

# Northwest College - WY

---

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

---

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

---

1. In Spring 2015, President Hicswa launched the process to revise Northwest College's (NWC)



from other states, and 4% from other countries.

3. President Hicswa and the President's Advisory Council have aligned planning and budgeting with the Mission (see 5.C.1).

- 
- Academic\_Programs\_List
  -

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
  2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of 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 document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.
- 

1. Northwest College (NWC) articulates its [Mission Statement](#) through a variety of documents that are available to the public. The online Mission Statement publication includes a description of each of the five overarching elements of the mission. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) identified strategic priorities and key performance indicators for NWC's five-year strategic vision, [Vision 2020](#). Following adoption of the Mission Statement by the Board of Trustees (BOT) on [March 14, 2016](#), President Hicswa promoted the new document among employees and continued to make verbal and visual references to the statement during her twice-a-year State of the College Addresses, monthly all-employee meetings, and in various public presentations, e.g., service clubs, chambers of commerce.

The Mission Statement is presented publicly in both print and Web-based venues and made available to the public through the following communication initiatives.

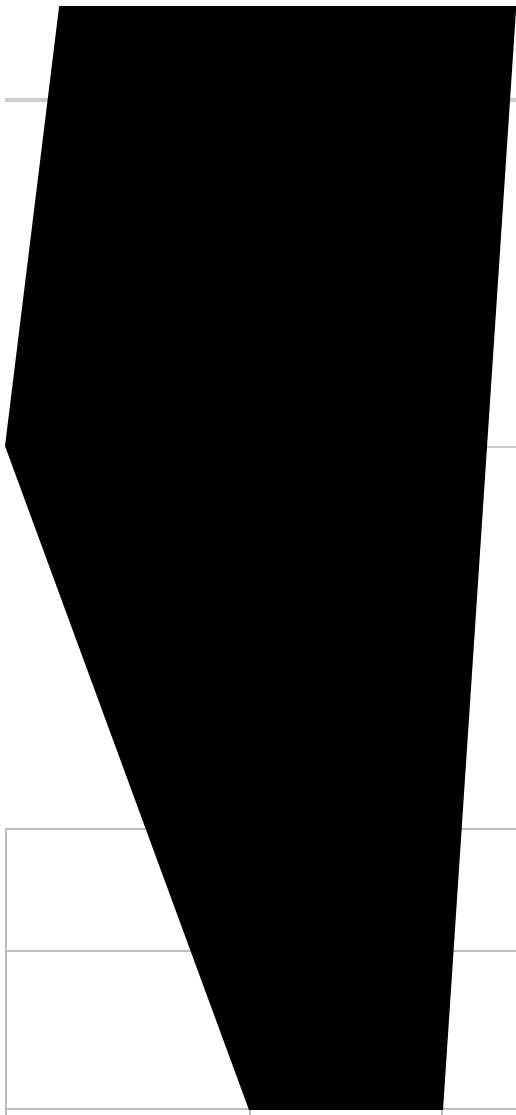
- [Institutional Fact Card](#) – Mailed annually with a letter from the President to more than 1,200 external stakeholders and put in all employee and Student Senate campus mailboxes
- [Institutional Profile](#) – A component of the online Annual Report
- [Annual Report](#) – Promoted via paid newspaper ads in NWC's service area, news releases, and postcards to external stakeholders and employees; remains in place for a full fiscal year before the next version is published
- [BOT Web page](#)
- [Desk cubes](#) – Provided to all employees for display in their offices and other work spaces; the cubes display the Mission Statement, Vision 2020, and institutional logo
- [Wall presentation](#) – Presented in lettering on a prominent wall in the lobby of the Orendorff Building and framed documentation in campus buildings.
- [BOT agendas](#) – Printed at the bottom of every BOT meeting agenda

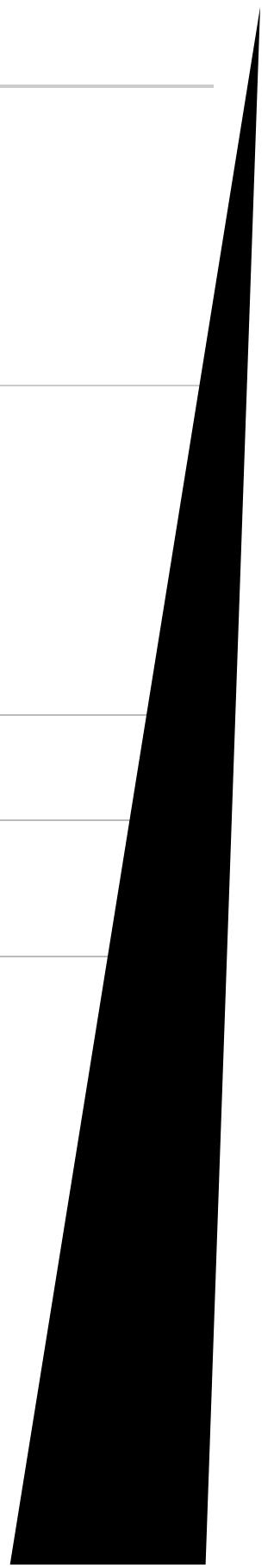
2. Mission documents, the Mission Statement and Vision 2020, are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission. [Descriptive bullets](#) explain each of the Mission Statement's five overarching elements in depth.

3. Each of the three strategic priorities in Vision 2020, Experience, Connections, and Environment, are elaborated by specific, measurable [key performance indicators](#) that identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the programs and services NWC provides. Mission and

Vision 2020 documents explain the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services.

- 
- [Annual\\_Report\\_Overview\\_Website\\_2016-2017](#)
  - [Board of Trustees\\_Agenda\\_June 2017](#)
  - [Board of Trustees\\_List\\_Website](#)
  - [BOT\\_Minutes\\_March142016](#)
  - [BOT\\_Minutes\\_March142016 \(page number 3\)](#)
  - [Institutional\\_Fact\\_Card\\_2017](#)
  - [Institutional\\_Profile\\_2017](#)
-







Native American Heritage Month on campus through a variety of programs, including a tipi raising and a fry bread demonstration. The Native Ways Club plans activities such as taco and fry bread sales, dream catcher nights, beading/choker nights, arrowhead and arrow crafting events, and the annual [Buffalo Feast](#).

These processes and activities reflect NWC's attention to human diversity to fulfill its mission in a global society.

- 
- Board of Trustees\_Board Book\_July 2017
  - Board of Trustees\_Board Book\_July 2017 (page number 53)
  - Course\_syllabi\_universal\_guidelines\_2017
  - Diversity Awareness Committee\_Website
  - Intercultural Programs\_Events Data\_2014-2017
  - Intercultural Programs\_Strategic Plan\_2012-2017
  - Intercultural Programs\_Strategic Plan\_2012-2017 (page number 3)
  - Multicultural Showcase\_News\_March 2017
  - Native Ways\_Buffalo Feast\_2016
  - Student Demographics\_Service Area Comparison\_2016

---

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
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 identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

---

1. Northwest College's (NWC) [Mission Statement](#) charges the college to "cultivate community" to support its public service obligation. A [key performance indicator](#) (Connections within Service Area) used to measure the "Connections" strategic priority in Vision 2020 demonstrates NWC's focus on public service.

The following actions and decisions illustrate NWC's understanding of its role in serving its community:





- [Mission Statement\\_2016](#)
- [Music\\_Events\\_Calendar](#)
- [News\\_desk](#)
- [Presidents\\_blog](#)
- [Vision\\_2020\\_KPI\\_2016\\_Final](#)
- [Vision\\_2020\\_KPI\\_2016\\_Final \(page number 3\)](#)
- [WYCCC\\_partnership\\_report.2016](#)

---

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

---

Northwest College (NWC) fulfills Criterion One through a clearly defined [Mission Statement](#) that is publicly articulated and guides NWC's operations.

Adopted in Spring 2016, the statement includes five commitments presented graphically in a word cloud enhanced by defining phrases linked to each commitment. The President's annual operational plan flows from NWC's Mission Statement and strategic [Vision 2020](#) and addresses key performance indicators. NWC's programs, services, and its enrollment profile are aligned with the Mission Statement.

NWC's budget-development process, which was refined in Spring 2016, has a twofold goal of greater involvement of budget managers and more consistent data-based decision making. During the budget development process, the constituent-based Budget Committee consistently referenced the mission. Early success with the new process helped foster more intentional linkage between planning and budgeting.

NWC's Mission Statement is articulated to the public in a variety of print and electronic venues and promoted among employees. Having been revised during the 2015-16 year, both the Mission Statement and Vision 2020 are current and benefited from the input of both internal and external constituencies.

NWC explicitly recognizes its role in a diverse society. Its Mission Statement is led by, "In the context of our global society, the mission of NWC is to...." NWC has the largest international student enrollment of any Wyoming community college. Cultural awareness programming is promoted among area residents. NWC maintains student clubs for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, Native Indian students, and multicultural students. NWC's Diversity Awareness Committee seeks to foster an environment of inclusiveness on campus.

Within the framework of its mission and statutory requirements, NWC takes seriously its obligation to serve the public good. Policies, actions, decisions, and practices of the Board of Trustees and of NWC's various units are consistent with its obligations as a public institution. One of the Mission Statement's five commitments—"Cultivate community"—is, in part, defined as "Upholding a culture of accountability, integrity, and respect." Extensive public use of NWC's facilities and robust external partnership

The Assurance Argument Team held informational workshops on Criterion One on Oct. 10th and 12th, 2016. At those workshops, employees were asked to provide [evidence statements](#) pertaining to the sub-components of this criterion.

#### Future Plans

NWC will continue to base initiatives, decisions and growth on the Mission Statement and Vision 2020. The communication efforts initiated by President Hicswa in 2013 to engage employees and community, including all-employee meetings, constituent group leadership meetings, task forces, and regular electronic communication, will be sustained and enhanced.

- 
- [Criterion 1\\_Workshop Comments](#)
  - [Mission Statement\\_2016](#)
  - [Vision\\_2020\\_KPI\\_2016\\_Final](#)

---

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

---

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

---

Northwest College (NWC) ensures integrity in its operations through established policies and procedures. NWC's policies outline requirements not only for fair and ethical behavior but also the



- [College Catalog](#)
- [Student Handbook - Academic Code of Conduct](#) (see 2.E.)
- Employment Handbook - [Statement of Ethics](#)
- [Course Syllabus Guidelines](#)

The Office of Academic Affairs monitors adherence to these policies and procedures as it relates to the ongoing assessment of student learning and advising, student course evaluations and reviews for faculty teaching, adherence to the academic code of conduct, and compliance with federal privacy and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations.

NWC conducts ongoing assessments of student learning and faculty instruction (see Criteria 3, 4). The Student Handbook contains the academic code of conduct to prevent violations such as plagiarism. Compliance with federal privacy and FERPA regulations ensure the privacy of student academic records and is discussed later in this section. Appropriate action is followed to ensure

Office of Civil Rights as requested. No additional correspondence has been received from the Office of Civil Rights.

On July 26, 2017, NWC received written a notice of a [Title IX claim \(08-17-2248\)](#) involving a faculty

---

- [Student Handbook\\_Academic Code of Conduct\\_website](#)
- [Student Handbook\\_General Code of Conduct\\_website](#)
- [Title IX Claim\\_July222016](#)
- [Title IX Claim\\_July262017](#)

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

---

Northwest College (NWC) utilizes digital publication of key documents, including catalog, schedules, academic requirements, financial information and data deemed relevant to consumers. Examples include digital versions of the school's catalog, student/faculty/employee handbooks, course offerings, course syllabi, and the academic calendar. Enhancements include a new signage marquee, intuitive student & employee information portal expansion, the adoption of the Moodle academic platform, numerous campus emergency notification modes and an extensive social media presence (i.e., Facebook, Twitter).

To keep current with the increased use of mobile devices, in August of 2015, NWC's web site revision debuted with responsive design for mobile devices. NWC is currently in development of an NWC proprietary mobile application for digital devices aimed at mobile access to NWC website.

NWC's [catalog](#) is available on the college website. Academic program pages detail program requirements. [Assessment](#) information, including learning outcomes for general education and programs, is provided via the NWC website.

A searchable, up-to-date [course schedule](#) is available via the NWC website. All course syllabi are available on NWC's website, with this course schedule.

The [Advising Center](#) (AC) communicates with the public in a variety of ways. The AC maintains several public Facebook pages. The main AC page is where Peer Mentors publish information about important college dates and deadlines (92 posts were made during the 2015-2016 academic year with 193 people following the page). The Area Jobs and Internship page is where local employment opportunities are published at the request of businesses and individuals looking to hire NWC students and graduates; this page is open for anyone in the area to use (67 posts were made during the 2015-2016 academic year with 194 people following the page). The Advising Coordinator organizes informational events for students, transfer advising sessions with transfer institutions, and a career prep workshop series.

The NWC [faculty and staff directory](#) is available on the NWC website.

The [cost of attendance](#) is published on the NWC website in the Admissions pages, accessible on the NWC website home page. Information presented includes tuition, general fees, housing, meals and other expenses. Financial Aid and net cost information are also published there.

Financial Aid staff offer comprehensive assistance to students & families by providing in-person custom counseling sessions (no appointment necessary), assisting students remotely with aid applications through electronic means, and by being actively engaged within its service area community through a variety of annual financial aid & higher education preparation/affordability [presentations](#) held both on campus and in local high schools.

NWC is controlled by an elected [Board of Trustees](#) (BOT) (see Criterion 1). Agendas, minutes, governing rules, and other information relevant to BOT control of NWC are published on NWC's [website](#).

Notice of accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission is on the NWC website. NWC posts documents related to comprehensive reviews. The Art, Music, and Nursing programs are accredited by their respective accrediting bodies, and there are links to these agencies in the catalog and on the [NWC website](#).

- 
- [Advising\\_Center\\_Website](#)
  - [Art\\_Graphic Design\\_Nursing\\_Accreditation\\_website\\_2017](#)
  - [Assessment\\_Website](#)
  - [Board of Trustees\\_List\\_Website](#)
  - [Board of Trustees\\_Minutes\\_Archive](#)
  - [Costs & Deadlines \\_\\_ Admissions \\_\\_ website](#)
  - [Financial Aid\\_Annual Presentations](#)

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board’s deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution’s internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

---

1. Statutorily-derived general powers of the Northwest College (NWC) Board of Trustees (BOT) ([WS 21-18-303](#)), referenced in the BOT’s [Rules and Regulations](#), guide the BOT in its preservation and enhancement of the institution.

The BOT’s Rules and Regulations operationalize its statutory obligation, as illustrated in the following statements in the document to which Trustees are bound.

- “The purpose of the Northwest College Board of Trustees shall be to govern the College within the parameters of State of Wyoming Statutes and to the benefit of the College District citizenry.” (Chapter I, Section 5)
- “The objective of the Northwest College Board of Trustees shall be to assure that the College accomplishes its vision and mission.” (Chapter I, Section 6)
- “The Board has full powers of organization and governance of Northwest College, subject to such control as provided for by Wyoming State Statute and the Wyoming Community College Commission.” (Chapter I, Section 7)
- “No individual member of the Board may act on behalf of the Board unless specifically instructed by an action of the Board. Every member of the Board shall be under obligation to honor the decision of the majority.” (Chapter II, Section 7)

Trustees are bound by a BOT [Code of Ethics](#) Chapter IV in its Rules and Regulations, which specifies the following BOT responsibilities.

- “...evaluate the educational program of the community college as it is to plan for the business of college operation....”
- “...establish the policies by which the community college is to be administered....”

Each of the provisions mentioned above in the BOT Rules and Regulations is reviewed ann T

- Building Construction: Providing approval to launching construction of an instructional building, which, at the time, was the number one unmet need in the prior Facilities Master Plan (August 13, 2012)
- BOT policy revisions: Approved Employment Handbook policy revisions (August 11, 2014; November 9, 2015; and December 14, 2015)
- Operational Plan: Reviewed the President's FY16 Operational Plan (October 5, 2015) and the previous year
- Credit transfer: Reviewed a Transfer Articulation Scorecard noting progress made on various program articulation agreements with the University of Wyoming (June 8, 2015)
- Student retention: Reviewed a Persistence and Graduation Rates/Performance Indicators Report (March 9, 2015)
- Controversial legislative bill: Took a position on a proposed legislative bill that would have allowed concealed carry of weapons on campus (February 6, 2015)
- Outcomes assessment: Received a briefing on how NWC is tying learning assessment to planning and using assessment data to improve instruction (November 9, 2015)
- Employee satisfaction: Reviewed a report on results of NWC's participation in The Great Colleges to Work For survey (November 10, 2014)
- Student survey: Reviewed a report on results of the NWC's participation in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (December 14, 2015)
- Student success: Reviewed a report on pass rates for development courses (June 2, 2014)
- Student completion: Approved a Resolution on Complete College America (December 9, 2013)
- Student enrollment: Reviewed reports on student enrollment (October 2014 and October 2015)
- Uncollected debt: Heard President's update on work of an Uncollected Debt Task Force impaneled the prior summer (November 11, 2013)

2. Evidence of the BOT's commitment to considering internal and external constituencies in its decision-making deliberations is seen in the BOT's support of the following ongoing initiatives.

- The BOT's support for shared governance principles is evident in its [March 11, 2013](#), approval of the [Shared Governance and Decision Making Guide](#), which is available to employees on the MyNWC portal.
- All agendas for regular BOT meetings include a "[Citizens' Open Forum](#)" allowing members of the public to address Trustees on topics of interest to them; guidelines for the forum are reviewed annually at BOT retreats.
- The BOT's evaluation of the President's performance includes input from both internal and external stakeholders.
- The BOT conducts an annual self-evaluation to help improve its performance.
- Internal and external input is sought via formal participation on [Presidential Search Committees](#) and in other major initiatives, e.g., invitations to [public meetings](#) regarding [Facilities Master Plan](#) development and specific renovation projects.
- Demonstrating a commitment to regular environmental scanning, trustees have reviewed results of annual [community surveys](#).
- Before BOT meetings, all [meeting materials](#) are electronically available to employees via email. Reviewers will have access to all "board books" during the site visit.
- BOT meeting agenda materials include reports from constituent group presidents.
- The BOT participates in a liaison program with the Alumni Association Board of Directors in which individuals from each board attend each other's meetings to foster effective communications between the two boards.

3. Trustees avoid conflicts of interest, a commitment supported by the following series of statements

E<sup>0</sup> - in the BOT's Rules and Regulations document, some of which require Trustee signatures.

I

- [Disclosure of interest statement](#): Pertains to NWC investments and complies with Wyoming Statute 6-5-118.
- [Conflict of interest statement](#): Trustees accept a pledge that "No member of the Board of Trustees shall receive any compensation or remuneration or derive any profit or gain by reason of Board membership or by reason of services to the College District."
- The BOT's Rules and Regulations specify the following responsibilities for its members.
  - "...base my personal decision upon all available facts in each situation; vote my honest conviction in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind..."
  - "...resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a community college board member to benefit myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the community college district..."
  - Chapter 4 outlines [procedures and sanctions for violation](#).
- In 2014, the BOT President initiated BOT-approved protocols for how trustees respond to [internal and external input/concerns](#).

The BOT comprises elected officials and holds autonomous governance duties for the college District. The BOT has statutorily-derived general powers, and the statutes provide a framework for its relationship with the Wyoming Community College Commission, a gubernatorial-appointed body. NWC's President manages the institution's communications with state legislators.

NWC and the BOT maintains a relationship with the NWC College Foundation, a private, nonprofit corporation incorporated in 1966. The [Foundation's mission](#) is to secure and manage gifts that support the educational mission of the college. While the Foundation plans and executes comprehensive fundraising and donor acquisition programs in support of NWC's Strategic Goals identified by the President and BOT, an [Agreement for Exchange of Services between NWC and the NWC Foundation](#) stipulates the Foundation's independence and allows NWC to refuse donations inconsistent with its mission. The NWC [Foundation Fund Raising Policy](#), M



As noted in 5.B., NWC's faculty Curriculum Committee has maintained an educational focus free of

---

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

---

Northwest College (NWC) affirms academic freedom as a core value. [Faculty Employment Policy \(FEP\) 1.6](#) addresses Rights and Privileges. In accordance with 1.6.1 Academic Freedom, faculty members are entitled to freedom in research, publication, and pursuit of professional/vocational areas of expertise, subject to the adequate performance of the duties contained in the Faculty Employment Policies. NWC has endorsed the 1940 “Statement on Academic Freedom” adopted by the American Association of University Professors. This statement highlights that the faculty is free from institutional censorship or discipline concerning freedom in the classroom while discussing their subject without teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. This statement encourages faculty to be accurate in their communication, exercise appropriate restraint and show respect for the opinions of others.

Faculty members are granted freedom to include speakers and professionals in their course schedule. Outside speakers conform to the same expectations of academic freedom, in which discussions include opportunities for rebuttal and expression of diverse points of view.

[FEP 1.5.1](#) concerns Professional Ethics. Personal integrity is emphasized. NWC has adopted the “Statement on Professional Ethics” from the American Association of University Professors.

Freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth are supported by NWC through shared governance. Faculty Organization (FO) is the faculty constituent representation within NWC’s shared governance structure. Two standing committees represent the faculty body’s interest in expression and truth: the Academic Freedom and Grievance Committee ([FEP App. E](#)) and the Committee for Faculty Development and Morale ([1.6.3](#)).

NWC is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth for students. As stated in the [Student Handbook](#), NWC expects each faculty member to foster respect for learning, treat students with individual attention and consideration, provide an environment of trust in the classroom and help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards. Students may initiate the Instructional Complaint Procedure when disagreements between faculty and students concerning instructional incidents surface. Points of concern may relate to a contested grade, harassment, intellectual bias or instructional design and delivery. This procedure provides students with a means of eliminating bias or clarifying intellectual viewpoints. The Dean of Student Learning serves as the advocate for the student throughout this process.

The [Student Senate](#) and student publications (student news outlet online Northwest Trail - the status of which is uncertain following the recent elimination of the Journalism program - and student creative magazine [Visual, Verbalize, Vocalize](#)) provide students with avenues of student free expression.

- Employment Handbook 2016-2017
- Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 21)
- Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 22)
- Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 25)
- Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 75)
- Student\_Senate\_Website
- Visualize\_Verbalize\_Description\_Website

---

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

---

1. Northwest College (NWC) core mission is teaching, and there is no ongoing or regular research involving human subjects. For the infrequent occasions when there are proposals to conduct human subject research involving students or staff, proposals are review by the [Institutional Review Committee \(IRC\)](#) chaired by the Dean of Student Learning with members recruited from the faculty and professional staff as appropriate for the proposed research. The IRC adheres to guidelines of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services best practices and ethical standards. The IRC reviews all research proposals involving human subjects from students, faculty, and staff and outside entities wishing to conduct research at NWC. If the project falls within human subjects research guidelines, the IRC determines if the research plan addresses issues such as risks to research subjects, informed consent, and collection and destruction of research data.

NWC does not have a formal Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Instead, faculty conducting research with vertebrate animals have their research proposals reviewed by the



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

---

Northwest College (NWC) fulfills Criterion Two through its commitment to integrity and ethical and responsible operations. A shared governance structure, policies, fiscal controls, and support for academic freedom ensure the integrity of conduct in its operations. Employees and students are expected to act with integrity, and these requirements are clearly communicated.

#### Employee Feedback on Criterion Two

The Assurance Argument Team held informational workshops on Criterion Two on Feb. 17th and 23rd, 2017. At those workshops, employees were asked to provide [evidence statements](#) about the sub-components of this criterion.

#### Future Plans

NWC will continue to operate within its shared governance structure to operate with integrity. NWC is developing a comprehensive policy manual. The process of creating the manual will facilitate a policy review to determine gaps, deficiencies, and areas for improvement, e.g. faculty qualifications, Title IX procedures, budget processes. The resulting manual will strengthen integrity in ethical operation.

- 
- Criterion 2\_Workshop Comments

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

---

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for 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).

---

1. The currency of courses and programs are assured through regular review and evaluation. Academic departments submit Program Review Self Studies to the Office of Academic Affairs on a [5-year rotation](#) cycle. Each [Program Review Self-Study](#) includes sections describing how the program determines currency in curriculum and course content. If a program determines that maintaining currency requires a fundamental course or curricular updates, revisions are submitted to and reviewed by the Curriculum Committee.

Further indicators that content is current at Northwest College (NWC) and that students are held to appropriate levels of performance include:

- [Specialized accreditation](#). There are several programs at NWC with specialized accreditation including:
  - Art (accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design);
  - Music (accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music); and
  - Nursing (accredited by the Accreditation Committee for Education in Nursing).

Accreditation by these external agencies requires programs to demonstrate a commitment to and excellence in learning in their respective areas. This specialized accreditation can be taken as proxy evidence of both currency and the achievement level required of students in these programs (see 4.A.5.).

- Articulation and [Transfer Agreements](#). As a result of annual articulation summits, 93 percent of NWC courses are [approved for transfer](#) to the University of Wyoming and other Wyoming community colleges. When a new course is approved by NWC's Curriculum Committee (see 4.A.4.), the Office of Academic Affairs submits the new course proposal to the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) for external confirmation that the course meets the standards of equivalent courses elsewhere in the state. Upon approval by the WCCC Coordinator for Articulation and Transfer, the course is added to either the Course Transfer





adjuncts for NWC, meet the same criteria as all classes. Because this is a special environment for college classes, we take extra measures to ensure program quality.

- Adjuncts attend an [orientation](#), before the first time they teach, that covers NWC-specific expectations of instructors (e.g., syllabi, grade submission, student evaluation process), support services available to all students, and the structure of NWC degrees. Adjuncts are required to meet with their divisions at least annually to discuss content and rigor in the concurrent enrollment classroom.
  - Students evaluate every class every semester.
  - Adjuncts are evaluated by the Division Chair or designee in a site visit at least once during the first semester it is taught.
  - The Academic Affairs Office monitors data to track [concurrent enrollment students' success](#)
- 



---

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. 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. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

---

1. Based on a charge by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VNS # \_\_\_\_\_) regarding the general education iatedorkev and tutc  
XM bugen t Ö Resirioq mhe ieneral education iatedorkev and tutc  
ultm .



		<p>institution.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Access and utilize a variety of online databases and academic information resources for their research needs.</li></ol>
		<p>Courses must meet all five outcomes listed below.</p> <p>(Prepare students to:)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe the different purposes of written, oral, and digital messages and employ appropriate organizational strategies, including developing a thesis statement and main ideas to meet the needs of specific audiences.</li><li>2. Produce informative, analytical, and critical prose to respond to a</li></ol>

COM		

QR

Important questions can often be answered through the

		<p>conclusion.</p> <p>5. Examine the impact of technology on science and society</p>
<p>CR</p>	<p>Creativity is a core human attribute that plays an important role in adaptability, interpersonal communication, inquiry, and innovation. The benefit of creativity to all disciplines is increased knowledge through broader understanding and the generation of new methods and ideas. Creativity can be realized through the processes of conceptions, research, problem-solving, understanding abstract/symbolic representations, and the act of production.</p>	<p>Courses must meet three of the five outcomes listed below.</p> <p>(Prepare students to:)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilize existing ideas, images, or works in original ways.</li> <li>2. Produce individual or collaborative forms of expression (e.g. oral, written, musical, or artistic).</li> <li>3. Recognize and discuss abstract and symbolic representation.</li> <li>4. Demonstrate resourcefulness in the process of problem-solving.</li> <li>5. Develop relevant skills in the pursuit of aesthetic goals.</li> </ol>

4. The recently adopted General Education will require all students, regardless of program, to complete coursework in the Human Condition (HC) Category. Courses approved for this category examine:

The character and complexities of the human species, as well as its behaviors, whether as individuals or in their collectivities as a subject of importance to civil society and the world. The framework of that discussion now includes a range of tools, methods, and vocabularies across





School to discuss the details of Northwest College hosting the regional Middle School Science Fair in January 2018.

Music Department:

- With the generous assistance of the Student Senate, the Music Technology Endowed Fund and donations to the NWC Foundation's Friends of Northwest Music, the music department took 21 students and three faculty members on a bus trip to Las Vegas and Los Angeles over Spring Break. Participating students included the Studio Singers and students from the Music Technology program. The singers performed a number of informal "shared" performances with high schools and colleges along the way receiving lots of useful performance experience and feedback from gifted directors and musicians. Music Technology students attended the Cirque du Soleil Love show in Las Vegas with its awarding winning audio features as well as a studio visit to Audiograph International in Santa Monica. Additionally, Music Technology students visited the Grammy Museum, had a customized visit to pro audio retailer Vintage King and observed a recording session at Mira Costa College in Oceanside, CA. The highlight of the trip

earning a bronze award in Dramatic Interpretation, Isaabella Munoz earned a bronze award in Program Oral Interpretation, Emily Myers earned a bronze in International Public Debate, and Connor Hunt earned a gold award in International Public Debate.

- Coach Jeannie Hunt received the Collie Taylor Fellowship Award for Coaches. She was honored by the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and the Phi Rho Bid Award Coaches' Salute. She is one of several recipients nationally.

Of the 84 competitors in Dramatic Interpretation, and 24 students advance to elimination rounds. 14 earned a bronze award, 4 earned silver, and 5 earned gold. So, out of 84 competitors, Clinton was in the top 30%. In their

Many of the members of the YAM “maintain their memberships solely for this annual opportunity to meet an artist and hear firsthand about their processes and thoughts.”

Access to all Board Books will be provided.

- 
- Curriculum\_Comm\_Minutes\_Apr192016
  - Curriculum\_Comm\_Minutes\_Apr252017
  - Curriculum\_Comm\_Minutes\_Feb92016
  - Curriculum\_Cdmm\_Minutes\_NMar22

m\_

---

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

1. 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; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. 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.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

---

---

1. Northwest College (

g nd aficient numbers anfaculty memb"

hl ¥

NWC places primary importance on excellence in teaching and encourages faculty to design curriculum with individuality while maintaining approved educational outcomes. As a result, faculty are directly responsible and actively involved in curriculum development. Curriculum development typically begins with a faculty member and moves through the established curriculum review process respectively for discussion, review, and approval: Academic Division, Curriculum Committee, VPAA, and in significant programmatic changes, the President, Board of Trustees, and the Wyoming Community College Commission.

Along with teaching and student learning support, full-time faculty provide [additional services](#) to students: sponsoring student organizations, participating in student orientation events, and participating in programs organized by student groups. Other faculty responsibilities include service to the Division; Service to the College; and Service to the Community. All full-time faculty are expected to fulfill these duties, and adjunct faculty are encouraged to participate in some areas of service.

Faculty are involved in the assessment of student learning through membership on the [Central Assessment Team](#) (CAT). For more on the role of the CAT, see Section 4.B.

2. Faculty members are [recruited](#)

evaluated by their Division Chair and the Rank and Tenure Committee when they meet eligibility requirements for promotion. Adjunct instructors are evaluated by the appropriate division chair or an appointed tenured faculty member during the adjunct's first semester of teaching. Students evaluate the [adjunct's teaching effectiveness](#) in her/his first semester of teaching and every third time the course is taught by the same instructor. More frequent student evaluations and Division Chair class observations can be scheduled at the request of the adjunct, the division chair, or the Academic Affairs Office.

NWC requires a written [self-evaluation](#) of teaching effectiveness, academic service, and professional development by each faculty member standing for an interim review, tenure, and/or promotion. "The College places primary importance on [excellence in teaching](#) and support of student learning, so this subject is the primary focus of the self-evaluation." This submitted self-evaluation is reviewed by the Rank and Tenure Committee for an interim review, tenure, and promotion and becomes part of the faculty member's permanent employment file. All full-time faculty members are required to submit a [written summary of their academic accomplishments](#) and activities in the areas of teaching effectiveness, academic service, and professional development at the conclusion of each academic year. This [End-of-Year Report](#) goes to the Division Chair and the Vice President of Academic Affairs for review and then is added to the faculty member's permanent employment file.

4. Faculty members are expected to stay current in their disciplines and to make efforts to improve their teaching, and the institution supports [professional growth opportunities](#). Evidence of faculty commitment comes from faculty self-evaluations submitted for interim, tenure, and promotion reviews, Year-End Reports, Division Chair evaluations, and student course evaluations. Also, AAS program professional advisory boards guide and recommend current professional trends to faculty. Professional development may include further education, research, participation in conferences or workshops, course design or redesign, and other opportunities. Professional development activities may occur while the faculty member maintains regular contract duties, or faculty may request a sabbatical leave, an in-house sabbatical, reassigned-time project, or faculty exchange. The institution's budget includes a Professional Development and Travel Fund allocated to divisions proportionately based on the number of full-time faculty in each division. Funding recipients submit a written report to the VPAA and Division Chair upon completion of professional development activity. Faculty may submit proposals to the [Committee on Faculty Development and Morale](#), also [funded through the Office of Academic Affairs](#), for [professional development funding](#) and professional development funding may be attained through program budgets and in the case of AAS programs, Perkins funding. Each year the NWC Foundation calls for [grant proposals](#) to fund faculty projects that support [faculty](#) and [program initiatives](#).

5. Full-time faculty members are required to [hold regular office hours](#). Faculty members are encouraged to schedule office hours throughout the week for optimum student access. Faculty office hours are listed on each course syllabus, and most faculty members post their office hours on their office door. Some faculty members hold office hours in the library, given that assessment and feedback of library services indicate that students view the library as the best study space on campus. Students are encouraged by both faculty and staff to contact faculty u m

job.

---

The institution provides support for student learning and 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 programs 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, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
  5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.
- 

1. Northwest College (NWC) provides student services from pre-admission to completion/graduation. Services provided include the following:

#### TRiO

NWC provides a [TRiO SSS program](#) to support students who are low-income, first-generation, and/or students with disabilities. TRiO averaged 107 student visits per week in 2016-2017. Many TRiO participants are non-traditional students and specific support for them as they juggle many life responsibilities is effective. Services provided include [\(2015-2016\)](#):

- Assistance applying for financial aid (75 students)
- Assistance applying to a 4-year institution (81 students)
- Financial Literacy Assistance (96 students)
- Transfer visits trips to 4-year institutions (17 students)
- TRiO specific tutoring/advising (147 students)

The TRiO program at NWC has demonstrated effectiveness including [\(2015-2016\)](#):

- 76% persistence rate among TRiO students
- 91% of TRiO students in good academic standing
- 41% of TRiO students earned either an Associate Degree or Certificate

Tutoring

See 3.D.2.

Advising

See 3.D.3.



## Intercultural Affairs

See 1.C.

## Library

See 3.D.4.

## Disability Services

NWC offers a number of services to help students with disabilities succeed in their academic work including providing alternative media, note takers, readers, taped lectures, assistive hearing devices, assistive computer software, assistive devices, equipment modification, testing accommodations, interpreters, and captioning.

2. Students entering NWC are assessed for college-level mathematics and English/writing preparation. NWC makes use of [various measures](#) including ACT scores (math and English),







[1010](#), students are introduced to effective research and information resources. NWC librarians provide this guided instruction as part of each course. Classes in each discipline provide students opportunities to practice research skills. Librarians provide higher level instruction to students in these classes, at the invitation of course faculty. Each class, which is team-taught by two librarians, is designed based on a discussion with the faculty member. Each semester, librarians teach close to 80 different class sessions and reach nearly 1000 students through this instruction. Librarians provide research instruction in online classes through the use of video, library guides, and discussions in forums.

---

- Classroom Technology Equipment List\_2015-16
- Curriculum\_Comm\_Minutes\_Apr12014
- Curriculum\_Comm\_Minutes\_Apr12014 (page number 2)
- First\_Year\_Experience\_Founding\_Document
- General Education\_Outcomes\_Fall 2017
- General Education\_Outcomes\_Fall 2017 (page number 2)
- Library Annual\_report\_2015-2016
- Library Annual\_report\_2015-2016 (page number 3)
- Performance Indicators\_Report\_BOT\_March 2017
- Performance Indicators\_Report\_BOT\_March 2017 (page number 2)
- Placement\_Test\_Scores
- Transfer Summary\_Students\_2011-2016
- Trio Annual Report\_2015-2016\_names removed
- Trio Annual Report\_2015-2016\_names removed (page number 2)
- Trio Annual Report\_2015-2016\_names removed (page number 8)
- Trio Student Support\_Website\_2016-2017





- Multicultural Showcase\_News\_March 2017
- SkillsUSA\_Welding\_Website\_2016-2017
- Student\_Clubs\_Website\_2016-2017
- Student\_Senate\_Website





Committee will complete the implementation of the revised general education requirements. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee will codify the process to evaluate programming for resource allocation. The Course Scheduling Committee will complete establishment of a regular college-wide course rotation.

- 
- Criterion 3\_Workshop Comments



2. and 3. Credit earned at other Regionally-Accredited Postsecondary Institutions will transfer to Northwest College (NWC) upon [evaluation](#) by the Registration and Records Office. Lower division college-level courses completed with a grade of C- or higher may be accepted. Upper division and

as a model for future concurrent assessment efforts. NWC annually submits concurrent and dual enrollment [information](#) to the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC).

As per HLC policy on faculty qualifications, all faculty must have a master's degree, with some exceptions for professional experience. In Fall 2016, the Faculty Organization instituted a committee to recommend credential standards for faculty. Those recommendations have been approved by their relevant divisions. The Ad Hoc Faculty Policy Task Force will take up these recommendations in Fall 2017 and forward its recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

NWC maintains and exercises authority over access to learning resources including tutoring services, library services, the TRiO program, and disabilities services. Learning resources staff are employed by NWC, and the services are managed by NWC.

5. [Three programs](#) at NWC have [specialized accreditation](#).

Music and Music Technology are accredited by the [National Association of Schools of Music](#).

Fine Art and Graphic Design are accredited by the [National Association of Schools of Art and Design](#) (NASAD). Only seven community colleges in the US are NASAD-accredited.

The Associate Degree [Nursing Program](#), RN, is fully accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and approved by the Wyoming State Board of Nursing. The [Licensed Practical Nursing Certificate Program](#), LPN, is approved by the Wyoming State Board of Nursing. Regional or national accreditation is required for eligibility to take the NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN offered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

6. NWC evaluates the success of its graduates. To assure that students can transfer to four-year institutions, NWC [maintains articulation agreements](#) with thirty-six potential transfer institutions. The Office of Institutional Research tracks the number of student transfers to identify [most common transfer institutions](#). Students can obtain information and support for transfer through the Advising Center (AC). The AC Coordinator works with the Dean of Student Learning to maintain NWC's articulation agreements.

The University of Wyoming (UW) provides a [comprehensive report](#) of NWC transfer students for each year; the most recent report shows students who transfer to UW have an average first semester GPA of 2.79 as compared with an all transfer student GPA of 2.80. This suggests that NWC transfer students do as well as others who enter programs at UW. A summary report for the years 2008 through 2012 from [Valley City State University Collaborative Teacher Education](#) shows transfer students from NWC have a 92.3% retention rate, further evidence of transfer student success.

NWC's Office of Institutional Research solicits an [annual graduate survey](#). The response rate for the most recent three-year period was 25%.

The WCCC collects licensure data for its annual performance report. The Commission's [2015-2016](#) report revealed the pass rate of NWC nursing graduates taking the exam for the first time was 96% for the NCLEX RN exam and 100% for the NCLEX PN exam. These rates indicate that NWC graduates are well prepared to enter their chosen career.

NWC records enrollment in internships scheduled as courses; see the "internship," "apprenticeship," and "interactive, cooperative education" (no longer offered) courses in the ["Summary Enrollment by Course, Designator, and Department."](#)









better recognition of how to assess student learning. While faculty may have been using rubrics for years, they did not recognize that rubrics should be reported as direct measures. There is now a stronger understanding among the faculty of the difference between direct and indirect measures and the difference between activities that help students achieve outcomes (lectures, discussions, papers, other assignments) and measures used to assess student attainment of outcomes (e.g., rubrics, test blueprints, scoring guides, feedback surveys).

Beyond improved reporting, data indicates an increase in actual measurement. SLO reports demonstrate faculty continues to develop new and revise existing measures for alignment with course and program learning outcomes. [Mean scores](#) on the measures section of the CAT feedback rubric rose 120% from 2013-2016, supporting the above conclusions.

2. Faculty are reporting more [direct evidence](#) of student learning.

The reported amount of indirect evidence remained constant from 2013-2016, but the reported amount of direct evidence increased five-fold.

3. Faculty are now extracting [higher quality evidence](#) from both direct and indirect measures.

Evidence was weighted based on its usefulness for diagnostic and planning purposes (1=minimally useful; 2=moderately useful; 3=useful). Average weights for direct evidence increased from 1.3 to 2.4. Average weights for indirect evidence increased from 1.1 to 1.4. [Mean scores](#) on the evidence section of the CAT feedback rubric rose 105% from 2013-2016.

4. The quantity of [student learning evidence](#) reported varies between general education outcomes.

Evidence for the [general education outcomes](#) of analysis and multiple points of view is reported





iii. How will you assess your intervention's impact on student learning should funds be awarded?

The CAT budget subcommittee [sent recommendations](#) to the Presidents Advisory Council and the Academic Advisory Council. The Presidents Advisory Council considered these recommendations in [making decisions](#) about the expenditure of available funds. This process will serve as a template for future distribution of non-standard funding. (See [template guidelines](#))

NWC has provided financial resources for the establishment of a [TLC](#) in response to evidence from the SLO reports and the [Graduate Exit Survey](#) that indicate: 1) students appreciate that NWC faculty are highly qualified, engaged, and approachable; 2) students value the hands-on learning experiences that are available to them; 3) students want even more opportunities for hands-on learning.

4. The institution's processes of assessing student learning involve the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

In the past five years, [faculty involvement](#) in NWC's assessment processes has increased at multiple levels. One of the first steps that the VPAA took after being hired in Fall 2012 was to [establish CAT](#) – a standing committee comprised primarily of faculty from all academic divisions. The committee [meets](#) at least once a month during the academic year.

In Spring 2013, twelve self-selected faculty and staff enrolled in a weekly assessment seminar led by the VPAA. The VPAA offered an all-faculty in-service presentation on assessment and organized a day-long Learning Outcomes Workshop for the Academic Advisory Council, CAT, and Curriculum Committee. NWC has had strong faculty and staff representation at the annual HLC conference each subsequent year.

Workshops have been led by experts ([Dr. Barbara Walvoord in 2013](#) and [Dr. Virginia A. Walvoord in 2014](#)) for conversations about assessment. Themes from those workshops have been explored in [meetings](#) between faculty and the Assessment Coordinator. [Recommendations and work](#) developed by the Assessment Coordinator and/or CAT

uses the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) results to inform assessment analysis. The Institutional Researcher presents these results to the BOT, Presidents Advisory Council, Academic Advisory Council, College Council, and CAT and at annual meetings.

CCSSE was administered every other spring since 2007. The 2017 results demonstrate that NWC scored higher for all five benchmarks than the average Wyoming community college and higher than the CCSSE cohort institution. Four out of five benchmarks have been above the national average for the 2007 through 2015 implementations. The 2017 results show that the Academic Challenge benchmark is now several points higher than both the Wyoming and the national average. Most of the CCSSE questions that contribute to this benchmark have shown significant increases from the 2007 to the 2017 implementation. These increases could be attributed to the efforts of the M&A team.

CCSSE 2017 Results	NWC	Wyoming		2017 Cohort	
Benchmark	Score	Score	Difference	Score	Difference
Active and Collaborative Learning	56.2	52.1	4.1	50.0	6.2
Student Effort	54.5	49.7	4.8	50.0	4.5
Academic Challenge	53.3	50.2	3.0	50.0	3.3
Student-Faculty Interaction	57.2	53.7	3.5	50.0	7.2
Support for Learners	51.7	49.1	2.5	50.0	1.7

All faculty have access to the [NWC Assessment online repository](#) for assessment-related resources and reports, and all program faculty are [expected to contribute evidence to their program's SLO report](#). Faculty participation in program assessment has increased, with [mean scores](#) on the collective review section of the CAT feedback rubric rising 59% from 2013-2016. Five programs have developed [curriculum maps](#) to identify gaps in coverage and make changes that ensure repeated student exposure to learning outcomes. Curriculum mapping in all programs is a priority for 2017-2018.

A number of departments have undertaken additional assessment projects on their own:

- Three programs maintain external, [dim](#)

- Assessment\_Actions Taken\_Summary and Excerpts\_2013-2016
- Assessment\_Actions Taken\_Summary and Excerpts\_2013-2016 (page number 3)
- Assessment\_Actions Taken\_Summary and Excerpts\_2013-2016 (page number 19)
- Assessment\_Evidence\_Board Handout\_Oct32016
- Assessment\_Flowchart
- Assessment\_Moodle course page
- Assessment\_Moodle course page (page number 4)
- Assessment\_Moodle course\_Collective Review\_page
- Assessment\_Strengths\_Weaknesses\_Change\_SLO Reports\_Summary and Excerpts\_2013-2016
- CAT\_Budget Proposals\_Rankings
- CAT\_Budget Request Recommendations
- CAT\_Budget Request\_SLO\_Template\_2017
- CAT\_Description\_Revised\_2017
- CAT\_Minutes\_Charge\_Committee members\_Oct172012
- CAT\_Minutes\_List\_Portal
- Criterion 4\_Workshops slides\_final
- Curriculum Map Examples
- ENGL\_1010\_Assessment Summary\_2015-2016
- FYS\_Assessment
- General Education Outcomes \_prior to 2016
- General Education Recommendations\_CAT\_Minutes\_Memo\_Sept252013
- General Education\_Outcomes\_Fall 2017
- General\_Education\_Submission\_Form\_2017
- Graduate Exit Survey Summary\_2014-2017
- Graduate Exit Survey\_Cocurriculum\_2015-2017
- Graduate Exit Survey\_Open Ended Questions\_Excerpts
- Graduate Exit Survey\_Outcomes\_2015-2017
- Hansen\_Writing Assessment\_Report\_2016
- Library Instruction Assessment Report\_2012-2017\_final
- One Time State Funds\_VPAA Memo\_2015
- Philosophy of General Education \_\_ Assessment\_website\_2017-2018
- Prof Development\_Travel Reports\_many\_2013-2017
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment\_Programs\_Summary & List
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment\_Report\_form\_2015-2016
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment\_Rubric Scores\_2013-2016
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment\_Rubric Scores\_2013-2016 (page number 2)
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment\_Rubric\_form\_revised\_Feb2016
- TLC\_Framework\_Summary\_Newlin\_Apr22017
- Walvoord assessment workshop\_agenda\_2013

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to 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 but 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.)

---

1. Northwest College (NWC) has defined goals regarding student retention and completion in both the [2012-13 to 2016-17 Strategic Plan Tracking Report](#) and the current [Vision 2020 Key Performance Indicators](#). These reports demonstrate progress toward the institution's most recent strategic plans.

NWC uses IPEDS definition of fall-to-fall retention rate as the percentage of first-time, degree-seeking students from a specified fall cohort who are still enrolled at NWC or completed their program by the following fall term. Before Fall 2016, NWC used the term persistence to describe retention, in accordance with the statewide terminology at that time. The current state definition of persistence rate is the percentage of first-time, degree-seeking students from the fall cohort who enroll at any institution or complete a program of study by the following fall term.

NWC measures completion through 1) annual program completions, 2) unduplicated completers, and 3) completion rates (also called graduation rates), as reported on the [IPEDS Completions](#) and [Graduation Rate](#) surveys. Completions are defined as the number of degrees or certificates awarded by the institution, regardless of the number of students earning these awards. Completers are the unduplicated number of students being awarded a degree or certificate. The completion rate is calculated for full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students who complete an award within 150% of the normal time to completion.

In the 2012-13 to 2016-17 Strategic Plan, Institutional Imperative #1 stated, "Northwest College shall be the preeminent two-year educational institution in Wyoming." The first goal for this imperative was to have "the highest student completion rates (earned degrees and certificates) of any two-year educational institution in Wyoming." In the related Tracking Report, the indicators by which NWC measured its progress towards pre eminence included completion rates, fall-to-fall retention (then called persistence) rates, and numbers of completions. Information was compiled for a baseline year and updated annually.

The current strategic plan, Vision 2020, focuses the institution on the priorities of Experience,

Connections, and Environment. The Experience priority includes components that measure:





implemented include:

#### First-Year Experience (FYE)

Extensive research on student persistence conducted by the members of the RC uncovered common reasons why students choose not to complete college after starting. This research led to the development of NWC's First Year Experience Program in 2014.

Before implementing FYE, the RC examined retention rates of three Program Orientation courses, in [Agriculture, Education, and Engineering](#). Retention rates were higher for program majors who took the orientation courses in their first year than for majors who did not.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Retention Rate in Course</b>	<b>Retention Rate not enrolled in Course</b>
Agriculture	80%	59%
Education	65%	33%
Engineering	67%	44%

This evidence supported CCCSE findings that FYE increases student retention. The [First-Year Experience Founding Document](#) elaborates on the rationale behind and details of first-year experience course implementation at NWC. [Curriculum Committee](#) voted to make FYE a requirement for earning a degree. NWC implemented these courses across all programs in Fall 2015.

#### Advising Center

The RC began researching advising models in [2012](#), which resulted in the creation of the Advising Center (AC). Data analyzed at that time indicated that advising for General Studies majors was a particular need since 20% of students were majoring in General Studies and there was no dedicated advising for that program.

The RC [recommended a split model for academic advising](#) to the Faculty Organization for discussion. The AC opened in Summer 2013 and is staffed by the Advising Coordinator, the First-Year Experience Coordinator, and peer mentors.

The AC provides:

1. General advising: helps to guide students through their academic journey here at NWC;
2. Transfer advising: helps students on their way to their academic careers after NWC;
3. Career advising: helps students identify and follow the correct path to reach the career goals that they set at NWC;
4. Coordinating internships: conducts arrangement through the college to allow students to gain valuable work experience to further their respective aspirations.

The AC coordinates peer mentoring, which allows well-established, successful students to serve as guides to new and struggling students. During the most recent academic year, 2015-2016, the AC had 3328 visits serving over 800 individual students.

#### HELP (Early Alert)

The RC examined student support services for struggling students and identified issues with a time delay between alert submission and actions taken. As a result, the FYE Coordinator was added to the alert notification, who began following up on alerts by contacting students to arrange an appointment. [Results](#) of this revised HELP (Early Alert) process show that 48% of alert submissions have been resolved.

#### HERO Grant

One of the barriers which often prohibits student success is unforeseen financial issues. In 2013, RC discussed using unclaimed scholarship money to [assist students facing financial obstacles](#). As a result, the NWC administration and the NWC Foundation implemented the “Hero Grant” program, which provides emergency financial assistance to students encountering unforeseen personal circumstances

In Fall 2017, the English department will offer a co-requisite course combining ENGL-0610 Basic Writing II and ENGL-1010 Introduction to Composition.

#### Future Initiatives

NWC is implementing new student success initiatives including:

1

---



- Criterion 4\_Workshop Comments



NWC maintains

committees, and architectural and engineering assessment. Both capital projects were [approved by the WCCC](#) and forwarded to the State legislature for Level Two approval and funding. Subsequent to Level Two approval, Level Three approval and funding would be required.

Several projects such as the Multi-Sports Court, Hardscape phase I and II, and the DeWitt Student Center Exterior Improvement Project, have been completed since 2013. Various projects continue to be scheduled as state maintenance funding and adequate reserves allow. A new updated Facilities Master Plan is scheduled for completion in Fall 2017 #





through [Northwest College](#) and up to three credit hours per semester through the [University of Wyoming](#). From 2011-2015, 176 employees have utilized NWC tuition waivers, and 24 received University of Wyoming tuition waivers.

The [Center for Training and Development](#) provides skills-based classes, leadership classes, and supervisory training courses which employees attend, often at free or reduced rates.

5. NWC has a [well-developed process](#) in place for budgeting. NWC has resource allocation processes in place to ensure that resources are apportioned properly and that revenue is not dispersed to a superordinate entity inappropriately. Campus constituencies, budget managers, employee meetings, and a Budget Committee serves in various capacities to enhance transparency.

The Budget Committee is composed of the President, VPASF, VPAA, Vice President for College Relations (VPCR), VPSS, the Finance Director, a faculty member, a professional staff member, and a classified staff member.

The Budget Committee [discusses](#), [reviews](#) and [disseminates](#) ongoing national, state, and local activities that affect college operations and budgets. [Revenue projections](#) are created, and other data are collected as needed to assist with the budgeting process. The committee utilizes this information for budgeting. NWC's educational purposes, regulatory requirements, and the strategic priorities of Vision 2020 are given priority.

In 2014, NWC received a one-time allocation from the state and used it to purchase educational equipment. Proposals for educational equipment were evaluated based on fit with the strategic plan and how the proposal met program outcomes assessment goals. In 2015, a similar state reallocation resulted in a bonus distribution to our employees. These actions aligned with Vision 2020.

In Spring 2016, the budget development process expanded to include the budget managers, whose goal is to make recommendations within their budgets that align with NWC's priorities and available resources.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) [reviews budget assumptions](#) in a study session in April. The BOT reviews [the preliminary budget](#) in May. The first reading of the [full budget](#) is reviewed by the BOT in June with a budget hearing and final budget approval in July. The budget books are made available electronically to all employees as part of the emailed Board package. Once approved, the budget is posted to the [web site](#). The annual audit report is posted and made available there.

NWC has processes in place for monitoring expenditures. All employees designated with budget authority have access to up-to-date expenditures and balances.

In 2013, the BOT changed policy to require the President approve all college contracts. Following this change, the President requires the supervisory Vice President and the VPASF to [review and sign](#) before approval to ensure alignment with the mission. This change includes employment contracts, stipends, and service contracts. The President's authorization is required for out of the ordinary expenditures.

President Hicswa and VPASF Watson have implemented processes to improve expenditure review. VPASF Watson monitors budgets quarterly to track revenue receipts and expenditure percentages budget to actual. Large shortfalls and overages are identified; budget managers are consulted for further analysis. With the budget reduction in FY 2017, budget lines in need of closer monitoring

were identified, e.g., motor pool and print services.

The VPAFS creates financial reports for BOT meetings which include a monthly [check register](#). The BOT reviews the register transactions as part of its fiduciary duty.

At BOT's 2016 winter retreat, trustees reviewed [state statutes](#) related to the [community colleges](#) and the [fiduciary statutes](#) for municipalities. At the February 2016 [BOT meeting](#), the principal from NWC's auditor provided training. He emphasized the importance of the BOT's oversight and fiduciary responsibility.

- 
- Audit Report\_2016
  - Audit Report\_2016 (page number 14)
  - BKD Financial Ratios
  - BKD Financial Ratios (page number 20)
  -

- Facilities\_MasterPlan\_ 2014 Update
- Facilities\_MasterPlan\_ 2014 Update (page number 26)
- Financial Ratios\_2014-2016
- Human Resources\_Training\_2013-2017
- Human Resources\_Training\_AI Pro\_2017
- Institutional Priorities Inventory questions\_FINAL
- IPEDS\_2016\_Custom Report
- IPEDS\_2016\_Custom Report (page number 9)
- Mission Statement\_2016
- Professional Development\_Summary\_2015-2018
- Student Center\_Level I Study\_Exec Summary\_May112017
- Student Wireless Survey\_Sept2016
- Tuition Waiver\_Form\_NWC
- Tuition Waiver\_Form\_UW
- Vision\_2020\_KPI\_2016\_Final
- Vision\_2020\_KPI\_2016\_Final (page number 3)
- Visual & Performing Arts Center\_Level I Study\_Exec Summary\_May112017
- WY Statute Article 1 Chapter 16 Uniform Muni Procedures
- WY\_Statutes\_Title21\_Chapter 18\_Section 303 (2016)\_BOT\_powers
- WY\_Statutes\_Title21\_Chapter18\_Community Colleges\_2016
- WYCCC\_Meeting Packet\_Jun272017
- WYCCC\_Meeting Packet\_Jun272017 (page number 109)
- WYCCC\_Performance Indicators\_Annual\_Report\_2016
- WYCCC\_Performance Indicators\_Annual\_Report\_2016 (page number 9)
- WYCCC\_Performance Indicators\_Annual\_Report\_2016 (page number 13)



- decision [redacted] made based on the best information [redacted] most inclusive persons [redacted].

An [extensive committee](#) structure fosters cross-campus involvement and collaboration. Representative groups provide consultation on various aspects of college operations (see discussion in 5.B.3). Major standing committees address matters related to instruction, curriculum, assessment, retention, administration, business development, academic computing, institutional effectiveness, policy review (one for all employees and one for faculty), the library, news, communications, website, and student appeals. Meeting minutes or summaries are posted on the institutional website, and links are emailed to employees.

The following bodies carry out NWC's shared governance functions.

- [College Council](#) [redacted] representative body composed of representatives from all constituent groups. Its systems and operations are based on the institution's Shared Governance and Decision Making Guide. The [Guide](#) provides parameters for how various topics should be considered by the College Council.
- Constituent group organizations for faculty, professional staff, classified staff, and students maintain elected officers.
- The President appoints task forces as necessary, e.g., the 2016-17 Futures Task Forces for

representation planned for 2017-2018)

- [Writing in the Academic World](#) (includes members from administration and faculty)

- 
- Board of Trustees\_Rules\_revised\_May 2017
  - Board of Trustees\_Agenda\_June 2017
  - Board of Trustees\_Board Book\_May 2017
  - Board of Trustees\_Board Book\_May 2017 (page number 8)
  - CAT\_Description\_Revised\_2017
  - College Council By-Laws\_Nov\_2013
  - Course Scheduling Comm\_ByLaws\_2016
  - Employment Handbook 2016-2017
  - Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 91)
  - Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 92)
  - Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 94)
  - Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 99)
  - Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 104)
  - Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 105)
  - Employment Handbook 2016-2017 (page number 111)
  - Governance Flow Chart
  - Retention\_Comm\_Bylaws
  - Shared\_Governance\_Decision-making\_Guide
  - Shared\_Governance\_Decision-making\_Guide (page number 6)

---

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
  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
-



determined priorities for this funding using [Central Assessment Team \(CAT\) recommendations](#) based on evaluation of funding requests. The CAT evaluated those funding requests based on linkages to the assessment of student learning outcomes. The President has communicated to the campus that this type of analysis is expected moving forward.

In Fall 2013, NWC began a [campus-wide](#) facilities master planning process. Point Architects and A&E Architects led campus personnel in updating the [Facilities Master Plan](#). This is an example of "scaling up" planning to include all employees in the evaluation of campus operations and future planning needs. In May 2015, a Planning Committee was created consisting of the President, VPASF, the VPAA, the Vice President for Student Services (VPSS), and the NWC Foundation Executive

[Internal and external constituent groups](#) were involved in the development of the 2014 updated Facilities Master Plan. A steering committee of campus representatives guided the external planning team led by Point Architects and A&E Architects of Billings, MT. The planning team held focus group sessions with employees, students, and community members.

Budget managers serve on the front line between operations and reporting. For FY 2017, the budgeting process expanded to include a campus wide Budget Managers group. This group encompasses the institution as a whole and provides robust input.

4. NWC plans from a sound understanding of its current capacity while anticipating the impact of revenue fluctuations.

Historically, fiscal planning used an incremental base model supplemented by projected enrollment increases and one-time state revenue. During times of economic downturn, the planning methodologies were ineffective. Currently, fiscal planning is driven by current enrollment, state, and

During 2015-2016, President Hicswa appointed task forces to anticipate emerging factors. The [Organizational Structure Task Force](#)

---

---

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

---

1. Throughout this Assurance Argument, reports and information are referenced that demonstrate that Northwest College develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations. Highlights are described below.

#### Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators

All strategic and operational goals are guided by NWC's strategic vision, [Vision 2020](#) (see 1.A.). Following the development of Vision 2020, [key performance indicators](#) (KPIs) were developed for each element. The KPIs are measured, documented, reviewed and published annually.

#### President's Operational Plan

Programs are in a [5-year rotation](#) for a program review. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee reviews academic program reports, and the President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and the Student Learning provide feedback to academic programs. The VPAA also reviews non-academic program reports (see 4.A.,3.C.).

Annually, each program submits a [Student Learning Outcomes Report](#) to the Center for Assessment and Evaluation, which reviews reports with a rubric and provides feedback to the program (see 4.A.).

To address budget shortfalls in Spring 2016, the VPAA and the Academic Advisory Council developed [academic program continuation](#) criteria. Programs considered for discontinuation are based on the following:

- Cost versus Revenue
- Number of program students
- Job prospects
- Other funding sources
- Community Keystone

### Student and Employee Feedback

NWC participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement to document student perception of performance in operations ([2015](#)). To gather employee feedback on the institutional climate, employees participated in The Chronicle of Higher Education's Great Colleges to Work For survey during [2012](#) and [2014](#). In 2016, NWC administered the Personal Assessment of the College Environment ([PACE](#)) survey to gather employee feedback. NWC uses survey results to develop and document evidence of performance in operations.

2. NWC learns from its experience and strives to continuously improve all aspects of its operations as evidenced in the following examples:

- Revision of the [Mission Statement](#) (see 1.A.)

- Provide institutional effectiveness information to NWC, community, and other constituencies.

The IEC's tasks have evolved to fit NWC's needs. Initial responsibilities included developing and annually monitoring the measurements for the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan Tracking Report. In 2014, President Hicswa [charged](#) IEC with exploring the ideal enrollment size for NWC. In 2016, IEC began reviewing and providing feedback on academic program reviews. In 2017, President Hicswa [charged](#) the IEC with overseeing the comprehensive review of all programs and services college-wide and the IEC [added a process](#) for non-academic program reviews.

- 
- Annual\_Report\_Connections\_Website\_2016-2017
  - Annual\_Report\_Environment\_Website\_2016-2017
  - Annual\_Report\_Experience\_Website\_2016-2017
  - Annual\_Report\_Overview\_Website\_2016-2017
  - Board of Trustees\_Board Book\_June 2017
  - Board of Trustees\_Board Book\_June 2017 (page number 12)
  - Budget\_2017\_final
  - Budget\_2017\_final (page number 3)
  - CCSSE\_Data\_Study Results\_2011
  - CCSSE\_Survey\_Results\_2015
  - Course Scheduling Committee\_report\_2016-2017
  - Emergency Planning Highlights\_2011-2016
  - Facilities Project Report\_June 2017
  - Facilities\_MasterPlan\_2014 Update
  - Great Colleges Survey\_Report\_2012
  - Great Colleges Survey\_Report\_2014
  - IEC\_Charge\_2014
  - IEC\_Charge\_2017
  - IEC\_Founding Document\_2009
  - IEC\_Minutes\_Apr262017
  - Institutional\_Fact\_Card\_2017
  - Institutional\_Profile\_2017
  - Mission Statement\_2016
  - Operational Plan\_President\_FY2014
  - Operational Plan\_President\_FY2015
  - Operational Plan\_President\_FY2016
  - Operational Plan\_President\_FY2017
  - PACE\_Survey\_Results\_2016



While there is always work to be accomplished, NWC has addressed opportunities and economic challenges to respond to the needs of its students in a global society.

- 
- Committee List 2016-2017
  - Criterion 5\_Workshop Comments