



REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

Bemidji State University

Bemidji, MN

3/22/10-3/24/10

Date of Visit

1379

Visit Number

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Name: Roberta C. Teahen, Ph.D., Team Chair	Title: Associate Provost	Affiliation: Ferris State University
City: Big Rapids	State: MI	Zip: 49307
Name: Dr. Lawrence A. Davis, Jr.	Title: Chancellor	Affiliation: University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
City: Pine Bluff	State: AZ	Zip: 71601
Name: Dr. Janice Graham Elias	Title: Chair and Professor, Department of Human Ecology	Affiliation: Youngstown State University
City: Youngstown	State: OH	Zip: 44555-3103
Name: Dr. Erin J. Frew	Title: Assistant Provost for Assessment & Student Learning	Affiliation: Colorado State University - Pueblo
City: Pueblo	State: CO	Zip: 81008-2848
Name: Dr. Effie Papoutsis Kritikos	Title: Associate Chair and Professor	Affiliation: Northeastern Illinois University



The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

30 North LaSalle Street

Suite 2400

Chicago, IL 60602

www.ncahlc.org

City: Chicago	State: IL	Zip: 60625
Name: Dr. Michael A. Maggiotto	Title: Dean	Affiliation: Ball State University
City: Muncie	State: IN	Zip: 47306-0000
Name: Dr. Douglas N. McMillan	Title: Vice President for Educational Outreach	Affiliation: Southeastern Oklahoma State University
City: Durant	State: OK	Zip: 74701-0609
Name:	Title:	Affiliation:
City:	State:	Zip:
Name: Enter Team Member name	Title: Click here to enter text	Affiliation: Click here to enter text
City: Click here to enter text	State: Click here to enter text	Zip: Click here to enter text
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ASSURANCE SECTION

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation.

B. Organizational Context

Bemidji State University is a part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and is one of seven universities. Located in northwest Minnesota, near the mouth of the Mississippi River, located 41 miles from the headwaters and 100 miles from Canada, Bemidji State is located in the town of Bemidji that has a population of 15,000 and a regional population of 30,000. The University also provides many services for Northwest Technical College, including sharing of its president. Northwest Technical College is separately accredited.

As reported on the Statement of Affiliation Status (SAS) provided to the team in February 2010, reflecting an April 2009 update, Bemidji State enrolled 3,286 full-time undergraduate students and 954 part-time undergraduate students and an additional 27 full-time graduate students and 338 part-time graduate students, for a total headcount of 4,240 undergrads and 365 grad students, resulting in a total student enrollment of 4,605. Ninety-two percent of the enrolled students are undergraduates. At the time of the visit, the President had announced plans to retire at the end of June 2010 and the Chancellor of the Minnesota System participated in the exit meetings with the President and the campus community.

The university offers two associate degrees, and awarded 54; 68 bachelors degrees, and awarded 805; and 15 masters degrees and awarded 88, according to the SAS. The university operates at six additional sites, including one in Casper, Wyoming, but none of these enrolls a significant number of students. The university is also approved to offer any of its programs online. At the time of the SAS update it offered five baccalaureates and four masters' options through the Internet.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

One uncommon aspect of the visit was the inclusion of the System Chancellor in the exit meetings.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

Outreach sites were not visited. The team chair checked with the Commission staff regarding this prior to the visit to determine if visits should be conducted. However, both faculty and students from two of these sites were interviewed via telephone conference calls by two separate team members. Administrators responsible for other locations were also interviewed. The team concluded that appropriate oversight is provided and the integrity of the University's offerings is maintained at its distant sites.

E. Distance Education Reviewed

The team reviewed representative online offerings, talked with individuals responsible for distance education, and talked with faculty, students, and

administrators associated with distance education through the use of technology, which is online at Bemidji.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

Steering Committee

Self-study writer

Each of the five Criterion Committees

President

Foundation Leadership

Assessment Coordinator

Education Program Faculty

DLite Faculty and Students (other site)

Center for Extended Learning Program Directors

College of Arts and Sciences Faculty

Minnesota System Trustee

Bemidji State University Faculty Association Executive Board

Graduate Studies Dean

Department Chairs

Student Senate

Open student group

American Indian Resource Center Representatives

Chancellor's Office Representative

Business and Technology Faculty

Health Sciences Faculty

Hibbing Faculty and Students (additional location)

Anoka-Ramsey Nursing Faculty and Students (additional location)

American Federation of State, Municipal, and County Employees representatives

Information Technology Services Representatives

Deans' Council

Academic Vice President

Professional Education Department
Liberal Education Committee
Athletics Representative
Physical Education, Health and Sport Department (PEHS)
Budget Committee
Residential Life Personnel
Gaps and Trends Committee
Library Personnel
Student Development and Enrollment Personnel (SD&E)
Academic Assessment Committee
Honors Council
Minnesota State University Association of Administrative Service Faculty (MSUUASF)
Admissions Director
Human Resources Director
Center for Professional Development (CPD)
Professional Improvement Grant Committee (PIG)
Student Programs and Admissions (SPA)
Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE)
Finance Vice President
Student Affairs Vice President
Institutional Research
Academic Affairs Committee
Teacher Education Faculty
Northwest Technical College Dean
Graduate Committee
Curriculum Committee

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

Self-Study including following a large number of its 1100 links

Notes from several sessions where attendees were invited to offer their views of strengths and limitations on slips of paper

Report of the visit to Bemidji State in 2000

Institutional Snapshot

Statement of Affiliation Status on the website

Monitoring Report submitted in 2002 regarding assessment

Commission correspondence (multiple items) regarding institutional actions related to change requests, monitoring report acceptance, etc.

Guidelines: Five Year Academic Program Planning, Review and Assessment Cycle

Random, representative course syllabi

Personnel records

Center for Extended Learning (CEL) Initiatives Summary 2000-2010

Organizational Charts

CEL Online Program Approval Process and Forms`

Folder of Materials on the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System

Folder of Materials on the Bemidji, MN region

Multiple issues of Horizons - a publication for alumni and friends of Bemidji State University

Federal Compliance Document (how Bemidji meets it)

Commission guidance on multiple factors, including distance learning and faculty qualifications

Annual Financial Reports for 2007, 2008, and 2009

Faculty Handbook (online)

Student Handbook (online)

Organizational Catalog (online)

Flyers describing Professional Education Distance Learning (PEDL) Programs: DLiTE and FasTrack

Memos concerning Reorganization

Newspaper article regarding online learning at Bemidji State (11/21/08)

Representative program reviews, including Physics , Chemistry, Philosophy, and History Departments - self-studies and external reviewer reports

Departmental Assessment Mid-cycle Progress Reports for multiple departments, including Chemistry, 2008.

FY2010-2013 Budget Update and BESI (Board Early Retirement Separation) Plan

Criterion/Core Component 5 B example of writing provides by self-study committees

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The self-study process employed by BSU was comprehensive, involving faculty, students, and staff from across campus. The formation of the self-study committee occurred in fall 2007 and was followed by a series of presentations and visits by external consultants on accreditation, mission statements, and assessment to prepare for the process of the self-study and the content of the report.

A website was created to inform and update stakeholders about the process and content of the self-study. The HLC team found access to electronic documents convenient. Among the items on the site is a message from the President, the timeline, the committees and their membership (a steering committee and a committee for each criterion along with a data committee, a logistics committee, a publicity committee, and a hospitality committee), and the self-study document. Many of these links are available to the public while others are secure and require login information. The secure site presented some challenges to the visiting team as it was necessary to log in multiple times during each visit to the site.

A large number of campus representatives from varied areas were involved, with some serving on multiple committees. The team concludes that the self-study process was comprehensive.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The team concludes that there is integrity in the self-study report. However, the report was not as comprehensive as would have been valuable, with some areas being overlooked completely, such as athletics and advancement. The organization of the report also made it difficult to find information related to each core component. The electronic version of the self-study report provided a number of useful links to information crucial to understanding the institution; however, some links were not functional or provided information that was not relevant. With the hundreds of links, it was difficult for the team to ascertain which would best support the self-study findings.

However, the team found nothing in the self-study that was misrepresented. It just lacked mention in many key areas, a lack of analysis of the information, and a lack of sufficient attention to some items, such as prior challenges.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

[Refer to instructions for standardized language and team options.]

The previous visiting team identified five challenges: (1) capacity for data management; (2) workload and staffing issues; (3) internal planning mechanisms; (4) vertical communication relative to planning; and (5) integration of planning initiatives. The 2010 self-study report did not summarize the organization's understanding of and response to the major issues identified by the last team. However, the team considers the response of the organization to these five previously identified challenges to be adequate as they were not found to be the challenges in this visit. Most of the former challenges have been addressed throughout this report, sometimes specifically, such as planning, and other times, more generally, such as workload and staffing issues.

Although none of these identified challenges specifically addresses assessment, the University was required to submit a monitoring report on assessment and operational planning by September 30, 2002. Thus, a significant challenge, in addition to those noted above, was assessment of student learning. The monitoring report was submitted and accepted. The previous team's rationale for the monitoring report stated "Some programs have defined appropriate and measurable objectives for program educational goals; others are currently functioning at a more elementary stage in the process; and still others have yet to use the data collected in a manner that helps them determine if the measures are adequate and appropriate." The team considers the organization's response to this issue to be inadequate. This challenge will be further discussed in Criteria 3 and 4.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

[Refer to instructions for standardized language and team options.]

Requirements were fulfilled.

III. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

A. Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

The stated mission of the university to engage, embrace, and educate permeates all of its documents. The publications of the university, such as the university catalog, the web page, the self-study report, and sundry planning documents all clearly state the mission of the institution in easily understood statements. Concomitantly, in various locations, such as the meeting rooms, the mission is posted. Changes in the wording of their mission in recent years is an evolution rather than an abrupt departure from earlier mission statements indicating consistency over time (1a).

Mission documents include signature themes such as multicultural and global understanding, and examples of realizing these mission components are the services to international students and Indian tribal nations (1a).

Bemidji State University is providing opportunities for students, many of whom require financial aid. Consequently, they are likely among the few in such families to have access to higher education—a ladder to an improved quality of life for themselves and members of their family. Such an institution is critical to the future of our nation, so in this way Bemidji is contributing to the strength of its communities while fulfilling its mission (1a).

The development of the strategic plan involved a variety of stakeholders, such as students, faculty, and staff. Specifically, the Master Academic Plan (MAP), the J-Plan, The Learning Journey (student development and enrollment master plan), and the Master Facility Plan (MFP) all attest to the alignment of planning processes with the university's mission. The diversity of academic programs and student development support services demonstrate understanding and support for the university's mission (1a).

The University has addressed the challenge of serving a diverse learning clientele utilizing a variety of strategies. These programs include the Center for Extended Learning (CEL) which allows outreach to multiple audiences. Also, the relationship with Northwest Technical College (a two-year institution) along with cooperative relationships with the three area Indian Nation Schools and the state of Minnesota's mandated two-year college transfer program provide for service to a diverse population (1b).

In each of the individual meetings, the President, the trustees, the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty, the Physical Education Faculty, the Criterion One Writing Committee, a student, the Deans' Council, the Faculty Budget Committee, and the Bemidji State University Faculty Association (BSUFA), it was readily apparent that understanding of the mission was broad and supported. Several representatives spoke of the engagement of the students in community activities, care of the environment, and in new worlds of thought. They also addressed the concept of embracing responsible citizenship and preparing students for "futures which can only be imagined." Especially, the President discussed the role of scenario planning in positioning the university to fulfill its mission (1b).

In interview sessions with Academic Deans, the Department of Physical Education, the Faculty Budget Committee, members of the BSUFA, and the President, evidence was provided that faculty, students, staff, and administrators participate in decision making. One example is the process that has worked toward revision of the university's liberal arts curriculum. The result of the process that developed the revision was ultimately rejected by the faculty assembly, yet this example illustrates that broad collaboration in the decision-making process is the practice. Disagreement does not preclude mission fulfillment (1d). The topic of liberal education is discussed further in Criterion 4.

The organizational model enables appropriate governance. The institution is organized into three colleges and has a pyramid

administrative structure that is typical of university structures. In addition, the president functions as the president of Northwest Technical College and some other administrative functions are also shared, providing for an efficient approach to governance of two related entities (1d).

The annual financial reports of the university for the years ended June 30, 2009, 2008, and 2007 give evidence that the university is exercising integrity in the management of its resources. The 2009 audit statement states: "The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards." Both assets and revenues increased from 2008 to 2009. The financial report verifies that the university is in compliance with Title IV (1e).

The institution evaluates policies and procedures for consistency with state and federal laws and monitors compliance and thus assures that it operates within the law and public policy (1e).

The institution attends to issues of academic integrity. One example is the collaborative effort between administrators and faculty to review and revise the academic integrity policy and procedures, where the students are involved in its review and approval (1e).

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

As a result of a re-organization and the return of the provost to the faculty, the number of interim appointments at senior managerial levels, and the numbers leaving the organization through retirements and other reasons, job responsibilities and reporting relationships are less than optimally clear because of the many changes in leadership roles, which is a situation that will need to be acknowledged and monitored for any potential impact on ongoing operations (1d).

The University has articulated that an "identity challenge" exists which is creating some consternation in varied groups. Efforts should be undertaken to clarify what this challenge means for the institution and how it moves forward with a greater shared understanding of its identity (1c).

The partnership with Northwest Technical College under the leadership of the President has provided advantages to both institutions and seems to be working effectively. However, the visiting team recommends that this partnership be codified in a written document, which outlines the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority of the parties. This will be particularly important as a new president takes office(1d).

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.):

None

Recommendation of the Team

[Refer to instructions for standardized language and team options.]

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up is recommended.

B. Criterion Two: Preparing For the Future

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

The institution has anticipated and planned for demographic shifts in its service region by broadening its recruitment efforts and reaching out to new audiences through distance learning. A record freshman class of 800 students enrolled in fall of 2009. For several years the University has emphasized recruitment of international students; the student body includes students from 40 foreign countries, unusual for an institution of this size and location. The international student presence reflects the institution's commitment to preparing students for a multicultural society and is a source of revenue. The Center for Extended Learning provides flexibility for meeting future demands (2a).

The physical facilities have been planned intentionally to support the university's values of environmental stewardship, student-faculty interaction, multicultural awareness, and respect for the region's Native American heritage. For example, the American Indian Resource Center, a new building, opened in 2003. The architecture and artwork reflect American Indian culture. Similarly, signs posted in many languages throughout the campus remind students and visitors of the diversity of the student body. Another example of reaching out to diverse communities is the single-parent residence hall where parents and children can live conveniently on campus (2a).

The University is being proactive in responding to the pending decline in state support. Examples include an early-retirement incentive, the capture of positions through attrition, exploration of summer school models, and increased attention to developing fund-raising and the possibility of a comprehensive campaign. Bemidji leverages its resources through partnerships with the city of Bemidji and with Northwest Technical College(2b).

The institution develops its human resources to meet the challenges of the future through a variety of professional development activities for both faculty and staff. Topics for some of these activities are suggested at

regularly scheduled “meet and confer” sessions with union leadership (2b).

In planning for the future, BSU has recently reorganized its academic division into three colleges and consolidated some smaller programs into larger units. While this reorganization was not unanimously supported, the new alignments appear to be logical and to have the potential for creating new synergies and collaborative opportunities (2b).

Due to budget constraints over several years, there is considerable deferred maintenance. According to the 2006 report of MnSCU Facilities Condition Data, Bemidji had a backlog of \$28,998,000, that is projected to grow to \$54,162,000 by 2016. However, the organization appears to have realistic plans for dealing with the issue. Two buildings account for a significant share of the deferred maintenance and tentative plans are to demolish those buildings and reduce the size of the campus footprint. This should be possible because one building is currently not in use, and space in the second building is not being used to capacity (2b).

Despite the difficult economic environment of the past two years, the number of full-time equivalent positions at BSU for fiscal year 2009 (546.08) is almost identical to staffing in FY 2003 (545.84). The institution is thinly staffed in some areas but has redistributed its human resources to meet needs. Given the financial situation in the state, it would be unrealistic to expect substantial increases in the number of employees. However, there is no hiring freeze and the institution continues to fill positions. Through its partnership with Northwest Technical College, the institution has been able to provide additional support for technology through shared personnel. The two institutions also share personnel in the areas of Human Resources, Physical Plant, Financial Services, and Financial Aid. In contrast to 2000, the University now has a chief technology officer, University Advancement is headed by an executive director, and there is an Associate Vice President for Extended Learning and Library. When the current search for a dean of arts and sciences is concluded in the next few weeks, there will be permanent deans for each of the colleges. A vice president for student development and enrollment has been hired, and the position of associate vice president for academic affairs has been filled. This positive level of staffing should contribute to the college's ongoing mission achievement (2b).

The previous visiting team identified one of the institution's challenges as "...concern surrounding the institution's current capacity for data management relating to decision making processes across the University. While the infrastructure for data acquisition and the management of information is currently in place and functional, the institution's use of information as a data-based decision-making process has not yet become institutionalized." This visiting team, however, noted several instances in which faculty and administration referred to data and sources of data used in decision-making. These examples included reference to TaskStream Accountability Management System, the MnSCU Cost Study, classroom space utilization reports, and deferred maintenance studies. As part of the self-study process the institution developed an

electronic master data site, intended to be a useful resource for the campus long after the self-study was completed. Members of the campus community identified the master data site as one of the major benefits of the self-study (2c).

Multiple planning documents reflect consistency in institutional values and directions, indicating a broad consensus on the goals of the institution, which facilitates the actual implementation of the plan. There is a high level of involvement in and enthusiasm for the progress made in developing a planning system. Three of the challenges identified by the 2000 visiting team were related to planning. A monitoring report related to these issues was required, submitted, and accepted. In contrast, this visiting team found BSU to be especially proud of and confident in its planning efforts. Although the Experimental Planning Process has been discontinued in favor of other planning mechanisms, the campus community believes that process and the subsequent Scenario Planning project were useful in obtaining broader participation in planning and setting the stage for the current planning system. The institution does have several interrelated plans now in place, including a Technology Master Plan, a 2008-2013 University Plan, Master Academic Plan, Master Facility Plan, Master Student Development & Enrollment Plan, as well as multi-year budgets. Implementation of plans for the assessment of student learner outcomes remains a concern, but overall the institution has made great strides in planning (2d).

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

The institution is facing continued decline in state financial support. In addition, it has little control over the biggest share of the budget – personnel. Salaries and benefits for most employees are established by collective bargaining at the state level. Therefore, the institution's ability to control the largest expenditure category is mostly limited to decisions regarding the number and type of personnel. The organization also has limited control over revenue as tuition increases may be restrained by the legislature. The likely imbalance between projected revenue and costs will inevitably lead to difficult decisions. It will be critical to involve the campus community in budgeting decisions and to continue to educate stakeholders about the financial situation (2a).

In academic and budget planning, the organization needs to consider whether it is wise to offer the current number of major programs. There are many majors with 10 or fewer students and several with fewer than 5. Even if it were cost-effective to offer the major, one wonders whether students are well-served if they do not have the opportunity to learn from a variety of faculty and interact with students in the field. The array of programs should be re-examined and a determination made regarding whether each is viable. Careful consideration should also be given to the decision to fill vacancies in these small programs (2c).

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.):

None

Recommendation of the Team

[Refer to instructions for standardized language and team options.]

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up is recommended.

C. Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

BSU appears to have enhanced the culture of assessment on campus since its last decennial self-study. Institutional dimensions of learning (i.e., Intellectual Development, Understanding Self and Relating to Others, Participation in an Emerging Global Society) and their respective student learning outcomes set the direction and purpose for teaching and learning activities, and the benchmarks for accountability at the university level. The alignment of department five-year plans and assessment plans with the dimensions of learning assures that the activities of the campus are consistent with and promote the mission and the University Plan for 2008-2013 (strategic plan)(3a).

The development of a five-year program review process that includes academic program assessment provides opportunities to review and improve teaching and learning. Because it is designed to include academic departments, the Honors Program, and Liberal Education, as well as other functional areas such as finance, administration, student development and enrollment, there is potential for integrating and synthesizing information from across campus to inform decisions that could ultimately improve student learning and teaching effectiveness(3b).

Through its review of the year-one, year-three, and year-five assessment reports, the Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) makes recommendations for improvement to the University Gaps and Trends Committee that are designed to result in improvement. The Committee also connects assessment results to academic program review and makes recommendations for change to the VPAA. AAC's membership is composed of deans, the Assessment Coordinators (including Liberal Studies), and the VPAA. This group is charged with evaluating, integrating, and synthesizing information on student learning and making recommendations for improvement, an important step in using assessment information for improvement. The Committee is designed to

centralize assessment and effectiveness information so that it may be used for the challenging task of improving teaching and learning (3a).

The quality of programs offered online through the Center for Extended Learning (CEL) is monitored by the departments from which they are offered, assuring that they are of at least the same quality as those offered in face-to-face formats. Additionally, CEL uses Noel-Levitz for evaluating the experiences of online learners (3c).

Assessment Coordinators provide support and variable levels of expertise to each of the departments for program assessment and for the five-year program review which means there is an on-going source of feedback on assessment plans and reports. These reports are also provided to the deans and to the Assessment Committee (3b).

Liberal Education, the general education component of the curriculum at BSU, provides students opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, values, and confidence to participate in a "changing global society." The expected student learning outcomes developed for the Liberal Education program provide the basis for communicating and integrating student learning and assessment (3a).

As the mechanism for using information about how well students are learning, the Center for Professional Development has great potential for helping faculty close the loop. The BSU University Plan, Master Academic Plan, and the Dimensions of Student Learning define its vision and mission related to education. The campus demonstrates a commitment to teaching and learning through the support of its faculty and programs and through the services it provides for students. Interviews with faculty confirm that a variety of services and programs exist to improve the teaching and learning experience. For example, the Center for Professional Development offers periodic workshops and training and the Professional Improvement Grants offer competitive grants primarily for travel for research and professional development purposes(3b and 3d).

Support services for students are abundant, and students and faculty attest to their effectiveness. The Advising Success Center offers tutoring, workshops, orientation, and skills assessment to prepare new students and provide continuing support to assure their success. The First Year Residential Experience offers living and learning communities that are particularly effective in supporting students. The TRIO Student Support Services and the American Indian Resource Center offer academic, counseling, and advising services based on students' needs (3c).

Students throughout Minnesota take advantage of BSU's Center for Extended Learning (CEL) to access courses and programs via online and self-study, both during the regular semester and during summer sessions, giving them more flexibility in meeting their academic goals. Students indicate they receive timely support from faculty, the CEL support staff, and technical personnel for their studies. They also remarked on having a high degree of accessibility to library materials and other learning

resources. The library staff verified that they receive frequent requests for assistance from students at the distance learning sites. Library resources are increasingly available in electronic form in support of both online learning and traditional instruction at the remote locations. The CEL employs three instructional designers and three customer support specialists who support both online learning and distance delivery to the remote sites. Off-campus programs have faculty member coordinators who receive release time in support of their role. Student fees are charged for distance education courses which are returned to the CEL in support of the critical support function that it plays for distance learning. Overall, the remote sites appear to be adequately supported by the institution and well integrated with the main campus (3c and 3d).

Faculty invest in students and provide the kind of out-of-class opportunities that enhance the teaching and learning experience. For example, the Undergraduate Teaching Association Program provides opportunities for students to learn through teaching. The Student Scholarship and Creative Achievement Conference, the Journal of Student Research, and the Marketing Assistance and Research Solutions offer platforms for meaningful faculty mentorship of undergraduate and graduate students. BSU also offers graduate assistantships and thesis mini-grants in support of graduate students. All of these make valuable contributions to student learning (3b, 3c, and 3d).

Technology is widespread with the wireless campus, the dual-platform computers, the MinnesotaOnline Desire-to-Learn, and the Library Services. These all enhance the learning environment (3c).

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

While BSU has developed a system for assuring high-quality teaching and learning, including the five-year program review process, there was little evidence of a systematic approach to assessment. The various components of the system do not appear as integrated with ongoing teaching and learning processes as will be required to ground assessment in course and program-level activities. Plans for assessing graduate programs and Liberal Education are still in development, with little assessment having been conducted on the liberal education curriculum. In addition, some programs (e.g., B.S. Business, Technological Studies) offered through the CEL have not been adequately assessed. BSU could build upon its current efforts to include all graduate and undergraduate programs in its assessment strategies whether they are offered in face-to-face or in distance environments (3b).

The use of the dashboard indicators as a way to communicate effectiveness and accountability for internal and external audiences is useful. This system is designed to provide information for decision making and its use could be continued and expanded (3b).

Intended learning outcomes are not easily accessible to students or staff. Ways could be found to make this information more readily available that

would contribute to all stakeholders' understanding. One possibility would be to provide student learning outcomes for all programs in the catalog and/or other appropriate locations, such as programs' Web pages (3a).

The role of faculty in assessing student learning is not readily apparent nor widely understood, thus possibly contributing to lack of clarity about how faculty should engage. The team found that faculty engage in the broad educational goals (the educational dimensions) but there were limited examples of producing evidence that course- and program-level outcomes were being measured, tracked, and/or acted upon. One approach to building this understanding may be to include in the faculty handbook a description of the roles and responsibilities of faculty for assessment of student learning in accredited and non-accredited programs. Faculty hiring processes could also explicitly identify the importance of assessing learning as integral to the role of a faculty member. While such information should be useful for current faculty, it may be especially helpful in communicating to new faculty that BSU values the on-going process of improvement. Communicating the expectations of assessment will contribute to the culture of assessment emerging at BSU and should help to convey the view that assessment of programs and courses is an important part of the overall assessment strategy(3b).

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:

Core component 3A specifies that each educational program clearly states its intended student learning outcomes. Despite the fact that some progress has been made in advancing use of assessment strategies, the University has not broadly specified program-level outcomes and there is no regular review of these. In addition, course outcomes reviewed in random syllabi are frequently not explicit nor are they measurable. Many of the measures reported to be in use are indirect measures, such as surveys (3A).

While Assessment Coordinators, the Assessment Committee, and the Gaps and Trends Committee were established to encourage participation in assessment from across campus, there is neither clear leadership for synthesizing and using assessment and effectiveness information, nor is there evidence that the information is used for improvement. Without balancing this wide participation with some centralization, there is no clear mechanism for using assessment information to inform strategic planning or budgeting and most importantly, pedagogy and curriculum. Further, there is limited ability to take actions for improvements when the course and program-level outcomes do not exist and no systematic approaches for gathering this information exist in many areas (3a, 3c, and 3d).

The campus implemented a top-down approach to establishing a common set of institutional-level dimensions of student learning. Departments are expected to adopt three of the dimensions as their programs' student learning outcomes and to develop an assessment

process for them. Therefore, beyond those programs with professional accreditation, faculty are not actively engaged in developing student learning outcomes appropriate to their respective disciplines. Thus, effective assessment is not possible (3a, 3c, and 3d).

While coupling program review and assessment is appropriate and can be effective, a five-year process is too long for the assessment component. Learning assessment is a continuous process and should result in, as appropriate, on-going improvement or recognition of successes so that they may be built upon and expanded. Undergraduate programs, graduate programs, and liberal education have initially engaged in assessment processes only in the past two or three years and only a few have made meaningful improvements to teaching and learning based on them (3a, 3c, and 3d).

While graduate program assessment has been given some attention, there is no evidence that it results in on-going improvement. Deans and graduate faculty do not appear to be taking a leadership role in assuring that student learning outcomes are appropriate to graduate learning, to advancing a culture of assessment, or in closing-the-loop on assessment (3a, 3c, and 3d).

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.):

None

Recommendation of the Team

[Refer to instructions for standardized language and team options.]

Criterion 3 is met; Commission follow-up is recommended.

Focused Visit on Evidence of Student Learning, June 2013

D. Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

The university's mission statement, its Master Academic Plan, and its continued financial support of faculty development have helped create an environment that supports a rich variety of research. A long list of faculty publications, presentations, and related activities was gleaned from faculty CVs that included the scholarships of discovery, application, integration, and teaching. The university actively encourages, supports and recognizes basic and applied research and creative endeavors (4a).

The university encourages students' research in its classes, laboratories, clinics, and studios, and especially in its capstone and Honors courses and, among graduate students, in the close mentoring surrounding master's theses. Moreover, the university recognizes student scholarship by offering opportunities for presentation and publication. It hosts annual events such as the Student Scholarship and Creative Achievement Conference and the student-written Madrigal Dinner, and it publishes the Journal of Student Research, Rivers Meeting, Dust and Fire, and Five Ring Voices. The university encourages, supports, and recognizes student research and creative endeavors (4b).

Faculty and staff professional development supports more than scholarship. As is apparent from an examination of sabbatical reports, faculty have used sabbatical opportunities to explore new pedagogies, engage in the practice of what they teach, and develop new courses and other experiences for students. Staff members have used professional improvement grants to learn new technologies and systems, and to work in settings that display different approaches to administering common units or that offer different solutions to common problems. Conversations with faculty and staff reveal their appreciation for the opportunity to engage in life-long learning that will directly benefit the university and that will contribute to efforts to model the value of life-long learning for students (4a).

The institution supports professional development opportunities for the faculty, staff, and administration at the institutional and system-wide levels. At the institutional level, the Center for Professional Development and Center for Extended Learning both offer opportunities for acquiring new knowledge, skills, and use of instructional technology for the ongoing enhancement of teaching and learning at BSU. In addition, at the system level, the Luoma Leadership Academy as well as opportunities to participate in regional workshops sponsored by the Minnesota State Colleges and University System also reflect that the institution values a life of learning (4a).

The Liberal Education curriculum currently required of BSU students mirrors the Minnesota State College and University Transfer Curriculum's 10 topical or skill-based categories, plus an 11th category for performance and participation. Thus, every student's program is infused with a breadth of courses spanning the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, with additional emphases on communication, critical thinking, diversity, globalism, ethics and civic responsibility, and environmental stewardship. The campus was immersed in controversy over structural reorganization into three colleges, when an attempt was made to change the general education curriculum to refocus it more closely on the university's new three-college identity, expressed as an "arts and sciences university with select professional programs," as opposed to a "comprehensive" university. Issues related to implementation of the new Liberal Education core and its compatibility with the state transfer curriculum led to a faculty referendum vote that overturned initial Senate passage of the new curriculum. This multi-year

involvement of the faculty and administration in evolving a university identity and academic structure, on the one hand, and shaping a compatible general education curriculum, on the other, while ultimately unsuccessful, testify to the importance attached by all parties to general education and their willingness to review the relationship between the university's mission and values and the effectiveness of its general education program. All parties want a deliverable curriculum, reflective of the institution, and compatible with the state's desire for transfer articulation, that prepares students for the challenges of the 21st Century. Conversations to construct such a curriculum continue (4b).

Interviews with members of the Bemidji community indicated that the university has demonstrated itself to be open to ideas from alumni, the local and regional business community, underrepresented minorities in the region and other external constituents. Economic, cultural, scientific, business, and other partnerships and related student internships provided the university the opportunity to serve its constituents and learn from them. Faculty cite the Marketing Assistance and Research Solutions (MARS) program, the 360 degree Center of Excellence, the Institute for Technology and Engineering Solutions, the Nursing program emphasis on rural practice, and the American Indian Resource Center as examples of the university's willingness to learn from its interactions with its external constituents and to construct responses that are meaningful to students, faculty, and external constituents (4c).

The university's internship program in disciplines such as Engineering Technology, Social Work, Nursing, and Marketing, as well as its student teaching program, provide students an opportunity to work in professional settings that challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills to actual problems and situations. Faculty, staff, students, and community members applaud these programs' success as learning experiences and as valuable contributions to the community (4c).

The university has instituted a five-year program review process for every department. The review cycle begins with a response to the previous review and a five-year plan in year one that is followed by a mid-cycle review of progress in year three, and the full self-study/site visit protocol in year five. The current assessment plan is integrated into this five-year process. This planning/review program is a significant commitment of time and resources to ensure that the curriculum is current and that a best-practice pedagogy is in place (4c).

The intellectual property rights granted students by the policies of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' Board to which the university subscribes, the vision and mission statements of the university and the vision statements of the colleges, and the conduct anticipated by the Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Integrity Policy of the Student Handbook illustrate the university's diligence in creating, disseminating, and enforcing clear policies and practices involving intellectual property rights and the ethical conduct by students across the learning environments of their curricula (4d).

The university has understood well the profile of its students and responded with a wide-range of support services to assist students in achieving their potential as college student and life-long learners. These services begin with the First Year Experience and First Year Residence Experience programs and continue, as needed by students, in programs such as Tutoring Services, Trio Student Support Services, The Writing Resource Center, the Math Help Room, the Accounting Help Room, the Residence Hall Academic Resource Center and the American Indian Resource Center. In addition, the Advising Success Center and the Career Center, working from a “strengths-based” student assessment model, provide all students direction, in cooperation with their faculty major advisors, as students grow intellectually to become self-confident and responsible contributors to society (4d).

The students we met took great pride in the signature themes of the university, especially environmental stewardship. An office and gathering space in the student union is devoted to publicizing environmental activities and linking students to programs from annual lake and park clean-up campaigns to spring-break trips that permit students to participate in building, clearing, and cleaning campaigns to lightening the human footprint on many different environments. Students speak with pride about the use of geothermal energy and wind power and their participation with groups such as Habitat for Humanity. Curricular and co-curricular activities intersect powerfully to reinforce this signature theme of the university and to create among students a passion for new knowledge and responsible personal and civic action (4a).

Graduate education in the past has been a secondary function for the institution. Until recently graduate programs operated with little administrative oversight. As a part of the re-organization, the institution has begun to emphasize the emerging importance of graduate education. The location of the School of Graduate Studies under a specific dean, the identification of Graduate Education as a priority for improvement, and reports from faculty of an increased involvement by all faculty in graduate education all support the new emphasis on graduate education by the institution (4d).

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

The only formal assessment of the general education curriculum conducted since the last HLC review was a three-year, time-lagged (2005-2008) assessment of the critical thinking component, using the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. The assessment presented both methodological issues (2008 N=22) and suggestive evidence that modest growth for some students had been achieved. The university has responded by indicating that it will move to the MAPP/VSA assessment procedure and investing management of the process in the Liberal Education Assessment Coordinator, with 9 hours of assigned time to be divided between the two semesters in agreement with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. While the move to MAPP/VSA may benefit the general education curriculum with better, more actionable assessment

data over a larger portion of the curriculum, the data currently available are inadequate to assess the general education curriculum. Further, effective assessment would incorporate multiple measures consistent with the importance general education reflects in the overall curriculum (4c).

While the renewed emphasis by the institution in graduate education is a positive direction, a variety of areas of concern are still present. The faculty indicated that up to 50 percent of each graduate program can be senior-level courses with enhanced requirements. This practice aligns with the Minnesota State System policy, but the team feels this is a practice that may be detrimental to the development of graduate education. While graduate education must be built on a solid undergraduate foundation, the practice of extensively using undergraduate courses with enhanced requirements as the basis of up to half of a graduate program is inadvisable and potentially reflects negatively on the rigor and quality of graduate education. The institution is encouraged to carefully evaluate this practice and make sound program modifications based on assessment data (4c).

It was observed that students enrolled in the Teacher Education Program were not receiving adequate exposure to cultural diversity. Although the university has much diversity as exemplified by students from all 50 states and 40 nations, there may be other opportunities to support cultural diversity learning. One example would be to form a partnership with an HBCU (Historically Black College or University) involving student exchanges for one semester or short-term exchange visitations that could assist students from both universities in becoming more aware of the world within which they will function (4c).

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:

The learning assessment information reported in two cycles of department program reviews, especially among programs that are not separately accredited, do not reveal in a consistent manner measurable learning outcomes and related indicators to demonstrate that graduate programs establish a knowledge base on which students develop depth of expertise, or that undergraduates have achieved a breadth of knowledge and skills and the capacity to exercise intellectual inquiry or the preparation for continued learning. In large measure these results follow from outcomes that are generic and unmeasurable, and data that are collected but not necessarily analyzed or connected to the underlying goals of curriculum change or pedagogical improvement. Many assessment plans call for indirect measures, such as survey results and few examples of direct measures of learning at the course or program level were clearly identified (4c).

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.):

None

Recommendation of the Team

[Refer to instructions for standardized language and team options.]

Criterion is met; Commission followup is recommended.

E. Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

The university consistently involves constituencies in the identification, decision-making, and planning of services by which they are directly and/or indirectly affected. The evidence includes a vision, mission, themes, and strategic plans which include and emphasize students, faculty, staff, community members, and partners. Furthermore, discovered mutuality of interest with the community includes the planning and implementation of the Events Center. There are multiple examples of current and future events which represent an infusion of community focus (5a, 5b, and 5c).

The university establishes and maintains partnerships with significant stakeholders in the community to increase connections and input with community members and make programs more robust. The evidence revealed partnerships exist with the Chamber of Commerce, the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, and the Joint Economic Development Commission, medical providers, business and other agencies. Meetings involving university staff and these members produce partnerships that provide opportunities for students. In addition, the President meets with the mayor, the president of the local hospital, American Indian tribal chairs, and superintendent on a regular basis. Also, distance learning, system articulations, and outreach programs (GEM and Wy) meet the needs of individuals in and close to the region of northern Minnesota (5b).

The environment in which the university exists is also a focus of appreciation, investigation, and protection by university administrators, faculty, students, and community members. Shoreline and water quality protection, recreational use, and sustainability are stressed. Evidence includes a safe and healthy campus environment with focus on protection and enhancement of the natural environment. For example, hazardous waste, recycling, "community right to know," and the "pollution prevention report" are discussed. In addition, a BSU environmental policy statement is included on their website (5c).

The university infuses K-12 school involvement with professional education programs. Evidence includes the finding that students are placed in the Bemidji schools (92% of the time). Also, partnerships exist

with UTEP; Minnesota Common Market; Aldine, Texas; and Student Teaching Abroad. Furthermore, Post-Secondary Education Options (PSEO) include students attending classes on the university campus. The university serves its community's K-12 sector in many positive ways. To further extend and facilitate the connection from K-12 to higher education, students could also take courses in their high school classroom (5b).

The university supports and advertises athletics as a community activity. Athletics are a major component of recreation for the community. A variety of sports options reportedly gives a sense of community, camaraderie, and entertainment for the community. Therefore, support for the university is built upon a sense of pride, especially because they are Division 1 in hockey. Men's sports include baseball, basketball, football, golf, ice hockey and track & field. Women's sports include basketball, cross country, golf, ice hockey, soccer, softball, tennis, track & field, and volleyball (5b).

The university supports and takes pride in the American Indian Resource Center. Built in 2003, it serves 4% of its students (181 students are American Indian). The university supports Indian language instruction. Five reservations exist in the area with which the center collaborates. The resource center draws support from elders and spiritual leaders. Three faculty members, an executive director, retention counselor, office specialist and four students support the center. The center holds about eight courses per semester (5a).

The university provides opportunities for students to take courses online. Some programs are offered completely online. These programs are also high in enrollment and graduation. For example, the special education sequence is offered completely online. Students who otherwise might not be able to commute to the campus are given the opportunity to advance their education and job prospects. Furthermore, this allows individuals in the general region to provide services to children in those areas of northern Minnesota and surrounding regions. The university consistently involves constituencies in the identification, decision-making, and planning of services by which they are directly and/or indirectly affected (5a).

The participation of the university in observance during the month of February of the Civil Rights Movement is commendable and demonstrates a sensitivity to what continues to be a national challenge (race relations). Also, it was noted that students were involved in a fundraising activity to assist the nation of Haiti (5c).

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention:

A 2005 faculty survey (N =41) showed faculty to be actively engaged in a wide variety of pursuits reasonably construed as civic. A 2008 Campus Compact survey (faculty N=49) reaffirmed responding faculty's support for civic engagement, but, with students (slightly more than four [4] percent

responding), they voiced a desire for a centralized location for advertising engagement opportunities. These data contrast with the 2003 Russell & Herder study, "Regional Focus Groups: Outreach and Growth," where community citizens expressed their desire for a more visible and active presence by the university in an array of social, economic and public service activities. In meetings with community members, a desire was expressed for more faculty engagement in meeting needs of common interest. The University may want to consider strengthening its approaches to community engagement, possibly through a centralized coordinating entity, and expanding its presence in the community through methods that would achieve the desired results, such as heightened service expectations in tenure and promotion decisions.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up:

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.):

None

Recommendation of the Team

[Refer to instructions for standardized language and team options.]

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

IV. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

[Refer to instructions for standardized language and team options.]

A. Affiliation Status

No change

Rationale for recommendation:

No changes were requested or warranted resulting from this visit.

B. Nature of Organization

1. Legal status

No change

2. Degrees awarded

No change

C. Conditions of Affiliation

1. Stipulation on affiliation status

(Include the recommendation and rationale)

No change

- 2. Approval of degree sites**
(Include the recommendation and rationale)

No change

- 3. Approval of distance education degree**
(Include the recommendation and rationale)

No change

- 4. Reports required**

Progress Report

Topic(s) and Due Date ()

Rationale and Expectations

Monitoring Report

Topic(s) and Due Date ()

Rationale and Expectations

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Condition Statement (if . . . then)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Contingency Report

[Click here to enter topic.](#)

Rationale and Expectations

[Click here to enter text.](#)

- 5. Other visits scheduled**

Type of Visit

Focused Visit

Topic(s) and Timing (academic year 2012 -2013)

Evidence of Student Learning

Rationale and Expectations

As noted in both criteria 3 and 4, the University has not sufficiently developed its documentation of intended student learning outcomes at

the course, program, or university level. Further, there is very limited evidence of implementation of assessment at the levels of program, course, and general education. There is some evidence in support of the "dimensions of learning." It is not clear that a system for ongoing evaluation of student learning exists, even though there are many impressive processes established for program review and examination of the intellectual dimensions. In a context of some sophisticated approaches to the scholarship of teaching and learning, the institution has not established the fundamentals in many program areas. Efforts need to be refocused on engaging the faculty in specifying outcomes, measuring, and using the results of assessments.

A focused visit is the recommended follow-up as the institution has already filed a monitoring report following its last comprehensive visit that also addressed assessment of student learning. In 2000, the team wrote: "Assessment of the liberal education program is just getting underway. The March 2000 assessment report detailed a plan and schedule for assessment of the seven areas. . .the initial plan was to administer a commercial nationally-normed test to juniors and seniors every third year. That position is being reconsidered, however, with some attention being given now to instituting a required capstone course that would focus on the three general objectives. The assessment plan for liberal education is therefore a "work in progress," as is the program itself. While the campus culture pertaining to assessment is still evolving, it has not yet become an institutional priority or a way of life. Some programs have defined appropriate and measurable objectives for program educational goals; others are currently functioning at a more elementary stage in the process; and still other areas have yet to use the data collected in a manner that helps them determine if the measures are adequate and appropriate."

The university filed its monitoring report on planning and assessment in 2002. The staff liaison wrote: "Evidence was provided to show the University's commitment and support of the assessment program." The 2010 visiting team was able to identify some of the strengths identified by the HLC, such as the allocation of additional resources, such as college-level assessment coordinators, but it does not find the progress for 10 years to be sufficient. The assessment of liberal education appears to have made little headway since 2000, and the institution now grapples with how to reform it, largely in the absence of sufficient student learning data that informs this decision-making process.

At the time of a focused visit by June 2013, the institution should provide the following evidence of its progress in documenting student learning outcomes and assessing the effectiveness of its educational programming:

1. Specifying program and course-level outcomes
2. Specifying general or liberal education outcomes

3. Making intended learning outcomes visible to students, staff, and external stakeholders, such as through catalogs, websites, and/or syllabi
4. Documentation of assessment plans for all programs that incorporates ongoing student learning assessment for purposes of continuous improvement
5. Documentation of course-level assessment plans or a framework for assessment encompassing a significant majority of courses, particularly those enrolling large numbers of students. As a guide, by this time in its evolution (since 1995), it should be expected that courses enrolled by 75% of the students would have clearly identifiable learning outcomes and plans for assessing and evaluating the overall learning. An important distinction to make is separating student assessment from course assessment. One is designed to provide feedback on individual students' performances while the other is designed to evaluate the course effectiveness in the key areas of student learning.
6. Evidence collected from program-level and course-level learning assessments conducted as a part of the ongoing plans/framework/processes.
7. Examples of how the findings have been used to improve programs and courses, pedagogy, and/or the assessment process or similar interventions.
8. Reports on the contributions of leaders and mentors to the advancement of student learning assessment, including possible heightened professional development related to assessment of student learning and broadening the engagement of the campus community in making sense of assessment information.
9. Description of the relationship of assessment to planning and budgeting.
10. Information about where general education outcomes are assessed, such as with a curriculum map, and evidence of the results gathered from these ongoing assessments. The university should be able to point to the places where students are developing the intellectual dimensions and provide evidence of the findings from direct assessment measures.

6. Organization change request

n/a

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

Please select an option: None

Due Date for Report:

Rationale and Expectations:

Areas That Must Be Addressed:

Next Evaluation Visit:

E. Summary of Commission Review

Timing for next comprehensive visit (academic year 2019-2020)

Rationale for recommendation:

Bemidji State University has a clear and compelling mission. Its mission is well understood by all major constituencies, and it engages proactively with its multiple communities in fulfilling its mission. There is a spirit of collaboration that pervades the organization as it fulfills its mission to serve students. The institution is also evolving at a time of increased accountability, changing demographics, challenging economics, and personnel turnover. Bemidji State University has many areas that distinguish it, and it should be expected to continue to serve the state of Minnesota with distinction. The team finds that the University meets all of the criteria for accreditation, although it also finds that improvement opportunities exist for the university in refining its plans for student learning and its processes for assuring that the intended outcomes are being achieved and/or that improvement interventions would be planned.

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

[Optional]

None

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Bemidji State University has earned a reputation of distinction and is poised to meet the future effectively. At the same time, there are some areas where either the institution has requested consultation or the team has chosen to offer advice. Those consultations follow.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

A. Professional Education

Additional Information:

The University identified the Professional Education Department as one of three overall priorities for improvement. This concern emanates primarily from the 2008 conditional accreditation of teacher licensure programs by the Minnesota Board of Teaching and the institutional goal to apply for NCATE accreditation in 2015.

The Professional Education Department has the largest number of majors at BSU. However, over the past several years the unit has experienced considerable stress. Not all of the faculty members in the department favored the move into the new College of Health Sciences and Human Ecology. Historically, BSU has had a focus on Education. Faculty perceive that positions had been reallocated to other areas. In clarifying facts, the institution reports that there has been no shifting of positions from education to other areas but in times of downsizing, many areas, including arts and sciences, have lost positions. At the same time, nursing programs have added positions. Student enrollment has also declined. The team is not in a position to determine whether one caused the other or vice versa and did not verify comparative numbers of faculty numbers. The more important issue, the team suggests, is to maximize the utilization of the existing faculty toward restoring a high level of professionalism in this degree program.

The reorganization also led to some physical relocations and loss of dedicated space. Professional Education now shares an administrative assistant with another department. Some faculty reported very heavy advising loads and increased class sizes. They expressed concern that the amount of reassigned time for the chair is inadequate to meet the demands. During this same time period, however, the Department has been entrepreneurial, reaching out to new audiences through distance learning. The Distance Learning in Teacher Education and the FasTrack licensure programs are making a significant contribution to enrollment and promoting BSU in other areas of the state. The combination of change, reduction of on-campus resources, and new ventures has led at least some of the faculty to feel overworked and undervalued. In addition, conversion from quarters to semesters was time-consuming.

Withdrawal from NCATE accreditation in 2000 affected faculty morale. The findings of the final report from the Minnesota Board of Teaching further eroded morale. Continuing approval was granted until June 30, 2010, with a report due no later than April 1, 2010. The report listed 19 points that the department needed to address. Specifically, the reviewers noted that the department did not meet Standards A(1), A(3), B(4), D(4), E(2), E(4), F(1), F(2), , G(7), G(11), and

H(6). Thirteen other standard portions were passed with comment or weakness. Some faculty members expressed concern regarding retaining approval from the Minnesota Board of Teaching during the next review.

On the other hand, some faculty members, as well as the dean, expressed confidence that the unit had taken the necessary steps to meet the Board of Teaching expectations. Representatives of faculty from the content areas in the secondary teacher licensure programs reported that communication had increased with the professional education faculty. They feel included in the unit's planning.

The administration should consider providing additional opportunities for the Professional Education Department members to candidly voice their concerns. Although it may not be possible to address these concerns to the satisfaction of all individuals, it is important to acknowledge the depth of their feelings. However, if the Department is to reach the goal of NCATE accreditation, it must focus on its strengths and the future, not the past. In this era of declining state support, it is unlikely that previously eliminated faculty lines will be fully restored. Therefore, the Department will need to guard against constructing curricula or offering new programs which it cannot maintain with its current faculty size. Creative solutions to the advising loads are possible. The University could consider challenging the assumption that advising can only be provided by full-time faculty. Perhaps supplemental contracts can be used to involve long-serving, part-time faculty as advisors at relatively low cost. Faculty members could then dedicate their time to the NCATE accreditation process.

The NCATE accreditation process will require resources beyond that typically provided to departments. BSU should carefully examine secretarial support and reassigned time for accreditation leadership and provide what is needed (within resource constraints). Expertise could be used across programs to further strengthen the infusion of services to individuals with disabilities and diverse populations. Furthermore, a consultant could support addressing some of the points mentioned in the Minnesota Board of Teaching report and also with NCATE requirements.

Additionally, both the Minnesota Board of Teaching and this HLC visiting team identified assessment of learner outcomes as an issue. Identification of learner outcomes for each program and documentation of achievement of the outcomes should be a focus of the entire institution. This university-wide attention should be helpful as the department moves toward NCATE accreditation, if all members of the department are actively engaged. The college assessment coordinator can be a valuable resource in the NCATE efforts and needs to be kept abreast of NCATE expectations, e.g., attending the NCATE conferences.

Despite what may be an unfortunate history, the challenge today is for the leaders and faculty to reclaim the program's historic strength as an institution with high-quality teacher education or to relinquish this part of its history in favor of new, more promising educational directions.

B. Trust In Senior Leadership

Additional Information:

The visiting team was asked to consult on the issue of “trust in senior leadership.” The impetus for this request was one of the results of an Employee Engagement Survey conducted in late fall of 2009, in which 62% of Bemidji State University employees participated. Employees rated several items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The area with the lowest average rating (3.98) was “trust in senior leadership.” Only one employee group, excluding administrators (which would include senior leadership), had a mean score over 5. The lowest ratings came from the Inter Faculty Organization, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees. Over 1/3 of employees disagreed that senior leaders “identify ways to involve employees in decisions, communicate openly and honestly, know how to position the organization for success and are accessible and available.” The Bailey Consulting Group, which conducted the survey, noted that trust in senior leadership declined with length of service. It is not clear, however, how these ratings compare with other institutions nor what might have been discovered at another time in the administration of this at Bemidji. With a scale of 6, 3.98 may not be a weak score. The team notes that issues of communications and trust are common on university campuses and that the Bemidji concerns do not necessarily suggest a more troubled environment.

Members of the visiting team raised the issue of trust with many groups and individuals throughout the visit. Senior administrators expressed concern about the survey results, some surprise, and a desire to understand why employees held these views. Individuals in this group stated that they believed administrators were acting “with transparency.” They noted that employees had frequent opportunities to exchange views with administrators, including the “meet and confer” mechanism. In addition, members of the administration expressed confidence in the abilities of fellow administrators and satisfaction with the level of cooperation across areas. They felt that there was a sense of camaraderie among administrators and that the cabinet is a collaborative working team. Employee mistrust in leadership does not seem to be fueled by divisiveness among administrators.

Among employees, perspectives varied widely. At one end of the spectrum are those who stated that the administration is very forthcoming, acts in the best interest of the institution, and that “anyone who wants to be well-informed can be.” On the other hand, there were individuals whose trust level is so low that they refused to answer the survey, indicating that they did not want to divulge what they thought to administration. Some employees mentioned that the campus is very political and that a union environment promotes antagonism between bargaining unit members and administration. One faculty member pointed out that an “us vs. them” attitude is ironic, considering the number of administrators who have risen through the faculty ranks or who are in acting capacities and will be returning to faculty status.

There are three particular areas where friction has affected trust: college reorganization, reform of liberal education, and personnel procedures. The discussions related to college reorganization and department realignments took place over a two-year period. There were many opportunities for input from those affected, and the time-line for discussion and decision was extended to allow

more time. The administration put forth a plan which was shaped by this discussion, but which was not ultimately approved by the faculty senate. However, the plan was implemented. Although many departments and faculty are pleased with the reorganization, others are not; they point to this decision as a lack of commitment to shared governance.

A second area of friction contributing to the mistrust issue was the reform of liberal education. The Bemidji State University general education program is constrained by requirements of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, which permits courses only from specified fields to be included. The implementation of the proposed new liberal education program for Bemidji would have further narrowed the departments which could participate in general education, eliminating several departments whose courses had been included in the past. Faculty from the eliminated departments, primarily from the new College of Health Sciences and Human Ecology, felt marginalized and that the administration was inappropriately involved in setting curriculum standards, which is a faculty prerogative.

Thirdly, there have been several changes in personnel procedures, which have coincided with the appointment of a new Human Resources Director. For example, it had been the common practice for search committees to rank finalists for staff/administrative positions and for the appointing authority to “rubber stamp” the first choice of the committee. The administration has recently taken a more active role in choosing the appointee, insisting that the search committee forward unranked finalists. Members of these committees have interpreted this change as administration not trusting the judgment of the committee. Administrators, on the other hand, assert that search committees continue to have a great deal of power in selecting finalists and that management was previously remiss in not taking responsibility for the final decision. Other changes have been made to bring personnel practices in line with federal or state law or Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy. Disgruntlement about these changes has been directed toward the Human Resources Director.

Discontent at BSU with “leadership” also seems to be directed at the state system, rather than at local administration. Many individuals at various levels of the institution expressed frustration with policies made at the system level, which they feel ignore circumstances unique to Bemidji.

The Bailey Consulting Group made recommendations to administrators for building the trust level. One recommendation was to be more accessible and available. Bemidji is thinly staffed. No doubt senior administrators have heavy demands on their time, but will need to attend to this issue. Management by “walking around” may be helpful. Although Meet and Confer sessions with union representatives are a time-honored method of communication and a contractual obligation, there need to be a variety of communication channels to discuss substantive issues.

A second recommendation was to communicate more openly and honestly. Senior administrators believe that they are doing so. However, their efforts may not be interpreted as such. For example, administrators disseminated information from the MNSCU “Cost Study” (a comparative analysis across the state of average costs by CIP code) and a Cost Recovery study (analysis of ratios of

tuition to direct instructional costs). The stated purpose according to the administration was to help departments understand the relationship between curriculum and costs and be proactive in planning. Some faculty interpreted the sharing of the information as “threatening” programs with above-average costs. Nevertheless, the administration should continue to share data broadly and to educate and involve staff and faculty in data-driven decision-making. Many people on campus had high praise for the Vice President of Finance who has involved the campus community in budget planning and regularly shares information about the institutional budget and the state financial climate.

To address the lingering rancor about college reorganization, the deans of these new units are encouraged to consider how to intentionally create a stronger identification with the college. There appear to be few college structures, traditions, or events which bring faculty together within the colleges. Activities tend to be at the department level or university-wide. Focus on positive college events could be bring favorable publicity.

The results of the Employment Engagement Survey can be a useful springboard to meaningful discussion about how to improve trust. For those discussions to be most fruitful, it would be helpful if they were co-sponsored by the bargaining units. If this survey or a similar one is repeated in the future, it would be wise to obtain endorsement by the leadership of the unions in advance of survey dissemination. It is in everyone’s interests to identify employee concerns in a safe and confidential manner, so that they can be addressed.

One of the contributing factors to the trust gap is the number of people in interim or acting positions. This practice was noted as a problem in the 2000 site visit and mentioned by several individuals during this site visit as well. Development of trust takes time, and it is not facilitated by frequent turnover. Employees may be reluctant to place their trust in persons who have not been selected through a national search and endorsed by the campus. A number of faculty members indicated that mistrust had occurred as members from within faculty ranks had taken administrative offices even after what they believed to be a less-than-ideal track record of performance. There are questions about how administrators are appointed. This situation is improving as deans have been appointed for the Colleges of Business, Technology, and Communication, and Health Sciences and Human Ecology. The search process for a dean of the College of Arts and Sciences is near conclusion.

Furthermore, some faculty members expressed the belief that meetings had taken place to include them in discussion initially and then they were excluded when they had a difference of opinion. There is also a belief among some faculty members that decisions were made at the administrative level that did not reflect the opinions of most faculty members. Including faculty in the discussion, as well as the decision-making and responsibility for positive outcomes, will be essential in providing all stakeholders with a sense of pride, university cultural membership, and trust. A desirable goal would be to establish that faculty members could feel like part of the “team.”

Although BSU requested consultation regarding the issue of trust in senior leadership, the visiting team did not perceive a dangerous rift between administration and other employee groups. The concerns expressed by some

individuals regarding communication and shared governance seemed quite typical for an institution of higher education. Administrative leadership and union leadership have a shared responsibility to monitor the campus climate and cooperate to improve communication and consistency. This is especially important in the current economic environment as a shortage of resources exacerbates tensions. The administration will need to become increasingly vigilant in monitoring expenditures, and this is likely to lead to more complaints from faculty and staff unless they fully understand how decisions were made.

C. Assessment Of Student Learning

Additional Information:

While Bemidji State University has made efforts to improve the assessment of student learning, a number of decisions and processes should be reviewed to evaluate their effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, establishing a position responsible for assessment/effectiveness with the requisite level of expertise would 1) allow the campus to simplify its assessment processes, 2) obviate the need for so many committees and processes, 3) sustain assessment and effectiveness efforts, 4) assure that sound best practices are implemented and maintained, 5) provide a central office for integrating information about teaching and learning, and 6) assure that assessment information is used to improve the campus. The team recommends that this position report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs to ensure that the information flows upward for strategic planning and budgeting purposes and that sufficient status is accorded to the need for implementation and use of data.

The program review processes, while holding potential for improving programs and services, appear to be complex and, because they extend over five years, not timely enough to result in on-going improvement. Efforts could be made to evaluate them to maximize effectiveness and eliminate areas with redundancies. In addition, an outcomes-based program review process might be considered for its potential to support BSU's commendable efforts to combine program review and assessment, while maintaining standards for good practice. (For examples, please see Bresciani, M. [2006], *Outcomes-based academic and co-curricular program review: A compilation of institutional good practices* and a Council of Graduate Schools publication, *Assessment and review of graduate programs: A policy statement* [2005]).

The team strongly encourages the campus to learn more about good practices of assessment for graduate and undergraduate programs, including Liberal Education assessment. Faculty development of student learning outcomes for their programs is the essential first step of program assessment. Following that, the curriculum (i.e., the course objectives from syllabi) should be aligned with the outcomes to assure that students have systematic, intentional opportunities to learn them. Embedded and independent processes that include direct and indirect measures of assessment should be identified and implemented (many of these are currently in place). Artifacts of student learning (e.g., exams, papers, presentations, case studies, internship projects) are frequently evaluated by two or more faculty using rubrics tied to the outcomes. And finally, development of a clear plan for the evaluation and use of the information generated would be beneficial. The student learning outcomes for programs should be tied to the mission/vision/purpose of the department, college, and of the institution. This

process is described in a number of publications readily available to faculty and staff. (For examples, see Allen, M. [2004], *Assessing academic programs in higher education*; Banta, T. [2002], *Building a scholarship of assessment*; and Maki, P. [2004], *Assessing for learning: building a sustainable commitment across the institution*.)

It would be useful to more intimately involve the faculty and staff of the A. C. Clark Library faculty in teaching and learning and in assessment as well. The Library is central to campus in general, and particularly as it relates to developing skills for life-long learning among faculty and students. Establishing systematic processes for engaging the Library faculty in learning and its assessment will enhance the experience of students.

To further enhance the sustainability of these efforts, the Team encourages the campus to integrate them fully into the fabric of its business. Doing so will assure that assessment is on-going and that it results in improvement. For example, we encourage consideration of a model of assessment that is integrated with the strategic plan, budget planning and allocations, and action planning. Information about what BSU students know and can do as determined by assessment should help set the strategic direction for upcoming actions and inform the on-going decisions the campus makes as it continues to pursue achievement of its mission.

The university may benefit from revisiting the "fundamental questions for conversations on student learning" advanced by the HLC many years ago. These include:

1. How are your stated student learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs, degrees, and students?
2. What information do you have that students achieve your stated outcomes?
3. In what ways do you analyze and use evidence of student learning?
4. How do you ensure shared responsibility for assessment?
5. How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts to assess and improve student learning?
6. In what ways do you inform the public and other stakeholders about what and how well your students are learning?

As noted in the Assurance section, although some high-level assessment is being conducted, the fundamental assessment system is missing and the institution is not positioned to provide evidence of achieving its intended learning outcomes at course, program, or university levels, particularly as it relates to general education.

D. General Education

Additional Information:

One of the major issues involved in the controversy over Liberal Education was the exclusion of disciplines from the general education curriculum that were not

traditionally considered among the liberal arts. This decision became conflated with the college reorganization plan and the president's articulation of the university identity as "a liberal arts university with select professional programs," as opposed to a "comprehensive university." The campus remains abraded by these outcomes. The university should consider adopting a new perspective on general education that will change not only the focus of discussion but also the vocabulary of the discussion, and thereby permit the reopening of productive discussion.

Such a discussion might begin with the realization that the problems confronting 21st Century decision-makers are large and complex and often transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries. Individual knowledge workers in solitary employment of their expertise are being replaced by teams and work-groups of experts from different disciplines in face-to-face and virtual collaboration. A premium is placed on the ability to lead and to work as a member of a team. Success as a leader and as a member rests both on one's individual expertise AND on one's ability to share that knowledge with people from different disciplines and to incorporate their expertise into one's own evolving contribution. The latter requires the ability to comprehend a number of different professional vocabularies and epistemologies in order to understand and be understood.

If the team environment fairly reflects the evolution of problem-solving among business firms, government agencies and non-profit organizations, then the liberal arts curriculum of the 21st Century must refocus itself to embrace a greater concern with epistemologies than ever before, challenging the traditional focus largely on content. The new curriculum must recognize that the scientific method of the experimentalists, the post-modernists approach to literary criticism, the rational choice assumptions of micro-economics, the qualitative approach of cultural anthropologists, and the quasi-experimental and probabilistic approaches of many social sciences (and many others that we could cite) do not comport easily with one another, when the debate turns to appropriate data and necessary and sufficient conditions. Moreover, there is no "one way" to acquire sufficient competency with these disparate vocabularies and epistemologies. There are no disciplinary monopolies.

This is the reality that the millennium generation and their successors must confront. A successful general education component must be responsive to the new demands of epistemological knowledge and not be overly concerned about content specifics that will be outdated in a relatively short period of time.

The new general education curriculum must abstract from current content those elements that are truly essential building blocks of more advanced study and recapture time to teach multiple ways of seeing and understanding the same or similar problems, processes and phenomena. At the same time, a general education curriculum must be constructed with the assumption, reinforced by faculty and institutional example, that learning is a life-long process. The realization of that example might lie in certificate programs or workshops offered by BSU for graduates who have been displaced by right-sizing, down-sizing, outsourcing, or the pace of change in their jobs.

In short, by understanding the nature of the 21st Century problem confronting our students, the opportunity exists to reincorporate faculty who feel inappropriately

displaced from the general education curriculum by emphasizing the contribution they can make to epistemological diversity AND to the life-long learning process that builds newly relevant content available to a wider audience that can understand it and integrate it into its mental model of the world.

One final thought, the treatment of general education as a static entity often leads to the occasional isolated review followed by significant “turf wars.” The rapid expansion of knowledge in all disciplines and the need for cross-disciplinary thinking necessitates a continuous process approach to general education which offers an alternative to the discreet or single event review model of general education. This process approach also limits the “turf wars” by allowing for more frequent review and modification based on assessment data as well as new information on best practices. BSU should consider institutionalizing an ongoing process for the management of general education.

This process model can take many forms but typically includes a general education council or standing committee that is charged with the ongoing review and modification of the general education curriculum, which Bemidji has with its standing Liberal Education Committee. A council typically oversees all phases of design, assessment, and modification of general education, which the Bemidji Committee reportedly also does. In addition to the committee, someone will likely need to be accountable for the administration of general education. Committees and councils typically are excellent at curriculum design, policy formation, and assessment planning but are often less efficient at administering general education. Without appropriate administration, general education becomes a secondary emphasis at most institutions and also runs the risk of fragmentation rather than integration.

A great opportunity exists for the Bemidji Faculty and Administration to model the 21st century skills and behaviors as they embark on this re-evaluation of general education--reflecting interdisciplinarity, teamwork, and enlightened discourse.

E. Civic Engagement.

Civic engagement is among the signature themes of the university and, consequently, should be a well-understood, well-documented feature of campus life for students and a clear expectation for faculty and staff to model. A 2005 faculty survey (N =41) showed faculty to be actively engaged in a wide variety of pursuits, reasonably construed as civic. A 2008 Campus Compact survey (faculty N=49) reaffirmed responding faculty’s support for civic engagement, but, with students (slightly more than four [4] percent responding), they voiced a desire for a centralized location for advertising engagement opportunities. These data contrast with the 2003 Russell & Herder study, “Regional Focus Groups: Outreach and Growth,” where community citizens expressed their desire for a more visible and active presence by the university in an array of social, economic and public service activities. Moreover, our recent site visit conversations with community leaders suggested that the Bemidji community continues to welcome a fuller partnership with the university across a wide range of activities and opportunities.

There seems to be a disconnect between university generated data and data from the community. A partial resolution of this issue may lie in the number of respondents to on-campus surveys. Their small numbers, compared to the size of either the faculty or the student

body, suggest the possibility, at least, that respondents do not constitute random samples and may, in fact, reflect only those already committed to an active civic role in teaching, learning, behavior-modeling and participating.

It would be wise, in our judgment, for the university to interpret civic engagement as broadly as possible. As a public university, Bemidji State University is an educational, economic, cultural, social, and scientific asset of the state. Faculty and staff are experts in their fields, and many possess leadership and managerial experience, that may be seen by community observers as otherwise in comparatively short supply. Students are not only a source of vigor and enthusiasm, but potential contributors of their growing expertise, as well. The citizens of Northern Minnesota, as taxpayers, rightly expect an appropriate return on their tax dollars. Thus, civic engagement might be recast as an assessment of how well BSU provides an acceptable investment return to the communities that look to it for leadership and assistance.

This approach does not demean the value of the long literature in political science and elsewhere that connects civic engagement with concepts such as internal and external efficacy. The former pertains to growth in a citizen's self-confidence to function as a full participant, and the latter reflects democratic institutions' ability or capacity to respond to citizens' demands. Our First Amendment rights to free speech and to peaceable assembly to address our grievances to government become meaningless, if citizens lack the understanding of how to proceed or the self-confidence to engage on the one-hand, or government feels sufficiently insulated from public comment or the sting of electoral defeat to care. Efficient, effective and responsive government depends upon an efficacious body politic.

Moreover, there is a long literature that correlates political participation and political efficacy with participation in social, economic, cultural and educational activities. The skills that one develops to express ideas in a public forum, to manage conflict, to run a meeting, to understand a budget, to prioritize among legitimate competing claims – and much more – are lessons that are learned or reinforced in church groups, bowling leagues, United Way campaigns, service organizations, as well as in classrooms and in student government activities. In addition, involvement in these groups instills in each participant a sense of community, of mutual dependence, of intersecting – even if not fully overlapping – interests, ideas and values. Thus civic engagement by faculty and staff strengthens public and non-profit organizations' capacity to respond, increases citizens' sense of community and how to function successfully within it, and models constructive behavior in support of the common weal for students to emulate and join.

We recommend that the university begin by stating clearly its objectives for civic engagement and recognizing that there are limits to its human, physical and financial resources. Developing objectives by involving regional and alumni advisory groups alongside faculty, staff and students puts the range of desired outcomes on the table and compels those who will be the core collaborators to prioritize resources more plainly recognized as scarce. It also develops a sense of ownership in the prioritized objectives and a new realism about the number that can be achieved and the rate at which achievement is possible.

The university may find that the diversity of objectives across the disciplines represented by departments and programs and the expertise and talents represented by faculty, staff and

students on the one hand, and the requests now being made known to the university community through its present level of civic involvement, outreach, internship, consultation, etc., on the other, doom a centralized effort from the start. A reasonable response to this outcome might be advisory boards at the college or departmental/program levels that are tasked with developing realistic, prioritized objectives for niche communities. Even if this choice is made, the university must articulate a goal for civic engagement and benchmarks to mark progress toward that goal.

Simultaneously, the university might pursue a third approach. The university has a well-developed and growing presence in digital, distributed education. Undoubtedly, students at BSU, like their peer across the nation, are “wired” to a variety of groups through social media. Together, the digital environment and this generation of students are reconstructing the meaning of “community,” diminishing the importance of geography. Wired communities are defined by common interests and secondarily, at best, by geography. At first blush, this may be an unwelcomed revelation to regional communities, looking to BSU for help. But, upon reflection, their connectedness to broader communities of interests may relieve their sense isolation and open new frontiers of collaboration that include economic development.

Think of this scenario. Because of, not in spite of, its climate and small-town feel, cities, towns, and rural areas in Northern Minnesota can be attractive destinations for knowledge workers who enjoy these geographic characteristics. If they can telecommute, web-conference – in short, be productive as geographically autonomous professionals who are, nonetheless, centrally located in the creative communications stream of their companies or organizations -- then they can live in Bemidji and add their incomes to the region’s and their voices and presence to civic organizations. The question for BSU is: how can it facilitate this outcome?

Regardless of the path the university takes, we recommend that it be explicit in the construction of a strategic plan that prioritizes its objectives, identifies supportive resources, and establishes metrics and reasonable timelines by which to measure progress. At present, faculty are expected as part of their contract to be engaged in such activities and are evaluated accordingly. The university may wish to consider ways in which faculty and staff could be further encouraged by an explicit recognition of civic engagement in principle and in the distribution of valued rewards. Such recognition might take the form of more explicitly valuing the scholarship of application, promoting project-oriented course-work or capstone experiences, developing a more robust internship program, increasing the number of service-learning projects and better integrating such co-curricular experiences into the curriculum, and the like. The university might also understand its inventory of scientific equipment to be a resource to be shared with the local community, with faculty and students collaborating directly with business firms, government agencies, or non-profit organizations. Charging a fee to cover consumables and partially offset service, maintenance and other equipment costs can be an economically viable alternative to users who are freed from the need for a large capital equipment expense.

At the same time, regardless of the path or paths that the university ultimately pursues to achieve its goals in civic engagement, it must be mindful of the political and communitarian consequences of its choices. All of us in higher education share the responsibility of helping the millennium generation and their successors chart a course for the future where our democratic

values of free-speech, tolerance, neighborliness and accountability coexist supportively with the economic virtues of prudent risk-taking and the need to be responsible stewards of our fragile environment. One of the greatest lessons we can model is how to deal with failure. New ideas, by their very nature, often fail to achieve desired results or come with unanticipated consequences. By trying out new ideas, the university places value on entrepreneurship: that is, taking a risk in pursuit of its passion. By learning from its experiences, it reinforces its fundamental role as a learning institution and models the appropriate way to deal with success and failure. These too are lessons in civic engagement.

F. Relationship with Northwest Technical College

BSU has what is best described as a partnership with Northwest Technical College which is also located in Bemidji. Approximately 6 years ago NTC aligned with BSU even though the two institutions have clearly distinct missions. NTC benefits from the relationship by receiving additional student services such as use of recreational activities, library resources, intramural programming, as well as some sharing of speciality lab space on the BSU Campus. Also NTC receives a variety of support services such as human resources, payroll administration, information technology, and a variety of financial support services. The chief academic officer at NTC is a dean and the position reports directly to the BSU president. BSU acts as the fiscal agent for NTC and shares in the state allocation for the services it renders to NTC. In addition, NTC also receives some course work from BSU. Personnel at both institutions report that the relationship is highly beneficial. One area of concern for the team is that none of this partnership is currently documented by a contract or a memorandum of agreement. This being the case the partnership is highly dependent on the personnel in place now and would be very vulnerable to changes in key personnel. While it is recognized that it may be a difficult task, BSU is strongly encouraged to formalize this relationship through a contract or memorandum of agreement.

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

The alignment of the institutional mission with its planning and strategic directions holds great promise for the future of the university.

Partnerships with the community are exemplary and could serve as models for others.

The approaches to branding the university serve to catalyze initiatives designed to advance the university's distinctiveness.

WORKSHEET ON FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

INSTRUCTIONS

For each component of the Federal Compliance Program, there are two sample responses on which the team can rely:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance. [Optional Comments]

-or-

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has additional substantive comments. See Criterion X.

I. **EVALUATION OF FEDERAL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

The team verifies that it has reviewed each component of the Federal Compliance Program by reviewing each item below. Generally, if the team finds substantive issues in these areas and relates such issues to the institution's fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation, such discussion should be handled in appropriate sections of the Assurance Section of the Team Report or highlighted as such in the appropriate AQIP Quality Checkup Report.

A. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs (or that there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).

Response:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

B. Student Complaints

The institution has a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints for the three years prior to the visit.

Response:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

C. Transfer Policies

The institution has demonstrated it appropriately disclose its transfer policies to students and to the public. The policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.

Response:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

D. Verification of Student Identity

The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education.

Response:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

E. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities

The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program. The team has reviewed these materials and has found no cause for concern regarding the institution's administration or oversight of its Title IV responsibilities.

1. *General Program Requirements:*

The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the U.S. Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.

2. *Financial Responsibility Requirements:*

The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.

3. *Default Rates, Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information, Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies:*

The institution has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.

4. *Contractual Relationships:*

The institution has presented evidence of its contracts with non-accredited third party providers of 25-50 percent of the academic content of any degree or certificate programs.

Response:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

F. Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its

accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.

Response:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

G. Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards

The institution has documented that it discloses its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence. **Note that if the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is currently under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action from, any other federally recognized accreditor in the past five years, the team must address this in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report and provide its rationale for recommending Commission status in light of this information.**

Response:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

H. Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment

The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments. The team has evaluated any comments received and completed any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments. **Note that if the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comment relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report.**

Response:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

II. INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWED BY THE TEAM:

Bemidji State University Updated Undergraduate Catalog, 2009-10

Bemidji State University Updated Graduate Catalog, 2009-10

Bemidji State University Class Schedule, Spring 2010

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 5.11: Tuition and Fees and Guideline 5.11.1.2: Differential Course and Program Tuition

BSU Student Handbook, including Student Complaint and Grievance Policy and Process, Academic Progress Policy, Authorized Excused Absences, General Policies on Grading

Office of Academic Affairs, Record of Student Complaints

Student Complaint Log, Office of the Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment, 2007-2010

Finance and Administration, Student Complaint Log

Cohort Default Rate History List, Bemidji State University, National Student Loan Data System

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 3.21: Undergraduate Course Credit Transfer

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 5.22.1: Acceptable Use of Computers and Information Technology Resources

Letter from U.S. Department of Education, dated September 11, 2008, verifying Bemidji State University is in compliance with Title IV requirements

State of Minnesota, Financial Compliance Report on Federally Assisted Programs for the Year Ended June 30, 2008.

BSU Annual Security Report

Public Notices of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit and Third Party comment in publications and one letter of comment from the public

*Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS*

INSTITUTION and STATE: Bemidji State University, MN

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW (from ESS): Comprehensive Evaluation Visit

DATES OF REVIEW: 3/22/10 - 3/24/10

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

DEGREES AWARDED: A, B, M

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: International degree delivery is limited to the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration at HELP University College/HELP Academy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS: The Commission's Streamlined Review Process is only available for offering the Master of Special Education degree in Casper, WY or existing degree programs at new sites within the state of Minnesota.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: No prior Commission approval required.
Change

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

OTHER VISITS SCHEDULED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Focused Visit in 2012-2013 on Evidence of Student Learning

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1999 - 2000

YEAR FOR NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2009 - 2010

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2019-2020

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: Bemidji State University, MN

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation _____ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

	Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate		
Associate	2	
Bachelors	70	
Programs leading to Graduate		
Masters	15	
Specialist	0	
First		
Professional		
Doctoral	0	

Off-Campus Activities

<p>In-State:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Campuses: Additional Locations:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Course Locations:</p>	<p>Present Activity:</p> <p>None Alexandria (Alexandria Technical College) ; Cambrige (Anoka Ramsey Community College) ; Coon Rapids (Anoka Ramsey Community College) ; Hibbing (Arrowhead University Center) ; Red Lake (Bemidji State University) ; St. Paul (Metro State University) ; Warroad (Marvin Windows and Doors)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6</p>	<p>Recommended Change: (+ or -)</p>
<p>Out-of-State:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Campuses: Additional Locations: Course Locations:</p>	<p>Present Wording:</p> <p>None Casper, WY (Natrona County School District) None</p>	<p>Recommended Change: (+ or -)</p>
<p>Out-of-USA:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Campuses:</p>	<p>Present Wording:</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Recommended Change: (+ or -)</p>

Additional Locations:	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Help University College/Help Academy)
Course Locations:	None

Distance Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

Bachelor - 13.1202 Elementary Education and Teaching (BS in Elementary Education) offered via Internet; Bachelor - 14.35 Industrial Engineering (BAS Applied Engineering) offered via Internet; Bachelor - 15.0612 Industrial Technology/Technician (BAS in Technology Management) offered via Internet; Bachelor - 43.0104 Criminal Justice/Safety Studies (BS Criminal Justice) offered via Internet; Bachelor - 52.02 Business Administration, Management and Operations (BS Business Administration) offered via Internet; Master - 13.01 Education, General (MS in Education) offered via Internet; Master - 13.0301 Curriculum and Instruction (Master of Education) offered via Internet; Master - 13.1001 Special Education and Teaching, General (Master of Science in Special Education) offered via Internet; Master - 15.15 Engineering-Related Fields (MS in Industrial Technology) offered via Internet

Recommended Change:

(+ or -)

Correspondence Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

None