

# Northland Pioneer College - AZ

HLC ID 1730

OPEN PATHWAY: Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

Review Date: 6/3/2024

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## Context and Nature of Review

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### Review Date

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6/3/2024

### Review Type:

Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

### Scope of Review

- Assurance Review

*There are no forms assigned.*

## Institutional Context

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In fall 1972, the Navajo County Community College District was formed to serve the higher education needs of residents in a region covering approximately 21,158 square miles, slightly smaller than the land area of the state of West Virginia. The district oversees Northland Pioneer College (NPC), a regionally accredited comprehensive community college serving the entirety of Navajo and Apache counties, Arizona.

The institution began offering classes in fall of 1974. More than 2,000 students were initially enrolled. NPC now serves more than 7,000 students on its four campuses and five center locations throughout tribal homelands of the Navajo, Hopi, and Apache peoples of northeastern Arizona.

NPC provides educational excellence that is affordable and accessible for the enrichment of communities across northeastern Arizona. Consistent with this mission, the institution offers associate degrees, career and technical education, college credit in high school, adult college prep/GED, noncredit/personal enrichment classes, small business development and corporate training. Most recently the institution has launched its inaugural Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education (spring 2024). NPC offers a Tech hub, computer and technology support, instructional technology assistance to faculty, students, and staff in its intent to ensure effective communication through online learning platforms.

## Interactions with Constituencies

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Judy Yip-Reyes, Director of Institutional Effectiveness (ALO), NPC

Betsy Wilson, Director of Development, NPC

## Additional Documents

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**The review team requested additional information for the following items and received documentation.**

1. Specific evidence of the 2023 planning process and the follow-up 2024 actions
2. College incorporation of external constituencies into the planning process
3. Process of the Master Plan
4. Linkages between the strategic planning process and resource management
5. 2023 Convocation in its addresses to student learning
6. Additional evidence of assessment of student learning
7. Consideration of external factors in the planning process
8. Document how planning is guiding the development of present and future goals.

# 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.

## Rating

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Met

## Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College (NPC) is a public, open-access community college that serves three Native American reservations and nine locations all serving different student population profiles.

In December 2020, a small group of the Leadership Council presented the final proposed mission, vision, and shared values to the full Council, after which a final draft was shared with the District Governing Board in January 2021 for adoption. The updated mission statement was part of an inclusive, collegewide annual strategic planning process. The mission statement guides the institution in "educational excellence that is affordable and accessible for the enrichment of communities across northeastern Arizona."

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 guides the institution in its goals of academic excellence through new programs such as

the Early Childhood Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree and a planned BA in Elementary Education degree. Program mapping will also organize future program development as well as the expansion of existing programs. The institution's affordability and accessibility statements are realized through its five-year Title III Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution Grant (NASNTI) called A Relational Model for Student Success (ARMSS), which within its five strategic priorities, addresses learning communities, one-stop-shop for student enrollment within the remote communities, holistic academic advising, and more. NPC is in its second year of grant implementation, and the individual priorities will be addressed within the span of the grant cycle.

Additionally, NPC offers ongoing student success workshops at its Center locations in Hopi, Whiteriver and Kayenta as well as workforce readiness courses in Nursing. These types of courses have supported the successful student pass rates on the NCLEX exam. Energy and Industrial Technology programs address the immediate needs of the community as some major industries in the area have shut down; the College has the insight to prepare students for other types of industry jobs. NPC scaffolds its academic offerings through tutoring services, academic advising, small business development center and future career planning.

NPC embraces cultural diversity on its campus locations to include cultural programming open to all employees, students, and the public. Cultural awareness is included in one of the College's general education competencies. The College hosts various cultural events. NPC's President has implemented a strategy for College personnel to participate in multi-cultural events and to engage with the community.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NPC seems well connected to its communities of interest through various outreach strategies that are documented in the assurance argument. Included in these strategies are regional education sector engagements and programmatic employer advisory committees, which were evidenced by meeting agendas and minutes. New degrees, such as the Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education, have been established to address the shortage of credentialed Pre-K and K-3 teachers. Additionally, the College's Performing Arts Center provides the community with various productions and entertainment.

Policies and procedures are in place to assure NPC is aligned with Arizona Revised Statute §15-1402. These include the election of the District Governing Board (DGB), Code of Ethics, Conflicts of Interest, and other policies providing guidance to accountability and the delegation of authority.

The use of advisory groups and industry-specific advisory boards is presented in the assurance argument as the means to engage external constituencies. Little evidence is provided on how these engagements are assessed and how the institution understands their effectiveness. Within the evidence file, there is a statement that suggests the College will be developing a strategy for 2025-30 for utilizing these stakeholders in developing strategic direction. Launched in fall of 2023 was the Workforce Development Task Force with the committee being formed and a charge presented. Minutes from the first meeting of this taskforce indicate that the President's Cabinet will have an extended meeting to discuss progress.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College (NPC) understands its relationship between curricular and cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. Collaborations exist between the College and various area businesses that serve a threefold purpose of cross-cultural training, technical expertise, and academic learning. One such example is the Indian Health Service Facility. Survey results showed that this facility offers outstanding clinical experience to its students through problem solving and critical thinking. Additional examples include Skills USA, a workforce development organization where students are empowered to become skilled in their future career field. An NPC student was awarded a bronze level medal at the national competition in 2023. Other programs such as the Presidential Scholars Program provide students the opportunity to pursue scholarly topics through discussions and field trips and active learning in general.

The College highlights its recently awarded federal Title III Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI) grant called A Relational Model for Student Success (ARMSS). The focus is preparing the institution for learning communities, a group of learners with shared common academic goals.

The College hosts multiple events/programs that are open to employees, students, and community members where cultural diversity is interwoven into the programs. Examples include Indigenous People's Day events hosted at the College's tribal locations. In 2023, the event brought tribal and college leadership together to honor the collaborative efforts between NPC and the tribal communities. Another event hosted during spring of 2024 was the Eagle Fest for cultural enrichment. The Talon Art Gallery recently hosted a Realism and Abstraction Exhibition on telling stories of the human condition. The Performing Arts Center supports inclusive shows and events.

The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. Examples include the hiring of several staff including an Associate Vice President of Human Resources to assist in ensuring that policies and procedures are updated. Annual training was offered to supervisors on a TEACH Cultural Competency Course. This will be expanded to other

employees through the ARMSS grant. Another highlight is the innovative technological delivery modalities which allow the institution to reach geographically and culturally dispersed populations in unique ways. The institution has also embedded diversity and/or multicultural competencies in many of its courses such as Cultural Anthropology, Women's Literature, and World Regional Geography. Another piece of evidence provided is a draft of the Belonging Plan which will provide NPC students, in particular Native American students and employees, a sense of belonging. This plan is in progress.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

### Rationale

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The NPC mission, vision, and shared values statement was adopted in January 2021. 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, the college catalog, as well as physically visible on campuses and centers. The mission guides the institution in its goals of academic excellence through a proposed Academic Master Plan, which is slated for completion in the academic year 2024-2025 per the addendum, and new programs such as the Early Childhood Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree and a planned BA in Elementary Education degree. Program mapping will also organize future program development and inform the expansion of existing programs. NPC offers student success workshops at its Center locations as well as workforce readiness courses in Nursing to improve student outcomes. Technology programs address the immediate industry needs of the community.

NPC embraces cultural diversity to include cultural programming open to all employees, students, and the public. Cultural awareness is included in one of the College's general education competencies. The College has also embedded multicultural competencies in many of its courses such as Cultural Anthropology. NPC seems well connected to its communities of interest through various outreach strategies.

The use of advisory groups and industry-specific advisory boards is presented to engage external constituencies. Little evidence is provided on how these engagements are assessed and how the institution understands their effectiveness. Within the evidence file, there is a statement that suggests the College will be developing a strategy for 2025-30 for utilizing these stakeholders in developing strategic direction. Launched in fall of 2023 was the Workforce Development Taskforce with the committee being formed and a charge presented. Minutes from the first meeting of this taskforce indicate that the President's Cabinet will have an extended meeting to discuss progress.

The College understands the relationship between curricular and cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. Collaborations exist between the College and various area businesses that serve a threefold purpose of cross-cultural training, technical expertise, and academic learning.

The institution's processes demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. Examples include the hiring of several staff including an Associate Vice President of Human Resources and annual cultural competency training is offered to supervisors and staff.

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College's (NPC) current mission, vision, and values were developed through a comprehensive process, including input from multiple stakeholders, and were approved by the Board in 2021. These were reviewed again in December 2023 as part of the College's development of its 2025-2030 strategic planning process. Based on feedback received from the college community, it was decided that the mission, vision, and values were still current and relevant therefore, they did not need revision.

Under Arizona state statute, the Board is responsible for setting and approving all policies and procedures for the College's operation. The administration reviews these annually and recommends changes and new policies when needed. Revisions of procedures are initiated by the department responsible for that area and are assessed through committees ensuring broad input. The College operates under a Shared Governance Model, as evidenced by Shared Governance Procedure 2125, which requires faculty participation in committees as part of the decision-making function. Multiple committees are used, including Assessment of Student Knowledge, Academic Standards, and Learning Technologies.

Financially, NPC received a favorable audit and has earned the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This honor recognizes the College's transparent financial reporting.

The Student Code of Conduct includes sections on the expectation that students present themselves and their work honestly and ethically. Program-specific handbooks, such as those of the Nursing department, provide guidance and expectations for their students.

The College further demonstrates its commitment to integrity regarding its operation in Human

Resources with standard processes for hiring and onboarding new employees. Employees are required to complete annual training which include topics such as Title IX, FERPA, HIPAA and Sexual Harassment. NPC recently completed a compensation study to ensure their employees were being compensated at a rate consistent with their peers.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NPC uses various methods to present itself clearly and completely to its constituents. The College's website provides comprehensive access to a wide array of information for both internal and external audiences. The website is organized to allow easy access to program information, course offerings, and program locations. One specific page is dedicated to listing tuition and fees based on resident and non-resident students. Additional tabs allow users to learn about media, course, and special fees. Their website also includes a section for Student Rights and Responsibilities clearly outlining student-right-to-know information.

Printed documents, including college catalogs, program brochures, and "Quick Facts," are readily available to share college information. Several of the printed documents, such as the College's annual report, catalog, and multiple data-related documents, are available on the college's website. Collegewide email communications are utilized to share pertinent information and provide any emergency or weather closures through the College's RAVE Emergency Alert System.

The College's Marketing and Public Relations department, in collaboration with the areas responsible for the various parts of the information, is responsible for the accuracy of the content. All reported data are reviewed and verified prior to publication.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NPC's District Governing Board (DGB) is prepared and knowledgeable, allowing it to make informed decisions about the College. The Board received training about statutory requirements including an open meeting on Law and Board Governance from the College's attorney and training by the American Community College Trustees in 2023.

Each month, the DGB receives information about the College's activities and operations. Financial documents, including monthly and yearly financial statements, are made available for review. A financial audit is conducted yearly and the Board has opportunities to ask questions and clarify information during presentations from the Arizona Office of the Auditor General. The College also prepares an annual comprehensive financial report that summarizes the fiscal year in review. Budget review and adoption are completed each year and the Board exercises its fiduciary responsibility with oversight of partnerships with Apache County and the Northeast Arizona Training Center.

Evidence supports that the Board's decisions reflect the College's priorities and its interest in internal and external constituents, as noted with reports about the White Mountain Campus construction project and the decision to purchase a new enterprise resource planning system. The Board agenda allows for reports from college groups, including the Student Government Association and Faculty Association, as well as monthly college updates from the President.

The Board maintains its independence in its decisions, and each Board member must attest to any potential conflicts of interest yearly. As College Policy 1009 indicates, the President is delegated the daily management of the College with input through a Shared Governance Model.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NPC is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression, as outlined in Policy 1810, which explicitly grants faculty the right of expression within the classroom, in research, and as private citizens. The library provides access to resources in various formats that support individual expression in conjunction with literary information and hosts a yearly Banned Book Week. Faculty utilize activities to share information regarding the pursuit of truth and reasoning in multiple courses across programs.

During an all-college meeting, the College hosted a breakout session on academic freedom, which outlined NPC's policy as well as sharing information on the importance of this concept for faculty and the content they teach.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The College supports applied research and maintains appropriate oversight in the process. Procedures are in place that outline requirements and expectations to meet federal regulations in support of ethical research and support of human subjects. NPC has its own Institutional Review Board that ensures protections are in place for employees or students who wish to engage in applied research. To further protect data and sensitive information, all employees are required to complete training which includes sections on FERPA and HIPAA.

Students have many opportunities to learn and understand the importance of ethical and responsible research and scholarly practice. Examples include proper citation guidance in specific courses as well as access to library resources. The library resources include a robust website and the opportunity to "Ask a Librarian" through texting or emailing, making this resource readily available and flexible for students. Student Writing Centers are available and provide support for research and proper citation. NPC has included information literacy as a learning outcome in its General Education group, further outlining the importance it places on the integrity of research and acquired knowledge. English Composition I includes a section on appropriate uses of information and is required for all degree-seeking students.

NPC expects students to act with honesty and integrity and has reinforced this with procedures outlined in the Student Academic Code of Conduct. A list of reported incidences of academic dishonesty and subsequent sanctions demonstrate the College's diligence in mitigating these issues.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College's (NPC) current mission, vision, and values were developed through a comprehensive process, including input from multiple stakeholders; these were approved by the Board in 2021 and reviewed again in December 2023. The administration reviews all policies and procedures for the College's operation annually and recommends changes when needed. The College operates under a Shared Governance Model.

The Student Code of Conduct includes sections on the expectation that students present themselves and their work honestly and ethically. The College further demonstrates its commitment to integrity regarding its operation in Human Resources with standard processes for hiring and onboarding new employees. NPC provides comprehensive digital and printed access to a wide array of information for both internal and external audiences. NPC's website also includes a section for Student Rights and Responsibilities clearly outlining student-right-to-know information.

Financial documents, including monthly and yearly financial statements, are made available for review. The College conducts an annual financial audit and prepares a comprehensive financial report that summarizes the fiscal year in review. Budget review and adoption are completed each year, and the Board exercises fiduciary responsibility with oversight of partnerships with Apache County and the Northeast Arizona Training Center.

The Board maintains its independence in its decisions. As College Policy 1009 indicates, the President is delegated the daily management of the College with input through a Shared Governance Model.

NPC shows commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression for all administration, faculty, staff, and students.

The College supports applied research and maintains appropriate oversight in the process. Procedures are in place that outline requirements and expectations to meet federal regulations in support of ethical research and support of human subjects. NPC has its own Institutional Review Board.

Students have many opportunities to learn and understand the importance of ethical and responsible research and scholarly practice. NPC expects students to act with honesty and integrity and has reinforced this with procedures outlined in the Student Academic Code of Conduct.

## 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).

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College (NPC) has a structured process for course and program development, involving multiple stages of review. It commences at the department level and progresses through the Academic Curriculum Review and Evaluation System (ACRES). Recommendations from departmental reviews are then assessed by the deans' offices and the faculty-driven Instructional Council (IC), which provides input and recommendations on proposed courses and programs.

These recommendations are then forwarded to the Vice President of Learning and Student Services (VPLSS) for further evaluation and feedback. Final decisions regarding new programs, changes, or deletions are made by NPC's District Governing Board (DGB), which votes on all related proposals.

Additionally, to ensure continuous improvement and relevance, all programs undergo a comprehensive review over a five-year cycle. To ensure the ongoing relevance of occupational/technical courses and programs, NPC has established industry-specific advisory committees. This structured approach to course and program development and review ensures quality and alignment with NPC's educational goals and standards.

NPC provides a diverse range of educational pathways including AAS (Associate of Applied Science) and AGS (Associate of General Studies) programs, tailored for immediate application in the workforce and alignment with Bachelor of Applied Science degrees. Additionally, NPC offers CAS (Certificate of Applied Science) and CP (Certificate of Proficiency) programs, aimed at equipping students with essential skills for employment. Workforce-oriented programs are regularly reviewed by advisory committees, ensuring they meet industry standards and adequately prepare students for

employment.

In spring 2024, NPC introduced a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education, expanding its offerings. Moreover, the DGB sanctioned two additional bachelor's degrees in December 2023: the Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education (BAEE) and the Bachelor of Applied Management (BAM). These programs are currently undergoing assessment by HLC.

Each program includes specific program-level learning outcomes, integral to the annual assessment of student learning. It is evident that NPC recognizes the importance of refining learning goals across its degree and certificate programs. Each program also contains program-level learning outcomes, which are a key component of the annual assessment of student learning outcomes. However, NPC has identified that differentiating learning goals between its degree and certificate programs is an area for continual improvement.

NPC employs ACRES to define and communicate the subjects and objectives of each course, ensuring consistency in curriculum across all classes. Regardless of how or where a course is taught, it must cover the designated topics and achieve specified outcomes. To maintain uniform and high-quality education across different teaching methods, NPC gathers and evaluates various forms of data concerning teaching efficiency by method.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NPC's mission within its general education programs is to instill lifelong intellectual engagement in cultures and the natural world by promoting critical inquiry, effective communication, and an appreciation of diversity. NPC adopted six learning objectives to help guide the curriculum development process.

Because several NPC general education courses and programs are designed to transfer smoothly to the three Arizona state universities, NPC is a part of the Arizona General Education Articulation Task Force (GEATF). This taskforce works together to coordinate the content of the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC), review and offer recommendations for AGEC policies, and determine general education and student learning outcomes within the Arizona transfer system.

NPC's faculty keep current with industry changes, trends, and knowledge to continuously improve their programs. For example, when several employers expressed recent graduates lack "soft skills", NPC's advisory boards focused on determining local employer's needs with skills represented in the general education outcomes.

NPC communicates the goals, anticipated learning outcomes, and specifics of its general education offerings through the General Education Values section of its website and college catalog. Additionally, students receive detailed syllabi for each enrolled course, outlining the course objectives, content, and expected learning outcomes.

The College has a five-year review cycle where each of NPC's programs and their respective courses are reviewed with the aim of enhancing student learning. Faculty members then implement assessment measures specific to their departments and gather relevant data. Subsequently, departments review and analyze these data, documenting their findings in a comprehensive report. These assessment findings guide departments in making necessary adjustments to the curriculum or other academic decisions.

NPC is committed to diversity and provides educational opportunities regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, geography, or socioeconomic status. Embracing its diverse student body, NPC cultivates a learner-centered environment that aligns with its shared vision. NPC addresses community needs through innovative and effective student services, supports professional growth, and fosters collegial collaboration. NPC offers a range of courses on human and cultural diversity, along with programs and services such as the Veteran Program and initiatives promoting Native American cultures, to meet the diverse needs of its student population.

NPC demonstrates how faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the advancement of knowledge, in line with their programs and NPC's mission. Faculty actively participate in conferences and projects aimed at furthering knowledge discovery. They also involve students in scholarly or creative activities within and beyond the classroom. NPC showcases examples of collaboration between faculty and students, such as the Art department's project where faculty guided students in researching, designing, and creating public art murals at Fool Hollow Lake State Recreation Area in Show Low, Arizona. This initiative allowed students to apply their artistic skills and knowledge locally, thereby supporting NPC's goals of academic excellence and community enrichment.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

### 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.

#### Rating

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Met

#### Rationale

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With approximately 30 percent of its students identifying as Native American and 12 percent as Hispanic, NPC is committed to recruiting faculty and staff who represent the diverse demographics of its service area. NPC consistently advertises job openings across multiple platforms and recognizes the ongoing challenge of recruiting additional Native American and Hispanic faculty and staff. This continued effort aims to foster an educational and supportive environment where students from these ethnic backgrounds can strengthen their sense of belonging and connection with NPC staff.

NPC maintains sufficient faculty staffing to effectively fulfill its educational mission across all current and future operations. NPC currently employs 86 full-time faculty members and 94 adjunct faculty members. Additionally, there are 28 faculty members qualified as dual enrollment instructors in Navajo and Apache Counties. Full-time faculty members play integral roles in curriculum development, program oversight, the credentialing of potential new faculty, and the assessment of student learning outcomes.

As outlined in Procedure 2910, NPC faculty typically teach a base load ranging from 30 to 36 load points per academic year. This procedure also specifies faculty job descriptions and evaluates faculty effectiveness, which includes assessing their contributions beyond the classroom, such as participation on search committees and institutional committees established through shared

governance. As detailed in Procedure 2910, NPC department chairs collaborate with deans in determining the credentials for prospective new full-time and part-time faculty, including necessary teaching qualifications.

NPC maintains a faculty credentialing process that aligns with HLC guidelines. All full-time, part-time, dual credit, and contractual faculty adhere to uniform credentialing standards. Documentation of faculty credentials is centrally stored at the NPC Painted Desert Campus within the Human Resource department.

NPC conducts annual evaluations of all faculty members in accordance with established policies and procedures. Newly hired full-time faculty undergo a probationary period for their first four years before transitioning to continuing employment status. As outlined in Procedure 2970, NPC reserves the flexibility to extend the probationary period beyond four years when necessary. This approach allows for tailored evaluation plans, encourages peer evaluation and mentoring among current faculty, and enhances the overall review process across all faculty groups.

NPC offers a variety of resources to support instructors' professional development, both internally and externally. Internally, NPC conducts an Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW), led by faculty, focused on enhancing classroom skills. Attendance at ISW is mandatory for probationary faculty and available to those with continuing employment, with a stipend provided by the College. Additionally, NPC's faculty in the educational technology team provides ongoing training in instructional technology, including just-in-time sessions before each semester to update faculty on current and new classroom technologies. Furthermore, NPC provides faculty with a professional development budget overseen by a faculty subcommittee of the Instructional Council and guided by the Faculty Professional Development Guidelines. This budget enables faculty to attend conferences and training opportunities aimed at enhancing their professional capabilities.

The NPC Handbook outlines clear guidelines for faculty-student communication. According to the handbook, NPC instructors are expected to be accessible to students through a combination of in-person and distance-based communication methods. Faculty are required to include their contact details in syllabi, maintain regular traditional office hours, communicate via NPC-issued email, and utilize the Moodle Learning Management System for student interactions. Recently, NPC also implemented TargetX, a customer relations management (CRM) system, to enhance communication between faculty, staff, and students across a broad service area, thereby improving student access to faculty support.

NPC maintains stringent credentialing requirements for staff in all student support areas. Current staff members not only meet but often exceed these standards, and their credentials are centrally documented at NPC's Painted Desert Campus within the Human Resource department. Additionally, NPC offers a diverse range of training opportunities to support staff, customized to meet the specific needs of their respective departments.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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).

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NPC provides a comprehensive range of student support services including advising, financial aid, office of accessibility and inclusion, career services, student billing and veteran services. Upon entering the institution, students begin with advising, which assists them in selecting programs and courses. Advising also guides students to access other necessary student support services tailored to their individual needs. NPC implemented a student success strategy to ensure students meet with an advisor; a 12-credit hold is placed on students with an undeclared degree path. NPC also requires students to meet with their advisor and to declare a degree pathway promptly. This NPC strategy helps ensure that students are enrolled in the correct classes.

All new NPC students have access to the self-guided "pre-registration tutorial" as an introduction to the College, providing information on the wide range of academic and non-academic support services available. Through the Title III-funded ARMSS project, students can utilize these services through an online information center, which acts as a virtual hub for their needs. Additionally, new students have the opportunity to enroll in a three-credit college success course (HDE105 – Success Strategies for College), taught by NPC College and Career Preparation faculty. Commencing in Spring 2024, NPC introduced a one-credit student readiness course designed for high school students to enhance their success in college-level classes.

NPC's Career Services website offers a wealth of resources and opportunities for career, academic, and personal development to students, alumni, and community members alike. It is tailored to help students define their career objectives, refine their résumés, and cover letters, and enhance their interviewing skills with confidence.

NPC prioritizes ongoing student success and recognizes that assessing college readiness and ensuring appropriate course placement are crucial aspects of supporting student learning. NPC is committed to student success by initially ensuring that students enroll in courses suitable for their academic



abilities. Students consult with an advisor for placement guidance with high school grade point average (GPA) serving as the basis for placement. However, incoming students who graduated from high school more than five years ago must take a placement exam in lieu of submitting a high school GPA. NPC has implemented various student support strategies, including a concurrent course model, a college success course tailored to high school students, student writing centers, and 24/7 online tutoring services for students.

Emphasized multiple times in the assurance argument, NPC acknowledges the vital role of academic advisors and ensures their availability across all NPC campuses and centers. A key responsibility of advisors is to assist students in charting a pathway towards certificates or degrees. NPC aims to foster a sense of belonging among students by encouraging relationships with staff and faculty. To transition from a transactional to a relational advising model, NPC enlisted NACADA (The Global Community for Academic Advising) to train advisors in more relational approaches and interactions. Additionally, advisors are currently participating in an appreciative advising course offered by Florida Atlantic University, which will lead to their certification as appreciative advisors.

NPC offers robust infrastructure and resources essential for facilitating effective teaching and learning for both students and instructors. For instance, the Technology Advancement & Support (TAS) Division and the NPC Resources webpage provide comprehensive support across the diverse array of courses offered. Faculty benefit from additional support programs such as the Faculty Mentoring Program and the Fourth-Friday technology training sessions. Moreover, faculty participate in mandatory Instructional Skills Workshops (ISW) focused on enhancing their classroom strategies and technology utilization.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

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

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

### **Rationale**

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NPC has identified that differentiating learning goals between its degree and certificate programs is an area for continuous improvement. NPC's academic advisors provide a variety of support to their students, including Placement Testing, Exploration of Careers, Course Selection and Establishment of a Certificate or Degree Pathway. NPC's academic advisors offer a range of support services to students, including placement testing, career exploration, course selection, and guidance in establishing a certificate or degree pathway.

NPC employs a thorough, multi-step curriculum review process to ensure that student competencies and program outcomes remain relevant and aligned with academic and industry standards. Central to this endeavor is NPC's commitment to embracing diversity within its student population and communities. NPC remains dedicated to enhancing support for student needs through a range of initiatives, organizations, and community partnerships.

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College (NPC) has a formal program review process for instructional programs and several non-instructional departments on a five-year cycle. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides program-specific data to the department/program chair to review and include as the program review is being prepared utilizing a template. Each review includes sections, such as a program overview, program milestones, budget, needs assessment, and future plans. The Vice President of Learning and Student Services (VPLSS) is tasked with reviewing and providing feedback. In the sample program reviews included as evidence, it was unclear if the recommendations made by the VPLSS were implemented; however, several examples of changes made in other programs were provided.

The College has procedures to evaluate transfer credit, starting with the registrar's office. The

transfer process is often straightforward because NPC participates in a state-wide articulation system that outlines transfer course equivalency between state universities and other colleges. The college catalog outlines the procedures to provide credit for prior learning as well as for experiential learning. In cases of unusual circumstances, NPC offers a waiver petition process to evaluate and assign credit outside of the above procedures.

The Instructional Council (IC), which consists of faculty and deans as well as several non-voting members, is responsible for the approval of courses, program changes, new program proposals, etc. New course proposals or course modifications are made through the Academic Curriculum Review and Evaluation System, and the IC acts accordingly.

The College maintains separate external accreditation for programs in Nursing, Cosmetology, Fire Science, and Massage Therapy. These programs are responsible for meeting the programmatic requirements of their individual external agencies, which often require site visits and program reviews outside of the college's accreditation.

NPC utilizes the Arizona Transfer System to track the success of students who transfer from NPC. However, it was unclear as to how graduate employment data are collected based on the evidence provided. While advisory board minutes are included, they don't specifically provide consistent data to help assess student success. However, additional student success data are provided relating to the attainment of external industry certifications, which are often required for students to gain employment post-graduation.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NPC ensures that each department has comprehensive curriculum maps delineating program-level learning outcomes, course-level outcomes, and general education objectives. When new courses are created using the ACRES form, explicit criteria are established to assess student success. NPC developed the Assessment of Student Knowledge (ASK) subcommittee, overseen by faculty under the Instructional Council (IC), to develop and supervise the College's assessment procedures across all academic departments. This systematic collegewide process assists departments in formulating annual assessment plans, collecting and analyzing data, and implementing curriculum adjustments to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Additionally, the ASK subcommittee collaborates with faculty to adopt General Education Learning Outcomes developed in partnership with the statewide Articulation Task Force (ATF). Each fall, departments are required to submit a Planning Report detailing their assessment plans, linking them to the department and college mission and values. In the subsequent spring, departments submit a Findings Report documenting their assessment progress and conclusions.

NPC has encountered challenges in developing satisfactory learning outcome assessments for services and cocurricular programs within student services departments. Recent obstacles, including the COVID-19 pandemic and high-level administrative turnover, delayed NPC's progress in cocurricular assessments. However, clearer guidance from the HLC has revitalized NPC's efforts in this area.

Core Component 4.B documentation confirms NPC has defined and approved cocurricular activities and identified them within NPC's academic programs. The subcommittee aims to implement a collegewide assessment process for these activities in the upcoming academic year.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.)

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NPC has established a Strategic Initiative Plan that includes areas of focus in three areas: increasing student enrollment, improving student outcomes, and improving college sustainability. To support the improvement of student outcomes, the Student Success Alliance was formed. The Alliance is not a shared governance group; however, at times it does look at College data to give any employee the opportunity to bring ideas that affect student success.

The College collects a large amount of data; however, it is unclear what specific or defined goals have been established specifically regarding retention and persistence. In reviewing the Strategic Initiative Plan, one section addresses completion and transfer rates; however, there doesn't appear to be any identified goals or metrics to determine if the College's efforts have impacted either of these rates.

Data from the College's advising software allows them to review academic performance and utilize an Early Alert System to identify struggling students. The College has instituted multiple initiatives to improve student outcomes, including improving advising practices and implementing a College readiness course. Additionally, the Faculty Workshop for Student Success was created to help faculty utilize various resources to improve student success. To ensure success in the online environment, the College developed a series of courses to improve student preparedness to utilize online classes effectively.

NPC was awarded a federal grant that provides resources to improve retention and completion rates through the development of a student-centered model to engage students. Learning that childcare was

a barrier for students to attend classes consistently, NPC collaborated with Head Start to evaluate the feasibility of having on-site childcare.

The College utilizes IPEDS and the Arizona 2030 Strategic Vision to analyze student success outcomes, including persistence and completion. Through its in-house student information system and the National Student Clearinghouse, the College is able to provide data to instructional and non-instructional areas to support strategic decisions to improve student outcomes.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 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.

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College (NPC) has a formal program review process for instructional programs and several non-instructional departments on a five-year cycle. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides program-specific data to the department/program chair to review. Each review includes sections such as a program overview, program milestones, budget, needs assessment, and future plans. The Vice President of Learning and Student Services (VPLSS) is tasked with reviewing and providing feedback. It was unclear if the recommendations made by the VPLSS were implemented; however, several examples of changes made in other programs were provided.

The College has procedures to evaluate transfer credit that aligns with a state-wide articulation system outlining transfer course equivalency between state universities and other colleges.

The Instructional Council (IC) is responsible for the approval of courses, program changes, new program proposals, etc. New course proposals or course modifications are made through the Academic Curriculum Review and Evaluation System, and the IC acts accordingly.

The College maintains separate external accreditation for programs in Nursing, Cosmetology, Fire Science, and Massage Therapy.

NPC uses the Arizona Transfer System to track the success of students who transfer from NPC. However, it remains unclear as to how graduate employment data are collected based on the evidence provided. While advisory board minutes are included, they don't specifically provide consistent data to help assess student success. However, additional student success data are provided relating to the attainment of external industry certifications, which are often required for students to gain employment post-graduation.

NPC ensures that each department has comprehensive curriculum maps delineating program-level learning outcomes, course-level outcomes, and general education objectives. NPC developed the Assessment of Student Knowledge (ASK) subcommittee, overseen by faculty under the Instructional Council (IC), to develop and supervise the College's assessment procedures across all academic departments. This systematic collegewide process assists departments in formulating annual assessment plans, collecting, and analyzing data, and implementing curriculum adjustments to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Recent obstacles, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and administrative turnover, may have delayed NPC's progress in cocurricular assessments. However, clearer guidance from the HLC has revitalized NPC's efforts in this area.

Documentation in Criterion 4.B confirms that NPC has defined and approved cocurricular activities, integrating them within NPC's academic programs. The subcommittee aims to implement a

collegewide assessment process for these activities in the upcoming academic year.

The College collects a large amount of data; however, it is unclear what specific or defined goals have been established specifically regarding retention and persistence. In reviewing the Strategic Initiative Plan, one section addresses completion and transfer rates; however, there doesn't appear to be any identified goals or metrics to determine if the College's efforts have impacted either of these rates.

The College utilizes IPEDS and the Arizona 2030 Strategic Vision to analyze student success outcomes, including persistence and completion.

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College's (NPC) shared governance structure is presented in its assurance review evidence file and describes how the institution engages its internal constituencies that include the President and Cabinet, Leadership Council with representatives from all governance groups, Instructional Council, Faculty Association, Classified and Administrative Staff Organization, and Student Government. Evidence included an example agenda of the Leadership Council meeting and work sessions. As recommended by the HLC analysis of the December 2021 Interim Report, the Leadership Council is identified as the group responsible for accreditation and planning. Evidence of the Governing Board agenda was included and shows each of the listed groups having standing presentations.

Evidence of data utilization was presented in the assurance argument with enrollment and withdraw data and successful completion rates (A,B,C,P) by course in aggregate and program completion rates all being monitored. Financial data utilized for the budget process was well documented. The Human Resources department collects data from the Great College to Work for Survey and collects feedback from supervisors to better understand professional development needs.

Academic oversight is established through a committee structure that includes dual enrollment, academic standards, learning technologies, professional development, and assessment of student knowledge with the Instructional Council providing oversight to these groups. Meeting minutes from

each committee serve as evidence. The recent movement of the Academic Planning Subcommittee from ad hoc status to a standing committee was also documented in the evidence. Faculty seem well involved within this structure and input from staff is through the shared governance structure.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The College provides evidence to demonstrate that the institution's resources provide solid support with staff and infrastructure describing fiscal, human resources, facilities, and technology. Documentation includes the condensed statement of revenues, expenses, and changes in net position for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, with a total net position up eight percent over 2022. The Composite Financial Index over the past ten years has been greater than 8.0. Policies adopted, such as the Cash Reserve Policy and the Future Capital Reserve Policy, have secured resources and support financial stability.

IPEDS data from 2023-24 shows a student-to-faculty ratio of 11 to 1, which the College reports as a key indicator for sufficient instructional staff. Procedures are in place to assure faculty and staff are engaged in professional development and professional organization memberships are supported to provide opportunities for peer support and benchmarking. The institution reports a minimum of \$2 million per year is set aside within the capital budget for facility maintenance and the Facility Master Plan, updated June 3, 2020, provides a process for expansion and renovation efforts for all campuses and centers within the organization. Policies and procedures are in place to guide the College in the event of a need to recover information technology and data in the event of a disaster.

To assure goals are well incorporated in the mission, the assurance argument describes the Arizona Revised Statutes prescribing expenditure limitations and providing the institution's Annual Budgeted Expenditure Limitation Report, year ending on June 30, 2021, as evidence. State appropriations provide approximately one third of the revenue. The budget for fiscal year 2025 shows evidence of how state funds, primary and secondary tax levy, grants, and investment income are considered to keep tuition affordable per the College's mission statement. The Workforce Development Task Force was established in fall of 2023 to assist with finding additional resources and to help align workforce needs to the College.

Fiscal processes are in place for budgeting and monitoring and are well connected to shared governance. Evidence submitted includes the budget development calendar, as approved by the District Governing Board, for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025. The College provided a Statement of Financial Position example of how revenues and expenditures are shared with the Board for their review and approval. The assurance argument states that the College provides real-time financial data to all budget managers. The College operates fiscal processes within federal and the State of Arizona audit expectations. Multiple policies and procedures are in place and presented as evidence that assures that the institution's fiscal allocations are sufficient to support the educational operations.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 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.

### Rating

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Met With Concerns

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College (NPC) underwent a Higher Learning Commission comprehensive evaluation in 2019 where the institution was granted ongoing accreditation and was required to submit an Interim Report demonstrating improvement in the strategic planning area, which was "met with concerns." The Interim Report was submitted in December 2021 and addressed seven expectations articulated in the final report of the 2019 evaluation. The HLC analysis of the Interim Report suggests that there was extensive evidence of progress for each of the seven expectations and that there should be observable evidence in this 2024 review of the needed cultural changes required to meet this core component. The findings listed NPC as having evidence demonstrating further organizational attention required in this area of focus.

The assurance argument states that improvement was seen in the December 2021 progress report with substantial organizational efforts to improve strategic planning with the arrival of a new President in July 2021 and the launch of a new annual planning process that is aligned to strategic goal areas with regular communications to the stakeholders. An infographic of this yearly planning process was provided as evidence showing a Leadership Council Retreat that leads to a deans and directors retreat in late spring, followed by a summer cabinet retreat. Finally, a presentation of the strategic actions and priorities are announced at the fall convocation. Evidence of the execution of this process in 2023 was provided. The assurance argument described resource allocation being aligned to the mission and strategic plan. While it seems clear that resource allocation is well tied to the mission, it is unclear how the strategic plan is connected. The addendum explains the connection is through leadership evaluating priority actions through a resource allocation lens and that plans are in place to change the annual planning process to align more closely with annual budget process. The

institution's financial capacity is well monitored and planned.

The linkage of the assessment of student learning into the planning process is unclear. Data planning processes suggest that persistence rates are declining, however, it is vague how this data was used in planning. Moreover, other elements of assessment seem absent from the process at the institutional level. An Academic Master Plan was mentioned but was not in the evidence file. This may be due to the early stages of this plan with the addendum identifying that a SWOT analysis was done this year, and more development work is planned for the academic year 2024-2025.

The new planning process seems to represent the College community well with external stakeholders focus groups, targeted surveys, and program advisory boards input for the five-year strategy development. Participating in national professional associations is presented as a strategy but it is unclear how the planning process captures this information.

The College seems well connected to regional and state economic conditions and demographic information. There is evidence of the planning process implementation in 2023. Key performance metrics, such as persistence, show how NPC performs compared to state averages; however the short- and long-term goals are not conveyed well.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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The HLC staff analysis of the January 2022 Interim Report noted Northland Pioneer College's progress toward satisfying this core component, and that the expectation of satisfactorily meeting this core component is through a change in the institutional culture.

This review team believes that while progress has been made, evidence presented of this core component suggests that this process is still in development and has not fully matured. Thus, this team recommends an embedded monitoring report in the next scheduled comprehensive evaluation. This report should contain:

- Evidence of mature, full-cycle strategic planning that follows the yearly designed process from the ideation retreats through to the selection of strategic actions and priorities and then to the assessment of the impact of the actions taken.
- Clear linkage of the assessment of student learning to the strategic plan with clear short- and long-term goals, and external benchmarks.
- Evidence within the planning process of how the College's planning process anticipates evolving external factors, and how these findings drive the prioritization of action plans.
- A systematic approach to the implementation of the strategic plan that drives improvement in operations and student outcomes.



## 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.

### Rationale

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Northland Pioneer College provided evidence of administrative structures and collaborative processes yet, the assurance argument seems to lack a strategic presentation of all the evidence needed to demonstrate the work being done is sufficient to fulfill its mission. The evidence offered is, at times, cumbersome, and difficult to discern. The institution has made progress with the planning process and demonstrates that its resources provide for the needs of the College. Shared Governance is well established, active, and utilizes data. The faculty oversight of academic processes is well documented.

Institutional resources support its educational offerings. Clear funding plans and analyses are in place for program expansion. State fiscal structures provide an organized framework for the College and underscore resource assessment and stability planning. Budgeting and monitoring processes are well documented, and the Governing Board and State provide additional oversight.

The 2019 comprehensive evaluation required that an Interim Report focus on improving strategic planning. The 2021 Interim Report showed progress however; there was an expectation for observable evidence in this current review of process improvement. Evidence of a full-cycle planning process with short- and long-term goals as well as follow-up actions is not readily evident. It remains unclear how the planning process is tied to the assessment of student learning and linked to resource management. While external constituencies are discussed, it is not evident how their insights are incorporated into strategic planning other than a consideration for new programs.

Ongoing professional development could assist with the accreditation processes. Such training and educational resources exist through HLC and other entities. The College may benefit by participating in academies on strategic planning and assessment of student learning. Staffing and leadership turnover may underscore the need for professional learning opportunities that could lead to a more concise presentation of the evidence that reflects the student success strategies being developed at NPC.

## Review Dashboard

| Number | Title   | Rating            |
|--------|---|-------------------|
| 1      | Mission   |                   |
| 1.A    | Core Component 1.A                                    | Met               |
| 1.B    | Core Component 1.B                                    | Met               |
| 1.C    | Core Component 1.C                                    | Met               |
| 1.S    | Criterion 1 - Summary                                 |                   |
| 2      | Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct            |                   |
| 2.A    | Core Component 2.A                                    | Met               |
| 2.B    | Core Component 2.B                                    | Met               |
| 2.C    | Core Component 2.C                                    | Met               |
| 2.D    | Core Component 2.D                                    | Met               |
| 2.E    | Core Component 2.E                                    | Met               |
| 2.S    | Criterion 2 - Summary                                 |                   |
| 3      | Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support |                   |
| 3.A    | Core Component 3.A                                    | Met               |
| 3.B    | Core Component 3.B                                    | Met               |
| 3.C    | Core Component 3.C                                    | Met               |
| 3.D    | Core Component 3.D                                    | Met               |
| 3.S    | Criterion 3 - Summary                                 |                   |
| 4      | Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement     |                   |
| 4.A    | Core Component 4.A                                    | Met               |
| 4.B    | Core Component 4.B                                    | Met               |
| 4.C    | Core Component 4.C                                    | Met               |
| 4.S    | Criterion 4 - Summary                                 |                   |
| 5      | Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning   |                   |
| 5.A    | Core Component 5.A                                    | Met               |
| 5.B    | Core Component 5.B                                    | Met               |
| 5.C    | Core Component 5.C                                    | Met With Concerns |
| 5.S    | Criterion 5 - Summary                                 |                   |

## Review Summary

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### Interim Report(s) Required

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#### Due Date

*Not Set.*

#### Report Focus

**The team recommends embedded monitoring included in the next scheduled comprehensive Open Pathway evaluation.**

**In summary**, the institution provides evidence of administrative structures and collaborative processes yet, there seems to be an absence of a strategic presentation of all the evidence needed to demonstrate that the work being done fulfills its mission successfully. For example, in reviewing the Strategic Initiative Plan, one section addresses completion and transfer rates; however, there doesn't appear to be any identified goals or metrics to determine if the College's efforts have impacted either of these rates.

The 2019 Comprehensive Evaluation required that an Interim Report focus on improving strategic planning. The 2021 Interim Report showed progress, however; evidence of a full-cycle planning process with short- and long-term goals as well as follow-up actions are not readily evident. It remains unclear how the planning process is tied to the assessment of student learning and linked to resource management. While external constituencies are discussed, it is not evident how their insights are incorporated into strategic planning other than a consideration for new programs.

Ongoing professional development could assist with the accreditation processes. Such training and educational resources exist through HLC and other entities. The College may benefit by participating in academies on strategic planning and assessment of student learning. Staffing and leadership turnover may underscore the need for professional learning opportunities that could lead to a more concise presentation of the evidence that reflects NPC's student success strategies.

This review team believes that while progress has been made overall, evidence presented in core component 5c suggests that this process is still in development and has not fully matured.

**This team recommends an embedded monitoring report (subcomponent 5.C) in the next scheduled comprehensive evaluation. This report should contain:**

- Evidence of mature, full-cycle strategic planning that follows the yearly designed process from the ideation retreats through to the selection of strategic actions and priorities and then to the assessment of the impact of the actions taken.
- Clear linkage of the assessment of student learning to the strategic plan with clear short- and long-term goals, and external benchmarks.
- Evidence within the planning process of how the College's planning process anticipates evolving external factors, and how these findings drive the prioritization of action plans.
- A systematic approach to the implementation of the strategic plan that drives improvement in operations and student outcomes.

## Conclusion

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Northland Pioneer College's (NPC) current mission, vision, and values were developed through a comprehensive process, approved by the NPC's Governing Board in 2021 and reviewed again in December 2023. The administration reviews all policies and procedures for the College's operation annually and recommends changes when needed.

The Academic Student Code of Conduct expects that students present themselves and their work honestly and with integrity. The College further demonstrates its commitment to integrity in its standard processes for hiring and onboarding new employees. NPC provides comprehensive digital and printed access to a wide array of information for both internal and external audiences. The College's website also includes a section for Student Rights and Responsibilities outlining student-right-to-know information.

State fiscal structures provide an organized framework for the College and underscore resource assessment and stability planning. Budgeting and monitoring processes are well documented, and the Governing Board and State provide additional oversight. The Board maintains its independence in its decisions. The President is delegated the daily management of the College with input through a well-established and active Shared Governance Model.

NPC shows commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression in various ways. The College supports applied research and maintains appropriate oversight in the process. Procedures are in place that outline requirements and expectations to meet federal regulations in support of ethical research and support of human subjects. NPC has its own Institutional Review Board.

NPC has identified that differentiating learning goals between its degree and certificate programs is an area for continuous improvement. NPC employs a formal multi-step curriculum review process for instructional programs and non-instructional departments on a five-year cycle to ensure that student competencies and program outcomes remain relevant and aligned with academic and industry standards. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides program-specific data to the department/program chair to review and include as the program review is being prepared. The Vice President of Learning and Student Services (VPLSS) is tasked with reviewing and providing feedback. It was unclear if the recommendations made by the VPLSS were implemented; however, several examples of changes made in other programs were provided. To ensure success in the online environment, the College developed a series of courses to improve student preparedness to utilize online classes effectively.

NPC has a strong commitment to embracing diversity within its student population and communities. NPC remains dedicated to enhancing support for student needs through a range of initiatives, organizations, and community partnerships.

The College maintains separate external accreditation for programs in Nursing, Cosmetology, Fire Science, and Massage Therapy. The College has procedures to evaluate transfer credit, starting with the registrar's office.

NPC utilizes the Arizona Transfer System to track the success of students who transfer from NPC. However, it was unclear as to how graduate employment data are collected based on the evidence provided. While advisory board minutes are included, they don't specifically provide consistent data to help assess student success. However, additional student success data are provided relating to the attainment of external industry certifications, which are often required for students to gain employment post-graduation.

NPC ensures that each department has comprehensive curriculum maps delineating program-level learning outcomes, course-level outcomes, and general education objectives. NPC developed the Assessment of Student Knowledge (ASK) subcommittee, overseen by faculty under the Instructional Council (IC), to develop and supervise the College's assessment procedures across all academic departments. Additionally, the ASK subcommittee collaborates with faculty to adopt General Education Learning Outcomes developed in partnership with the

statewide Articulation Task Force (ATF).

Recent obstacles, including the COVID-19 pandemic and administrative turnover, delayed NPC's progress in cocurricular assessments. However, clear guidance from the HLC has revitalized NPC's efforts in this area. Criterion 4.B documentation confirms NPC has defined and approved cocurricular activities and identified them within NPC's academic programs. The subcommittee aims to implement a collegewide assessment process for these activities in the upcoming academic year.

**In summary**, the institution provides evidence of administrative structures and collaborative processes yet, there seems to be an absence of a strategic presentation of all the evidence needed to demonstrate that the work being done fulfills its mission successfully. For example, in reviewing the Strategic Initiative Plan, one section addresses completion and transfer rates; however, there doesn't appear to be any identified goals or metrics to determine if the College's efforts have impacted either of these rates.

The 2019 Comprehensive Evaluation required that an Interim Report focus on improving strategic planning. The 2021 Interim Report showed progress, however; evidence of a full-cycle planning process with short- and long-term goals as well as follow-up actions are not readily evident. It remains unclear how the planning process is tied to the assessment of student learning and linked to resource management. While external constituencies are discussed, it is not evident how their insights are incorporated into strategic planning other than a consideration for new programs.

Ongoing professional development could assist with the accreditation processes. Such training and educational resources exist through HLC and other entities. The College may benefit by participating in academies on strategic planning and assessment of student learning. Staffing and leadership turnover may underscore the need for professional learning opportunities that could lead to a more concise presentation of the evidence that reflects NPC's student success strategies.

This review team believes that while progress has been made overall, evidence presented in core component 5.C suggests that this process is still in development and has not fully matured.

**This team recommends an embedded monitoring report in the next scheduled comprehensive evaluation.** This report should contain:

- Evidence of mature, full-cycle strategic planning that follows the yearly designed process from the ideation retreats through to the selection of strategic actions and priorities and then to the assessment of the impact of the actions taken.
- Clear linkage of the assessment of student learning to the strategic plan with clear short- and long-term goals, and external benchmarks.
- Evidence within the planning process of how the College's planning process anticipates evolving external factors, and how these findings drive the prioritization of action plans.
- A systematic approach to the implementation of the strategic plan that drives improvement in operations and student outcomes.

## Overall Recommendations

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### Criteria For Accreditation

Met With Concerns

### Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

**Pathways Recommendation**

Not Applicable to This Review

## Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Worksheet

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### Review Details

**Institution:** Northland Pioneer College, Arizona

**Type of Review:** Open Pathway - Assurance Review

**Description:**

**Review Dates:** 06/03/2024 -

☐ No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

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### Accreditation Status

**Status:** Accredited

☒ No Change

☐ Recommended Change:

**Degrees Awarded:** Associates, Bachelors

☒ No Change

☐ Recommended Change:

### Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2019 - 2020

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2029 - 2030

☒ No Change

☐ Recommended Change:

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### Accreditation Stipulations

#### General:

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Associate's, Bachelor's

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Master's, Specialist, Doctoral

The institution is limited to offer the following program, within the approved program level above: Bachelor of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education

- ☒ No Change  
☐ Recommended Change:

### **Additional Locations:**

The institution has been approved for the Notification Program, allowing the institution to open new additional locations within the United States.

- ☒ No Change  
☐ Recommended Change:

### **Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:**

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

- ☒ No Change  
☐ Recommended Change:

### **Competency-Based Education:**

- ☒ No Change  
☐ Recommended Change:

### **Pell-Eligible Prison Education Program:**

- ☒ No Change  
☐ Recommended Change:

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## **Accreditation Events**

**Pathway for Reaffirmation of Accreditation:** Open Pathway

- ☒ No Change  
☐ Recommended Change:



### Upcoming Reviews:

Comprehensive Evaluation Visit - 2029 - 2030

Quality Initiative Proposal - 06/01/2027

Quality Initiative Report - 06/01/2029

Federal Compliance Review - 2029 - 2030

☒ No Change

☐ Recommended Change:

### Upcoming Branch Campus or Additional Location Reviews:

No Upcoming Reviews

☒ No Change

☐ Recommended Change:

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## Monitoring

### Upcoming Monitoring Reviews:

No Upcoming Reviews

☐ No Change

☒ Recommended Change:

Embedded monitoring in the next Comprehensive Evaluation on systematic and integrated planning and improvement (5.C).

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## Institutional Data

### Academic Programs Offered:

| Undergraduate Programs |    |   |
|------------------------|----|---|
| Associate Degrees:     | 41 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change<br><input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change: |
| Baccalaureate Degrees: | 1  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change<br><input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change: |

| <b>Graduate Programs</b>    |    |   |
|-----------------------------|----|---|
| Master's Degrees:           | 0  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change<br><input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change: |
| Specialist Degrees:         | 0  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change<br><input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change: |
| Doctoral Degrees:           | 0  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change<br><input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change: |
| <b>Certificate Programs</b> |    |   |
| Certificates:               | 70 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change<br><input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change: |

### **Contractual Arrangements:**

No Contractual Arrangements

☒ No Change  
☐ Recommended Change:

### **Off-Campus Activities**

#### **Branch Campuses:**

No Branch Campuses

☒ No Change  
☐ Recommended Change:

### **Additional Locations:**

Joseph City Ind. Technology and Maintenance, Cholla Power Plant, 4801 Frontage Road, Joseph City, Arizona 86032 United States

Kayenta, 1/4 mile north on Hwy 163, Kayenta, Arizona 86033 United States

Hopi, State Highway 264 @ Junction to Hopi Jr/Sr High School, Keams Canyon, Arizona 86034 United States

White Mountain, 1001 W. Deuce of Clubs, Show Low, Arizona 85901 United States

Show Low Welding, 1380 East Thornton Road, Show Low, Arizona 85901 United States

Show Low Auto Technology site, 1400 North Lumberman's Loop, Show Low, Arizona 85901 United States

Silver Creek, 1611 S. Main, Snowflake, Arizona 85937 United States

Springerville/Eagar Center, 830 East Main Street, Springerville, Arizona 85938 United States

Springerville/Eagar Center, 940 East Maricopa Street, Springerville, Arizona 85938 United States

St Johns Cosmetology and Welding Program, 955 W13 West, Suite B, St. Johns, Arizona 85936 United States

St Johns Ind. Technology and Maintenance, Coronado Generating Station, 32060 US Highway 191, St. Johns, Arizona 85936 United States

St. Johns, 65 West 3rd South, St. Johns, Arizona 85936 United States

Taylor Area Fire Science, Northern Arizona Training Center, 1840 Papermill Road, Taylor, Arizona 85939 United States

Vernon, 36316 US-60, Vernon, Arizona 85940 United States

White Mountain Lakes, 9125 Grant Rd, White Mountain Lake Estates, Arizona 85912 United States

Whiteriver, 720 S. Chief, Whiteriver, Arizona 85941 United States

Little Colorado, 1400 East Third Street, Winslow, Arizona 86047 United States

✓ No Change

☐ Recommended Change: