital to preparing students for academic success. As such, Information Literacy is listed as an additional general education [learning outcome](#). Each NPC campus contains a full-service library to support students in research and information access. Additional services are accessible online. For example, the [library’s website and subject guides](#) contain multiple resources to aid students in the use of research and information, including understanding plagiarism and citation assistance. Students may also use Ask-a-Librarian, via email, or Text-a-Librarian services for additional support. Research and information requirements for NPC courses are supported by the NPC Library. Library staff provide students with individual reference and research [assistance](#). As mentioned in 2.E.2, upon instructor request, classroom [information literacy instruction](#) is also provided and designed to teach students to identify and articulate their informational needs, improve their research skills, and to incorporate research in accordance with scholarly citation conventions.

To provide students with skills in locating, assessing, and analyzing information effectively, NPC offers English Composition I and II ([ENL 101 and ENL 102](#)) that address the effective use of research and information sources. All degree-seeking students are required to take English Composition I, at a minimum, to graduate.

### **2.E.4 The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.**

NPC has explicit procedures ([Procedure 2601 and Procedure 2602](#)) to enforce academic honesty and integrity, including a procedure written specifically for the Student Academic Code of Conduct. The college catalog publishes the [Student Code of Conduct](#) with clear procedures to inform students on due process and consequences for all forms of academic misconduct. The Vice President for Learning & Student Services and the College Archives maintain [records of the incidents](#) and descriptions of academic misconduct.

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## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### Summary

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NPC has continued to operate with utmost integrity in all its functions throughout its history. NPC's system of shared governance, operating policies and procedures, and board oversight ensure integrity in the systematic and integral function of NPC. The financial functions of the College are reviewed for both financial and enrollment integrity by the Office of the Auditor General for the State of Arizona, through financial and enrollment audits.

The academic functions are governed by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), other accrediting bodies such as the Arizona State Board of Nursing, and the DGB. The DGB is composed of five locally elected members. Major functional changes or major decisions concerning the College typically begin at the departmental level and move through the appropriate shared governance channels, resulting in internal recommendations. These recommendations, with input from relevant college parties, conclude with either a decision by the President, with advice from the Cabinet, or a decision by the DGB when the recommendation falls under its purview.

Faculty and staff handbooks, as well as the *Student Rights and Responsibilities* section in the college catalog, guide the operations for these respective bodies of the College. These documents provide guidelines for ethical behavior and integrity in all NPC activities. NPC follows its personnel policies and procedures to comply with all laws and regulations and ensure fair and ethical treatment of all employees.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*



## 3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### 3.A - Core Component 3.A

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The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

## Argument

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### 3.A.1 Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.

Northland Pioneer College (NPC) ensures all its program offerings are current and appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. NPC follows a multi-step process for course and program development. All courses and programs undergo a comprehensive review process beginning at the department level, through the [Academic Curriculum Review and Evaluation System \(ACRES\)](#). The deans' offices and the faculty-driven Instructional Council (IC) review and make recommendations on courses and programs. Recommendations are then forwarded to the Vice President of Learning and Student Services (VPLSS) for comments. NPC's District Governing Board (DGB) [votes on all new programs, program changes, and deletions](#). All programs are comprehensively reviewed on a five-year cycle.

NPC has established [industry-specific advisory committees](#) to ensure that occupational/technical courses and programs are current. Each advisory committee meets twice a year to review the program and to provide input on the relevance of the curriculum, labor market prospects, and student and graduate performance on campus and in the workplace. Student performance on [discipline-specific external exams](#) reflects this alignment.

General education courses or programs are kept current and relevant through partnerships with state universities and community colleges. NPC uses the statewide AZTransfer system to ensure transferability and applicability of the courses/programs with state universities and community

colleges. Universities and community colleges meet by subject area annually ([evidence file pages 116-132](#)) to review common courses and to ensure transferability from the community college to the universities. This partnership ensures that the content of general education and other transfer courses aligns with standards established by the state universities. In 2021, the statewide articulation group began a review of their general education requirements. The public colleges and universities in Arizona collaborated to identify the [new Arizona General Education Curriculum \(AGEC\) criteria and an acceptable implementation timeline](#). Since that time, IC has begun to review and update the general education courses to align with statewide transfer articulation expectations.

### **3.A.2 The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.**

NPC currently offers undergraduate education at the various degree and certificate levels to include:

- Bachelor of Applied Science, Early Childhood Education (BAS, ECE)
- Associate of Arts (AA)
- Associate of Arts in Early Childhood (AAEC)
- Associate of Arts in Elementary Education (AAEE)
- Associate of Business (ABus)
- Associate of Science (AS)
- Associate of General Studies (AGS)
- Associate of Applied Science (AAS)

The AGS and AAS degrees are designed for direct-to-work and applicability to Bachelor of Applied Science degrees. The AA, AAEC, AAEE, ABus, and AS are built for university transfer to Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science programs.

NPC also offers Certificate of Applied Science (CAS) programs and Certificate of Proficiency (CP) programs in different disciplines. In response to Arizona legislation, NPC started offering a Bachelor of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education in the spring of 2024. In December 2023, the DGB approved two more bachelor's degrees, the Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education (BAEE) and the Bachelor of Applied Management (BAM). These programs are currently undergoing HLC's review.

NPC has adopted a common set of general education learning outcomes {[catalog, page 56](#), 65, 67} that are articulated and shared by the state's community colleges and public universities. This set of learning outcomes helps ensure that NPC's degrees are articulated and appropriate for the undergraduate level.

NPC also articulates and differentiates learning goals for students enrolling in different programs. At the broadest level, the *General Education Course Options* list ensures that General Education values are integrated into NPC's curriculum. NPC's academic departments select General Education coursework that best reflects program-specific learning outcomes. All CAS programs include three credits each of English and Mathematics to establish core competencies (see examples in [Fire Science](#), [Health and Physical Education](#), [Paramedicine](#), and [Welding](#)). NPC's transfer degrees include the appropriate AGECE offerings.

The requirements for all degree and certificate programs are available in the current college catalog and online. The specific requirements for completion of individual degree and certificate programs may be found on program pages of the NPC public website. Each program also contains program-level learning outcomes which are a key component of the [annual assessment](#) of student learning outcomes. Although differentiated learning goals and outcomes are found in many department curricula, NPC has identified that differentiating learning goals between its degree and certificate programs is an area for continual improvement.

### **3.A.3 The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit through contractual or consortia arrangements, or any other modality).**

NPC utilizes ACRES to establish and communicate course topics and outcomes for each course. This ensures that each course adheres to standard curricula. Regardless of the manner of delivery or location of the class, the topics and outcomes of the course must be met. [Course modalities](#) include stand-alone courses, connected courses, NPCFlex, NPCSynch, multi-course learning environments, online courses, hybrid courses, and dual and TALON enrollment courses. Syllabi are submitted by individual faculty members to their respective deans and are reviewed for consistency and kept on file.

To ensure consistent and quality education across modalities, where appropriate, NPC collects and analyzes [data related to teaching effectiveness by modality](#). Currently, teaching effectiveness is evaluated with various methods based on modality. Stand-alone, connected courses, hybrid courses, and multi-course learning environments are evaluated with teaching observations, student assessment results, and course improvement surveys. The Moodle (NPC's Learning Management System) online component of courses is led by the distance learning guidelines for online course delivery. Online teaching effectiveness is evaluated in these environments with student assessment results and course improvement surveys.

NPC created the [Division of Instructional Innovation](#) (DII) in 2020 to "promote effective and innovative teaching and learning, strengthen internal and external educational partnerships, and foster a learner-centered and inclusive educational environment that increases access." The creation of this division is in line with the college's vision. The [Instructional Technology and Curriculum Support](#) Department (ITCS), a subdivision of DII, "assists faculty and staff with the

use of technology for teaching and learning and the creation of well-designed instructional content for all delivery modes.” These entities together provide robust, college-wide support.

NPC has [dual enrollment partnership agreements](#) with 17 high schools in the service area. Therefore, it is important to ensure instructional quality and learning goals are consistent across all our high school partners. NPC has an established state-mandated [Dual Enrollment committee](#) that develops policies for dual enrollment course delivery. Per our intergovernmental agreement with high school partners, NPC’s academic divisions review requests for additional college courses within a high school’s curriculum. To ensure quality and consistency of instruction across all courses, dual enrollment instructors are required to meet the same qualifications as all college faculty. Dual instructors are required to teach the same IC-approved course topics and outcomes as full-time faculty. Dual instructor’s teaching effectiveness is evaluated through site visits, student assessment results, and course improvement surveys. NPC is presently working on providing its dual enrollment instructors with NPC accounts, allowing them access to the College’s learning management system (Moodle). This supports improved continuity in NPC’s courses with the development of common course shells.

The IC develops and updates the course evaluation processes to ensure quality instruction. This process utilizes a single course review approach for all modalities offered at the College. As prior HLC [multi-site reports](#) demonstrated, NPC continues to meet the needs of its student population, regardless of the location and modality of instruction.

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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

### Argument

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**3.B.1 The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.**

The mission of the general education programs at NPC is to promote skills in critical inquiry, communication, and an understanding of diversity that supports a life-long intellectual engagement in cultures and the natural world. To help ensure that the general education mission is being carried out, NPC has adopted the six General Education [Student Learning Outcomes](#). These general education outcomes guide curriculum development in NPC's general education courses and are appropriate for the educational offerings of the College. Since many NPC general education courses and programs transfer to the three Arizona state universities, NPC belongs to the Arizona General Education Articulation Task Force (GEATF). This task force coordinates the content of the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC), reviews and makes recommendations for AGECE policies, and determines general education and student learning outcomes within the Arizona transfer system. Semi-annual meetings with the GEATF allow NPC to ensure that its general education learning outcomes emulate those of the universities and community colleges in the state.

NPC's general education outcomes also respond directly to needed skills identified by local and regional employers. An increasing number of employers express that recent college graduates lack "soft skills," including the ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate critical thinking, effectively use information literacy skills, and operate in a diverse work environment. Through

department-specific [Advisory Boards](#), NPC is able to identify local employers' needs for employees with skills represented by NPC's general education learning outcomes.

As described in 3.A.1, the [AGEC curriculum is undergoing a redesign phase](#), and the IC works diligently to ensure that its general education program requirements and learning outcomes are appropriate to the college mission, as well as degree offerings. The Vice President for Learning and Student Services also is a member of the AZ Transfer Steering Committee which oversees the work of implementing the [new AGEC redesign](#) statewide as a collaboration between the state's community colleges and public universities.

**3.B.2 The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college educated person should possess.**

NPC communicates the purpose, intended learning outcomes, and content and requirements of its general education programs and courses in the [General Education Values](#) section of the college catalog and on the NPC website. In addition, students are provided with [course syllabi](#) for the courses in which they are enrolled. Each syllabus states the purpose, content, and learning outcomes of the course.

To continuously improve student learning, each department annually reviews courses as part of the college-wide [assessment process](#). Initiated by the Assessment of Student Knowledge (ASK) subcommittee, this [process](#) begins in the fall semester with Planning Day, which is when departments and programs determine the institutional learning outcomes and/or program learning outcomes (as well as any other department-specific objectives) to be assessed and the assessment methodology. Next, faculty members implement department-driven assessment measures and collect data. After data are collected, departments review and analyze the data and report the results in a Findings Report. The departments use the assessment findings to modify curriculum or other academic decisions as needed. In late February/early March, faculty across disciplines participate in [Dialogue Day](#) to discuss assessment challenges and their assessment process more specifically. This promotes a college-wide dialogue regarding best practices and insights gained through the current year's assessment efforts.

**3.B.3 The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.**

NPC supports diversity and is committed to providing educational opportunities regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, geography, or socioeconomic status. NPC honors the diversity in its student population through its shared vision by providing a learner-centered environment,



responding to community needs through effective and innovative service to our students, and fostering professional growth and collegial collaboration.

[Many courses](#) have a specific emphasis on human and cultural diversity. Additionally, to ensure that NPC remains true to its vision, as well as its shared values, the following programs and services were developed to meet the needs of diverse student populations:

- TALON classes for high school students: Designed in response to the lack of qualified high school teachers in the region, particularly in those high schools located in the most remote sections of the college's service area.
- Veteran Program: Designed to assist Veterans in attaining their educational goals and accessing any resources they might need.
- Office of Accessibility and Inclusion: The NPC Office of Accessibility and Inclusion (OAI) coordinates support services for students with disabilities under the Carl Perkins Vocational Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- As one of the projects within the Title III NASNTI grant to promote cultural awareness of the distinct Native American cultures in our service area, NPC has begun its implementation of the [Native American Student Success Initiative](#).

Students can learn about available NPC [programs on the College's activities, clubs and organizations](#) webpage which includes special events, educational trips, recreational opportunities, intercollegiate activities, performing arts, publications, and special interest clubs. These programs are supported by the Student Government Association and are designed to respond to community needs through effective and innovative services.

### **3.B.4 The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.**

NPC faculty are encouraged to participate in research and professional development. The [professional development process](#) allows faculty to access and utilize college resources to pursue professional endeavors. Over the past two years, faculty participated in various conferences and projects to advance the discovery of knowledge. Additionally, faculty actively engage students in conducting scholarly or creative work using in-classroom or out-of-classroom opportunities. One example is the Art department where in the fall of 2023, professors Peterson Yazzie and Magda Gluszek co-taught students in researching, designing, and creating public art murals at Fool Hollow Lake State Recreation Area in Show Low, Arizona. The class offers students an opportunity to apply their art knowledge and skills in a local setting, hence addressing the “educational excellence” and “enrichment of communities” aspects of our mission. The public art murals completed by our students are displayed in the recreation area to be enjoyed by one of our communities (Show Low). The students also had quite a bit of interaction with the public while working on their murals. Professor Gluszek commented that she continues to hear positive feedback about the artwork from members of the community, long after the class ended. At the request of the Park Director, this class will be offered again in Fall 2024.



Full-time faculty or staff members may also be granted sabbatical leave, per [Procedure 2785](#), for advanced study, related industry experience, or other professional activities that are related to their field of teaching or employment, and which will improve their professional competence and performance.

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- 98\_Sample Course Syllabi\_F1.pdf

### **3.C - Core Component 3.C**

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The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

### **Argument**

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**3.C.1 The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.**

With close to 30 percent of our students being Native Americans and 12 percent being Hispanic, NPC is working hard to recruit faculty and staff that reflect the diverse student body in our service area. The College regularly posts jobs in a variety of venues (e.g., Inside Higher Ed, HigherEd jobs.com, the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium [HERC], The Chronicle of Higher Ed, Indeed, LinkedIn, and Arizona at Work, if applicable). Nonetheless, NPC has continuously struggled with hiring more Native American and Hispanic faculty and staff to create an educational and service environment where students of similar ethnic identities have an opportunity to cultivate their sense of belonging and connections with our employees.

**3.C.2 The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the**

**curriculum and expectations for student performance; assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.**

NPC has the adequate level of faculty staffing necessary to fulfill its educational mission in all facets of current and planned operations. The College currently has 86 full-time and 94 adjunct faculty. There are 28 faculty who are qualified dual enrollment instructors in Navajo and Apache Counties. Full-time faculty are involved at all levels of curriculum and program oversight, review and credentialing of potential new faculty, and assessment of student learning.

Faculty teach a base load that varies from 30-36 load points in an academic year ([Procedure 2910](#)), depending on their respective faculty contract. Faculty job descriptions and assessments of faculty effectiveness incorporate non-classroom roles, including service on search committees and institutional committees established under shared governance. Each academic department participates in a faculty-driven process for assessment of student learning. Faculty department chairs engage with deans in credentialing decisions for potential new full-time and part-time faculty based on [Procedure 2925](#) and [required teaching qualifications](#). Class sizes and student loads are monitored by division deans. Department chairs and division deans jointly make decisions to add additional faculty or adjust course offerings, based on guidelines presented in the faculty handbook.

NPC has educational [services contracts](#) with Apache Counties, as well as with the Northeast Arizona Technological Institute of Vocational Education (NATIVE) and the Northern Arizona Vocational Institute of Technology (NAVIT), both of which represent local Career Technical Education Districts (CTEDs). NPC provides educational services in Navajo and Apache Counties through a combination of distance delivery and on-site courses. These courses are taught by faculty based in either county. Apache County-based faculty are NPC employees funded by Apache County educational services contracts. NAVIT contracts with NPC to provide direct-employment coursework and certification programs to students from participating high schools in Navajo County.

**3.C.3 All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial offerings.**

NPC maintains a [faculty qualification process](#) fully in alignment with HLC guidance regarding faculty credentialing. All full-time and part-time faculty, including dual credit and contractual faculty, are held to the same credentialing standards. All faculty credentials are kept on file in the Human Resource Department at the NPC Painted Desert Campus.

**3.C.4 Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.**

NPC instructors are evaluated annually per Policy 1730 and [Procedure 2970](#). Probationary full-time faculty follow a specific evaluation process, and faculty who have moved from probationary to continuing employment status follow a separate, annual review process. Adjunct faculty are regularly reviewed by their departmental peers and the division dean as outlined in Procedure 2970.

Per Procedure 2970, the faculty review process gives NPC the option to extend the four-year probationary period as needed, which allows flexibility in developing individualized evaluation plans, gives current faculty a larger role in evaluating and mentoring their peers, and strengthens the review process for all faculty groups.

**3.C.5 The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.**

NPC has [professional development processes](#) and resources to ensure that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles. NPC provides in-house professional development options for faculty and also strongly supports external professional development. Internally, NPC provides an [Instructional Skills Workshop \(ISW\) offered under the Instructional Technology and Curriculum Support \(ITCS\) department](#), which is a faculty-led program designed to enhance classroom skills. ISW is required for all probationary faculty, as described in the [faculty handbook](#). A stipend is provided by the college for all ISW participants. NPC assigns faculty mentors to provide support and advice for new probationary faculty. NPC also participates in the statewide Articulation Task Force process, as discussed above in 3.A.1 and 3.B.1.

NPC's Faculty in Educational Technology, under the ITCS department, provides [ongoing instructional technology training](#) to new and continuing faculty. Fourth Friday trainings are year-round and focus on both the technical and pedagogical aspects of classroom technology. ITCS also maintains an [eResource](#) site with similar tools and training for all faculty. Before each semester, NPC provides "just in time" training for faculty to review current and new classroom technologies. For example, before the beginning of the fall 2023 semester, ITCS, in conjunction with the Technology Advancement & Support (TAS) Division, hosted a Connected Classroom training.

NPC provides faculty with a professional development budget, which is overseen by a faculty subcommittee of the Instructional Council and is guided by the [Faculty Professional Development Guidelines](#). Faculty use these funds to attend conferences and trainings. Additionally, NPC departments, such as Nursing and College and Career Preparation, maintain separate professional development/training budgets, as required by external accreditors or grantors.

### **3.C.6 Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.**

The NPC faculty handbook identifies specific expectations for faculty [communication with students](#). NPC instructors are accessible for student inquiry through a mixture of in-person and distance-based communication methods. Faculty include [contact information in their syllabi](#), hold regular traditional office hours, communicate with students via NPC-issued email, and utilize the Moodle Learning Management System to communicate with students. NPC has also adopted TargetX, a customer relations management (CRM) system, in part, to facilitate faculty and staff communication with students in a widely dispersed service area.

### **3.C.7 Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.**

NPC has established strong [credential requirements](#) for staff in all student support areas. Current staff meet or exceed those credential requirements, and their credentials are kept on file in the Human Resource Department at NPC's Painted Desert Campus.

Training opportunities are provided to all support staff based on the needs of their respective departments. Below are some examples of [department-specific training opportunities](#):

- Financial aid staff annually attend regional and national update sessions to remain current on policy and process changes.
- Student tutors undergo regular training and review from faculty in the College and Career Preparation division.
- Academic advising staff attend statewide conferences and hold monthly internal training meetings. During these meetings, instructional departments provide regular updates on program changes, recommended course sequencing, and best scheduling options for students. Representatives from Arizona State University, University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University also regularly attend these trainings at NPC to provide current information on best practices for student transfer to their respective institutions.

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## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

### Argument

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#### 3.D.1 The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

NPC is committed to student success and provides a variety of services to help ensure students can receive the assistance they need when and where it is needed. NPC Student Services works to ensure that prospective and current students are knowledgeable about certificate and degree programs, available student services, and college resources that could be beneficial.

New students can access the self-serve [“pre-registration tutorial”](#) as an orientation to the College to learn about the various academic and non-academic support services. Through the Title III-funded ARMSS project, students can access these services via an [online information center](#) which serves as a virtual one-stop shop for them. New students can also register for a 3-credit college success course (HDE105 – Success Strategies for College) taught by NPC College and Career Preparation faculty. Starting in Spring 2024, NPC developed a [1-credit student readiness course](#) for high school students to help them be successful in taking college-level classes.

Each campus/center provides and/or connects students with the following support:

- Advising
- Financial Aid
- Office of Accessibility and Inclusion
- Career Services
- Veteran Services
- Student Billing

Since Advising is the crucial first step to student success, NPC ensures that students at all locations have access to an academic advisor. To ensure students meet with an advisor, a 12-credit hold is placed on students with an undeclared degree path. Requiring students to meet with their advisor and to declare a degree pathway promptly, helps ensure that students are enrolled in the correct classes.

NPC's academic advisors provide a variety of support to our students, including:

- Placement Testing
- Exploration of Careers
- Course Selection
- Establishment of a Certificate or Degree Pathway

At any time during the semester, students can access these services with an NPC academic advisor at any campus or center in person or via phone and/or email. Once students are enrolled in classes, academic advisors help them to access support services in financial aid, Office of Accessibility and Inclusion, and veteran services, as needed, on an individual basis. To accommodate students at their respective locations, support staff travel, as needed, to campuses and centers to assist students with these services. Starting in fall 2023, through the Title III-funded ARMSS project, NPC provides [one-stop-shop services](#) to connect students at our center locations to campus-based advisors or other student support staff to assist with their questions. The same grant also provides a training opportunity for advisors to learn to use appreciative and relational advising. Starting in Spring 2024, program advisors reach out to all students with the corresponding program intent to support them more holistically.

NPC also offers students, alumni, and community members many resources and opportunities for career, academic, and personal development. NPC Career Services is designed to help students determine their career goals, learn how to prepare résumés and cover letters, and develop confidence in interviewing skills. On the [Career Services webpage](#), under the Student and Alumni section, students can learn more about the following opportunities:

- Career Exploration and Planning
- Job Search
- Experiential Education
- Federal Work-Study

**3.D.2 The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.**

Assessing college readiness and appropriate course placement is a significant part of learning support for our students. NPC is dedicated to student success by first ensuring that students select courses appropriate for their skill level. Students meet with an advisor to [determine placement](#). High school grade point average (GPA) is used for placing students; however, for incoming



students who graduated high school more than five years ago, a placement exam is required in place of high school GPA.

Aside from guidance on course placement, NPC also institutes several mechanisms to support students in their academic learning. One example is the development of [concurrent courses](#) for students who take college English and Math classes. Another example is the creation of college [success courses for high school students](#) who are taking NPC college classes. Funded by a FIPSE grant, these courses are set up in multiple sessions to help high school students be ready for college-level learning environments.

[Student Writing Centers](#) offer students computer access and technical assistance to improve writing skills for term papers, research assignments, and résumés. Additionally, tutors, learning assistants, and NPC faculty are available throughout the week to help students. Learning assistants' hours and contact information are conveniently located online and are posted at each location.

NPC also provides [tutoring services online for students](#) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week free-of-charge through Tutor.com. Students can access these services through their Moodle Course shells whenever they need assistance with the following subjects: Mathematics, English, History, Nursing, Healthcare, Science, Social Sciences, Writing, and Business.

### **3.D.3 The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.**

Academic advisors play a key role at NPC, and advisors are available at all NPC campuses and centers. A primary responsibility of advisors is to help students establish a certificate or degree pathway. The 12-credit hold ensures that students see an advisor before taking more than 12 credits to confirm they are taking the courses specified for their intended degree. To assist students in making these choices, advisors use [degree maps](#) and attend regular advising meetings that help them stay apprised of the various degrees and certificate pathways. However, not all students are prepared to declare a degree within their first semester, so advisors, working with career services, help students explore career options. Through career services, students can explore careers, take career assessments, and find information on local career fairs. Once students have determined a career pathway, advisors assist students in determining the best certificate or degree pathways to their chosen career.

As a college, NPC wants to ensure students build relationships with staff and faculty so that each student feels a sense of belonging. To change our advising model from transactional to relational, NPC invited NACADA (The Global Community for Academic Advising) to train advisors on more relational processes and interactions. Advisors are also currently attending [an appreciative advising course](#), through Florida Atlantic University, where they will become certified appreciative advisors.

Advisors hold [monthly meetings](#) to improve their advising practices and to share. Common topics include financial aid updates, customer service training, career advising, technology use, program updates, and advising best practices. With the new bachelor program offerings added to the college program portfolio, advisors are working closely with department chairs to understand and implement the program requirements.

**3.D.4 The institution provides to students & instructors the infrastructure & resources necessary to support effective teaching & learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).**

NPC provides students and instructors with the following infrastructure and resources designed to support effective teaching and learning.

**Technology:** NPC's distance-learning infrastructure provides the resources necessary to deliver instruction in a diverse range of courses to meet the needs of its vast service area. The Technology Advancement & Support (TAS) Division and the NPC [eResources](#) webpage support both faculty and students in these environments. Faculty receive additional support through the [Faculty Mentoring Program](#) and Fourth-Friday technology training programs. Additionally, there are required Instructional Skills Workshops (ISW) for faculty to learn strategies and techniques using technology in their classrooms.

From its inception, NPC has followed the guidance of its Board to provide educational access for students in their local communities. This direction has guided the College's use of connected classroom technology and its ongoing effort to research and implement newer, higher-quality forms of technology that improve the classroom experience. Currently, NPC's connected classrooms contain one of two technology models: either CISCO hardware and software, coupled with an interactive Smartboard or InFocus board; or Logitech, or another vendor's, teleconferencing hardware and CISCO software, coupled with an InFocus board or a non-interactive large display. The CISCO hardware and software configuration offers a premier experience, serves as the cornerstone of our connected classrooms, and establishes a robust infrastructure that ensures seamless connectivity and collaboration. Smartboards and their associated Smart Notebook application play a pivotal role in enhancing the learning environment by empowering educators to engage students through touch-sensitive technology and multimedia presentations.

NPC and CISCO have a strong relationship and shared goals for educational excellence. Together we have launched our ConnectED initiative that seeks to better align CISCO's product offerings and services with connected and engaged classrooms. Through our partnership NPC is staying at the forefront of educational technology trends to ensure our classrooms remain innovative and effective.

In considering the College's technology needs, a group of faculty, instructional administrators, and TAS staff, as represented in the [Learning Technology Subcommittee](#), regularly evaluate

emerging technology and make recommendations to the Instructional Council (IC) to adopt new technology, impacting learning and instruction.

**Library:** Libraries at NPC are instrumental to effective teaching and learning and serve a critical role in enhancing student learning experiences at the College. Students and faculty have access to a variety of NPC [library services and resources](#) at all four campuses, five centers, and through the library website. Most locations also have a Tech Hub managed by the library that provides technology support for students and faculty. The NPC Library maintains a variety of print, electronic, and online [resources](#) that support the curricula and encourage independent research. Additionally, the library supports faculty teaching through [information literacy instruction](#) to help students develop better critical thinking and information discernment skills. Research strategies and citation assistance are available on NPC Library subject guides, including scholarly use of resources and plagiarism guidance. Other support services provided to faculty include equipment loans, course reserves, information for creating and [using Open Educational Resources \(OER\)](#), and limited test monitoring. Since 2021, NPC has been participating in a consortium with grant funds to promote the [use of OER](#) at the college. Over the past three years, over a dozen faculty participated in this consortium and generated OER materials for 20 classes. In February 2023, the English department chair reported to the DGB that since the fall of 2020, students saved an estimated \$570,000 through the use of OERs and free resources to replace commercial textbooks.

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### **3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary**

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The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

#### **Summary**

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NPC prides itself on its commitment and dedication to high-quality education that meets the diverse needs of its student population. The College utilizes a comprehensive, multi-step curriculum review process to ensure student competencies and program outcomes are relevant and aligned with academic and industry standards. The unique and varied instructional delivery models offered at NPC provide students with equitable access to high-quality, consistent instruction.

Through the adoption of General Education Student Learning Outcomes aligned with national standards, the College advances its mission of providing, supporting, and promoting lifelong learning. At the heart of this work is the value placed on the diversity of NPC's student population and communities. NPC continues to strengthen its efforts of supporting student needs through its various initiatives, organizations, and community partnerships. NPC further ensures students receive the highest quality education by supporting ongoing faculty development and community engagement.

#### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

### Argument

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#### 4.A.1 NPC maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

Northland Pioneer College (NPC) has an established [program review schedule](#) and processes to assist department/program chairs in conducting program reviews. The current program review process, which occurs on a five-year cycle, entails creating a program overview, analyzing enrollment trends and student demographics, discussing curriculum changes and program outcomes, and summarizing program plans and goals.

Department/program chairs are responsible for conducting program reviews using a standardized template (see [sample data appendices](#)). The template is used to ensure all reviews include the required components outlined in the policy and procedure. Program reviews must also discuss areas for improvement that are tied to the program analysis and annual assessment data. Current program resources are also analyzed, and recommendations are made to advance program goals.

The review concludes with specific action plans (see [sample program review reports](#)) that respond to identified challenges and potential opportunities.

The program review process involves the relevant academic deans, department chairs and faculty, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Program reviews are evaluated by the Vice President of Learning and Student Services (VPLSS) who provides feedback to the appropriate dean (see [sample VPLSS feedback](#)). The VPLSS, relevant academic deans, and department chairs develop implementation strategies based on the review suggestions. Specific changes made, that align with program review recommendations, include the following examples. The Welding department hired a fourth full-time instructor to expand course offerings. The Administration of Justice Studies department secured funding to expand and improve instruction for the police academy. The Nursing Assistant program has made curricular changes to the certificate of proficiency to improve program outcomes.

Information gathered from program reviews also helps inform the decision-making process at the President's Cabinet meetings. For example, the General Education review supports the development of a milestone credential ([AGEC certificate](#)) which is one of the strategic priority actions in the academic year 2023-24.

#### **4.A.2 The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.**

NPC details its [incoming credit acceptance policy, assessed credit policy, and residency policy](#) in the college catalog. NPC coordinates with the state's universities through the state-wide Arizona Transfer Articulation System ([AZTransfer](#)). Credit by examination is evaluated in coordination with cut scores established by the state universities. National examinations, such as the College Level Examination Program, Advanced Placement, and the International Baccalaureate, may be used for credit when approved by the Instructional Council and appropriate department. The state's public universities establish the cut scores for such exams; however, individual departments independently decide whether to align their cut scores with those of the universities. These national exams may be used at NPC for students' degree programs and general education courses, including major and elective requirements.

NPC has clear processes in place to evaluate credit for coursework, in addition to in-district completion or transfer credits from accredited institutions. [Processes](#) include credit by departmental evaluation, transfer courses from non-accredited institutions, experiential learning, and articulated equivalent courses. Students may also earn credit through an independent study format by completing a Learning Contract Application (LCA). LCA utilization is rare, and it must be made in consultation with an academic advisor, arranged with an NPC faculty member who will work with the student and evaluate the completed assignments, and approved by the appropriate division dean. Students may also work with Career Services to coordinate a [supervised internship opportunity](#) with an academic department. Finally, the College utilizes a

transfer equivalency/requirement [waiver petition process](#) to address exceptional cases of credit review.

Students completing programs from prior course catalogs are given an opportunity to complete their degrees provided that they maintain continuous enrollment. When NPC removes a program from the catalog, it [develops a teach-out plan](#) to assist students currently enrolled in that program. The teach-out plans are reviewed by the deans and the Instructional Council (IC). After IC's approval, the department shares the plan with the students to encourage degree completion. All students with continuous enrollment status may use teach-out plans to complete their degree.

#### **4.A.3 The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.**

NPC has policies and processes in place, detailed in the course catalog, to ensure the quality of the credits accepted for transfer. NPC reviews all incoming coursework from accredited institutions for content and learning outcome equivalency. Transfer credit evaluation begins in the Registrar's Office, but the process often involves faculty and department chairs when questions arise regarding content and outcome equivalencies. Given that most transfer credit comes from Arizona public community colleges and universities, the review process is often expedited by NPC's participation in the AZTransfer. This system includes annual participation by each department in [articulation task force meetings \(evidence file pages 116-133\)](#) to align curriculum; the system also includes a statewide database containing all university-transferable courses from all public community colleges and universities. Finally, AZTransfer has also developed the [Arizona General Education Curriculum](#) (AGEC), which is a block of general education coursework with guaranteed acceptance at Arizona's public universities and guaranteed lateral acceptance by all of Arizona's state community colleges.

In 2021, the AZ Transfer Steering Committee, made up of representatives from the state's community colleges and public universities, began a review of their general education requirements. The public colleges and universities in Arizona collaborated to identify the new AGEC criteria and an acceptable implementation timeline. Since that time, NPC's [Instructional Council has worked to review and update its general education courses](#) to align with statewide transfer articulation expectations.

Students may petition for acceptance of course credits which are not automatically accepted by the College. The [petition](#) must demonstrate that the content and rigor of the transfer course is equivalent to the NPC course. The petition is reviewed by the relevant academic dean and the Registrar, and a final decision is determined by the VPLSS.

#### **4.A.4 The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all of its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures**



**that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.**

The College's IC, in conjunction with the NPC President, VPLSS, and District Governing Board, maintains primary authority over course offerings and the process that ensures courses have the necessary academic rigor. IC is a key component of the shared governance process ([Procedure 2125](#)). IC is chaired by faculty, with a voting membership consisting of nine IC faculty and two academic deans. The VPLSS, the Instructional Council administrative assistant, and key support personnel serve as advisory, non-voting members. IC manages and oversees the curriculum development process, and it exercises primary control over academic policy.

Decisions over course and placement prerequisites fall within IC's purview. The current course placement system is developed and monitored by IC's Academic Standards Subcommittee. The [placement process is reviewed and discussed as needed by IC](#).

All new and revised courses are initiated at the faculty level. Faculty submit new course and course modification proposals through the Academic Curriculum Review and Evaluation System (ACRES). The ACRES system maintains a trail of comments and approvals from different entities when the course is reviewed. [ACRES forms](#) in the system include a course description, learning outcomes, assessment method, delivery model, learning modality, pre-/co/concurrent-requisite requirements, and general education outcomes for critical thinking, literacy, and diversity. Before review by IC, each course is reviewed and approved by the appropriate department chair and division dean. Departments may also collect feedback from the community or [advisory boards](#) to inform decisions related to new course additions or course modifications.

Once submitted to IC, proposals are reviewed following established guidelines outlined in the [ACRES User's Guide](#). IC may either recommend course approval or ask for further revisions. The VPLSS makes approval decisions on all courses based on recommendations from IC.

Program development and modifications follow the same faculty-driven process, but decision-making on programs occurs at the District Governing Board level, following VPLSS and NPC presidential review.

NPC maintains and exercises jurisdiction over faculty qualifications, including those of dual enrollment faculty. Additionally, [Arizona Revised Statute §15-1821.01](#) requires all community colleges to have a Dual Enrollment Faculty Committee that ensures fair treatment of dual enrollment students. NPC is compliant with this statute through its [Dual Enrollment Committee which regularly meets](#) to provide guidance related to dual enrollment issues.

Individual divisions create their own processes for ensuring that approved syllabi, textbooks, and learning outcomes are being used in Dual Enrollment courses. Dual Enrollment and adjunct faculty also participate in departmental assessment activities. NPC encourages Dual Enrollment and adjunct faculty to attend the Assessment of Student Knowledge (ASK) Planning Day, where assessment results and best practices are shared to improve teaching and learning.



NPC's departments and programs also collaborate with the Technology Advancement and Support (TAS) division to ensure that all the College's instruction modalities, which include online courses and interactive, real-time video classrooms, are supported. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the College chose to expand the use of connected classrooms that use CISCO, In-Focus, and SMART Board technology. Faculty members provide feedback on proposed technology to maximize educational flexibility and ensure student success.

#### **4.A.5 The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.**

The College has procedures in place for collaborating with national accrediting agencies that provide specialized accreditation to programs the College offers, such as Nursing, Cosmetology, Fire Science, and Massage Therapy. Ten NPC programs are affiliated with national accrediting and certifying agencies. Each [programmatic accreditation](#) agency has specialized criteria for maintaining accreditation. Many of these agencies conduct independent program reviews and site visits to ensure compliance with their standards. NPC has continued to meet these programmatic standards as evidenced by recent program accreditation reports.

#### **4.A.6 The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.**

In alignment with its mission, NPC uses multiple methods to track and evaluate student success at university transfer programs and student employment status. One indicator used to determine success is the [graduation rate of new transfers](#). The [Arizona Transfer System](#) provides helpful information about how community college transfer students have performed once they reach the universities.

To ensure certificate and degree programs meet the needs of industries and employers, Advisory Boards are established, meeting regularly to inform the College regarding necessary industry competencies. Regular feedback from the [Advisory Boards](#) has often led to program changes.

Some NPC programs have been supported through a Perkins Grant. In those instances, the College has been able to [track students and their post-graduation progress](#). The [Perkins Grant data](#) has indicated that in some categories NPC graduates have performed better than the state average.

Several programs such as Cosmetology, Fire Science, Medical Assistant, Surgical Technology, and Nursing have external industry certification exams that NPC students must pass to be certified. For example, there is a national licensure examination for Registered Nursing candidates and a state-certified examination for Nursing Assistant candidates. The pass rates of

NPC students are closely monitored by the respective licensing or certification boards. As applicable, NPC [uses pass rates on industry exams](#) as a means to assess program effectiveness. NPC students have achieved high pass rates on most of these external exams.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

### Argument

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#### 4.B.1 The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic cocurricular offerings.

NPC's processes for assessing student learning start with the development of clearly stated learning goals at multiple levels. At the course level, all [ACRES course forms](#) provide clearly outlined, course-level learning outcomes, and assessment methods for the outcomes. Through the course review process, IC ensures that course outcomes are clearly stated and measurable, and the assessment procedures are appropriate for the specific outcomes.

Departments set student learning goals at the program level and use curriculum maps to align course-level goals with program goals. The curriculum map is included as part of the department's [program review](#) (outlined in 4.A.1). Program-level assessments of student learning are found in vocational programs. All departments are responsible for ensuring that students meet [institutional learning outcomes](#) in the areas of Effective Communication and Critical Thinking. Additional areas in which departments may evaluate student outcomes include Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Inquiry, Information Literacy, and Diversity.

NPC's [Assessment of Student Knowledge \(ASK\) subcommittee](#) (under the IC) is a faculty-driven committee set out to develop and oversee the college assessment process for all academic departments and supports the College in meeting its mission. The [college-wide process](#) guides the departments to systematically and consistently develop annual assessment plans, collect data, analyze results, and consider curricular changes to ensure continuous improvement of student learning. Since the ASK subcommittee supports departments in their assessment processes, it also promotes improvements in defining clear learning goals and adopting effective assessment methodologies. In 2019, the ASK subcommittee worked collaboratively with the instructional departments to adopt Effective Communication and Critical Thinking as NPC's institutional-level learning outcomes. Every year since then, the ASK subcommittee supports academic departments to align these learning outcomes with their program-level learning outcomes. Specific questions are included in both the [Planning and Findings Reports](#) to reinforce these learning goals. Lastly, the ASK subcommittee, in conjunction with all faculty, also supports the

adoption of a set of General Education Learning Outcomes that were developed with the statewide Articulation Task Force (ATF) group.

All of NPC's academic departments follow the college-wide assessment process established by ASK as outlined in 4.B.1. In the fall of each academic year, each department is required to submit a Planning Report to document its assessment plan. In addition to laying out an assessment plan for the academic year, the department explains how its assessment plan is connected to the mission and/or values of the department and college as a whole. In the following spring, each department submits a Findings Report documenting its assessment progress and/or conclusions. The current practice is for the ASK subcommittee to host an annual [Dialogue Day](#) to discuss yearly progress in assessment and to report past findings.

Historically NPC's processes and methodologies to assess student learning have been largely generated from the instructional side. The College has faced some obstacles in developing satisfactory learning outcome assessments for services and co-curricular programs for all student services departments (see [history of NPC's efforts in co-curricular assessment](#)). Two recent obstacles were the COVID-19 pandemic and high-level administrative turnovers, both of which delayed our development of co-curricular assessments. Nonetheless, with clearer guidance published by the HLC, NPC has revitalized its work in this area. The IC [recently approved the following official definition](#): "Co-curricular activities at NPC are structured learning activities that support or complement the formal curricular programs offered by the college in its service areas. These activities are designed to enrich students' learning experiences beyond the classroom and foster their academic excellence and success." Members of our Assessment of Student Knowledge subcommittee are compiling information regarding activities that match this definition. Next academic year, the subcommittee will develop a college-wide assessment process for co-curricular activities.

#### **4.B.2 The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.**

NPC uses the annual assessment process mentioned above to drive instructional and curricular changes focused on improving student success. Most departments plan and collect assessment data in the fall and analyze results during the following spring semester.

[Use of assessment results](#) varies by department. At the course level, assessment evidence has been used to support things like changing how a topic is covered or rescheduling learning opportunities to a later time. In some cases, departments have used these results to reflect on their own assessment process.

Departments are expected to incorporate their assessment results in their [program review reports](#) with opportunities to use these results to improve program curricula. The Findings Report contains a section for departments to detail how they plan to implement their findings in continued support of student success. Departments can share their findings and implementations during Dialogue Day in the spring. In its [most recent Dialogue Day](#) attended by faculty, deans,

and staff, discussion topics gleaned from assessment included grand challenges in assessment, differences between grading and assessment, and utilizing assessment to analyze equity issues. Faculty were encouraged to reflect on developing reliable measures to improve student learning assessment.

**4.B.3 The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.**

NPC believes that its assessment structure and processes reflect effective practice. The ASK subcommittee continued to utilize information gained from its 2014 participation in the HLC's Assessment Academy to enhance its assessment process. NPC faculty work to integrate assessment in all programs, college wide. This begins with the ASK subcommittee, which consists of faculty members from all divisions within the College, plus the Director of Institutional Effectiveness. This subcommittee is chaired by a faculty member who is given a 3-credit load release to coordinate the committee's activities and the college-wide assessment process. To support the work of guiding and supporting different departments' efforts in assessing student learning, each ASK subcommittee received a copy of *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide* by Linda Suskie as an important resource. ASK subcommittee members who took the lead in coordinating the college's co-curricular development efforts also received professional development training.

The College's assessment processes are set up such that faculty can follow an ongoing and continuous cycle of assessment. The process is designed to systematically assess and document student learning to guide instructional, programmatic, and/or curricular changes. As described in 4.B.2, each department is required to use the report templates provided by ASK to document the assessment process. There are questions within [these templates](#) that guide the departments to develop specific and measurable learning outcomes, align assessment tools with outcomes, collect formative and summative data, and reflect on results from the previous year's assessment cycle to determine what changes need to be made to improve student learning. Departments then determine whether their assessment tools or methods need to be adjusted. The processes and the standardized templates allow the College to review departmental progress and challenges in conducting the assessment as a whole and provide insights for the ASK subcommittee on supporting each department.

Departments are encouraged to collect direct evidence of student learning and to use assessment methodologies or instruments that best match their learning outcomes. Assessment may include the use of rubrics on evaluating written assignments, embedded questions in quizzes/examinations, pre- and post-tests of self-evaluated scales, performance observations, certification results, and/or portfolio review.

The creation of Dialogue Day in the spring is also a good practice to promote assessment. On Dialogue Day, all faculty and administrators are invited to discuss insights and methodologies related to assessment, as well as to share pedagogical techniques that enhance student learning.

Dialogue Day participation reflects the faculty's commitment to making assessment an embedded part of teaching. Dialogue Day has historically been a time to share department successes and challenges discovered through the assessment process. Recently, [Dialogue Day](#) has become an opportunity to discuss potential assessment concerns, address the effectiveness of current assessment procedures, and identify opportunities for improved practices related to college-wide assessment efforts. As such, it was moved from after to before the Planning Report due date. In spring 2024, Dialogue Day included the opportunity for departments to discuss their findings from the previous academic year.

NPC's efforts in developing institutional-level learning outcomes provide another example of the College's commitment to encourage broad participation of faculty and other instructional staff in shaping its assessment culture. As described in 4.B.1, during the academic year 2018-19, the college worked to develop Critical Thinking and Effective Communication as the institutional-level learning outcomes that characterize NPC's completers. The ASK subcommittee continues to encourage department/program chairs and faculty to align their course-level and program-level learning outcomes to the two institutional-level outcomes by inserting specific questions in the report templates, as well as including this topic as a general session in the Dialogue Day event every spring.

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

### Argument

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#### **4.C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.**

NPC's focus on retention, persistence, and completion began before this current Year 4 Assurance Review, with its HLC Quality Initiative "Proactive Advising for Student Success" (PASS) in 2015. The decision to focus on these items was driven by a college-wide recognition of low student goal attainment rates and unacceptably high attrition. PASS has since evolved into a comprehensive strategic initiative plan with the following priorities on the NPC website (<https://www.npc.edu/administration/2021-24-strategic-plan>): increase student enrollment, improve student outcomes, and improve college sustainability. Through the newly created Instructional Technology and Curriculum Development (ITCS) department, NPC maintains its faculty mentors and faculty success workshops. The retirement of PASS coincided with the development of the aforementioned [Student Success Alliance \(SSA\)](#), an advisory and analysis group that prioritizes student success and equity. In addition, the College and Career Preparation Division and Early College Programs have implemented student preparation modules and are in the process of transitioning those into permanent, for-credit courses.

Beyond these college-wide initiatives, individual departments and programs also define and review completion goals. Some departments must use goals set for them by external accreditors. For example, Career and Technical Education departments work with the Carl Perkins grant manager annually to review [prior completion data](#) and adjust their course sequencing and instructional processes to improve completion. The Nursing and Nursing Assistant programs



[annually review completion rates](#) and supply the Carl Perkins grant manager with licensure data. Those programs are current with all external accreditations and keep close track of completions, licensures, and alterations to stakeholder criteria. NPC's adult basic education curricula, housed under the College and Career Preparation Division, are evaluated annually by the Arizona Department of Education and the Federal Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education on several parameters, including [completion rates and student gains](#).

In addition to the above efforts, the [SSA has done a great deal of work](#) in identifying barriers to student success and suggesting remedies to remove them. As SSA is a research and advisory group, the following initiatives originated from them and have since been at least initiated for implementation: developing categories regarding areas of interest, developing program maps, promoting the [use of open educational resources \(OERs\)](#), and promoting co-enrollment courses intended for student support in foundational composition and mathematics courses. Further, SSA ran a ["secret shopper" registration experiment in Spring 2021](#) that asked faculty, staff, and administrators to navigate our registration system and identify issues. This research became part of the college-wide consideration for initiating the implementation of a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

#### **4.C.2 The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.**

NPC's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) collects student course-level and program-level data across semesters and academic years from its student information system Jenzabar to generate indicators associated with student retention, persistence, and program completion. OIE shares the information in [an Excel file, containing multiple spreadsheets](#), with all academic departments as part of the annual program review process. [Individual departments utilize data](#) to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, course sequencing, and content selection. Departments also work with external agencies and accreditors to evaluate student completion data and make necessary adjustments to academic programs.

At the institutional level, the President and VPLSS share student retention, persistence, and completion data with the College and academic divisions during convocation (see examples [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) and division day. In Spring 2024, NPC also begins collecting advising-related data through [TargetX](#) which is a software used in part to replace the Starfish early alert system. The advising data in TargetX, combined with student academic performance data in Jenzabar, will be used to further support NPC's strategic initiatives to improve student retention, persistence, and program completion.

The initiatives started by PASS and outlined above have been dispersed throughout the college and integrated into the strategic plan. In addition, the PASS team also worked with the NPC divisions to develop a team of faculty success coaches. During spring 2018, the success coaches began discussing the need to provide faculty with knowledge of advising practices. This led to the development of the Faculty Workshop for Student Success (FWSS), a professional development opportunity for faculty to learn how to use some of NPC's student-success



resources. Although the name has been retired, its focus persists as an essential component of the [Instructional Skills Workshop \(ISW\) and Faculty Mentoring initiatives](#), overseen by the Instructional Technology and Curriculum Support department.

In support of Early College students, the Division of Instructional Innovation and the College and Career Preparation Division are implementing four [one-credit, sequenced college readiness courses](#) at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Early College Advisors will be examining transcripts and meeting with students to determine which of these courses are appropriate for individual students.

#### **4.C.3 The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.**

Across the college, instructional departments use retention, persistence, and completion data to make improvements to all aspects of program delivery, as described in 4.C.1. and 4.C.2. A few more examples of how NPC uses information regarding student retention, persistence, and program completion to make curricula or operational/service improvements are as follows:

- Due to its previous success in promoting program completion among students in adult basic education, the College and Career Preparation (CCP) Department introduced a second Integrated Education and Training (IET) program. The IET programs are designed to teach, concurrently and contextually, both Adult Basic Education/High School Equivalency (ABE/HSE) skills and workforce readiness and training. The CCP Department, in partnership with our Nursing School, launched a [Nursing Assistant IET](#) program in March 2024. Learners needing a high school equivalency and high school graduates who need extra support began with an 8-week pre-session class which prepares them to take the Nursing Assistant course (NAT101) along with another co-enrolled CCP course in the fall of 2024. Learners are supported through the logistical and academic demands of the NAT program, which prepares them to take the CNA/LNA licensure exam in December and, where applicable, continue to advance toward earning an HSE and/or taking additional pre-requisites for the RN program. This program will continue with a new cohort beginning each semester in preparation for NAT101 the following semester (Fall 2024 to Spring 2025, etc.).
- The Academic Standards Subcommittee of IC has been researching [redesigning NPC's course placement process](#) for several years. In Spring 2016, the subcommittee recommended to IC that the College should shift from sole reliance on a single high-stakes placement exam to an approach that incorporates analysis of high school course completions with GPA, GED completion and scoring, and an enhanced placement testing system. Evaluation of this change was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic because students and NPC employees had limited access to testing resources. As NPC moved temporarily to mostly remote learning, advisors and students used self-placement for general education courses. The subcommittee continued to use data to evaluate how to improve the course placement process. As we continue to handle the after-effects of the

pandemic, we have re-instated the multifactor placement processes and are working to better define the stipulations of “satisfactory placement” on official curriculum proposals.

- At the institutional level, NPC utilizes student performance data to guide the development of our strategic initiatives. For example, in August 2021, NPC participated in the Institutional Resilience and Expanded Postsecondary Opportunity (IREPO) Grants Program and was awarded a two-year grant for a project titled Early College Opportunities to Advance Degree Attainment (ECOADA) to increase [college access among high school students](#) in our service area and improve student readiness for success in college courses. Through this grant, NPC was able to implement the Dual Enroll registration software which drastically improved the efficiency in accepting college applications from the high school students and in registering these students for NPC classes. Additionally, NPC developed a series of college success classes to improve student readiness for online synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- In October 2022, NPC was awarded a federal Title III, Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) Part A program grant for a project titled [A Relational Model for Student Success](#) (ARMSS). This project focuses on improving student performance such as enrollment, persistence, retention, and successful semester/year course completion rates. This project also focuses on college experience such as a sense of belonging among our public non-high-school students. It involves implementing five strategies to transform our episodic, task-based student support model to a student-centric model in which NPC would reach out to every student to establish holistic relationships. The design of the entire project is closely tied to specific goals and objectives to increase enrollment headcount and full-time student equivalency, as well as fall-to-fall retention.
- The lack of available, accessible, and affordable childcare has been a known barrier to student success for several years. The issue has been exacerbated since the pandemic and the NPC service area has joined the nation in its childcare crisis. NPC has taken a leadership role in addressing this issue by formalizing a partnership with the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) Head Start grantee. NPC’s District Governing Board (DGB) allocated funding to purchase a new modular building for the Winslow campus to house an on-site Head Start program. NACOG and NPC celebrated with a [grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony](#) on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The College and the Head Start program will continue to study the impact of on-campus childcare and early childhood educational access on student success. The current NPC master plan also includes space to be utilized as an on-site childcare program at the Show Low campus. We continue to seek out more partnerships to grow these services and provide students with the resources needed for success.
- An increased focus on student retention led to the [creation of the Division of Instructional Innovation](#) (DII), which promotes and supports a diverse lifelong learning community committed to innovation, creativity, and collaboration. Their aims are inclusive in all aspects of the education process. As such, they strive to promote effective and innovative teaching and learning, strengthen internal and external educational partnerships, and foster a learner-centered and inclusive educational environment that increases access. Currently, the division houses Instructional Technology & Curriculum Support (ITCS), Library Services, the Office of Accessibility and Inclusion (OAI), and Early College.

As part of DII, the ITCS Department assists with the use of learning technologies and the creation of well-designed curricula for all delivery modes. The faculty members in ITCS are assigned to teach for-credit courses in their field of expertise at NPC, which supports student enrollment. ITCS is also responsible for the delivery of [professional learning events](#) and the management of innovative technology along with design and curriculum projects to improve student success. In addition, the ITCS Department assists with the oversight and support of the Moodle learning management system in collaboration with the Learning Technology Committee (LTC) and Technology and Advancement Support (TAS).

**4.C.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)**

NPC's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. NPC follows well-defined methodologies for measuring student retention, persistence, and completion for external reporting. The College uses a data-driven and logical approach to determine suitable methodologies that match with its student populations. Historically, the College has used externally-developed definitions, such as the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the Arizona [2030 Strategic Vision](#) specifications, which are based on the Voluntary Framework of Accountability.

To promote better comparison with other institutions nationally, as well as within the state of Arizona, NPC opts to use the IPEDS definitions and Arizona 2030 Strategic Vision specifications to analyze student retention, persistence, and completion. Some of these measures are used as the college's current set of key performance indicators, while others are used to support the development and implementation of division-level strategic priority actions. Analysts at the Office of Institutional Effectiveness develop SQL scripts based on IPEDS and Arizona 2030 cohort-based measure specifications and subsequent updates to these specifications. They extracted data from two major sources: Jenzabar CX (NPC's Student Information System) and student transfer and graduation data from the National Student Clearinghouse. Data extracted from these sources were then imported into Excel files before analyses. [Denominators and numerators are computed](#) for each measure and are validated by another analyst before being sent to NPC's responsible parties for review. Since Arizona 2030 Strategic Vision measures are compiled by an external consultant, NPC also has an opportunity to review the [report](#) before it is finalized and published. The data used in these reports are disseminated to different departments in various ways to support discussions related to progress in strategic priority action or data-informed decision-making.

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## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### Summary

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NPC relies on the following practices and approaches to both maintain the quality of, and ensure ongoing improvement of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services:

- A systematic five-year cycle of program reviews, with collaboration between the respective academic dean, department chairs, faculty, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, which leads to program plans and goals designed to improve student success.
- Overseeing the quality of its academic offerings through faculty-driven leadership in curriculum development, evaluation of in-coming student transfer credits, participation in the Arizona Transfer Articulation system, and dual enrollment supervision.
- Faculty commitment to an active and evolving assessment process that follows an established annual cycle of collecting and evaluating data, which is used to improve student learning.

In the upcoming years, NPC expects to improve in the following areas:

- Working closely with area high schools to improve high school student college education experiences
- Co-curricular assessment process
- Establish an Academic Master Plan through the new IC Academic Planning subcommittee

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

### Argument

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#### **5.A.1 – Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—through planning, policies and procedures.**

Shared governance is an integral part of how NPC makes strategic and, to some extent, operational decisions. NPC supports the philosophy of [shared governance \(Procedure 2125\)](#) and relies heavily on shared responsibility to make the decisions influencing the College's mission and budget priorities. By using shared governance, NPC strives to promote and preserve a culture of collaboration and trust for the benefit of all its constituencies.

At NPC, shared governance includes the following bodies:

- the President (and Cabinet members)
- Leadership Council (LC) – the represented entity of all shared governance groups
- Instructional Council (IC) – focuses on curriculum and instructional matters
- Northland Pioneer College Faculty Association (NPCFA) – representing faculty
- Classified & Administrative Staff Organization (CASO) – representing staff
- Student Government Association (SGA) – representing students

These shared governance groups collectively exchange viewpoints on matters that impact the College as a whole, as well as the individual constituencies. Some of these groups may have

subcommittees with specific charges. For example, there are currently two subcommittees under the LC: The belonging subcommittee (in charge of developing the institutional belonging plan) and the Policy and Procedure subcommittee (overseeing the development of new or revised college policies/procedures).

The LC is responsible for the College's accreditation and planning processes. To encourage open meeting attendance, LC [emails its agenda items](#) to all NPC employees before the meeting. The LC may accept items referred by college employees and other committees of shared governance and may refer items to other committees, subcommittees, or task forces as necessary. The LC deliberates and makes recommendations to the President regarding broad strategic direction and initiatives. As our 2025-30 strategy development process began in January 2024, LC voting members constitute the central planning facilitation group. Every month, a 2-hour time block is set aside for this group as [a work session to discuss various planning topics](#) and venues for the College's internal and external stakeholders to engage in. Each member of this group is responsible for updating the latest planning progress and gathering input from several departments/groups.

CASO addresses staff concerns, NPCFA addresses the concerns of faculty, and SGA addresses student concerns. Each of these committees [reports regularly](#) to the District Governing Board (DGB) (see examples: [1](#), [2](#)) regarding recent actions and areas of importance. IC handles matters of curriculum, academic standards, and instruction for NPC.

College employees have [multiple ways](#) to be informed and participate in the college's decision-making process:

- Receive "AllNPC emails" that are sent out on (1) major issues or concerns; (2) DGB activity postings of future Board meetings; (3) updates from NPC's President that relate to upcoming events, major changes, or accomplishments (4) new procedures or revised procedures with an invitation to comment and give input before finalization
- Attend All College bi-weekly meetings where the President and other administrators updates the entire college on significant events via Web-ex. Before the meeting, the President's administrative assistant invites college employees to submit agenda items for these meetings. All meeting recordings are posted on the NPC SharePoint page for those who cannot attend to be kept informed of college happenings.
- Participate in semiannual convocations where the whole college gathers to give feedback and receive training via breakout sessions.

In keeping with the tenets of shared governance, NPC makes a conscious effort to include all internal stakeholders in decision-making processes and annually reviews the shared governance policies and procedures.

**5.A.2 – The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.**



NPC administration practices data-informed decision-making by relying on different types of data to make strategic, operational, and tactical decisions that support the fulfillment of our vision and mission. In general, many departments/committees have their agenda item template with designated space to encourage data presentation that supports discussion of issues or ideas.

Specific functional units utilize data differently but all practice data-informed decision-making as much as possible. For example, data related to enrollment, course success, and program completion are distributed to academic departments every fall to support their annual or comprehensive [5-year review process](#). Departments use these data to support their annual and long-term budgeting needs. [Local employment data](#) are usually collected by individual departments to inform program demand and opportunities for graduates.

At the dean level, [registration data](#) at various timeframes along the semester are used to determine course cuts, instructor adjustments, and future semester course scheduling decisions. For NPC's nursing division, additional external data are also collected to evaluate program rigor and to meet program accreditation requirements. These external data allow the nursing division to track student success while in the program, licensing exam results, admission to university-level Bachelors of Science in Nursing programs, and post-graduation job placement outcomes.

Directors of various student support departments (e.g., enrollment services, advising) use enrollment data to determine recruitment needs and plan for future recruitment efforts. Program-level retention and persistence data are used by the advising department to initiate student outreach and support, and to determine if additional advisors are needed to serve students.

The NPC Chief Financial Officer and her team, including the financial services and business office, use data daily. The annual budget process includes a review of historical financial information to help develop estimated budgets for revenues and expenses for future years. All department budget managers are provided [historical budget data](#) for review to make informed, balanced requests for next year's budget planning. The annual audit process focusing on reconciliations and trend analysis utilizes data to help explain variances in revenues and expenses (note: most of these data can be found in the [Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](#)). Other operating data are also used to analyze financial data such as enrollment and total employees broken down further by subcategories. Financial data is also used for the compliance reporting that is required of NPC. NPC has recently focused on construction to build facilities for new programs and expansion of existing programs. The square footage along with construction costs are used to help determine the space needed and compare that to the available financial resources before final decisions are made.

NPC's Technology Advancement and Support (TAS) division routinely uses network traffic data to determine internet circuit needs and bandwidth limitations. The lifespans of computers, printers, and other devices on campus are monitored carefully to strategically plan for update rollout and replacement. TAS also relies on [data feeds from security cameras](#) installed at all NPC locations to protect assets and to work with law enforcement if theft occurs. Staffing needs are partially assessed using iSupport ticket data to maintain an adequate level of services to NPC employees and students.



Since NPC as a remote, rural institution has some challenges in recruiting key personnel, the Human Resources Department (HR) frequently collects data to improve the College's ability to retain and empower employees in their work. Exit interview data are used to better understand employee turnover, as well as the [Great College to Work For survey data](#) to gauge employee engagement and satisfaction. In the fall of 2023, HR launched its monthly supervisory training sessions and has been collecting [feedback from supervisors](#) to improve professional development opportunities. HR also began to host monthly [new employee orientation events](#) to improve the new employee onboarding process.

**5.A.3 – The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.**

NPC's Instructional Council (IC) and its established subcommittees are the primary college groups that address academic requirements, policies, and processes (Procedure 2125). IC is composed of faculty and administrators; advisory (non-voting) members include administration, staff members, and other individuals invited to participate. IC has [several standing committees](#), which include Dual Enrollment, Academic Standards, Learning Technologies, Professional Development, and Assessment of Student Knowledge.

The [minutes of these academic subcommittees](#) serve as evidence of the involvement of administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policies, and procedures. Any concerns or questions can be submitted to IC as an agenda item for discussion. NPC division meetings, held twice a year, address areas of academic programs, policies, and procedures central to the interests of the faculty, students, and staff.

The [President's Cabinet meets weekly](#) to communicate urgent and important matters to other college administrators, and then make decisions as appropriate. Where appropriate, the President's Cabinet provides input to matters about academic programs. A most recent example of shared governance group involvement in academic or instruction-related policy or process involves improvement in the areas of conducting feasibility studies for new programs. The Bachelor's Ad Hoc Task Force was a temporary group created and charged by the IC to help the College in the initial exploration and development of three bachelor's degree programs for the college. Based on its experiences, this group proposed a revised tool to better encapsulate information that academic leadership, as well as senior college leadership, determined is needed when considering whether future Bachelor's degree development. The Ad Hoc Task Force presented the proposal to the [Cabinet](#) as well as the LC for input. In April 2024, the IC voted to make the Ad Hoc Task Force group [a permanent subcommittee in charge of academic planning](#).

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## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

### Argument

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#### **5.B.1 – The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.**

NPC maintains robust fiscal, human resources, physical, and technological infrastructure to support its operations. To promote operational excellence, NPC also develops effective ways to retain qualified and trained operational staff.

##### *Fiscal*

NPC has [sufficient fiscal resources](#) to provide continued, ample support for its programs and operations; additionally, there are fiscal resources to strengthen the quality of its programs and operations in the future. NPC's [budget process](#) involves the DGB, administration, and budget managers and focuses on creating and sustaining adequate operational funding and fiscal reserves. NPC also has a cash reserve policy and a future capital reserve to maintain operating stability and set aside funds for capital projects.

Several employees in the finance area are Certified Public Accountants (CPAs). They are affiliated with professional associations such as Community College Business Officers (CCBO). They also attend other continuing [professional educational activities](#) and events to keep up with knowledge associated with financial controls and to obtain critical industry updates, such as Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) pronouncements.

NPC's commitment to quality, in education and institutional planning, is evident in the financial area with the benchmark success of an exceptionally high Composite Financial Index (CFI) demonstrating the ample financial health of the institution. NPC has maintained an index above 8.0 for [the last ten years](#), with 1.0 being the threshold for the lowest acceptable and no ceiling on the rating scale.

##### *Human Resources*

NPC takes pride in the expertise of its faculty, staff, and administrators who collectively stand behind the success of the College and its students. The [low student-to-faculty](#) ratio allows for timely and personalized responsiveness to students and their needs. The current workforce includes 30 administrators, 66 full-time exempt professional staff, 71 full-time non-exempt staff, 87 full-time faculty, and 99 adjunct faculty.

Hiring at NPC focuses on identifying the most qualified candidate for the advertised position. On occasion, vacancies are posted internally before being posted externally to give priority consideration to qualified internal candidates. Advertisements are placed in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education*. Highly specific positions are frequently advertised in trade journals. Staff positions are generally placed in local papers.

NPC has adopted many strategies to ensure that all its staff are appropriately qualified and trained. [Procedure 2701](#) summarizes NPC's entire hiring process. Once hired, new employees receive the Employee Handbook and new faculty receive the Faculty Handbook. These handbooks are updated annually to provide the latest information and reflect any broad operational changes that occurred during the year. With a new Chief Human Resources Officer hired in the summer of 2023, NPC increased the number of new employee orientations from once a year to monthly. At the beginning of the new academic year, new faculty members participate in [new faculty orientation](#), collaborate with experienced faculty mentors, and receive training in instructional technology and additional support from [a designated faculty and educational technology instructor](#).

Both faculty and staff are encouraged to apply for funds, set aside, for professional development. [Professional Development procedures](#) are clearly articulated and publicly available. In most cases, employees may not need to apply for professional development funds as they have opportunities to attend professional development events to stay skilled in their areas to meet NPC's changing needs. Below are specific examples:

- Since academic year 2022, the Human Resources department launched [regular supervisor training](#), including topics such as cultural competence, conflict resolution, budget development, strategic thinking, and Title IX.
- Beginning academic year 2023, through the funding from a five-year Title III NASNTI grant ([A Relational Model for Student Success](#)), NPC administrators, faculty, and staff have the opportunities to attend a cultural competency class designed by Utah State University. Additionally, this grant also provided funding for [NPC advisors to attend relational advising training](#).
- Faculty members, both new and long-serving, are provided multiple opportunities to participate in training in all distance modalities, including technology use and pedagogy. While NPC also requires new faculty members to participate in [Instructional Skills Workshops](#) (ISW), long-serving faculty are encouraged to participate in ISW as well.
- Employees with job assignments in Financial Aid attend all required [financial aid training](#).
- The Technology Advancement and Support Department maintains [individual training schedules](#) for its employees to maintain and gain technical relevance.

### *Facilities*

NPC operates nine campuses/centers plus a maintenance location, totaling more than 400,000 square feet on 105.51 acres, and maintains sufficient facilities to meet its current and future educational programs. These facilities were built between 1974 and 2023. In 2023, [a new Skills Center](#) facility was built at the White Mountain Campus in Show Low. The Skills Center is a 28,200-square-foot building built to meet the needs of students in the career and technical trades, such as welding and automotive programs.

Facilities undergo renovation as necessary to meet the needs of students and staff. NPC increasingly uses distance learning technology, in addition to the traditional classroom format, allowing renovations to facilities to accommodate more technology-based classrooms. The Technology Advancement and Support (TAS) and Facilities departments collaborated with faculty to develop a classroom layout that accommodates more technology-based teaching and learning modalities. NPC allocates a minimum of \$2 million per year in its [capital budget](#) for facility needs, including renovation and maintenance for projects that support student learning.

Facility renovation and maintenance costs greater than \$5,000, and a useful life greater than one year, are included in the capital budget. NPC has a rolling [three-year capital budget](#) to manage these needs. The capital budget is funded from general operations and receives a small amount in state appropriations related to STEM programs.

NPC solicits input from its communities to address facility needs. These needs are incorporated into the Facility Maintenance Plan and the [Master Facility Plan](#) to develop annual budgets and establish priorities on a three-year rolling basis. In Spring 2024, the Construction/Facilities Department developed a more streamlined and inclusive process to accommodate and prioritize construction and facility renovation needs. This department-specific initiative is to address multiple requests from many departments/groups, sometimes with competing timelines and resources. Having this process helps the department, as well as TAS, to coordinate construction and facility renovation efforts in a well-ordered manner.

### *Technology*

The TAS Department provides 32 staff maintaining over 1,400 desktop and laptop computers, two data centers, a call/support center, and an infrastructure with a complex and redundant WAN with microwave and extensive ISP service to support delivery of services across two counties, covering over 21,000 square miles at 25 multi-site locations. Sites are equipped with classroom technology to support collaborative instruction. Virtualized environment server infrastructure is used, with 200 virtual servers and 20 physical servers. As outlined in [Policy 1138](#), NPC Procedure 2208 directs the College's Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan to address any disaster that impacts the ability to offer information technology services and data recovery necessary for NPC operations. The College's current Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution, Jenzar, provides the foundational structure as both a student information system and business operational backbone. NPC is transitioning to a new ERP with Anthology. The implementation process will take [three years to complete](#). The new ERP will have a more

streamlined operation across several core college functions including student information system, finance, payroll, and recruitment.

**5.B.2 – The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution’s organization, resources and opportunities.**

NPC’s mission states “**NPC provides educational excellence that is affordable and accessible for the enrichment of communities across northeastern Arizona.**” To provide affordable and accessible education to a service area that covers the size of the State of West Virginia, the DGB has a history of practicing cautious use of public resources. Since state appropriations account for approximately one-third of its revenue, NPC pays close attention to any changes at the state level in terms of revenue streams and adjusts the resources to meet its current and future goals. The budget for [fiscal year 2024-2025](#) for general fund operations is nearly \$39 million and, on a college-wide basis, is \$66 million including capital and grant activities. Unrestricted fund balance is approaching \$80 million for fiscal year 2023-2024. This demonstrates NPC can meet its current and future education demands.

To provide a sustainable and predictive revenue stream, NPC has taken a systematic approach to resource allocation and has prepared for any Arizona state budget cuts to community colleges. The College continues to work with other community colleges within the state to urge the legislature to revise the [Expenditure Limit](#) formula for all districts. Changes in the formula will reduce the pressure imposed on all community college districts to rely heavily on property tax revenues for their expenditures.

In addition to fiscal conservation, NPC is also leveraging resources to maximize opportunities not only for students to obtain education but also for our partners to obtain qualified employees. The [Workforce Development Task Force](#), created in the fall of 2023, aims to explore and align various external resource opportunities with the college’s strategic goals.

Our students were greatly impacted both financially and emotionally as a result of COVID. Although NPC experienced some enrollment increase since 2020, the growth has not been as much as that of other state community colleges. Under the leadership of the President, NPC focuses on strategic enrollment management. In November 2023, the Director of Enrollment Services shared the [strategic enrollment management plan](#) with the DGB. The implementation of this multi-year plan is phased into stages in light of the college’s existing resources. In the academic year 2023-24, only a few initiatives described in the plan are scheduled as priority actions.

**5.B.3 - The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.**

NPC has a very well-conceived and well-implemented budget and monitoring process. Internally, the annual financial planning cycle begins in September with an introduction to the DGB by the Chief Financial Officer and ends in May with an approved budget. A [budget calendar and planning assumptions](#) are also approved by the DGB in the fall of each academic year.

The budget development includes extensive shared governance involvement, including meetings at the department level and review and recommendations at the executive level. At the beginning of the budget planning cycle, budget managers develop their line-item department requests, which are reviewed by the President's Cabinet during the budget hearing held in the spring. Budget increases are usually tied to NPC's strategic priorities. The proposed budget is then presented to the DGB for review and discussion, and the budget is eventually adopted by the DGB in May. The approved budget is then published on the NPC website.

In addition to the operational and capital budgets, NPC also develops tuition, property tax, and other revenue projections, and provides these estimates to the DGB at the February and March meetings. If NPC plans to increase its primary property taxes over the prior year's level, it must also provide notices in the local newspaper per [Arizona Revised Statute §15-1461.01](#).

In terms of monitoring expenses, NPC maintains budgetary controls in the form of detailed balanced budgets and budget transfer restrictions by fund, department, and account. All budget managers have access to financial reports in the College's current ERP, Jenzabar, for real-time financial data. When a budget manager questions an expenditure, he/she contacts the Business Office for further information and, if necessary, adjustments are made. Operating and capital budgets are also reviewed and adjusted semi-annually; this allows NPC to redeploy resources to other divisions or departments as needed.

Monthly, NPC's Chief Financial Officer or designee presents a [financial report](#) to the DGB that includes monthly and year-to-date expenditures by funds. Expenditures are reviewed for significant variances at the division, department, and line-item level and are addressed with the budget manager for corrective action. The objective of these budgetary controls is to ensure the annual budget is properly managed with sufficient oversight from the DGB according to the [Uniform Expenditure Reporting System \(UERS\)](#) for community colleges.

NPC also demonstrates fiscal compliance by compiling the annual budgeted [expenditure limitation report](#), which is audited by the Arizona Office of the Auditor General. The expenditure limitation calculation determines the maximum allowable expenditure supported by local revenues.

#### **5.B.4 – the institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.**

NPC's Business Office has extensive [policies and procedures](#) that monitor financial processes in accordance with federal and state laws and best practices. The Arizona Office of the Auditor



General audits the institution annually and presents the audit results ([component unit](#) and [comprehensive](#)) to the DGB each spring.

NPC has a long-standing Intergovernmental Agreement [with Apache County](#), the neighboring eastern county, to provide education services on a reimbursement-for-service basis. The College also has a long-standing partnership with Northern Arizona Vocational Institute of Technology (NAVIT), the regional Career and Technical Education District (CTED), which provides Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities to juniors and seniors in high school at no cost to the student. A significant percentage of the TAS department spending supports direct instructional activities, as a result of the multitude of distance learning modalities, with the balance supporting overall technology for college operations.

The DGB provides policy-level oversight of the institution. As Board Members are all elected representatives of their districts, this governance structure and process allows NPC to focus on students and the public good. Under this shared governance structure, NPC is prevented from being adversely affected by elective resource allocations.

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## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

### Argument

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#### **5.C.1 – The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.**

The results of the 2019 HLC comprehensive evaluation for reaffirming our accreditation status showed that NPC was required to submit an interim report demonstrating improvement in our strategic planning area. We submitted the interim report in December 2021 and received [encouraging feedback from the HLC](#). As described below, with a new President coming onboard in July 2021, we continued to devote substantial organizational efforts to improve our strategic planning process. More notably, our President helped create an annual planning process to align with strategic goal areas at the institutional level. We have also consistently communicated our progress in our planning and implementation efforts to the college at large.

NPC fulfills its mission by planning strategically for the future and managing its resources responsibly. [Resource allocation planning](#) is a part of the budget development cycle and occurs at functional, departmental, and institutional levels. NPC allocates its budget resources in alignment with its mission and strategic plan.

NPC develops an annual [operating](#) and 3-year [capital budget](#). The operating and capital budgets allocate limited resources. In the most recent academic year, NPC developed 14 [priority actions under the three 2021-24 strategic goals](#). All priority actions are aligned with specific strategic initiatives and the three strategic goal areas. The process for developing the operating and capital budgets prioritizes initiatives that support the Strategic Plan, then academic programs and student services. The rest of the operating budget is allocated to support services. Each year,

NPC undergoes an [annual planning process](#) where the LC, all deans and directors, as well as the President's Cabinet, evaluate which of the priority actions and/or strategic initiatives are completed and identify newly emerged priority actions. A new list of priority actions is presented to the college at the fall convocation. Every month following the fall convocation, the President's Extended Cabinet [reviews progress](#) in implementing the priority actions for that academic year under each strategic goal. The President then summarizes the progress and reports to the DGB and the entire college via [monthly strategic updates](#). The President also presents mid-year progress with data on key performance data at the spring convocation.

### **5.C.2 The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.**

NPC follows an annual planning and budgeting process that links departmental assessments, for both instructional and support departments, to the broader institutional direction. Each fall semester, departments evaluate their existing and future needs based on departmental and institutional goals. The Business Office provides departments and division leaders with longitudinal spending data and the current multi-year capital budget as working tools. Instructional divisions, as well as Student Services departments, collect [relevant assessment and evaluation data](#) to inform their planning and budget requests.

A [budget hearing](#) is held with the President's Cabinet and budget managers to review budget requests and justifications provided by respective division heads. During the spring semester, the DGB reviews, and is asked to approve, the annual operational budget and a [three-year rolling capital budget](#) based on this interactive process. This planning and budgeting process is evolving, with the ongoing goal of providing as much process access and input across the College as possible, to achieve the best planning outcomes.

This process reflects NPC's in-depth assessment and evaluation of operations and planning from within and results in continuous improvement. The primary tools of assessment of student learning, the General Education Outcomes, Program Outcomes, and Course-Level Outcomes, are linked to the systematic and integrated assessment, planning, and budgeting process of the institution. Ongoing improvements in measurability and data collection ensure that the College's planning and budgeting processes are linked to assessments in ways that have operational meaning. (See [two examples](#) of how departments and divisions combine their assessment and program review in their budget planning process)

### **5.C.3 - The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.**

When NPC engages in its multi-year strategy development, the planning process involves the entire college. NPC's strategic planning process integrates feedback from its internal and external constituencies. Internal involvement is outlined in NPC's policy on Shared Governance,

while the solicitation of external input is acquired through several different methods. College employees have access to the [LC SharePoint page](#) to provide their input on any planning topic (e.g., reflecting on the current mission or vision, environmental scan, or suggestion related to a strategic direction for the college) via a Qualtrics survey specifically developed for this purpose. Each LC voting member is assigned to serve as the [strategy development liaison](#) for several shared governance groups and departments. Their responsibilities are to provide up-to-date planning progress to these groups or departments, as well as organize opportunities to collect input or feedback via surveys, listening sessions, or focus group discussions. The LC also works alongside the President in conducting [community input surveys](#) or hosting [focus group discussions](#) to invite input from our external constituent groups.

NPC places a high value on its relationships with area high schools. Since 2023, NPC has been hosting a [day-long High School Appreciation Day](#), with specific sessions sharing updates and collecting input from these K-12 institutions on current and future enrollment needs and trends. NPC is also a member of the Navapache [Administrator's Association](#). Academic programs are guided by [program advisory boards](#) comprised of local members of business and industry who have expertise in a particular field. These groups meet regularly and provide input regarding the direction of curriculum matters to ensure that academic expectations and business, industry, and real-world standards are complementary.

NPC also has an [annual strategic planning process](#) in place to review and adjust existing and potential priority actions to respond to external changes imposed on the College. As described in 5.C.1, this process starts with the LC whose members participate in a planning retreat in March/April. The retreat is organized to review existing priorities and identify new priorities as the College moves forward with the overall strategic goals. When needed, forums, task groups, and work groups are called to discuss matters of institutional importance. The LC's list of proposed priority actions for the next academic year will be reviewed by the deans and directors at their retreat in May/June. Deans and directors also have their opportunities to add to this list, which is reviewed and discussed by the President's Cabinet at its retreat in June/July. The Cabinet will finalize the list with the President announcing the priority actions to be implemented at the fall convocation.

#### **5.C.4 The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.**

NPC conducts its planning based on a sound understanding of its current capacity. NPC anticipates the impact of fluctuations in its [sources of revenue](#), including local property taxes, state appropriations, tuition, and grants. Each year, the DGB approves [budget assumptions](#); one assumption is that property taxes will be levied at the maximum amount, limited by the Arizona Statute not to exceed two percent plus new construction additions. In the most recent academic year (2023-24), upon hearing that the state will likely have significant cuts in its budget, the President's Cabinet met on several occasions to discuss how the state budget cuts would impact the college revenue and discuss ways to balance a college budget to continue to fulfill its mission.

NPC develops tuition increases with the financial situations of its students in mind. Tuition increases are deliberately low and steady. NPC consistently has the lowest tuition rates per credit hour in the state. NPC is required to track enrollment on a semester basis, which is audited annually per the [Arizona Revised Statute §15-1466.02](#). Since our ability to spend resources to expand our enrollments and/or improve our services to our communities is restricted by the [Expenditure Limit](#), which is tied to our enrollment figures, NPC continues to develop processes and activities to increase engagement with communities and future student enrollments of all age groups. Most recently, the NPC administration proposed to the DGB to [reduce the summer tuition rate to \\$0](#) to help relieve students' financial burdens and encourage summer enrollments. Other examples of NPC's consideration of its current capacity in the planning process include developing the implementation plan of our priority actions into different phases to avoid overloading resource demands on departments and through regular progress review, postponing implementation of certain priority actions to future years.

#### **5.C.5 – Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.**

In its strategic planning process, NPC reviews emerging factors that may impact the College. Factors vary from changes in federal or state legislative requirements to fluctuations in the local economy and population. NPC does several things to stay informed of local, regional, and national trends. College staff participate in regional and national [professional associations](#) to keep abreast of trends. Through these discussions, employees gain insight into national shifts in technology, demographics, and globalization through training, newsletters, webinars, and conferences. Information acquired through these resources is considered during the planning process.

At a local level, NPC tracks county population and student demographics and stays connected to local industry/employment trends, resulting in the development of new CTE associate programs and three bachelor's degree programs. NPC also continues to strengthen its Early College programs via the TALON consortium with local high school partners. The [increase in high school student enrollment in NPC classes](#) counteracts the slight decline in overall enrollment. This change has prompted the creation of the [Division of Instructional Innovation in 2020](#).

Given its distributed model and the service area's dispersed population, NPC must constantly research emerging technologies that allow the College to serve its constituents more effectively and efficiently. Our Technology Advancement and Support (TAS) division is developing a comprehensive multi-year technology plan. This plan will serve as a guiding document, outlining our strategic approach to implementing new technologies and aligning them with the broader goals in NPC's strategic plan. Integration with our TAS strategic plan ensures consistency and collaboration, driving innovation and efficiency through NPC. Overall, The College continues to invest significant resources in its technology infrastructure to anticipate evolving external changes:

- Campus/Center Security – we have strategically installed [state-of-the-art security cameras](#) across the majority of our Campuses and Centers and have plans to finalize installations at our remaining locations this year. TAS is collaborating closely with Campus and Center Managers and other groups at the college to ensure that these cameras are installed in critical areas and monitoring is accessible to the appropriate staff.
- Tower Connections - Ensuring dependable connectivity for both our students and staff is extremely important for us. Currently, TAS is soliciting proposals to upgrade the College's wide area network and microwave towers to bolster performance and security links to our Campuses and Centers.
- CISCO technology to enhance the quality of instructional delivery within the college and with our high school partners - We are deeply committed to enhancing the technology experience for our college and high school partners, collaborating closely with them to ensure students have access to the most reliable technology and connectivity possible. Together with our TALON high school partners, we are proactively improving the learning environment by enhancing connected classrooms with new or upgraded equipment at each of our locations. This ensures that students have the tools they need for an exceptional and successful educational experience.
- Cybersecurity - Safeguarding our college against cyber threats is a top priority at NPC. In addition to [regular campaigns and other assessments](#), TAS continues to provide opportunities to educate college employees about recognizing and mitigating threats to safeguard us against cyberattacks and protect sensitive information. NPC's commitment to ongoing cybersecurity testing and training ensures that we remain strong in the face of evolving threats.

Navajo and Apache Counties are the most impoverished counties in the State of Arizona. NPC has responded to this financial reality by [maintaining a very low tuition rate](#), developing and offering new [scholarship opportunities](#) for local students, and maintaining a tax rate significantly lower than other counties with low tax valuations. The College also partners extensively with local industry and K-12 entities to maximize the use of budget dollars. NPC houses and supports the [local Small Business Development Center](#) to help foster a climate of local economic development and serves on local economic development groups such as the Real Arizona Corridor project. NPC takes into consideration any changes in local and regional demographics and economic conditions in its operational and strategic planning. In the past two years, NPC has developed several new programs to meet employment demands within its service area. Most recently, NPC applied for the Arizona Commerce Authority grant to upgrade our Kayenta educational building to an educational and economic development center. Through this grant, NPC hopes to create enduring partnerships with the local township and the Navajo tribal nation to promote significant economic development growth in Kayenta and its surrounding communities.

**5.C.6 – The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.**

Improvement in operations to fulfill its mission starts with planning. Our five-year strategy lays out the strategic directions or future college goals. Currently, the [Leadership Council](#) is facilitating a college-wide process to set our strategic directions for 2025-30. Then, our [annual planning process](#) creates a structure where the administration and the LC conduct planning and prioritization exercises to create a list of priority actions that align with the strategic goals to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes. As described in 5.C.1 and 5.C.3, this annual planning cycle begins in mid-spring when the President organizes a series of planning retreats with the LC, all the deans and directors, and the President's Cabinet. During these retreats, these three groups review progress made in the existing academic year's priority actions, discuss existing and upcoming challenges for the college, and identify specific projects (called priority actions) for the forthcoming academic year. Key performance metrics such as enrollment growth, completion rates, and employee satisfaction survey data are reviewed for future planning ([evidence file: pp.5-9](#)). To prepare for these planning retreats, voting members at the LC and all deans and directors must work with their respective constituent groups or reporting departments to examine current operations or practices, as well as growth opportunities in light of existing priority actions and the strategic goals.

At the fall convocation, the list of priority actions, along with its corresponding strategic initiatives tied to the [strategic goals is shared with the entire college](#). To ensure successful implementation, each priority action is assigned to a member of the President's Cabinet as executive sponsor. [Monthly updates](#) (i.e., progress made, challenges and resource needs, next steps) are first shared at the Cabinet level. The President also prepares a [report](#) to the District Governing Board (verbal report with presentation slides at each DGB monthly meeting) and the entire college (distributed via [AllNPC emails](#)). During spring convocation, the President presents ["the State of the College"](#) to all employees with accomplishments or thus far progress from these priority actions and the most recent key performance metrics.

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## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

### Summary

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With HLC's recommendation to focus on strategic planning, NPC has developed a robust process to align its annual planning to its strategic goal areas. NPC also focuses on communicating its progress in implementing these annual priority actions more widely and consistently with various constituent groups. NPC strategically plans and allocates its resources in support of its mission. Through strategic planning and saving, the College is capable of generating sufficient financial resources to meet current requirements, upcoming challenges, and growth opportunities. Purposeful planning in all areas, including finances, facilities, personnel, and technology, supports the diverse educational offerings NPC currently delivers, and will continue to deliver in the future.

NPC's resource base and careful allocations of public funds allow expansion in response to student enrollment and future projections. The quality of NPC's educational offerings is a consistent focus and is directly tied to NPC's strategic priorities throughout the budgeting and planning processes. NPC also invests heavily in the technological resources that support and maintain an ever-changing landscape of communication, connectivity, and access for students and staff.

NPC is preparing for upcoming challenges, such as a decrease in county property tax base, by making strategic reallocations of funds that directly support the learning environment and by prioritizing expenditures for student-centric success initiatives.

NPC successfully plans for its future by assessing its program and operational efficacy and areas needing improvement. Utilizing applicable data from assessments is an area for growth. Another consistent goal in the planning process is repurposing funds for use in more efficient ways that better support student success.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

