Info on BSU’s Continuing Accreditation Process

This is the first of five HLC updates, each highlighting one of the criteria.

Self-Study Process Started in 2008

The campus began working toward continuing accreditation by organizing committees and a campus-wide forum during spring semester 2008. Besides forming a committee to prepare information for each of the five criteria used by HLC to evaluate institutions, we also formed a team for gathering the data needed by the criterion committees and a publicity team to provide leadership in promoting knowledge of BSU’s mission and awareness of the continuing accreditation process. Over fifty people, including students, staff, administrators and faculty, have contributed time, effort and intellect to this part of the process.

The details of their work can be found on BSU’s HLC website, http://www.bemidjistate.edu/hlc.

As the criterion committees were finishing up the bulk of their work, the writing team formed and began compiling the Bemidji State University Self-Study document. It was completed and sent to HLC and the consultant evaluators on January 25. The self-study is also found on BSU’s HLC website.

Campus Prepares for March 22-24 Site Visit

The BSU site visit will take place March 22-24. Site visits are a time for consultation with the HLC consultant evaluators. The campus community will have an opportunity to meet with the consultant evaluators. A schedule for their visit will be released soon. With open meetings planned for a variety of constituencies on campus, everyone is encouraged to consult on topics of their choosing.

The University will be evaluated on five criteria specified by the HLC and highlighted in our self-study. They are:

- Criterion One: Mission and Integrity
- Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future
- Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching
- Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
- Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

Three “Priorities for Improvement” that cut across the entire university are highlighted in the self-study, as well, and are related to:

- Civic Engagement
- The School of Graduate Studies
- Professional Education Programs

Faculty and staff in each of these areas are working on detailed information regarding the priorities that will be shared with the HLC consultant evaluators.
General Findings
In its mission documents, Bemidji State University clearly and consistently articulates its mission, including core values, goals, and commitments to internal and external constituents. The documents identify processes for accomplishing the mission in fair and balanced ways; embrace complex and broad notions of diversity; provide for academic quality and continuous improvement; accommodate innovative response to unanticipated change and encourage collaborative decisionmaking. Further, the university’s mission is evident in strategic documents at all levels, including master, college, department, student development and university services plans. It is also manifest in the actions of the university, from its academic programs to its physical plant. Mission documents are readily available to the public.

Core Component 1a
The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

The 2008-2013 University Plan defines Bemidji State’s mission, vision, strategies and strategic imperatives. The document guides the university’s decision making. Primary and foundational mission documents are readily available to internal and external constituents. The university’s curriculum processes and documents support Bemidji State’s mission. Assessment systems are also in place to further assure mission integrity. The university regularly reviews its mission documents and evaluates its processes and progress.

Component 1b
In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

The University Plan 2008-2013 expresses Bemidji State’s commitment to diversity, which is addressed in the mission statement, the signature themes, specific strategies and initiatives. The university’s academic and service programs encourage, support and model diversity. Codes of conduct help ensure congruency between planning and action. Bemidji State supports educational opportunities for its external constituents.

Component 1c.
Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Mission permeates the university’s everyday operations as well as its organizational planning efforts. Faculty, staff and administration credentials and professional development align with and support the mission. Similarly, curriculum, program, and assessment planning and processes exemplify mission understanding and support. Also, Bemidji State’s collaborative decision making, policies and practices, its service to diverse populations, its commitment to life-long learning and its signature themes reflect the pervasiveness of the mission.

Component 1e
The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Bemidji State upholds and protects its integrity through mission consistency in planning and delivering its programs and services. Planning, implementation and assessment processes also exist to uphold its integrity. Bemidji State conveys the rights and responsibilities of its constituents, including codes for conduct and acceptable behavior. The university models its signature themes by serving diverse populations, by responding and adapting its programs and services to changes in the social and cultural environment, and by committing to environmental stewardship in its plans and actions.

Criterion 1: Strengths and Challenges
STRENGTHS
Future-oriented; learning-focused; connected; distinctive.

CHALLENGE
Continuing to refine the university’s identity.

More information on Criterion 1 can be found at: http://www.bemidjistate.edu/hlc