

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

1. In Spring 2015, President Hicswa launched the process to revise Northwest College's (NWC) seven-year-old Mission Statement to have it more accurately reflect the institution's current purpose and character. The process resulted in the NWC Board of Trustees (BOT) approval of the following new [Mission Statement](#) at its [March 14, 2016](#), regular meeting:

In the context of our global society, the mission of Northwest College is to: be student-centered; be forward thinking; cultivate community; prepare students for transfer, career, and life; and retain and graduate students.

Dr. Hicswa chose a revision process that sought employee input in the form of core concepts, words, and phrases that employees used to reflect their sense of NWC's essential character. This process was suited to shared governance style and culture of the Institution. Conducted during a late Spring 2015 all-employee meeting, the exercise refreshed employees' earlier input about major challenges faced by the college, a question she first put to the campus community during the first month of her presidency in 2013. After receiving [employee submissions](#), Dr. Hicswa called upon Assistant Professor of English Rachel Hanan and Instructor of Sociology/Anthropology Aura Newlin to identify common themes and create an employee questionnaire. Dr. Hanan and Ms. Newlin developed an online Institutional Priorities Inventory (IPI) questionnaire. The IPI's purpose was to:

1. Help employees and stakeholders be aware of values identified during the input process,
2. Guide development of a new Mission Statement, and

3. Help the college develop techniques for assessing how well the campus community is achieving its priorities.

President Hicswa promoted the IPI during her August 2015 State of the College Address, providing employees with a link to the IPI and calling for responses by September 4. She sent all-employee email reminders regarding the response deadline. [Survey results](#) reflected a 50% employee response rate—46% of faculty, 63% of Classified Staff, and 50% of Professional Staff.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and the Institutional Researcher analyzed responses to determine the top-rated priorities for the new Mission Statement. Following this process, President Hicswa worked with Professors Hanan and Newlin and the 2015-16 Student Senate President to identify words and phrases that emerged as common themes. From that work, an innovative Mission Statement format, employing a “word cloud” to cluster the words and phrases on one page with the most highly valued elements appearing in larger type to denote prominence, was developed to represent the College’s essential character. Dr. Hicswa updated Trustees on the revision process at their [January 2016 meeting](#).

Public and student input were sought to ensure that revisions to Mission Statement and Vision 2020 were informed by area residents, students, and employees. The Vice President for College Relations sent personal invitation letters to 289 external stakeholders, including current and former Trustees; emeritus professors/administrators; current and former members of the Alumni Association and Foundation Boards of Directors; public school superintendents; media; city, county, chamber of commerce and economic development representatives; legislators; and banking, healthcare and University of Wyoming representatives. Approximately 25 area residents participated in an [October 12, 2015 public meeting](#); an additional 20 individuals who were unable to attend the evening meeting requested to participate in the survey via email. The 2015-16 Student Senate President sought input from student senators in an [October 6, 2015 meeting](#). Results of that meeting, in addition to the results of the [October 12, 2015 public meeting](#), were used to inform the development of the new Mission Statement.

The Institutional Researcher and VPAA conducted statistical analysis to determine employees’ top-rated themes, inter-question reliability within themes, and significant differences between constituency groups. The themes that rose to the top became the five mandates in the new Mission Statement, and the results of the statistical analysis were used to inform the development of the new Vision 2020.

4. The breadth of [instructional programming](#) is consistent with NWC's mission to prepare students for transfer, career, and life. NWC's commitment to general education in its curriculum provides its students with a foundation for lifelong learning. A faculty-based [Curriculum Committee](#) meets regularly to review proposals for new courses, certificates, and programs. NWC currently offers BAS, AA, AS or AAS degree programs and certificates.

Consistent with its student-centered mission, NWC provides student housing, with residential programming and activities intended to promote the social and psychological development of students. Student services include residence life programming, a bookstore, the Johnson Fitness Center, disability support services, short term counseling, peer tutor program, student employment positions, and financial aid services (see 3.D.).

NWC's enrollment profile reflects its mission to prepare students for transfer, career, and life in the context of a global society. According to [Fall 2021 Wyoming Community College Commission \(WCCC\)](#) data, 41% of students are enrolled in transfer programs only, 7% are in both transfer and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, 12% are in CTE programs only, 2% of students are in the BAS program, and 38% are non-degree-seeking. Eighty percent of students are from Wyoming, 17% from other states, and 3% from other countries.

5. 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 strategic vision, [Vision 2020](#). This vision was originally developed as a five-year vision; however, due to effects of the pandemic, Vision 2020 was extended and work on a new strategic vision is currently underway. 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 Profile](#) web page
- [Board of Trustees](#) linked from 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.
- [Board of Trustees](#) agendas – Printed at the bottom of every BOT meeting agenda

Sources

- HLC_2022_academic programs By Area Northwest College
- HLC_2022_Board of Trustees __ About Us __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_BOT_2022_06_29_agenda_Mission Statement graphic

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- HLC_2022_BOT_Minutes_March142016 (page number 3)
- HLC_2022_College Council_Minutes_March12016
- HLC_2022_College Council_Minutes_March12016 (page number 2)
- HLC_2022_Curriculum Committee April 26 2022 minutes
- HLC_2022_Fall21.EnrollmentReport.Final
- HLC_2022_Institutional Priorities Inventory_Summary_statistics
- HLC_2022_Institutional Profile
- HLC_2022_Mission Statement 2022
- HLC_2022_Mission Statement_2016
- HLC_2022_Mission Statement_Community Survey_Public Meeting_Results_Cloud
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- HLC_2022_Mission Statement_Student Survey_Results_Feb32016
- HLC_2022_Mission_Statement_Graphics
- HLC_2022_Mission_wall_art_photo
- HLC_2022_NWC KPI 2022 FINAL
- HLC_2022_Vision_2020_KPI_2016_Final

and services, e.g., rebranding/renaming, strategic vision, future direction of the college, connections between local businesses and college.

- The President, Board of Trustees (BOT) members, and Vice Presidents maintain contact with and participate in statewide agencies, e.g., the Wyoming Community College Commission and its statewide consultation groups, Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees, Complete College Wyoming and WyDEC (statewide distance education consortium).
- [The Partnership Report](#) is a summary of educational, community, and regional development partnerships that demonstrate NWC's commitment to the public good.

NWC is governed by a seven-member, locally elected, unpaid Board of Trustees from within three sub-districts in its tax district of Park County, Wyoming. The following BOT practices and decisions provide evidence that NWC takes its public service role, public access, and public accountability seriously.

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to the success of students including counseling, the library, disability support services, tutoring, the business office, and advising.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have great impact on international education. For one, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly decreased international student mobility which has resulted in a much lower number of international students studying at U.S. institutions. In part, this is due to many countries implementing travel bans, embassies and consulates around the world remaining closed and/or operating with limited staff and schedules, and students and parents choosing health and safety over travelling. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic also severely impacted all study abroad programs due to increased health risks, travel restrictions, and travel bans.

1. NWC curricular and cocurricular activities reflect its mission to prepare students for informed citizenship and workplac

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

Sources

- HLC_2020_Intercultural Programs_Strategic Plan_2012-2017
- HLC_2020_Intercultural Programs_Strategic Plan_2012-2017 (page number 3)
- HLC_2022_Clubs_Organizations 2022
- HLC_2022_Diversity Awareness Committee_Website
- HLC_2022_Evidence_ICH Committee Mission_Vision
- HLC_2022_General Education Outcomes
- HLC_2022_Native Ways Buffalo Feast __ April 21_2022 __ Calendar of Events
- HLC_2022_Northwest College Multicultural Showcase Returns April 30 __ April 12_2022 __
NWC News Desk
- HLC_2022_NWCUniversalSyllabiInformation 2021-22
- HLC_2022_OIP Events Data_2019-2021

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

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 partnerships are centerpieces of NWC's commitment to the public.

NWC maintains a strong educational focus that takes primacy over other purposes, a focus evidenced in its Mission Statement and among key performance indicators that address each strategic priority in the strategic plan, Vision 2020.

Employee Feedback on Criterion One

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, have been sustained and enhanced through public forums on

operations on campus, including student financial aid. The annual third-party audit determines compliance with regulations, procedures, and standard financial practices. Recent audits have returned no major findings.

[Audit](#)

[Budget Process](#)

[Cash Handling Procedure](#)

The annual audit is discussed at an all-employee meeting, and a presentation and discussion led by a managing partner of the audit firm occur at the BOT meeting usually held in November of each year. NWC works with the Wyoming Community College Commission under Wyoming Statute Article 1, Title 16; Chapter 18 cited as the "Wyoming Community College System Code" and Title 16, Chapter 4, as the "Uniform Municipal Fiscal Procedures." Wyoming Statute requires NWC to submit approved budgetary, enrollment, and other data that accurately represents the operations of NWC.

The integrity of academic operations is assured by adherence to the policies and procedures found in the following documents.

[College Catalog](#)

[NWC Board Policy Manual](#) – Section 3000 Faculty and Academics

[NWC Board Policy Manual](#) – Section 4000 Students and Student Services

[Student Handbook - Academic Code of Conduct](#)

[Course Syllabus Guidelines](#)

The Office of Academic Affairs monitors adherence to these policies and procedures as it relates to; ongoing assessment of student learning and advising, student course evaluations, 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, 5). The Student Handbook contains the academic code of conduct to prevent violations such as plagiarism. Compliance with federal privacy and FERPA regulations ensures the privacy of student academic records and is discussed later in this section. Appropriate action is followed to ensure compliance. Appeal and grievance policies are in place to assure fairness.

The integrity of personnel functions is assured by adherence to the policies and procedures found in the following sections:

[NWC Board Policy Manual](#)

- [Disability support services](#)
- [FERPA policy](#)
- [Financial Aid policies, disclosures, and information](#)
- [Information Technology- policy 7310](#)
- [Student Handbook](#)
- [Student Policy 4500 Student](#)
- [Student](#)

- HLC_2022_coc_njcaa
- HLC_2022_Disability Support Services __ Services __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_FERPA __ Registration_Records __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_Financial Aid Policies __ Financial Aid __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_NWC Financial Aid Disclosures and Student Consumer Information
- HLC_2022_NWC SYLLABUS GUIDELINES
- HLC_2022_Policy2140 Board Policy Development
- HLC_2022_Policy4500 Student codes of conduct
- HLC_2022_Policy5700 sexual misconduct TIX
- HLC_2022_Policy7310 Technology
- HLC_2022_Residential Campu Life __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_The Mission of Northwest College __ Northwest College

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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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

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monthly culture nights, the intercultural Tuesday lunches, the annual Multicultural Showcase, Homesteader Days, Haunted Homesteader, International Education Week, the President's Gala, the 4th of July Parade in Cody, WY, the fair parade in Powell, WY, and visits to local schools. In 2016-2017, the Multicultural Club had an average of 68 members and all members are encouraged to participate in these community service projects.

While NWC does offer many opportunities for students outside of the formal curriculum, no claims are made regarding learning or outcomes from these activities other than enhancement of the college experience.

Sources

- HLC_2022_2021-22 Student Senate __ Campus Life __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_Accreditation __ About Us __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_Board of Trustees __ About Us __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_Costs _ Deadlines __ Admissions __ Northwest College
- HLC_2022_Mission Statement 2022
- HLC_2022_Site Monitors by Section __ Web Management __ Communications _Marketing __ Northwest College

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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's mission and academic excellence.
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1. The Board o

3. 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 ev T eBOT' O

BOT delegates the day-to-day management of the institution to the President, as illustrated in NWC's organizational structure and BOT-generated documents. [NWC's organizational chart](#) provides detail on reporting lines to the BOT, President, and Vice Presidents.

The BOT supports the President in day-to-day administration, as evidenced by the multi-year employment contract. President Watson and the BOT have moved towards a policy governance model of leadership. Examples include:

- The BOT established a Policy Committee that works with the President on policy matters and makes recommendations to the BOT.
- The BOT maintains a Finance Committee that works with the President on financial and budgetary matters and makes recommendations to the BOT.
- BOT agendas now include a "consent agenda" that allows trustees to focus on more major informational and action topics.
- The President and the President of the BOT develop and implement agendas for regular BOT retreats and training.
- Monthly reports by administrative units and employee constituent groups are now written to the President rather than to the BOT as had occurred for several years prior.

As noted in 5.B., NWC's faculty Curriculum Committee has maintained an educational focus free of external pressures for specific instructional programming. The Academic Advisory Council (AAC) meets regularly to advise the Vice President for Academic Affairs on instructional issues, including budget decisions, program review, and prioritization of open faculty positions.

Sources

HCL_2022_BOT_Agenda_6_13_22

HLC_2022_Board of Trustees Board Code of Ethics 2021

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2.D-

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

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 reviewed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs to determine whether proposals qualify for exempt status. If further review is necessary the proposal is reviewed 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. 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. Northwest College generally honors IRB approval from other institutions.

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 funding agency or sponsoring institution IACUC before beginning their research.

2 and 3. Undergraduate research and scholarship are fundamental aspects of an NWC education. All students take ENGL 1010, Introduction to Composition, where they learn the mechanics of college writing and documentation. In many 2000-level courses, students complete a review of the literature on a given topic and are expected to use accepted academic conventions of citation.

Depending on discipline or department preference, students learn to use MLA, APA, Chicago or a discipline-specific citation style (such as Agronomy Style). Librarians instruct students on copyright laws, the ethics of citation, and when to use citation generators in First Year Seminar, ENGL 1010 and other classes when invited by faculty. Library staff provides additional citation resources through a series of [library guides](#) and videos to assist students in understanding how information must be used ethically. Student tutors in Peer Tutoring Services and the Writing Center assist with these efforts when working with students on an individual basis. Faculty in individual disciplines provide further instruction and guidance in relevant citation formats.

[Previous general education outcomes](#) (before Fall 2017) expected students to 1) produce informative, analytical and critical prose to respond to a particular task or audience, 2) produce writing that

conforms to discipline-specific conventions, 3) use appropriate research skills in at least one substantial writing assignment, and 4) observe the conventions of standard written English. Beginning Fall of 2017, [new general education outcomes](#) expect students to 1) use the accepted conventions including spelling, grammar, organizational structure, punctuation, delivery and documentation in oral, written, and digital messages, 2) find, analyze, evaluate, and document information appropriately using a variety of sources, including library resources.

New General education outcomes emphasize using accepted conventions (spelling, grammar, organizational structure, punctuation, delivery, and documentation) in oral, written and digital messages. Students are expected to "find, analyze, evaluate, and document information appropriately, using a variety of resources, including library resources."

A 2021 [Library Instruction Assessment Report](#) examined the effect of some of the resources listed above on information literacy competency at NWC.

4. Policies ensuring honesty and integrity are published in the college catalog, the Student Handbook and on NWC's website. Faculty are required to outline the consequences for academic dishonesty or reference the Student Handbook policies and procedures in their course syllabi. The Academic Code of Conduct outlines both student rights and responsibilities. All students are responsible for reading the college catalog and Student Handbook and conforming to the General Code of Student Conduct. Administration of the Academic Code of Conduct falls under the purview of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Any student, faculty or staff may initiate an Academic Dishonesty Hearing following the procedures. During the Spring 2017 semester, there were five reports of Academic Dishonesty reported to the Dean of Student Learning and zero of those reports were appealed by the students involved. In an attempt to assure complete reporting of Academic Dishonesty issues, the [Academic Code of Conduct](#) policy was revised in Spring 2017 (effective beginning Fall 2017).

Faculty members use Turnitin, a web-based plagiarism checker. There were 599 student submissions in 25 classes in the Fall 2021 semester and 335 submissions in 36 classes in the Spring 2022 semester. Students are notified in their syllabi when Turnitin will be used in a course, and they have the opportunity to submit rough drafts of written assignments during the course to self-check for plagiarism.

Sources

- HLC_2022_Citation_guides_library_Website
- HLC_2022_General Education Outcomes (Current)
- HLC_2022_General Education Outcomes _prior to 2016
- HLC_2022_Library Instruction Assessment Report FY2021
- HLC_2022_Student Handbook __ Policies_Academic Code of Conduct

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

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 institution acts with integrity. Employees and students are expected to act with integrity, and these requirements are clearly communicated.

NWC operates within its shared governance structure that provides transparency through various existing committees, campuswide and Board meetings, written and verbal communication, and a multitude of data and fiscal reports. The College shares and distributes minutes, information, and reports through email, the employee portal, campus meetings, or the Board Book. These processes and transparency support the institution's expectation to act with integrity.

The College completed [the conversion](#) of its employee handbook into the [NWC Board Policy Manual](#) in 2019. The conversion utilized a consultant to identify policy gaps, and NWC has worked diligently to review, update or develop policy throughout the Manual. Board, Faculty and Academics, Students and Student Services, and Finance and Human Resources are just a [few areas](#) with [new policies](#) in

HIST 2389: History of Women and the American West class collaborated with peers from the University of Wyoming where Dr. Renee Laegreid teaches the same course. Classes were combined over Zoom and NWC students got to interact with their counterparts at ac

- HLC 2022 ASSOCIATE OF ARTS_SCIENCE DEGREE WORKSHEET
- HLC 2022 General Education Courses 04.24.19
- HLC 2022 General Education Outcomes (Current)
- HLC 2022 Mission Statement 2022
- HLC 2022 Philosophy of General Education
- HLC 2022 Rationale for General Education Distribution Requirements (Current)
- HLC_2022_BoT Book Apr 11 2022_pp48
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Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander			X	Â

Full-time, tenure-track faculty members are [hired through a process](#) th

ex officio), four tenured faculty members appointed by the VPAA, and four tenured faculty members appointed by the President of the Faculty Organization. The term of service is four calendar years, with staggered terms. In the case of [nursing faculty](#), the Director of Nursing has primary responsibility for faculty development, performance review, retention, tenure, and promotion.

New full-time faculty hired in tenure track positions are classified as probationary for their first five years. Faculty hired in non-tenure track positions are classified as fixed-term contracts. Non-tenured faculty are evaluated yearly by their [Division Chair](#). [Probationary faculty](#) members are further evaluated by the Rank and Tenure Committee during the interim review in the fall semester of their third year and for the decision of tenure in the spring semester of their fifth year. Tenured faculty members are 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 and once annually thenceforth.

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, and this subject should provide 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 [year-end report](#) summarizing their academic accomplishments and activities in the areas of teaching effectiveness, academic service, and professional development at the conclusion of each academic year. This 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.

5. 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. 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.

6. 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 via email and phone. Adjunct faculty members are provided office space so that they can offer regular office hours to students.

7. NWC staff providing student support services are appropriately qualified, trained and supported. All staff in the positions of tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and co-curricular activities have credentials relevant to their position. In employee recruitment, certain positions such as counseling staff require specific credentials. Barring those positions that require specific credentials, professional experience is accepted in lieu of education allowing the equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job.

Student support services staff are trained and supported in three primary ways. First, staff members have regular professional skills development courses available through NWC's Center for Training and Development. Second, staff members are presented with regular opportunities for webinars and in-state conferencing that concern best practices in their appropriate support areas. Third, most Coordinators and Managers who are directly involved with student support services have the opportunity to travel to professional conferences or training each year. Finally, the institution's [Professional Development Leave](#) policy is paid leave that allows for further study, training, and enrichment experience to better equip employees for their service to the institution. The Human Resources Department subscribes to professional development programming which is made available to all staff.

Sources

- HLC 2022 Program Learning Assessment Report Template
- HLC_2022_AAC 13 October 2020
- HLC_2022_AAC 25 January 2022
- HLC_2022_Academic Service BPM 3310
- HLC_2022_CAT
- HLC_2022_Diversity_Awareness_Committee_Website
- HLC_2022_Documents and Procedures Used for Evaluation BPM 3620
- HLC_2022_Documents and Procedures Used for Evaluation BPM 3620 (page number 2)
- HLC_2022_Faculty Appointment BPM 3110
- HLC_2022_Faculty Appointment BPM 3110 NHL u0

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- HLC_2022_Support for Faculty Development and Morale BPM 3420
- HLC_2022_Year-End Report Template

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

Northwest College (NWC) fulfills Criterion 3 by providing high-quality education in all of its offerings. NWC offers degree programs appropriate to higher education and relevant to local transfer institutions and the local workforce. Learning goals are set at the course and programmatic levels for all undergraduate education. These goals are consistent across all means of delivery including online and concurrent (dual) enrollment. General education is clearly ar ne

4- Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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.

A recent program review resulted in changes in course scheduling and curriculum reform in one of the college's technical programs. These changes are in progress. Another example of action taken as a result of program review is reorganization and realignment of the Center for Training and Development and other college programs. Program review results have informed course schedule decisions across the college.

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 graduate courses may be accepted to satisfy degree requirements with Division Chair approval. Credit earned at a non-Regionally-Accredited Postsecondary Institution is not accepted for credit, and the transcript is not accepted for admission purposes.

NWC may award credit for [Advanced Placement \(AP\) tests and Subject Examinations of the College Level Examination Program \(CLEP\)](#). The Registrar evaluates International Baccalaureate (IB) programs for credit transfer. NWC may award up to 15 credits of [Self-Acquired Competency Credit](#)

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

outcomes in all programs, and therefore program outcomes reflect general education outcomes.

Assessment activities, both general education and program-related, have several vital uses. The most obvious usage is the ongoing adjustments instructors make to their teaching methods based on observations to enhance student learning. NWC's assessment process requires program faculty to regularly meet and discuss student learning regarding program learning outcomes. Faculty have expressed to CAT members that this reflection has been valuable in developing and incorporating teaching strategies.

Faculty assess student strengths and weaknesses in their courses and programs, using the [reporting form](#), which asks questions about:

- Changes made to improve student performance in program learning outcomes since last assessed
- Direct and indirect measures of student performance on outcomes
- Observations of student performance on outcomes, based on direct and indirect measures
- Planned changes to improve student performance, based on the observations

A three-step process for improving instruction and student learning is to 1) measure student performance on an outcome at key points throughout the curriculum, 2) analyze the measurements, and 3) make changes based on this analysis. NWC's Program Learning Assessment report form is designed to step program faculty through this process and gather evidence of this work, particularly with items 3 through 6. The CAT committee uses a [rubric](#) to measure the level at which programs are effective in working through this process.

[Analysis](#) of the rubric scores from the 2020-21 Program Learning Assessment reports, specifically for items 3 through 6, demonstrate that most programs are effectively using these steps to improve student learning. The rubric items are scored on a 0-to-3-point scale where 0 points means none of the rubric components are met and 3 points means all of the rubric components are met. The following items indicate a high level of implementation of assessment techniques across programs, resulting in instructional changes that enhance student learning.

- Item 3. Direct evidence - rubrics/test blueprints used to examine student performance on this outcome
 - 86% of programs had a score of 2 or 3.
- Item 4. Indirect evidence - other methods used to examine student performance on this outcome
 - 86% of programs had a score of 2 or 3.
- Item 5. Observations of student performance on this outcome
 - 79% of programs had a score of 2 or 3.
- Item 6. Changes planned to improve student performance on this outcome
 - 89% of programs had a score of 2 or 3.

Two examples of submitted Program Learning Assessment reports that demonstrate instructional change to enhance student learning on the reported outcome are [Equine Studies](#) and [Outdoor Education](#).

Further analysis shows significant improvements in evidence provided of student learning and

changes made or planned regarding student learning. Though the Program Learning Assessment report form and evaluation rubric have evolved from the 2013-14 to 2020-21 cycles, they have similar components that can be compared, such as the listing of the program learning outcome, measures used, evidence-based observations, and changes made or planned. Rubric scores from [2013-14 through 2015-16](#) showed major improvement u

(pedagogical, curricular, and logistical/technological). The majority were pedagogical changes. Actions taken were weighted according to the potential for improving student learning (1=minimal potential for effectiveness; 2=moderate potential; 3=high potential). Between 2013-2016, average weights increased from 1.7 to 2.4 for pedagogical actions; 2.3 to 2.7 for curricular actions; and 2.0 to 2.6 for changes made to logistics/technological. [Mean scores](#) from the actions taken section of the CAT feedback rubric rose 112% from 2014-2016.

f. Faculty reported planning [more frequent and effective actions](#) in response to assessment evidence.

Planned actions were weighted according to the potential for improving student learning (1=minimal; 2=moderate; 3=high). Between 2013-2016, average weights increased marginally across all types of actions. [Mean scores](#) on the actions planned section of the CAT feedback rubric rose 71% from 2013-2016.

g. Faculty report more evidence of change in student learning as a result of actions taken.

From 2013-2015, [changes in student learning](#) were reported at higher rates across all general efs ral

j. Students self-evaluated

definition of performance criteria in the institution's fall-to-fall retention rate as the percentage of first-time, degree-seeking students from a specified fall cohort who are still enrolled in the institution's degree or certificate program at the end of the fall semester.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

1. Northwest College (NWC) has defined goals regarding student retention and completion in the [Vision 2020 Key Performance Indicators](#), which demonstrates 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 in the institution's degree or certificate program at the end of the fall semester.

Before implementing FYS, the Retention Committee examined retention rates of three Program Orientation courses in place, 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.

Program	Retention Rate in Course	Retention Rate not enrolled in Course
Agriculture	80%	59%
Education	66%	44%
Engineering	67%	44%

This evidence supported CCCSE findings that FYS 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 FYS a requirement for earning a degree. NWC implemented First Year Seminars across all programs in Fall 2017.

Since Summer 2020, NWC has partnered with the NWC Foundation to offer summer first-year seminar courses at no charge to students as an enrollment and retention initiative. [Early tracking](#) shows a growing number of students under 18 years of age enrolling in this course and high retention of Summer 2021 students into the following fall and spring terms.

Academic and Career Advising

The Retention Committee began researching advising models in 2012, and [recommended a split model for academic advising](#) to the Faculty Organization for discussion. This resulted in the creation of what is now the Academic and Career Advising Coordinator (ACAC) position. Data analyzed at that time indicated that advising for General Studies or General

Sources

- HLC_2022_AIR Best Practices for Analytical Reporting
- HLC_2022_AIR Best Practices for Analytical Reporting (page n

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

Northwest College (NWC) fulfills Criterion Four by demonstrating responsibility for and evaluating the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services. NWC systematically tracks the quality and effectiveness of its educational programs through the following methods:

- Academic program reviews
- Non-academic program reviews
- Program and general education learning outcomes reports
- Retention, persistence, and completion reports
- Transfer reports
- Student course evaluations
- Graduate exit surveys

Since the 2013 focused visit, NWC has made significant strides in improving assessment including creation of the Central Assessment Team, development of regular processes for collection and evaluation of evidence relating to student learning outcomes, ongoing professional development, and expansion of the role of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to evaluate program reviews.

Employee Feedback on Criterion Four

The Assurance Argument Team held informational workshops on Criterion Four on March 24th and 30th, 2017. At those workshops, employees were asked to provide [evidence statements](#) about the sub-components of this criterion.

Since 2016-17, NWC has implemented evaluation of non-academic student support programs. The Central Assessment Team completed curriculum maps in all program areas. Faculty participated in professional development on assessment, online education, and pedagogy.

Sources

- HLC_2022_Criterion 4_Workshop Comments

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

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 at the institutional level.
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- HLC_2022_Strategic Visioning Listening Session Notes_NWC Students
- HLC_2022_Student Fees FY2023
- HLC_2022_Support Services Program Review Form - incorporating rubric expectations

[reclassification review](#) is performed. The position reclassification review may result in an updated position description and a different compensation band placement.

If an employee needs additional education or training to enhance their skills or maintain various certifications relative to their role, there are many avenues through which staff at NWC can engage in professional development.

Funds are budgeted annually for [professional development](#). Employees may request funds through their supervisor or constituency groups. Funds may support specialized training, online courses, workshops, conferences, programs, and continuing education.

[Supervisory training](#) is provided by Human Resources (HR) to all managers and supervisors. Topics include supervisory skills, legal/compliance/regulatory training, performance management, employee engagement, coaching, effective selection processes/interviewing techniques, communication, and leader development. HR provides access to the [Employee Assistance Program](#) and [Academic Impressions \(AI\) Pro](#), an online training program for all employees.

Departments, committees, and work groups sponsor training events and provide learning opportunities for employees, including:

- Residence and Campus Life provides monthly training sessions to student residence life employees.
- ~~F~~ ~~o~~ ~~c~~ ~~k~~ ~~R~~ ~~e~~ ~~s~~ ~~o~~ ~~u~~ ~~r~~ ~~c~~ ~~e~~ ~~m~~ ~~e~~ ~~n~~ ~~t~~ ~~s~~ ~~t~~ ~~o~~ ~~t~~ ~~h~~ ~~e~~

NWC's organization, resources, and opportunities. Because NWC's mission is educational and student-centered, academic performance measures indicate the sufficiency of fiscal, physical, technological, and human resources.

Statewide and national comparisons of NWC's [retention](#) and [completion](#) rates demonstrate that our goals are realistic and that NWC has sufficient resources to achieve them.

3. NWC has [well-developed processes](#) in place for budgeting. NWC has a resource allocation process to ensure that resources are adequately apportioned 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 comprises the vice presidents, Finance Director, Business Office Manager, a faculty member, a professional staff member, a classified staff member, and all college budget managers.

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 to assist with budgeting. The committee utilizes this information for budgeting. NWC's educational purposes, regulatory requirements, and the College's strategic priorities are given priority.

The budget development process strategically includes 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 the [preliminary budget](#) and discusses budget assumptions at the May study session. The first reading of the total is reviewed by the BOT in June, with a budget hearing and [final budget](#) approval typically 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 on the [website](#)

provided \$31

- HLC_2022_Professional Development Expenditure by Department
- HLC_2022_Retention and Completion Rate Summary
- HLC_2022_Retention and Completion Rate Summary (page number 2)
- HLC_2022_Student Center Level 3 Update_April 2022 Final
- HLC_2022_UW Tuition Waiver eff 12.7.2021

5.C - Core Component 5.C

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 comprehensive
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NWC expanded processes linking evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting across the entire campus. A [campus-wide facilities master planning](#) process was completed in 2014. Point Architects and A&E Architects led campus personnel in updating the 2008 [Facilities Master Plan](#). This T ²

beginning spring 2020 to rX

planning and enrol

in February 2020.

The start of the pandemic in March of 2020 saw the campus shift focus and resources to serve students, sustain health, and retain campus operations. Even with the pandemic in full motion, the College was able to kick off Phase 1 - Collective Visioning from July to October 2020. In October 2020, President Hicswa announced her departure, and VPASF Watson was named Interim President in November. The announcement of lost revenue at State and local levels by the Governor resulted in another budget reduction for fiscal 2022. In April 2021, the BOT approved its third round of budget reductions. During the winter and spring of 2020-2021, Interim Watson continued the transformational work with Phase 2 – External & Internal Scanning. The final Phase 3 – Transformational Planning was worked on from August 2021- March 2022. Throughout the process, data and evidence were collected to support the transformational effort's ideas.

On March 14, The Board of Trustees approved the Northwest College Transformation Change memo. In it, the Board moved to support the transformational vision of "Distinction and destination of place." A second motion supported the development of a ten-year strategic plan, with measurable goals to be completed in the fall of 2022.

President's Operational Plan

The Board of Trustees (BOT) develops and sets annual Board and President priorities ([2023](#)) relating to the Mission and Vision. Once the BOT has set the priorities, the President meets with President's Staff to develop operational goals for the year. The President's Operational Plan guides operations for all divisions. Throughout the year, the President and Vice President's conduct periodic reviews of the Operational Plan to monitor progress ([FY22](#), [FY21](#), [FY20](#), [FY19](#), [FY18](#)).

Facilities Master Plan

NWC updated the [Facilities Master Plan](#) in 2014, which guides improvements and new buildings across campus (see 2.C., 5.A.). The College provides a monthly [facilities worksheet](#) to the Board with updates relating to significant maintenance, master plan, or general plant repairs on campus. The [Facilities Master Plan](#) is scheduled to be updated in fall 2022.

Institutional Profile

Annually, the Office of Institutional Research compiles the Institutional Profile, which includes college information, including the mission, enrollment, student costs, scholarships, employee counts, library resources, budget, and endowment funds. The Institutional Profile is published on the NWC website.

Program Reports

Academic programs are periodically published in the IR

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

Northwest College (NWC) fulfills Criterion Five by ensuring its resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to its future challenges and opportunities.

NWC has responded to enrollment and funding challenges in line with the [Mission Statement](#) and [Vision 2020](#). Those responses include improved planning in assessment, project development, and budgeting. A new President and many new faculty, staff, and administrators have created opportunities for fresh ideas and teamwork. Transformational work and an upcoming strategic plan will continue to align resources and people with the mission.

NWC is financially sound and has made budget adjustments in response to fluctuating resources. NWC has low debt obligations, access to state funding for deferred maintenance, and a Foundation with \$50 million in assets. These resources support efforts to improve the campus and move past Vision 2020 to a new Vision 2030. Participatory budget planning and expanded program reviews will assist with the future allocation of resources.

Future Plans

NWC will continue its oversight and management of resources, structures, processes, and planning to maintain its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

NWC will:

- Complete the development of Vision 2030
- Complete the construction of a new Student Center and Soccer facility
- Continue review and outcome assessment for academic and non-academic areas. Evaluate assessment documents for relevance to funding, enrollment, economic and career viability
- Expand Strategic Enrollment efforts and planning, which includes retention and completion
- Integrate marketing and communication efforts with the enrollment and admissions process
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Sources

- HLC_2022_Mission_Statement_Graphics
- HLC_2022_Vision 2020 KPI Memo and KPIs