

**Report to the**  
**Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students**  
**of**  
**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**Danvers, Massachusetts**  
**by**  
**An Evaluation Team representing the**  
**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**  
**of the**  
**New England Association of Schools and Colleges**

**Prepared after study of the institution's**  
**self-evaluation report and an evaluation visit to**  
**campus October 18-21, 2009**

**Submitted by:**

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**President**  
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**COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**New England Association of Schools and College**  
**Preface Page to Team Report**

Date form completed: October 21, 2009

Name of Institution North Shore Community College

1. **History** Year chartered or authorized 1965 Year first degrees awarded 1967

2. **Type of control:**  State  City  Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Private, not-for-profit  Religious Group; specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Proprietary  Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Degree level:**  
 Associate  Baccalaureate  Masters  Professional  Doctorate

4. **Enrollment in Degree Programs** (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year): Fall 2009  
(Numbers include degree and credit certificate programs)

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention <sup>a</sup>	Graduation <sup>b</sup>	# Degrees <sup>c</sup>
Associate	3635	4333	5022.63	64.2	31%	1003
Baccalaureate						
Graduate						

(a) full-time 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Fall 2008 first time full-time who returned Fall 2009 IPEDS data.

(b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate – IPEDS 6 year rate

(c) no. of degrees awarded most recent year – includes degree and certificates (credit only)

5. **Number of current faculty:** Full-time 134 Part-time 416 FTE: 133

6. **Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year:** (Specify year: FY 2009)  
(Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

**Revenues**

Net Tuition & Fees	\$13,081,894.000
State Appropriations	\$23,657,853.000
Grants & Contracts	\$12,174,581.000
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$3,294,413.000
Other	\$41,837.000
Total	\$52,250,578.000

**Expenditures**

Instruction	\$21,033,565.000
Academic Support	\$6,661,483.000
Student Services	\$8,356,983.000
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$2,958,831.000
Institutional	\$5,509,343.000
Operation of Plant	\$4,182,738.000
Public Service	\$547,153
Scholarships	\$2,808,308
Total	\$52,058,404

7. **Number of off-campus locations:**  
In-state 0 Other U.S. 0 International 0 Total 0

8. **Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:**  
Programs offered entirely on-line 7 Programs offered 50-99% on-line 26

9. **Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?**  
 No  Yes; specify program(s): \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Accreditation history:**  
Candidacy: April 1966 Initial accreditation: Dec 1969 Last comprehensive evaluation: Fall 1999  
Last Commission action: Accepted the fifth-year interim report submitted. Date: September 23, 2004

11. **Other characteristics:**

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**THE MEMBERS OF THE TEAM**

<b>Ray M. Di Pasquale, Chair</b> <b>President</b> <b>Community College of Rhode Island</b>	<b>Mr. William Foster, III</b> <b>Professor of English</b> <b>Naugatuck Valley Community College</b>
<b>Mr. Howard Burpee</b> <b>Professor, Department Chair, Computer</b> <b>Technology</b> <b>Southern Maine Community College</b>	<b>Dr. Gena Glickman</b> <b>President</b> <b>Manchester Community College</b>
<b>Ms. Frances Chickering</b> <b>Director, Institutional Research</b> <b>Great Bay Community College</b>	<b>Dr. Barbara A. Martin</b> <b>Dean of Administration</b> <b>Community College of Vermont</b>
<b>Dr. Karin Edwards</b> <b>Dean of Student Development &amp;</b> <b>Services</b> <b>Three Rivers Community College</b>	<b>Dr. William A. McIntyre</b> <b>Director of Learning Resource Center;</b> <b>Program Director, General Studies</b> <b>Nashua Community College</b>

**This Report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation.**

## INTRODUCTION

The evaluation team conducted its visit at North Shore Community College (NSCC) October 18-21, 2009. The visit commenced with a dinner on the evening of Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, with the college's administration, trustees, key team members, and students. On October 19-20, the team had the opportunity to meet with the trustees and members of the senior administrative team. In addition, many individual meetings were conducted with department chairs, the governance committee members, faculty, non-union administrators, student leaders, and alumni. Team members also visited the college's off-campus sites, as well as both the Lynn and Danvers campuses.

The evaluation team found the self-study and all of the other materials provided, such as the financial reports, catalogs and the strategic planning documents, to be comprehensive. The on-line information provided in the work room provided team members with access to a substantial amount of information related to the college's planning and evaluation. All of the materials provided presented a full and accurate description of NSCC.

The team truly acknowledges and appreciates the process and the time that went into preparing the self-study. The document, as well as the meetings held on campus, provided a broad and inclusive view of NSCC's description of current practices, as well as thoughtful appraisals and projections for its future. The team reviewed these documents in advance of visiting NSCC and continued to use them throughout the evaluation. In addition, the team members utilized all of the materials provided to help them in writing their report on the eleven Standards that constitute NEASC's Standards for Accreditation.

The college was extremely cooperative in providing an outstanding and receptive environment for the Visiting Team to conduct its comprehensive evaluation.

Throughout the visit, NSCC administration, Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students were all candid, and their comments provided a wonderful environment for assisting the team in all aspects of its evaluation.



## **STANDARD ONE - MISSION AND PURPOSE**

Since its founding in 1965, North Shore Community College (NSCC) has demonstrated a strong and consistent commitment to the region's educational and economic needs. Under the leadership of President Wayne Burton for the past eight years, the college has recently completed a strategic planning process and has established a strong vision which continually supports the mission statement. NSCC's strategic plan entitled "Leadership and Learning in a New Economy" provides a roadmap for the future of the institution.

A self-study process included a review of the mission and vision statements, and both were truly endorsed as affirming the college's priorities and future actions. The self-study report has been used, and continues to be used, as an evaluation of where the college has been and where it would like to go. The college has a clear mission and vision statement which the entire community embraces, understands, and uses as their guiding principles in decision making for NSCC.

The strategic plan has been approved by the faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees. It is aligned with the institution's mission and vision statements and is connected to the budget process. The college continues to make decisions based on its mission statement and in meeting the needs of the north shore communities it serves. From the marketing message, "real opportunities", to the establishment of the Public Policy Institute, the college continues to create opportunities and vision to support its mission. NSCC's mission statement is a strength of the institution and clearly guides the college in its decision making and planning.

The mission statement is clear, is steeped in the vision of the institution, and accurately defines the institution's commitment to providing open opportunity and an education that is responsive to changing community needs.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

The college continues to reassess and re-examine its mission. The self-study process and resulting document provide a reaffirming indication that the college was thoughtful in its assessment process. The college has clearly reviewed its mission and purpose and indicated very strongly throughout the entire evaluation process that its mission statement is still a strong guiding principle. Members of the college community confirmed that the self-study process was an extremely useful tool in guiding the institution to its current strategic plan.

## **STANDARD TWO – PLANNING AND EVALUATION**

### **Planning**

At the foundation of the NSCC planning effort is the newly completed Strategic Plan. The design of the 2009-2013 Strategic Plan - *Leadership and Learning in a New Economy* - included the input of multiple constituencies through expected and innovative channels of communication. A blog set up to encourage wider participation included Strategic Plan goals, objectives, and resource information. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee consisted of 24 people broadly representing the college. Core values and planning assumptions were delineated. A SWOT survey informed the process with data. Teams comprised of over 75 people worked collaboratively to create the strategic plan.

The finalized Strategic Plan was presented to and approved by the faculty, staff, the Coordinating Council, and the Board of Trustees. It included six goals: 1: Institutional Practice: A Culture of Respect; 2: A Learner-Centered Focus; 3: Academic Programs and Curriculum: A Commitment to Teaching and Learning; 4: An Engaged Institution: Leadership, Partnership, Stewardship; 5: Environmental Sustainability: A Greener NSCC; and 6: Institutional Resources: Preparation and Planning for Growth.

Communication about the Strategic Plan is evident at the college. The entire plan is published in the 2010-2012 Course Catalog. A visit to the college reveals predominant display of the plan's keywords throughout the community on signs and banners.

The Strategic Plan objectives have been incorporated into an action plan with implementation strategy, timetable and performance measures. These are to be reviewed mid-year and annually. Implementation of the Strategic Plan is to occur with the support of SPOL-Strategic Planning On-line. This will enable participants to easily and directly link plan objectives to outcomes and necessary resources. There is some question, given the current financial climate, as to the initiation date for using SPOL.

The Office of Planning and Institutional Research supports the college in its comprehensive planning effort with routine reporting and ad hoc reports. Some of the FY10 data supports from the Office of Planning and Institutional Research include research for the annual institutional planning/evaluation cycle; annual statistical reports, including IPEDS; student tracking/retention/enrollment/graduation reports; Factbook update, etc.

A Data Warehouse initiative is in the initial implementation stage, stemming from a Title III grant that ended in 2008. Once fully realized, Data Warehouse will give more people across the campus greater access to data. Plans include a library of reports and eventually a system of dashboards on college metrics. The goal is for 70-80% of reporting to come from this Data Warehouse by 2010.

## **Evaluation**

Use of data for continuous evaluation and improvement was evident in NSCC's federal, state, and institutional reporting. Through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), data from NSCC are benchmarked with a custom comparison group of 10 institutions. Indices include headcount, demographics, financial characteristics, retention/transfer/graduation rates. The 2009 report documented NSCC's transfer out rate (19%) as similar to its comparison group. Retention rate for NSCC fall-to-fall first time freshmen was 60% (vs. 56% comparison group) for full-time students, and 48% (vs. 40% for the comparison group) for part-time students.

NSCC submits data for Education Performance Accountability to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education on an annual basis. An indicator of *Student Success and Academic Quality* is persistence rate. The 2008 Performance Measurement report noted that the Fall 2006 Cohort First-Year Persistence rate was 61.1%, a rate that had remained 'relatively stable' over the last three years and was 'above' the Massachusetts' community college average of 56.5%.

The Office of Planning and Institutional Research supports institutional improvement through reporting of relevant data such as student applications, enrollment, retention, course completions, and grade distributions. This information is regularly presented in newsletters. Faculty requests for data are increasing as a result.

Periodically, the college participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Results of the survey are presented to the community by the Office of Planning and Institutional Research. Examples of other college-wide assessments are the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE), the LibQUAL, the Technology Needs Assessment, and the Student Campus Climate survey. The 2009 PACE completed by 23% of the NSCC employees documented a concern of equitable workload demands. The LibQual survey completed by 548 students, 76 faculty, 13 library staff, and 78 staff reinforced the satisfaction in services, but also suggested areas of change. Internal student satisfaction surveys are compiled by the Office of Institutional Planning and Research. In spring 2007, 14.9% of the registered students participated. The FY2009 Strategic Plan includes an objective to address the lowest scoring items of the student satisfaction surveys.

The most recent Title III grant supported creating a revised Program Review process. Faculty that participated in using the revised process have shared results at an annual Assessment Day. Recently, suggestions were made to make the process more meaningful. During the summer of 2009, a Redesign Team created a first draft of a Department Self-Study Guide with an Action Plan that specified the necessary steps, resources, budget information, and suggested timelines for completing the process. Learning outcomes, both programmatic and general education are part of this first draft plan. As the plan is finalized, the Visiting Team supports two specific additional considerations: 1) NSCC's self-appraisal that the program review "...outcomes need to be tied more directly to budget requests and resource allocation" (NSCC Self-Study, p. 13); and, 2) the need to address the repeated emphasis in both the 2000 and 2004 NEASC letters on "...the assessment of student learning outcomes in general education."

The commitment to the use of data was evident throughout our visit. The Student Government President spoke of using a student poll to determine an action. The Dean of Student Enrollment identified the use of data for evaluation. A research report on service learning and civic engagement documented students' perceptions of the benefits to themselves and to the community. Varied types of data collection were noted. Information has been sought via on-line and paper/pencil surveys. Qualitative methods, such as focus groups, were used when more in-depth exploration was needed.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

NSCC is at a crossroads as it begins to use the new Strategic Plan, SPOL, a Data Warehouse, and a revised Program Review Process in its ongoing efforts to plan and evaluate effectiveness in achieving its mission. NSCC has demonstrated a commitment and a past strength in its continuous endeavors towards improvement to “...*offer lifelong education responsive to changing community needs.*” Continued ongoing assessment will be needed as NSCC integrates the new enhancements to its planning and evaluation process.

Through review of the self-study, college documentation, and interviews with varied groups and individuals of the college community, the team affirms that North Shore Community College has engaged in long-term, systematic, and comprehensive planning and evaluation in alignment with its stated vision and mission.

## **STANDARD THREE – ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE**

### **Organization**

NSCC has a clearly delineated organizational chart, including explanations about the roles and responsibilities of the Board, the president, administration, faculty and staff. Governor Deval Patrick established a new Executive Office of Education in March 2008, raising the oversight of higher education to a cabinet level position. College presidents were invited to comment on this change, which was appropriate, given that any change in governance could impact the autonomy of a college. The new Secretary of Education was appointed and took office in July 2008.

The eleven members of the local board of trustees are appointed by the Governor. The Board includes two alumni and one student trustee. The Alumni Association and Student Government Association each elect a representative to the trustees. Minutes of the Board show sufficient independence to act "in the institution's best interest." Individual members are free from having financial interest in the campus as indicated in their required financial disclosure statements.

The composition of the Board reflects the demographic diversity of NSCC's service area, as well as a wide range of professions. Board members have backgrounds in education, banking, business, and local non-profits. There is some racial diversity, (4 of 11 are diverse); the Board, through its nomination process, is aware of the need to reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the service area and the college. This is especially important in light of the recent vacancy on the Board.

The Board, through engagement in the Strategic Planning process, fully understands the mission and purposes of the college, and was engaged in developing the Plan itself. Minutes and agendas of board meetings reflect that the board understands its role as policy maker, financial overseers, and approving major initiatives. They have given appropriate authority to the president to make decisions to manage that institution and appear to work together with campus leadership through Board committees in a collegial and appropriate manner. The Board's by-laws, which were developed in 1981 and reviewed and amended in 2008, include three standing committees - a Finance Committee, a President's Evaluation Committee, and a By-Law Review Committee. Board members participate in national board activities through ACCT participation. Recently, a recommendation by a trustee to conduct an annual review of board self-evaluation was made following an ACCT conference.

The college has well-defined organizational units, each led by a vice president who reports directly to the president. The five units include: Administration and Finance, Academic Affairs, Student and Enrollment Services, Institutional Advancement, and Human Resource Development. One of the major organizational changes since the last NEASC self-study includes the assimilation of all credit and non-credit programming, formalizing the one-college concept under the Academic Affairs vice president. By all reports, this change has led to greater responsiveness and innovation in responding to community needs.

The vice presidents all engage the college community through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms. There are clear lines of authority and communication. All vice presidents hold regular meetings to resolve issues. The president communicates with the entire campus through

an internal newsletter and weekly email updates. Examples of the collaboration and communication that exists between the president, his senior staff, and the college include working together on issues: budget reductions and impact on campus, integration of a campus portal and on-line services, the evolution to a Center for Alternative Studies and Educational Testing, a strategic enrollment management plan, and increasing diversity of the campus workforce.

## **Governance**

The college recognizes that the newly established governance structure - from changes in State oversight to internal coordination and involvement in planning - needs clear lines of communication, as well as internal governance effectiveness measures. The college also recognizes the challenges inherent in the new State model that includes a Secretary for Education and merges K-12 with higher education under one umbrella. As a result of these changes, there will likely be demands for greater collaborations to address college readiness and retention to degree completion. Other issues that the college identifies as challenges over the next ten years include: the expansion of workforce initiatives and community needs, global sustainability, minority outreach, economic coaching support for students, program review and changing demographics. While these are significant issues for the campus, the recognition of such as demonstrated in the college's strategic plan, gives the college a roadmap to follow to reach their goals.

The college is aware of the challenges that it faces in a new economic climate and are prepared to address these challenges through a comprehensive and collaboratively developed strategic plan. There is a spirit of collegiality among the various constituency groups and a willingness to work together to provide the best possible environment for students.

Since the college is in such a dynamic environment with many pressures given the economy and rapid growth in times of diminishing resources, there may be unforeseen challenges. This speaks to the need to develop a comprehensive assessment plan for the relatively new governing process and for the recently revised Board's new by-laws to ensure that the governing structure continues to represent the collegial culture of the institution. The president of North Shore Community College is a dynamic leader and has created a talented and committed leadership team over his tenure. Transparent and collegial processes in planning and resource allocation engage the entire institution in meeting the mission of the institution. It is clear that this institution lives its mission.

The college's governance structure was revised in spring 2001. The governing committees were suspended in 2004 during a union job action at the state-wide level as faculty awaited a new contract. Since then, the Coordinating Council and eight standing committees of the internal governance structure have reconvened; the standing committees are directly or indirectly related to issues of teaching and learning. The charge for each committee is delineated in a set of operating policies and procedures that also has a statement of values. In addition, there are several ad hoc taskforces that report through the Standing Committees, departments or divisions.

Over 130 employees and 11 students serve as members of the governance system. Membership is both elected and appointed. The committees of the Coordinating Council, with significant

faculty representation, actively participate in addressing the following topics: reviewing academic standards and policies related to academic standing and grading, including student ethics; reviewing curriculum, institutional competencies, and the core curriculum; recommending policies related to diversity in hiring; reviewing the needs, concerns, and suggestions of faculty; reviewing policies related to academic computing; and sponsoring professional development activities. The Council has also been involved in strategic planning and discussions on the budget. A formal process to tie these together within the governance structure is under discussion.

There are both formal and informal opportunities to engage in discussions related to academic curricula. The program review process, which incorporates outcomes assessment, is conducted by faculty. The executive team and president attend all Coordinating Council meetings. Meetings rotate among campuses to allow for inclusiveness. A good example of collaboration between the faculty and administration is documented in the review of changes to the governance system that has seen significant change over the past ten years. Over this same time period, the self-study describes governance as being “distinguished by an internal structure that has focused on institution-wide decision-making.”

The Governance Sub-Committee of the Coordinating Council monitors and proposes changes to the governance system on a regular basis. In 2008, a blog was created to improve communications of the work of governance to the college community. A special sub-committee of the Coordinating Council has conducted effectiveness surveys over the each of the last three years with data available to the public on-line. These mechanisms have significantly improved communication across the college. Governance members were actively involved in the development of the college's strategic plan.

Students are clearly at the core of the college and in the hearts and minds of the faculty and staff at all times; this is a student-centered college. The college's governance committees have 11 students appointed to serve as members. The Dean of Students has made significant headway in engaging students in co-curricular activities. The Student Government Association by-laws, which had not been revised in 26 years, are new. More students are more engaged. A mentoring and leadership program for student committee members is in its infancy, but showing good results by helping students make meaning of their role as governance members.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

The college clearly recognizes that "a transparent and meaningful governance system melded with a strong organizational structure promotes collaboration and creativity - ingredients for an effective institution."

## **STANDARD FOUR – THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

The college offers a large and varied array of credit and non-credit certificate and associate degree programs in recognized fields. There are 49 different programs leading to associate in arts, associate in science, and associate in applied science degrees within five different academic divisions, Business, Health Sciences, Human Services, Liberal Studies, and Sciences and Mathematics. The college also offers 31 certificate programs that include portions of the credit offerings for their degrees. In the college's sixth division, Corporate and Community Education, students may enroll in 32 non-credit certificate and certification programs.

The college's programs are planned, developed, and evaluated while keeping the college's mission of promoting social economic improvement and the college's strategic plan in mind. The college also manages its academic program in response to emerging community and regional needs.

The college has multiple special programs and pathways in place to help students with certain needs obtain higher academic achievements. The college uses Accuplacer testing to assess the incoming student's skills in math and language. Many students are enrolled in remedial sections of math and reading / writing according to their Accuplacer scores. The college has determined, through analysis of their own, and other's data, that students who complete the remedial courses in math and language before enrolling in the program courses ultimately achieve a higher level academic success. The college strives to insure that all prerequisites are enforced.

The college has developed learning outcomes for the college and for each program. The learning outcomes include program-specific outcomes and general education outcomes. These outcomes are then incorporated into the class objectives on the syllabus for each course in the program.

### **Program Development**

The college takes its responsibility for creating new degree, certificate, and non-credit courses, to better serve their community, very seriously. Several new programs, many related to digital technologies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, have been created in the past eight or nine years. The new Computer Networking and Human Services Practitioner degree programs serve as examples of these new programs.

Program creation is initiated in many ways:

- Through suggestions from department and / or program advisory committees.
- Via workforce development initiatives developed and directed by the state and local communities.
- The college recently commissioned a marketing study that surveyed the population in the local communities as to their desires for educational opportunities.

One of the more interesting programs, in the beginning stages of development, is part of the state's "Green Initiative" for sustainable energy. The college is looking at programs in wind and solar power technology in support of this initiative.

## **Program Review and Assessment**

Program reviews are done every five to six years. The current academic program review process, developed under a recent Title III grant, is a three-phase process. The college's program review process includes full-time and adjunct faculty, department and division chairs, and administration.

The phase-one portion of the program review includes information on the:

- Program mission statement and purpose
- Program outcomes and curriculum mapping
- Professional development
- Student assessment
- Workforce and market trends
- Advisory board information
- Action plan

The second phase of the program review involves the development of an assessment plan. The components of this phase include:

- Creation of an assessment map
- Selection of a program outcome to assess
- Creation of the assessment process

The third phase of the program review includes:

- Assessment results
- Changes in the program action plan

Since the program review process has been implemented, approximately 30% of the college's programs have completed the entire review. Another 30% are in the second and third phases of the process, and the remaining programs are in the first phase.

The college has identified that their newly developed program review process is not as flexible as it should be for the programs that undergo a periodic external accreditation program review, e.g. Nursing and Physical Therapy Assistant. Because of this, the college will be making further modifications to their program review process in the current academic year to create a method so that the externally reviewed programs can utilize their existing documentation for the internal review process.

## **Distance Education**

The college has implemented a very strong distance education component in all of its degree offerings and general education courses. At least 50% of all degree program-specific courses can be taken on-line, and as of academic year 2008-2009, there are seven degrees in which all course requirements are available on-line.

The college has developed the on-line courses in response to student demand, increasing enrollments, and to be able to offer more courses despite a lack of classroom space. Support for on-line course development is available for full and adjunct faculty from two full-time curriculum designers. Faculty are paid a stipend for creation of an on-line course.

The college recognizes that on-line courses are not appropriate for many of their students and takes the time during initial orientation and advising sessions to inform students of the technology requirements, self motivation, and time management aspects of on-line courses before recommending the student enroll in an on-line course. More than 50% of on-line courses require at least one proctored exam. Faculty who teach synchronous courses in the classroom are strongly encouraged by the college to post basic course information, such as the syllabi, on the campus intranet.

### **Curriculum Integrity**

Course and program integrity is assured via the curriculum committee. The curriculum committee is a standing governance committee whose responsibilities include: reviewing the creation of new credit programs and program offerings, deletions of credit programs, and revisions of credit course offerings. All non-credit course offerings are also reviewed by the curriculum committee, and final decisions regarding curriculum changes are made by the president of the college after a recommendation from the committee.

### **General Education**

The college's general education requirements for degree programs are consistent with the State's and NEASC's requirements for associate degree programs. The college has spent time in analyzing the learning outcomes for general education and has integrated these outcomes into all of their academic programs. The college requires students to demonstrate the general education competencies in all program and general education courses. As part of the program review assessment phase, each program is required to create an assessment map where close attention is paid to general education learning outcomes. The general education departments (Math and English) are required to undergo the program review process in the same manner as all of the degree programs.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

The college has developed an interesting mix of degrees within two categories, career tracks and transfer tracks. Much time has obviously been spent in communicating with area employers, advisory committees, and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions in the development of these tracks. The college maintains a high degree of support for faculty and students involved with on-line courses. The philosophy of the college regarding on-line education is "on-line courses are not appropriate for some of our students". Following up on this philosophy, the college has invested in the resources necessary to individually assess and advise students as to whether an on-line course is appropriate for them. The program review and assessment process that was recently created and implemented is very extensive. It has become a valuable tool for program

faculty to assess the outcomes of their courses and programs. The inclusion of the general education departments and library in the program review process is an excellent idea.

Due primarily to the age of the Lynn campus facilities, as compared to the newer facilities on the Danvers campus where a higher level of technological infrastructure and science labs can be found, some of the career course offerings are only available on-line or on the Danvers campus while other programs are offered only on the Lynn campus.

Taking into account the economic status of the Lynn students, that they are not likely to have computers or Internet service in their homes, the minimally available public transportation offerings from Lynn to Danvers, and traffic being onerous at times when students are very likely to be traveling to, or from, the Danvers campus, the college should develop a facilities plan for the Lynn campus to offer more complete career and transfer programs.

## **STANDARD FIVE – FACULTY**

Both full-time and part-time faculty roles are clearly defined by the institution. Serious efforts have been made to insure the role of each category is fulfilling the institution's mission and purpose. The mission of the college has been promoted in most if not all campus media to ensure the inclusion of the entire campus community. The specific role of the faculty is spelled out in both a longer narrative (strategic plan) and in easily communicated bullet points (publications and banners posted across the campus).

The faculty consist of qualified instructors who are encouraged by the administration of the college to engage in professional development, advanced studies, and creative pursuits that reflect their particular area of expertise. The faculty is also encouraged to work for rewards for extraordinary performance in the classroom via teaching awards. There are several campus award programs for teaching excellence, as well as an annual award tied to a national award program.

The faculty are in sufficient numbers to ensure the instruction of the student base. Faculty are not only engaged in classroom instruction; they are also engaged in increasing their knowledge and use of cutting-edge technologies, including distance learning, as well as use of the campus "smart" classrooms. Notices for current opportunities to increase their expertise in technology, as well as pedagogy, are communicated to the faculty in a variety of campus publications and in regular staff meetings. The faculty also can earn rewards for their efforts to enhancing the college's self-assessment program.

The college has an open and orderly process in place for recruiting and appointing faculty. The college just recently hired 8 new faculty members, half of whom hold doctoral degrees in their respective fields. Fifty percent of the newly-hired faculty are people of color. However, this ratio is much higher than the diversity of the campus faculty population as a whole. The college has a formal orientation program and a peer mentoring program for new faculty as well. The college recognizes its challenge to avoid overdue dependency on part-time faculty. This year, according to Maureen O'Neill, (Dean of Liberal Studies), 50% of all credit courses in the college were taught by full-time faculty and staff. Last fall that percentage was 54%. As of Fall '09, the college has 417 adjunct faculty, and 134 full-time faculty. Programs have been created to integrate both full-time and part-time faculty in training, professional development and promotion opportunities.

There are clear outlines for the responsibilities of the faculty and the criteria for recruitment, appointment, evaluation, promotion, and tenure. Such documents are readily available in the human resource office, in orientation (hiring) materials, and posted at convenient locations on campus. These materials were prepared and are updated by the college's Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment. The college has a statement of expectations and processes to ensure that faculty act responsibly and ethically, observe the established conditions of their employment, and otherwise function in a manner consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution. The college has instituted a Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment. While primarily a tool for professional development, it is also a learning tool for the students as well.

The Center has served as a conduit on campus for creative program ideas between staff, faculty students and members of the community.

Because of the present economic climate, the college has experienced a sudden influx of students. This, in turn, has caused a strain on available classroom space, teaching tools, and faculty time schedules. Although the college has made serious and numerous efforts to ensure that all faculty positions are treated equally and that there is parity, the additional student load has been a source of friction between some members. Despite this recent development, there is a strong feeling of inclusiveness among the faculty. In meetings with faculty members, they openly praised the efforts of other colleagues and spoke proudly of their joint efforts to work out creative solutions for mutual problems.

The college's nursing faculty has a positive reputation with their community partners. The college's faculty have many conduits to increase their expertise in teaching and to interact with each other. There are numerous programs in place for faculty training and professional development, including the Writing Across the Curriculum and Technology Across the Curriculum programs.

The contract (compensation) for the faculty is negotiated in an agreement by and between the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and the Massachusetts Community College Council for full-time and part-time faculty and professional staff. As a result of the current economic conditions and the workload expectations delineated in the current contract, the full-time faculty have been mandated to take on a teaching load of five courses, up from four courses in previous years. This has caused some feelings of resentment between faculty and staff.

**Note: The increased teaching load was agreed to in the 1999-2002 Contract and was accompanied by a new salary classification system and a significant increase in compensation for faculty and professional staff.**

The college has offices and classrooms on two main locations, Danvers and Lynn. There is some inequity between the facilities and services on the two different locations. This has been a source of friction with the faculty, and there have been calls from members for parity between the two sites. The college is working on a plan for physical plant improvement. A new building is presently being constructed on the Danvers location. There is a long-standing question among some faculty about the lack of facilities at present for arts programs. Considering this long-standing concern, the new construction has served as a potential source of conflict between the faculty and the administration. One faculty member suggested that the arts are in fact the "soul of the college" and need to be given more recognition. The faculty members have a true appreciation for the college's access to technology. One member stated "When we are in the classroom, we have the best of all worlds."

Because of the increase in student enrollment, some faculty have expressed some concern regarding their seemingly increased "additional responsibilities" duties. They are worried about a list of duties that seem to be growing in a finite time frame. There has been an expressed concern that some activities and programs on campus are more "grant driven" than academic centered. There has been a suggestion by some faculty that increasingly high expectations and job requirements have led to low morale. One of the ways that the college shows appreciation for the

efforts of the faculty and staff to excel at their jobs is an annual Employee Appreciation Breakfast which is attended by the college's Board of Trustees.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

It is recommended the administration make sincere efforts to address current faculty concerns regarding the perceived increase in teaching responsibilities. It is further recommended that the administration should create a public forum, as well as use the current campus information network to deal with these concerns.

It is understood by all parties involved that these are trying economic times and that some compromises may need to be made. And as there have been good faith efforts on the part of both parties to reach parity on matters important to the entire college community in the past, these proposed improvements can be seen by all as in the interest of all.

## **STANDARD SIX – STUDENTS**

### **Admissions**

North Shore Community College has over 7,000 students enrolled for the Fall 2008 semester. This diverse group of students comes from the 59 high schools in the service area. They range in age from 15 to 65+. One-third of the student population are students of color and more than 60% are female. Like most community colleges, the majority of students are enrolled part-time, taking less than 12 credits. NSCC students come from all walks of life and find themselves in an environment that is welcoming and supportive.

Organizational changes in the division were implemented in 2004 with the arrival of a new Vice President for Student and Enrollment Services. These changes were made to enhance the college's effort to increase enrollment and retention and to improve services to students. For the last five years, NSCC has experienced substantial growth in student enrollment. In the fall of 2004 the student headcount was 6690 and the FTE was 4049. Currently, the student headcount is approximately 8000 and the FTE is over 5000. Some of this growth is attributed to the challenging economic climate, which historically impacts enrollment at community colleges. However, the college also developed an enrollment management plan that is designed to increase enrollment of new students and improve retention of those already enrolled.

There is an enrollment management team comprised of student enrollment services personnel, academic deans, and department chairs who collect and review data and make recommendations to improve services and change policy, when appropriate. The team is chaired by the Dean of Enrollment Services, who has responsibility for monitoring and updating the plan. The success of this team is evidenced by the trend of increasing enrollment and changes in policy that adversely affect enrollment. One notable change resulting in the work of this team is the implementation of block scheduling.

Members of the Student and Enrollment Service Division work collaboratively to streamline services and reduce barriers. For example, the use of technology has made it easier for students to access information about the college, communicate with college officials, apply for admissions and financial aid, and register for classes. The college offers information sessions at several community-based organizations where students are also able to access admissions and financial aid information in the evening. The admission personnel work with high school guidance counselors sponsoring *On the Spot Events* designed to get students admitted and prepared for college early. These events have proven effective as they result in an 80% yield of applicants to registrants. The staff actively seeks to increase access to higher education by engaging in early awareness programs by reaching out to middle schools and high schools to promote college readiness.

## **Retention and Graduation**

Under the leadership of the Dean of Retention and Student Success, several retention strategies have been implemented to increase student persistence. In the most recent IPEDS data (Fall 2008), the college reports a 62% retention rate for its first-time, full-time degree-seeking students; that figure is up from the 50% retention rate reported in 2007. The graduation rate at NSCC decreased from 19% in 2005 to 17% in 2007. There is a large disparity between the number of male and female graduates. The college reported a 21% graduation rate from female students, but only a 12% rate for males. Those students who graduate from NSCC have been successful finding employment. Eighty-three percent of the graduates of career programs in 2007 were employed, and 92% of students in a transfer program successfully transferred to another college or university. The college seeks to increase the overall graduation rate to 20% over the next two years and has a goal to increase student retention by 4% over the next two years. Plans to accomplish this goal include building relationships with students, using technology to communicate with students, offering quality support services such as tutoring and advising, and employing qualified, committed and caring staff to assist students in need.

Student support and advising centers are available on both campuses where students can get academic advising and personal adjustment counseling on a walk-in basis. There are five advisors available at each campus, along with a part-time retention specialist. The retention specialist reaches out to students who are experiencing academic difficulty to offer support and guidance. The support and advising centers also provide services to students with disabilities. A disability team meets to review individual student cases and make recommendations on how best to serve that student. There is a concern that the number of students needing developmental coursework and disability services is growing, and the college does not have the resources to support the growing demand.

NSCC also has federally funded TRIO programs that provide support services to first generation and low-income student population. The Student Support Services grant serves approximately 350 students at the college. Both peer and professional tutors are employed to help students in developmental math and reading, as well as to provide assistance to students for whom English is a second language. Tutoring and advising is also available to on-line learners through Live Chat, an on-line advising program. Last year, they recorded 806 contacts from students through Live Chat and anticipate greater utilization this year.

## **Student Services**

In an effort to better educate students and parents about their financial obligation to the college and the financial aid process, the college combined student accounts and financial aid under the leadership of the Dean of Student Financial Services. Over 10 million dollars in aid was awarded in the 2008 academic year. As enrollment increases, so will the number of recipients and the amount of aid dispersed. Of particular concern is the increase in student borrowers. According to the self-study, the volume of student loans increased 600% over the last ten years. The Vice President of Administration oversees a compliance team to ensure adherence to federal and state regulations.

Student life at the college is vibrant. Students are engaged in variety of clubs and organizations, and they exude a very high level of school spirit and pride. A school newspaper, literary magazine, exercise and fitness classes, and community services are just a few of the activities available to students at both the Danvers and Lynn campuses. The Student Government Association is in the process of re-writing its constitution under the guidance the Dean of Students.

Health Services provides clinics and workshops on topics pertinent to the student body. The college has begun planning to offer programs and services to student veterans. In conjunction with the college's Public Policy Institute, student life will host a veteran's appreciation breakfast with the college president, Senator John Kerry, and Congressman Tierney as featured speakers. There is genuine care and concern for the well being and holistic development of students at NSCC.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

The mission statement for Student and Enrollment Services states: "NSCC's Student and Enrollment Services (SES) division will deliver outstanding services to the college community. SES strives to cultivate a high quality educational experience. Innovative services, programs, activities, resources and leadership opportunities will promote personal development, active lifelong learning, academic success, strong citizenship, involvement, and the importance of respect and inclusiveness in a climate of support and change. Our mission informs our daily interactions to ensure that the NSCC experience is on that maximizes success."

This mission clearly supports the mission of the college and demonstrates the level of commitment the SES division has to students. The SES division uses data derived from research to inform decisions and implement programming. For example, results from Community College Student Engagement Survey led to the development of service learning opportunities and a student leadership institute. The formation of the Student Financial Services department is a result of the student satisfaction survey, and the enrollment management plan is driving changes in course scheduling, as well as academic policy. There is a strong sense of collegiality among deans in the SES division; they work together to support each other's initiatives. The one pervasive concern for the SES division is its ability to sustain quality services with continued increases in enrollment without additional resources. Plans are underway to formally adopt the student learning outcomes outlined in the Council on Advanced Standards (CAS) for the division.

## **STANDARD SEVEN - LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES**

The Danvers Campus library and the Lynn Campus library support the overall academic and research needs of the college and further the intellectual and cultural development of students, faculty, and staff. The mission of the library is consistent with the overall institutional mission, and a clear vision is set forth regarding the level, sufficiency, and breadth of resources and services necessary to support the mission. Library staff undertake appropriate levels of planning and assessment to achieve that vision.

A re-organization and name change in FY2005 served to focus the scope and function of library services. Public service and education, the primary functions of the library, are supported by physical and technological environments conducive to study and research and collections of books, media, and electronic resources appropriate in breadth and scope. The libraries appear to be regularly utilized by students who require library resources to complete their assignments.

The libraries are staffed by a Director who serves both campuses. There is a Coordinator of Library Services at each campus, along with Reference Librarians and Library Assistants. A part-time Reference Librarian and the Head of Circulation divide their time between the campuses. The staff is very collegial and from appearances provide outstanding services to all constituents. Staff assignments and qualifications appear to be appropriate, although there is some concern about the sufficiency of staff in light of the large increase in enrollment this year and projected increases in the future. Workload, time constraints, and expectations (especially in information literacy) have placed significant pressure on staff. An assessment of staff, duties assigned, and workload to assure sufficiency of staff would be prudent in the near future.

The library on the Danvers campus is approximately 12,500 square feet with a 20-seat computer lab, conference room, media preview area, administrative offices, and seating for 100. The Technical Services department located in Danvers serves both campuses, and personnel are responsible for cataloging materials and also interacting with database vendors. In addition, Technical Services is responsible for statistics and reports concerning circulation, IPEDS, interlibrary loan, electronic resource usage, other statistics, and record keeping. Enrollment has increased significantly since the building was constructed in 2003, and the increased number of students at times makes the physical space of the library appear to be cramped. On surveys, students have reported the library sometimes can be noisy.

The library on the Lynn campus is approximately 10,180 square feet. In 2005, the library was re-configured for handicap access, and the functions of the circulation and reference desks were combined to create an Information Commons to streamline library services. The library contains a small media preview area and a small room with an LCD projector and computer to demonstrate concepts in information literacy classes. Although there is seating for 150, the enrollment growth makes the space appear to be very tight in the morning peak hours. Since the 1999 CIHE visit, two conference rooms (formerly part of the library) have been re-allocated for other purposes.

Efforts are made by the library staff to assure consistency in services and operations at each campus; however, the Danvers library is short staffed two days a week in the Circulation department. Communication between the libraries and to the college community is well developed and ongoing. A newsletter called *The Library Link*, posters, and campus television network are utilized to disseminate library news and to publicize upcoming events.

The information literacy program is taught by library staff on multiple levels from individual sessions to a one-credit research methods course (LSC101) offered on each campus. Information literacy classes address general education outcomes to achieve increasingly sophisticated skills with information literacy and technology; the sessions are not required in the curriculum.

NSCC library staff maintain memberships in several regional and state library consortia which provide access to a rich breadth and depth of print and non-print materials. Collaborative arrangements include NOBLE (North of Boston Library Exchange), MCCLPHEI (Massachusetts Commonwealth Consortium of Libraries in Public Higher Education Institutions), and NMRLS (Northeastern Massachusetts Regional Library System). Interlibrary loan services are provided through NOBLE, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Virtual Catalog, and OCLC (On-line Computer Library Center) which links libraries internationally. Statistics provide evidence that interlibrary loan is utilized in increasing numbers.

A comprehensive array of electronic resources is available for the college constituency. Memberships in NMRLS and the MBLC (Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners) provide a baseline of on-line resources including 17 databases and 12 full-text Massachusetts newspapers. Consortia also provide 24/7 reference services, delivery of materials, and continuing educational opportunities for library staff.

Consortial arrangements, along with college purchases, create an aggregate of 70 general and specialized electronic databases; a large collection of electronic books will be added in 2009-2010. A proxy server simplifies remote access for students and faculty. The library web page is dynamic and links to electronic journals (with current college ID card); the library web page receives in excess of 84,000 hits a year.

A broad range of library services for distance learners is evident. In addition to the databases available remotely, electronic reserves are utilized by faculty, on-line reference services are available 24/7, an on-line information literacy tutorial is available on the website, and the library staff maintain the "Subject Guide to Web Resources." Requests for materials are filled in a timely manner.

Library staff participate in strategic, operational, and financial planning. Library services are part of the college Strategic Plan, and there is an action plan that is updated annually. Library staff have a cooperative working arrangement with Information Services, and the college has a Technology Plan.

The level of budget support has been consistent over the past five years. In FY2009, the budget for library materials was \$126,048, and the budget for staff development was \$1,300. Over the past five years, over \$129,000 from the Foundation has augmented the purchase of equipment, books, and databases. The rising costs of electronic resources are placing great pressure on the

overall budget. A Collection Development Policy is in place to guide acquisitions and budgeting, and collections are weeded according to NOBLE's ongoing Collection Assessment Program. Recently, new media and information capabilities have been added, including streaming video, digital audio books, and faculty electronic reserves. In 2006 and 2008, adaptive equipment was acquired and/or upgraded as services to students with disabilities have increased.

NSCC posts its comprehensive computer use policy on its website. The English department's *Plagiarism Handbook* (2007) addresses this issue on campus, and the plagiarism policy is published in the catalog and posted on the college website. The college also has a copyright policy.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

Effectiveness is a serious concern to the library staff, and library services continue to become more outcomes-based as measured on several levels. Library staff evaluate the adequacy and utilization of resources and services through effectiveness measures that are comprehensive, systematic, and regular. The currency and sufficiency of technology are also monitored.

Specifically, the following measures are utilized to gather data:

- Statistics are maintained and reported concerning circulation, interlibrary loans, information literacy classes, gate counts, and electronic resource use
- There is a library action plan that is updated annually
- Surveys of satisfaction are administered
- Comparisons are made with the *ACRL Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries*
- In FY2008, the library underwent a Program Review.

The staff carefully analyze the data and use the results to evaluate and improve services.

## **STANDARD EIGHT – PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

NSCC owns or leases, manages and maintains, physical and technological resources that serve the college and its constituents well. NSCC operates campuses in Danvers and Lynn, with rented facilities at the Cummings Center in Beverly (housing the Institute for Corporate Training and Technology) and at the Essex Agricultural High School. The campuses and other locations comprise approximately 473,000 gross square feet, combining State-owned and leased property. The physical facilities of the college are a strength of the institution, as they are well designed to serve students, staff, and faculty and actively support the mission and the vision of the college. The college conducts most of its classes and administrative functions from the State-owned facilities and is examining the feasibility of reducing the leased property to become more financially effective.

On the Lynn campus, the McGee Building was built in 1985 and was designed to accommodate 1,000 FTE, but student demand now brings 2,500 FTE to this facility. The facility contains general purpose classrooms, science labs, computer labs, library, bookstore, office space for enrollment management and financial aid staff, student government offices, student activities/lounge areas, a testing center, tutorial and adaptive labs, a day care center, and the college's gym. The facility, while safe and well maintained, lacks sufficient classroom and office spaces, has a crowded library area that does not meet building users' needs, lacks sufficient gathering meeting space for students wanting to work together, has small faculty offices, and suffers from a building structure of concrete and brick that makes renovation costly and difficult. Lynn needs an estimated 6,200 square feet of classroom space and 16,000 square feet of office space. In addition, modernization efforts add to the needs on this campus. In spite of its inadequacies, this campus has strong local business community support, and there exists a sense of community and shared culture within a highly diverse campus population that encourages student learning and success.

The suburban counterpart to Lynn's urban campus is the Danvers campus with two academic buildings. The Berry Building is a new, modern facility that has all the amenities for classrooms, library, labs, study space, open and dedicated computer labs and administrative areas for the college. Even with the addition of the Berry Building in 2003, there is a space deficit of classroom, laboratory, and office space revealed in the 2008 Capital Planning Report of 34,000 square feet at this campus. At the time of the visit, site work has begun for an expansion on the Danvers campus. A formal groundbreaking ceremony is planned for the near future. This expansion will consolidate the health-related classes of the college, as well as bring together a portion of the student services area. The addition of the new Allied Health building will address most of the space needs in Danvers.

The Institute for Corporate Training and Technology is located at the Cummings Center in Beverly, which is a renovated mill that has exceptionally nice open areas for working in and serving students. In order to eliminate the need for rental space, 14,500 square feet of space will need to be replaced.

The college's physical resources are directed by the Vice President of Administration and Finance and managed by the Director of Facilities, who is responsible for the development and management of operating budgets for all facilities, deferred maintenance, and capital improvements. The Director ensures that the college is in full compliance with all applicable state and local building codes, oversees work done by outside contractors, and serves as a liaison to various state agencies, which may fund capital projects. The director is also responsible for and oversees his staff's efforts at education and training on chemical Right to Know legislations, hazardous material training, hazardous waste disposal, and all other applicable environmental regulations.

The college plans for the near and longterm needs of physical and technological resources that support its mission, and with the assistance of the State and NSCC Foundation, prepares a budget for the future needs of the college. The Capital Facilities Master Plan process, under the purview of the Board of Higher Education and Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM), was completed in FY 2008 and outlines the priority building projects and options for competing the Danvers and Lynn campuses and has formed the basis for \$52.6 million allocations that are included in the State Capital Higher Education Bond bill. The college participates in DCAM's computerized preventative maintenance management system that allows the college to schedule regular maintenance of building systems and components. The campus buildings and grounds are clean, obviously well planned and maintained, and receive extensive use by students, faculty and staff.

The Campus Police Department headed by the Chief of Police manages all public safety issues. They are responsible for campus-wide security, traffic and parking, emergency medical response, crime prevention and investigation, fire safety and prevention, and work collaboratively with local police forces in Danvers and Lynn. Campus crime reports, which are current and appropriately reported, indicate that campus crime is low, indicating a safe environment in which to teach, work, and learn.

An emergency response plan has been developed for the college, part of which contains first responder emergency information and exists in printed and electronic form. This has been distributed to all police, fire, and emergency first responders in the communities where campuses are located, as well as to the State Police.

### **Information Resources**

The NSCC Information Systems Department (ISD) advances the mission and vision of the college by delivering a high level of secure information technology integrated systems and services to students, faculty, staff, and the community. The intent is that it be available anytime, anywhere. Wide-ranging services support quality education and instructional innovation, while collaboratively building efficient, effective, and convenient business services. The team working with software applications supports the mission-critical administrative business systems on campus. Evidence of this is in the up-to-date reporting systems, innovative business practices, and support for data integrity.

Wireless connectivity is easy and available. The visiting team was assigned secure, limited access to the college's network portal and Pipeline, which enabled us to work remotely prior to

arriving on campus. This kind of reliable service is often an exception rather than an expectation. Helpdesk operations are available to the college community, using a robust set of tools that enable a small group of support persons to quickly and effectively evaluate users' troubles, concerns, and either get them up and running or turn them over to someone who can.

Academic resources are available and continually growing in scope and encourage and support academic teaching and learning. Approximately 50% of the classrooms are considered "smart classrooms" and contain consistent, well-maintained and supported computer connections to the inter- and intra-nets with projection and media support. Over 90% of students register "on-line".

Blackboard (Bb) has been replaced by ANGEL learning technology system that is completely integrated into the campus portal environment. All accounts are dynamically generated. Successful implementation and integration of ANGEL have dramatically reduced the need for physical support, replaced by effective on-line support. Enthusiasm for and participation in a "greener" curriculum has increased faculty and student desire for access to technology tools.

Although having separate reporting lines, and serving different populations, the Academic Technology and Information Technology units work collaboratively and well together – ensuring that support is available to faculty, students and staff. Information Systems members participate in college governance through the IT standing committee and collaborated on the Strategic Plan. A three-year strategic/tactical plan for academic technology is being devised.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

Although struggling to balance the needs of the college community with inadequate external financial support, the college - with broad-based involvement from staff and faculty and the State - has both physical and technological facilities that support the mission of the college.

NSCC accepted the challenge of exercising leadership in their communities by modeling ways to eliminate global warming emissions and by providing the knowledge and the educated graduates to achieving climate neutrality. Dr. Wayne M Burton became the 100th president to sign the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment that includes developing a comprehensive plan to achieve climate neutrality as soon as possible.

The college appears to do a fine job of planning for and procuring equipment that is necessary to keep the college operating and functioning, but it is struggling to maintain and support equipment without increased human resources to support the growth of the college's advancement and growing enrollment.

## **STANDARD NINE – FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

NSCC, typical of other community colleges in the country, continues to struggle to obtain the resources necessary to provide high quality, affordable education to those seeking to learn in the communities that it serves. The current economic climate and resulting State financial struggles makes this difficult task even more onerous and unpredictable.

The college obtains its funding from two primary sources, tuition and fees and an appropriation from the State of Massachusetts. For fiscal year 2009, NSCC's total operating expenses are budgeted at \$54,600,000, with total operating revenues budgeted at \$28,500,000 and non-operating revenues budgeted at \$23,287,000. This leaves a budgeted decrease in total net assets of \$2,100,000. Tuition and fees comprise just over a third of expected revenues, while the appropriation from the State (prior to any rescissions) is budgeted at 45% of total operating and non-operating revenues. While tuition, which is set by the State Department of Education, has remained the same for many years, the college has flexibility in setting its fees as necessary to provide for the ongoing support of the mission. Additional revenue sources are actively sought by the college and supported by the Board of Trustees. Examples of significant grant funding include Perkins Funds, Title III, and FIPSE grants. Auxiliary enterprises and the college's bookstores help to support the college financially, although the current economic climate affects the ability of these enterprises as well.

Systems, processes, and policies are in place to control and protect its financial resources with integrity. Cross-component functional teams have been formed to address procedural and policy issues to ensure not only compliance with college and external regulatory requirements, but also to initiate best practices. Policies are published and readily available for review and direction.

Although the current economic times present incredible challenges for higher education in general and community colleges in particular, NSCC, guided by a comprehensive strategic plan, has the commitment of its full community and the framework of planning to respond to financial challenges as they arise. The budget of the college flows from this strategic plan. Annually, the President and Vice Presidents review the Strategic Plan and the institution's priorities for the upcoming year. With input from deans and directors, a preliminary budget is prepared and forwarded to the college's executive staff for review. The college's Board of Trustees participates in the process by review from the Trustee Finance Committee. Once agreed upon, the document is forwarded to the full Board for their acceptance.

In the most recent fiscal year, FY 2009, the State's revenue shortfall impacted the funding of higher education in Massachusetts resulting in 9C cuts to the budgeted state appropriation for the college. The impact of FY 09 cuts led the college to work together, to revisit the strategic plan and to employ various actions such as December break energy savings, moving away from the Novell network to Active Directory, (which was a beneficial thing to do and saved the college money) and moved to implementing on-line payroll information – again saving financial and other resources. Also employed were increased use of email for communications and using less paper. The college was able to fund the almost \$1million in cuts through the current operating budget rather than dip into reserves.

NSCC has been able to build and maintain significant reserves - in excess of \$4 million - from a fund balance deficit of less than ten years ago. NSCC's assets exceed liabilities by more than \$30,000,000 in the last three fiscal years.

Financial Aid policies and processes are subject to regular financial and compliance audits and program reviews. In 2007, a program review brought a determination by the Federal Department of Education of two findings covering the administration of the college's Title IV programs relating to federal aid awarded. The college's management in accordance with the appeal process has recently settled the issue agreeing to a long-term payback of funds with no admission of wrongdoing, error or mistake.

The college contracts currently with KPMG to conduct an external audit every year, the last fully completed for FY 2008. The FY 2009 audit has been conducted and the reports are in draft form. Annual external audits for the past 5+ years have revealed no material weaknesses that would prevent the college from meeting its mission. The audit findings indicate "The College uses these capital assets to provide services to students, faculty, and administration."

The NSCC Foundation, Inc. - a 501(c)3 - has raised and holds assets amounting to nearly \$5 million. The Foundation is a legally separate tax-exempt component unit of the college. The Foundation provides support to the college in the form of scholarship assistance and acts primarily as a fund-raising organization to supplement the resources that are available to the college in support of its programs. The Board of the Foundation is self-perpetuating and contains graduates and strong supporters of the college. The resources of the Foundation can only be used by or are for the benefit of the college. In the past three years, the Foundation has made available over \$275,000 (07), \$332,000 (08), \$410,000 (09), for use by the college, both in scholarship assistance to students and in funding activities of the college.

The college has sought and expects to receive ARRA funds and has created spending plans for funding of approximately \$3.5 million. This funding will aid in supporting instruction, student services, operations, IT, and addressing space needs.

The institution's 11-member Board of Trustees has appropriate autonomy in matters relating to budget and financing. A review of trustee meeting minutes reveals active and appropriate involvement in reviewing current budgets, approving future budgets, and responding to cuts in state appropriation. The Board believes that the college "squeezes every nickel out of every dollar" in support of students.

Financial policies are in place that address process, integrity, and security. Using the Banner system since 1994, the college conducts its business operations in a consistent, well-managed manner. Staffs are well-seasoned and competent with appropriate systems of checks and balances process oversight. Education and training of staff, both within the business operations areas and those who use the systems, ensures that the college meets its regulatory obligations. The college has been audited for PCI compliance and is working on Red Flag protocols. Business operations staff is aware of and focused on the college's Mission and Strategic Plan.

Multi-year planning is a difficult process in that the college shows an ability to effectively predict enrollments and plan for program needs; however, the constant changing in predictable resources from the State adds an element of uncertainty that makes multi-year planning difficult or impossible.

Unlike business and industry, the college has a large market now and for the foreseeable future (recognizing a decrease in traditional college-aged students in 2011). Capping enrollments due to space limitations and inability to hire and support faculty and staff to actively serve students, will negatively affect the college's ability to serve the communities that rely on it.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

NSCC's financial resources are sufficient to sustain for the near future the achievement of its educational objectives and provide for further institutional improvement. All or substantially all of the institution's resources are devoted to the support of the college's academic programs and purposes. Appropriate levels of fiscal oversight, planning and management, as well as annually conducted external audits of both the college and the Foundation are significant components of institutional effectiveness. The review and oversight of the college's Executive Management, Board of Trustees, and ultimately review by the State's Department of Education support and assure this.

## **STANDARD TEN – PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

The mission of the college is supported by the availability and currency of information that it provides to the public. NSCC uses a matrix of publications, website, and radio to convey its message to current and prospective students, as well as to the general public in a manner sufficient for the intended audiences to make informed decisions about the college. A number of publications are utilized to promote the college mission, objectives, activities, programs, courses, alumni events, and other topics. Publications include the *Catalog*, *Viewbook*, *Student Handbook*, *Course Schedules* (Credit and Non-credit), and specialized pieces including *Strategic Plan* brochure, *Fact Sheet*, *President's Annual Report*, and *Alumni News*. These materials are attractive, and the language is clear, factual, and appears to be complete.

There are clear lines of responsibility for the creation, authentication, and publication of all publications and media. All publications, press releases, advertisements, and media communications are coordinated through the Marketing and Public Relations Office. The website is managed by the Web Services department which is part of Information Systems. All materials are thoroughly checked for consistency and proofread for accuracy. The website is tested by focus groups before it is published to the web. The Institutional Image Council oversees publications and media for consistency in image and design.

The *2010-2012 Course Catalog* is well organized and attractively presented in a wire spiral binding. The catalog provides comprehensive information about the institution and its programs which are easily referenced through the Table of Contents and Index. General introductory information includes the Mission and Vision Statements and Department Directory. The *Strategic Plan* (2009-2013) is also included. Admissions and Financial Aid procedures are detailed and easy to follow. Programs of Study (Degrees) are presented in a brief overview of the field and courses numbers, titles, and credits follow. Program and Liberal Arts requirements are clear. Other sections include Academic Services, Library, Instructional Media, Student Services, Community Outreach, Alumni, and Administrative Policies. The section on Governance lists the administration, faculty, and staff with year of hire, titles, and degrees attained. The Advisory Committees list current members and affiliations. A list of transfer agreements with four-year institutions is included. The catalog also contains a disclaimer citing that the information is subject to change.

A course schedule for credit courses and a course schedule for non-credit courses are published three times a year (Fall, Winter/Spring, and Summer). The schedules list courses offered with days and times. The schedules list current offerings; courses that have not been taught in two consecutive years are not listed. Campus-specific programs are designated, and any special admissions or program requirements are noted. Course descriptions designate number of credits and prerequisites as appropriate. The enrollment process is clearly presented.

The current website is attractive and uncluttered and appears to be complete and accurate with a search feature. The website is published in three languages: Spanish, French, and Portuguese – a very welcoming offering for the constituencies who may not have English as their native language.

The site provides links under sections for Current and Prospective Students. Academic Opportunities includes links to Associate Degrees, Certificates, Community Education, e-Learning, ESL, High Tech, and Spotlight programs. Services provides links to Admissions and Enrollment, Alumni, Campus & Public Safety, Financial Aid & Student Accounts, Library, Student Life, and Student Services.

The website also has a faculty directory that lists contact information, and there is a pdf file of the *Catalog*. Notably, there are also sections for Alumni, the Foundation, and endorsements and comments from former and current students. General Education outcomes are posted in the catalog and on the website. The statement of accreditation is clear and published in the catalog and on the website. The website was being re-designed at the time of the NEASC visit to incorporate new ideas in navigation and to streamline access to information.

The Institutional Profile (on the website) and *Factsheet* (print) details the size and characteristics of the student body. Retention and graduation rates along with passage rates for licensure examinations are listed in the *Factsheet*. This information may also be obtained from the Office of Planning and Research.

Current full-time faculty are listed in the catalog; adjuncts are not listed. Names and positions of administrative officers are listed in the *Catalog* and in the Institutional Profile.

The cost of tuition per credit and applicable fees are listed in the *Catalog* and *Course Schedules*. The projected total cost of education and the expected amount of debt upon graduation is available from the Financial Services department.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

The quality and accuracy of all materials is checked; there is an Institutional Image Committee. The Marketing and Public Relations Office maintains standards for consistency related to image, presentation, and production quality. Focus groups of students, faculty, and staff are used to test the website and to suggest improvements.

## **STANDARD ELEVEN – INTEGRITY**

Students are the primary focus of NSCC, as evidenced by the genuine care and concern given to students by all members of the college community. Programming and planning at the college focus on ensuring access to a quality education and services.

Leadership at NSCC fosters an atmosphere where issues of integrity can be openly considered as evidenced by the philosophy of inclusion that is pervasive throughout the campus. The president sends out weekly communication to the college community providing updates and insights related to the activities of the college. Communication flows freely and regularly throughout the campus. Print and electronic materials are kept up-to-date and accurate. College policies and procedures are made available to students, faculty and staff. These policies are monitored and implemented consistently by appropriate administrators.

The college holds true to its mission. Its presence is infused in the community as evidenced by the high level of involvement in external activities. It is both a catalyst for change and responsive to the needs of the communities it serves. NSCC's Public Policy Institute hosts several conferences and workshops that advance the role of the college as a leader and social change agent.

The college has made a commitment to diversity as evidenced by the creation of a diversity leadership council and a committee on tolerance, and by providing diversity training. The college also employs a minority student recruiter. Although good faith efforts have been made to increase diversity among faculty and staff, the college had not met its goal to achieve parity with the student body and should continue making concerted efforts.

The college's minority student population of 28% exceeds by 100% the minority population in the college's primary service area.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

The college has used data gathered from surveys and other assessments (Personal Assessment of College Environment) to form committees and procedures to address the issue of diversity. A market analysis was conducted to ascertain the need for new academic programs, which they are exploring. The college has demonstrated a solid level of institutional effectiveness.

## **SUMMARY**

### **STRENGTHS OF NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

- The college is guided by a clearly stated and widely accepted mission statement, which serves as a living guide for planning and decision making
- North Shore Community College has a culture of enthusiasm, collegiality, with high participation levels
- The college used the self-study process as an effective tool for planning and has used the report as a valuable tool for strategic planning and several aspects of institutional functions
- The college has an inclusiveness of part-time and full-time faculty
- The college has exceptional planning and involvement with strong functional teams in place. This has helped guide the college to its current success
- North Shore Community College's use of data and research has led to strong institutional effectiveness
- The college has a great sense of pride, which is demonstrated by the cleanliness of the facilities
- North Shore Community College has a deep sense of culture and core values
- The college is very student-friendly and values its students as evidenced by the support services provided to the student body and the college should be commended for the care of its students
- The college has continued to provide a high quality learning environment during a difficult economic environment, as witnessed by the commitment to not sacrifice quality
- The college has a very high level of transparency and trust, which was evidenced by the many interviews with constituencies of the institution
- The college has a very strong leadership team and President who are well respected
- North Shore Community College has developed many partnerships and community connections which has led to creative problem solutions and economic growth.

### **CONCERNS**

- While the college currently has a strong management team which is currently leading the institution, it faces challenges in replacing an experienced and seasoned group of professionals and should plan appropriately for a succession plan in future leadership roles for the institution
- While the college has facilities that are currently serving the student body, and expansion plans for the Danvers campus are in place, it should begin master planning for the Lynn campus, as well. Space at the Lynn facility is limited and restricted
- While the college is currently experiencing an enrollment growth, it is stretching the staff and facilities to the maximum and, at the risk of losing momentum in its drive for quality, it should carefully review staffing and facility patterns

- While the Board of Trustees is very engaged and committed to North Shore Community College, it should start a process of self-evaluation and training for existing and new board members
- While the college has demonstrated strong programs for preparing students for transfer and employment opportunities, it should review its offerings at the Lynn campus for program mix, as well as short-term training programs
- While the college is dedicated and has continued to provide quality teaching for all its students, its ratio of full-time versus part-time faculty should be reviewed
- While the college and the Foundation should be commended for helping many students achieve their dreams at North Shore Community College by providing financial aid and scholarship opportunities, the college should be concerned for the continued issue of student financial needs in this challenging economy