



NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DR. CAROL BROWN, PRESIDENT

2011 SELF-STUDY REPORT FOR THE MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

CO-CHAIRS EDWIN TRATHEN AND SHIR FILLER

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MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PROCESS AND ITS LESSONS

While the Middle States accreditation mandate provides a stimulus for self-study, North Country Community College has long been engaged in a process of self-reflection, of which the last three years have been a particularly intensive period. Since the inception of the self-study process in 2008, the administration of the College has shifted significantly with vacancies in two major administrative positions: Vice President of Academic Affairs and President of the College. After the retirement of long-time President Gail Rogers Rice in 2008, Interim President Fred Smith guided the self-study process through the resignation of Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) Tom Finch and the ensuing leadership of Interim VPAA Joseph Keegan. The process continued under President Carol Brown and the recent hiring of VPAA Carole Richardson. Due to these transitions in leadership, NCCC was granted a year extension on its self-study process. The result has been a long but exciting period of self-reflection with the opportunity to take immediate action on issues important to the success of the College.

When the self-study began, Co-Chairs Tom Finch and Vice President of Enrollment and Student Services Ed Trathen worked with President Rice to choose working committees to study each standard. They chose a comprehensive design and grouped standards together to integrate all aspects of the College's operations. There were committees for Standards 1 and 6, Standards 2 and 3, Standards 4 and 5, Standards 8 and 9, Standard 10, Standards 11-13, and Standards 7 and 14. Each committee created a list of questions and researched the answers, laying the groundwork for the seven chapters of this document.

Most of the initial research was done and committee reports completed by the fall of 2009. When VPAA Tom Finch resigned in spring 2009, Assistant Professor of English and former Assessment Coordinator Shir Filler took his place as co-chair. Assistant Professor Filler was also designated to write the report. Ms Filler compiled the committee reports, and successive drafts were reviewed by the Steering Committee (made up of the chairs of all the standards committees) as well as by the College community. During the Steering Committee reviews, many issues identified in the report were addressed and given to appropriate people and groups for action. As a result, the report has been almost completely rewritten to encompass as many changes as possible that have come about during the self-study process.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE COLLEGE

After forty-four years of service, NCCC is entering the productive prime of its life. Despite dealing with an aging infrastructure on its main campus in Saranac Lake, the College is moving forward with upgrading its technology, its processes, and its human capital to improve course delivery and accomplishment of its overall mission. In 2010, *The Washington Monthly* named NCCC as the number one community college in New York State and number 22 in the country, based on a number of indicators, from student satisfaction as measured by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement to graduation and retention rates. This was a great honor, and it speaks to the ability of this small College's dedicated employees to leverage limited resources into great results.

Since 2005, NCCC has seen tremendous growth, not only in enrollment, but also in strength and resourcefulness. The following is a sampling of many of the important developments that have occurred in the past six years, all of which are discussed in more detail in the body of this report.

Strategic Planning

In January 2010, the College systematically examined and revised its Mission, Vision, and Values. As of January 2011, the College has agreed upon seven Strategic Directions for the next three years. Institutional goals and strategies for achieving those directions have been developed for the coming year. Currently, each division of the College is working to create its own goals and strategies to further implement the institutional priorities at each level of operation. Assessment plans for each strategy are incorporated.

College Senate

After a three-year process of collaboration, the College Senate was instituted in fall 2009. It has become a forum for communication among administration, faculty, and staff. Several initiatives have led to policy changes and recommendations. A notable achievement was the development of an Academic Integrity Policy which was approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2010 and implemented College-wide in January 2011.

Curriculum Development

New programs added since 2005 include the following:

A.S. Environmental Science – 2010

Certificate in Health Science – 2010

A.S. Fine Arts – Studio Art – 2009

A.A.S. Nursing – Ticonderoga – 2009

Certificate in Practical Nursing – Ticonderoga – 2006

New Campus

In 2005, the College opened its new campus in Ticonderoga. This state-of-the-art facility was funded and built by the NCCC Foundation, which leases it to the College. Enrollment in Ticonderoga has increased from 83 in fall 2004 to 176 in fall 2009.

Board of Trustees Rejuvenation

Since 2009 Board of Trustees members have been participating in retreats for self reflection, goal setting, and assessment. Members have been active in College activities and particularly in the work sessions (World Cafés) in which the Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Plan have been developed. In 2011, the Board established goals directly aligned with the new Strategic Plan.

Faculty Handbook

After years without an updated handbook, the Faculty Handbook was revised and approved by the faculty and the Board of Trustees. More than a year of faculty discussion and work by the Vice President of Academic Affairs went into the document, which is a “living document,” distributed in a loose-leaf binder to facilitate revisions when appropriate.

Adjunct Faculty Workshops

In January 2011, the first workshops in many years for adjunct faculty were held. These workshops introduced the adjuncts to administrators and coordinators of most departments. Adjuncts received a copy of the Faculty Handbook; information on assessment, the student

profile, and the Middle States evaluation process was presented; and there was an opportunity for questions and feedback. The plan is to revise the workshops to include more participation on the part of the adjuncts and to continue to hold the workshops at the beginning of each semester. Adjunct faculty participate on College committees, task forces, and the College Senate.

Employee Evaluation Protocols

Beginning in the summer of 2009, faculty developed a new system of evaluation of both teaching faculty and non-teaching professionals (NTP). This involved the resurrection of individual Professional Growth Plans as well as the creation of a Peer Observation Pool to do classroom observations. These new procedures are detailed in the Faculty Handbook. Simultaneously, supervisors of classified staff were trained in evaluation techniques and required to do regular evaluations of their personnel. A new system of evaluation of administrators and Board of Trustees members was also implemented.

New Student Registration

As a result of information gleaned from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, administered in 2009, the College has changed the process of new student registration to better orient and welcome new students to the College.

Positions Created

A Human Resources Director was hired in spring 2010. Prior to that point, issues of salaries and benefits, administration of contracts, and hiring of personnel were scattered among several offices with a resulting lack of structure and consistency. Currently, policies and procedures are being codified and enacted to ensure fairness and compliance with all contracts. A Technology Help Desk Technician was hired in fall 2010 to provide better and faster assistance to students having difficulty with their Student Portal access and to allow the Assistant Dean of Institutional Research and Support to focus more on Institutional Research and overall College technology issues.

Facilities Master Planning

From 2007-2010, the entire College community as well as the Saranac Lake community and an architectural firm created a Master Plan for renovation of the Saranac Lake campus. While funding for the project has been delayed due to financial constraints at the state and county level. The planning process has resulted in a renovation plan to significantly improve the College and its service to the students and the community.

College-Wide Goals for Student Learning

College-wide conversations on desired learning outcomes for all two-year graduates began in fall 2010. In spring 2011, the resulting list of College-Wide Goals for Student Learning is being revised and will be taken to the College Senate for approval. The timeline is for all divisions and departments to have an assessment plan in place for the College-wide Goals by May 2011 and to begin implementing the plans in fall 2011.

College Bridge Program Expansion

The College partners with area high schools to offer dual-enrollment courses in which students can earn credit toward both their high school and college degrees. Enrollment has grown from 349 students in fall 2005 to 965 students in fall 2010. From 42 courses offered in 13 area schools in 2005, the program has expanded to 195 courses offered in 27 schools, some outside

the sponsoring counties. The College is expanding the partnerships to ensure higher high school graduation rates.

International Travel Course

The 2003 SUNY Student Opinion Survey indicated that NCCC students desired an international learning experience, so the International Travel course, with both one-credit and three-credit options was approved as a humanities course in 2006. It has been cross-listed as a sociology course. Students and faculty have traveled to Italy, Costa Rica, Spain, France, and Ireland over the winterim session, increasing their cultural awareness, which is critical in the College's rural, homogeneous area.

Ongoing Excellence

The aforementioned new developments are exciting and are moving the College forward quickly, and the day-to-day work of providing quality education has continued through it all. Like any other organization, NCCC has its issues, but the parallel processes of this Self-Study and the revision of the Mission, Vision, Values, Strategic Plan, and College-Wide Goals for Student Learning have led to the improvement of operations in many areas. The College has faculty, administration, and staff who are devoted to student success, and the results are shown in the higher than average graduation and retention rates as well as assessment results such as high licensure exam pass rates for professional programs, transfer acceptances and retention, and student employment success.

COLLEGE HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Sponsored by Essex and Franklin counties, North Country Community College (NCCC) was founded in 1967 to provide public post-secondary educational opportunities and services within its 3,514 square mile service area. NCCC operates as a unit of the State University of New York (SUNY), but as a community college, its governance and its funding differ significantly from those of the 34 state-operated SUNY institutions.

NCCC shares mission elements with all 30 SUNY community colleges, including the following objectives:

- *Access* — providing universal access to higher education — perhaps the definitive mission element for community colleges — by removing economic, social, geographic, and scheduling barriers;
- *Transfer* — preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions;
- *Career preparation* — preparing students for a first career, a career change, or career advancement;
- *Basic skills and developmental education* — assisting under-prepared students in acquiring the basic skills and knowledge that will allow them to advance to college-level work; and
- *Workforce/economic development and community service* — meeting the educational aspirations of educated adults, employees of local business and industry, and professionals seeking continuing certification, as well as local workforce development needs, including the provision of programs, events, and services for community organizations and the general public.

While NCCC embraces these mission elements, it also achieves significant distinctiveness by the College's unique implementation of its mission as well as its particular contextual conditions. NCCC's individuality is defined in part by the following factors:

- Location, which makes the College one of the few options for residents in the region who desire access to higher education and also attracts students from other, more urban, environments;
- Small classes and close faculty-student contact; and
- Size of the College's service area, the largest in square mileage and lowest in population within the State University system, necessitating a main campus and two additional instructional sites located two and a half hours from each other.

TEN YEARS OF CHANGE

NCCC's last decennial accreditation review, in 2000, found the College still reeling from five years of shrinking budgets due to loss of state funding for inmate education and lifelong learning courses, both of which had been significant programs for the College. In the 2005 Periodic Review Report (PRR), the College reported that its budget was growing again. Since 2005, the annual budget has almost doubled, to more than \$12 million, and the College has made numerous improvements in infrastructure as well as teaching and learning. In addition to the handicapped-accessible and aesthetically pleasing campus in Malone, which has resulted in an increased presence for NCCC in Malone, and consequent increased enrollment, NCCC also built a brand new campus in Ticonderoga, which opened in 2005, replacing an aging, inadequate storefront. Enrollment has jumped in Ticonderoga as well, especially since the inception of an LPN program on that campus in fall 2006 and an RN program in 2009¹. This growth fulfills plans reported in the 2005 PRR. Both the Malone and Ticonderoga sites were funded through entrepreneurial use of the NCCC Foundation. (See Chapter 3)

Three other new programs have been instituted in recent years. An A.S. degree in Environmental Science is one of the latest new transfer programs, preceded by an A.S. in Fine Arts – Studio Art. A certificate in Health Sciences was approved in 2010. Along with creating new programs, faculty and administration are continually working to increase the rigor of existing programs through the process of program review as well as assessment of individual courses and NCCC's entire general education curriculum, staying in line with SUNY's mandates for general education, assessment, and review of the majors.

The reach of NCCC programs is enhanced by advanced computer technology. Currently, the College offers a variety of asynchronous, web-based courses. In 2005, the College began to offer courses by video conference between Malone and Saranac Lake. Since then, the number of video courses has grown, and Ticonderoga is now included, as some classes are broadcast to all three campuses simultaneously².

These new campuses, new programs, educational technologies, and increases in the quality of the College's offerings have all contributed to increased enrollment, and the College has created more dual enrollment partnerships with area high schools through the College Bridge Program. NCCC now operates Bridge Programs in 28 area high schools and BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) programs, including 18 schools and four BOCES programs in the two sponsoring counties, as well as several in St. Lawrence and Hamilton counties (up from six high schools total in 2000). These programs permit eligible high school students to take college credit courses at their own secondary schools or BOCES centers. In the fall 2010 semester, the College Bridge Program registered 967 students³.

¹ See Appendix A - 2009-10 Institutional Profile

² See Appendix B - List of Distance Learning and Video Conference Courses

³ See Appendix C - Summary of Bridge Enrollment 2005-2010

NCCC: AN “ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE”

The gains in enrollment and budget that have occurred in the past 10 years resulted from a college that has been both creative and entrepreneurial. The positive results of this entrepreneurship, in addition to those listed above, have included increased empowerment of individuals to focus on areas of interest to them that also benefited the College. Several faculty members responded by taking the lead on creating new programs; others led initiatives related to improving student advisement and general education assessment. Departments became smaller and more focused on individual areas of curriculum, with designated coordinators of each smaller unit rather than overall chairs or deans for larger areas. This has resulted in swifter communication and action when necessary. A culture of immediate communication, both electronic and in-person, has been fostered.

The ability to make changes quickly and informally empowered many faculty and staff to take charge of different areas. One faculty member created a standing Advisement Committee to find ways to better help students. Another faculty member requested the creation of a part-time Assessment Coordinator position and took oversight of general education assessment. Other faculty pursued creation of new programs, with the programs listed above as the result.

On the other hand, many formal procedures began to erode. One example of this was the shared governance system. As reported in the 2002 Follow-Up Report and the 2005 PRR, the College was implementing a system consisting of an All-College Assembly and a College Council. There were many standing committees working on individual aspects of governance, such as Curriculum, Assessment, and Campus and Student Life. While the committees continued to do good work on their own, all-College assemblies as part of a governance system did not last, and until 2009 there was no overarching governance structure to coordinate the work of all the committees, to recommend policy, or to be the conduit for communication between the administration, staff and faculty.

Beginning in 2006, a group of faculty worked with staff and administration for three years to craft a College Senate that was implemented in fall 2009⁴. The Senate enfolds the existing committees and embeds them in a more formal structure. Based on research into other colleges' systems, as well as NCCC's own past successes and failures, and created by faculty from the bottom up, the College Senate has achieved a level of support from the College community that was not evident with the previous College Council and Assembly.

A similar situation occurred with strategic planning and budgeting. A Strategic Plan⁵ was formulated in 2002; however, the process to create it was not representative. In January 2010, a new process began, working in tandem with the Self-Study process as well as the College Senate, in order to create a Strategic Plan that is representative of the vision of the College as a whole. This plan is almost entirely complete as of January 2011. Additionally, departments have had more and more input into the budget process over the last five years. In the coming year, the budget process will be tied to the Strategic Plan in a more formal manner.

In education, as in business, government and other fields, there is always a pendulum that swings from one extreme of practice to another. Until 2008, when long-time President Gail Rogers Rice

⁴ See Appendix D - College Senate By-Laws

⁵ 2002 Strategic Plan

retired, NCCC had been practicing on the entrepreneurial, informal, and spontaneous end of the swing. This allowed the College to not only recover from a huge loss of revenue but also to spring forward in many areas. However, the College's positive trajectory in this direction reached its limit, and now, for the foreseeable future, NCCC will be swinging back toward more formalized processes of planning, governance, and assessment. Fall 2009 saw implementation of the first steps in this new direction as the College community came together to create new statements of Mission, Vision, and Values as the foundation of a new Strategic Plan. In fall 2010, the Strategic Plan was fleshed out, and new College-Wide Goals for Student Learning were drafted. Every day, seemingly, a new initiative is begun or another step is taken toward improving the status quo. Assessment has become an increasingly important part of each new initiative. Change is becoming more data driven, and the effectiveness of each new step is being or will be assessed with an eye toward further refinement.

This Self-Study report is a snapshot of the College's current position with an indication of the vectors that are propelling its progress toward a new paradigm. This progress has become so rapid that it is difficult to document. By the time this report is read by the evaluation team, many of the suggestions and recommendations will have already been implemented with the new Strategic Plan and assessment goals. This Self-Study process has allowed the College to do the self-assessment required to establish these new structures, and formative assessment of the new initiatives is ongoing even as they are implemented.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

2002 Strategic Plan

CHAPTER 1: STANDARDS 1 AND 6

STANDARD 1: MISSION AND GOALS

The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.

In 2009-10, the College undertook a process to redefine its Mission, Vision, and Values. The process has been deliberate and inclusive and began with determining the bedrock values of the College as seen by its internal community, as well as a vision for its future. While the wording of the mission and the scope of the corresponding institutional goals have changed to better focus on current priorities, what came out during the process of rethinking these statements shows that all along the faculty and staff of the College have not strayed from the fundamental goal of providing a high quality education to all those who seek it. This was confirmed in August 2010 when the *Washington Monthly* ranked NCCC as the number one community college in New York State and number 22 in the country. This ranking was based on several indicators, including the 2009 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), which reported that 79% of students rated their NCCC experience as good or excellent and 87% would recommend the College to a friend or family member.

The Revised Mission, Vision, and Values, adopted in April 2010, are as follows:

Mission

North Country Community College provides an exceptional learning and community building experience for all who seek it, challenging and supporting all individuals in their educational and personal growth.

Vision

North Country Community College will be a leader in higher education. We will provide a quality education that enhances opportunity, growth, and success for our students and community.

Values

- 1. Honest, Open and Timely Communication*
- 2. Shared Governance*
- 3. Mutual Respect for Diversity and Individuality*
- 4. Accountability and Integrity*
- 5. Openness to Change*
- 6. Transparency*
- 7. Intellectual Curiosity*

This Self-Study process began prior to several major changes in the College's leadership and then was extended a year. Much of the research on which this report is based was done early in the

process, before the new Mission was completed, and thus this chapter mainly addresses the mission and goals that have guided the College up to now, as follows:

North Country Community College is committed to providing, within Essex and Franklin counties, an innovative, challenging, supportive environment where the intellectual, career, personal, and creative aspirations of all interested individuals can be realized.

The College promotes a desire for excellence, a concern for lifelong learning, and an ability to adapt to a changing society. The College offers programs in:

- *Liberal Arts and Sciences*
- *Vocational, Technical, and Business Careers*
- *Lifelong Learning and Community Services*

There is a great degree of congruence between the new mission statement and the old, with the primary emphasis of both being to support and challenge individuals in their educational quests.

Up to the 2009-2010 academic year, NCCC's mission statement had remained essentially the same, with few changes in wording, since the inception of the College in 1967. After the 2005 Periodic Review Report, in response to SUNY requirements, an overall assessment of the mission was undertaken, and this resulted in the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the College and SUNY under which the College is currently operating. Also, in 2008, during the first phase of the College's three-phase master planning process, the planning committee looked at the mission language but did not recommend any changes. The mission is assessed in various review processes that occur continually in different areas of the College's operations. These will be addressed in following chapters.

MISSION GOALS

As of spring 2011, NCCC has adopted seven Strategic Directions as part of its new Strategic Plan. However, up to now, the College has been working toward the previous mission goals. For the purpose of this analysis, these goals have been grouped to correspond with statements within the mission itself. The pre-2010 mission specifically discusses helping individuals with their "intellectual, career, personal, and creative aspirations."

Intellectual and Career Goals:

Goal: The College will provide post-secondary educational opportunities and related services to residents of Essex and Franklin counties and to others who can benefit from them.

Goal: The College will provide degree and certificate programs that enable students to continue their education at other post-secondary institutions, to find gainful employment, or to enhance occupational skills.

Goal: The College will provide services that enable students to clarify their current and future educational, vocational, personal, and social goals.

The College provides transfer and career degrees that prepare students to enter a four-year institution or go directly into the workforce. Examples of career opportunity degrees are A.A.S. Nursing, A.A.S. Massage Therapy, and A.A.S. Business. Students can complete a program or certificate at NCCC, increasing their body of knowledge, employment opportunities, and financial

independence.⁶ According to data gathered in the annual Alumni Survey, nearly all (96.28%) students who graduated in 2008-2009 were either employed or continuing their education within six months of graduation. Thirty-eight percent of students who were employed were working in their field of study, with only 21% of graduates employed in a field not directly related to their degree program. The average annual salary a year after graduation was \$26,490.69⁷.

NCCC has good relationships with many four-year colleges, and those relationships enable positive transfer experiences for students. Additionally, SUNY has been strengthening the transfer relationship between community colleges and four-year schools within the system by enforcing a transfer guarantee for students with A.A. or A.S. degrees as well as improving course-by-course transferability. SUNY has a website that provides course equivalencies among all schools, and the NCCC website links to that resource. Students who anticipate transferring to another institution are guided to seek more detailed information from the career/transfer counselors on each instructional site or the appropriate department chair. Careful course selection and planning in consultation with a faculty advisor are required in order to prepare for transfer to upper-division study.

The College provides general transfer resources for various post-NCCC educational opportunities⁸. The Office of Campus and Student Life houses a variety of reference books and offers guidance toward internet sites profiling careers as well as colleges of various sizes, locations, cost, academic programs, athletics, extracurricular activities, and residence halls. The College also provides information to help students assess their personal interests, skills and values; research information about careers; and prepare to enter the workforce. Two online services NCCC subscribes to are ACT Discover and Optimal Resume. The efficacy of these offerings is assessed through the SUNY Alumni Survey, and data is collected and analyzed by the Records Office. As of the 2009 IPEDS Report, NCCC's annual transfer rate was 21%, which is above the median of 15% for the 20 comparison schools in the report. NCCC's 2009-10 Institutional Profile reports a transfer rate of 33% for the fall 2006 cohort. (See chapters 4, 6, and 7)

According to the 2009 CCSSE, students indicated that they had spoken with an instructor or advisor about their career plans very often (9%), often (22%), sometimes (44%), and only 25% said never. Sixty-two percent of students indicated that their experience at NCCC had helped them develop clearer career goals "very much" or "quite a bit". Only 12 percent said "very little". Eighty-one percent said the college had helped them gain at least some information about career opportunities. On the other hand, despite the fact that 78% said career counseling services were at least somewhat important, only 27% of students said they used the services sometimes or often. The Office of Campus and Student Life plans to do more to educate academic advisors about these services.

Goal: The College will provide appropriate sites and outreach services at a variety of locations to residents who cannot attend the Saranac Lake Campus. The College will ensure that all such sites provide equal quality instruction, access to services appropriate to the nature of the sites, and consistency of programs offered at more than one site.

The College provides three locations over an area that exceeds 3,000 square miles to meet the needs of residents and non-residents in Essex and Franklin counties and the surrounding area. Diverse populations and locations are accommodated with evening classes, video conferencing, and online

⁶ NCCC.edu, "Degree Programs"

⁷ NCCC.edu, "Statistics"

⁸ NCCC Catalog and "Transfer Services on NCCC.edu"

distance learning classes. In programs such as Human Services, Chemical Dependency Counseling, Criminal Justice, Business, and Computer Graphics, the primary full-time instructors regularly travel between two or among all three sites to teach required courses. Faculty in other disciplines frequently travel to other campuses as well to bring diversity of course offerings to the branch sites. Faculty who teach video conferencing courses travel to the different locations to alternate broadcast sites and give all students the opportunity to interact with the instructor in person whenever possible. The Office of Campus and Student Life coordinates programming so that events can be held at all campuses and/or broadcast to all three if physical travel of the program or performer is not possible. (See Chapter 4)

The College offers programs, courses, and certificates that meet the need of the surrounding areas' businesses and individuals and has adjusted programs and certificates as the environment changes. For example, as of fall 2009, the College expanded to offer the RN program at the Ticonderoga campus to meet the need of this federally designated medically underserved region. Saranac Lake offers the Wilderness Recreation Leadership program to train students for local opportunities in outdoor recreation in the Adirondacks. Students are prepared to work in various recreational settings such as guiding, wilderness therapy, tourism, environmental education, and specialized retail.

Currently, enrollment in off-campus programs is growing rapidly. NCCC has been offering community training courses for businesses and institutions such as St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment Center and the Federal Correctional Institution in Ray Brook. Since 2009, the College has offered instruction to inmates at Bare Hill Correctional Facility in Malone under a grant coordinated by Andrew McKee⁹. The College Bridge program provides access to college courses for high-performing students from area high schools and BOCES programs¹⁰.

Goal: The College will provide full and part-time admissions to appropriate programs to anyone with a high school or equivalent diploma or who is 18 years of age.

As stated on the College Website under Admissions and the Office of Enrollment Management:

The College's open rolling admissions policy seeks to be consistent with the purposes and philosophy of the College. With a high school or general equivalency diploma as a basic requirement, applicants will be admitted to a program offered by the College. Certain programs have special academic requirements, and the decision concerning admissions to these programs is based upon an evaluation of the applicant's academic and/or special achievements to date.... alternative programs will be offered to those students who do not meet these special requirements. Admission to North Country Community College is determined without regard to the applicant's race, color, creed, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation or marital status.

The College provides several registration opportunities at each campus prior to the start of each semester. At these sessions, students meet with faculty advisors to discuss their program and choose appropriate courses for the following semester. Students may change programs at that time, if it is

⁹ Inmate education five-year enrollment report

¹⁰ See Appendices A and C

appropriate. The one exception is in regard to admission to competitive programs in the Allied Health fields. (See Chapter 4)

Goal: The College will use and improve instructional techniques that accommodate student differences in learning rate and style, aptitude, and background.

In the classroom, instructors use many teaching methods, including lecture, PowerPoint, hands-on work, discussion, and group work in order to accommodate students' varied learning styles. The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) administers learning style inventories to interested students to enable them to plan their own best approach to classes. The fall 2010 New Student Orientation in Saranac Lake focused on learning styles. The LACs on all sites serve as resources for instructors seeking pedagogical techniques relating to working with different learning styles. Additionally, students can receive tutoring and support in specific subjects as well as general learning, study and test-taking skills so they can improve their grades in every course. The College provides ADA-504 accommodations to students with documented needs. The ADA-504 coordinator counsels qualifying students and matches them with services.

Goal: The College will provide continuing education and community service programs by offering credit and noncredit courses, events and activities.

In 2009-10, NCCC offered on-site training for eight different organizations and consortia, including several workshops at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino¹¹. The total number of participants in the workshops was 841. As noted earlier, on-site training is a growing revenue source for the College, in addition to providing a service to community organizations and businesses. This year NCCC is partnering with SUNY Canton to offer college courses at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino training center. Accounting I will be offered in spring 2011.

NCCC's Center for Lifelong Learning (CLL) is currently without a director. However, some courses and events are still being offered, with varying regularity, administered through the office of the VPAA as well as the Records Office. They include the following:

- Wilderness First Responder training
- Training for Akwesasne Mohawk Casino employees
- Proposed transition training for former Pfizer employees
- Adventure Education Series
- New York State Pre-Licensing Course
- Defensive Driving and Drinking Driving courses
- Personal enrichment courses in the arts
- Swimming /Children's Programs
- Holiday Craft Fair
- Hundreds of online courses through partnership with Ed2Go

Other events and activities are regularly offered by the Office of Campus and Student Life. These include lectures and artistic events such as readings by local and visiting authors as well as entertainment events for students, such as concerts, game shows, and crafts. Most of these are open to the community. Athletic events at the main campus are publicized and open to the public. Many community members follow NCCC's teams throughout their seasons. Students in SGA and various campus clubs perform community service by conducting food and toy drives. Nursing students give

¹¹ SUNY Workforce Development Report 2009-10

blood pressure and cancer self-screening clinics, and Massage Therapy students offer chair massages at community events such as the Lake Placid Ironman competition and to underserved populations such as nursing home residents, Native Americans at the Akwesasne Health Center, and cancer patients. The Saranac Lake campus offers flu shot clinics and regularly hosts American Red Cross blood drives in addition to teaming with Essex and Franklin counties' public health departments to provide emergency response training.

Goal: The College will promote a cooperative environment where all members of the College community have the opportunity to influence the operation of the institution.

Many committees (see below) have provided opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to influence the operation of the College. The following is an incomplete but representative list:

- Program Advisory Boards
- Campus Activity Boards (scheduling and funding campus programs)
- Athlete Mentoring Program (AMP) Committee
- Residence Hall Committee
- RAVE Committee (“Reducing Alcohol and Violent Experiences”)
- POWER Committee (encouraging wellness)
- Middle States Self-Study teams
- Search Committees (aiding in the hiring of staff at all levels)
- Safety Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- NCCC Association Board
- Master Plan Committee
- College Senate and Standing Committees

Since 2009, opportunities for staff and faculty to participate in decision making have increased. One example has been the process of developing the College's new mission, vision, and values statements as well as a new Strategic Plan. This process incorporated “World Cafés”¹² to gather input and shape the language of the final statements. Additionally, the College Senate was instituted in fall 2009. (See Chapter 3)

Academic departments are relatively autonomous. Faculty working within departments develop courses and programs and keep them updated. Departments put together their own course offerings for each semester and then work with the other departments to create balanced schedules for students and avoid conflicts. Coordinators have regular meetings with the VPAA to facilitate the sharing of information and to discuss issues and procedures relating to academics. See chapters 5 and 6.

An area that has been of concern with regard to shared decision making was the admission of students to competitive Allied Health programs. The directors and faculty in those programs perceived that admissions were being determined by the Office of Enrollment and Financial Aid without any departmental faculty input. However, in fall 2009, the VPAA facilitated the institution of a cooperative process in which program faculty and enrollment staff worked together to choose

¹² See Appendix E - Documentation on World Cafés

students, with the final decision resting with the VPAA rather than the Enrollment Office¹³. (See Chapter 7) This was done as a result of evaluations by program faculty that indicated that more factors needed to be taken into account in the admission process to better assure success for admitted students. These evaluations are now being used to better determine the fit of an applicant for a particular Allied Health program. For example, to gain admission to the A.A.S. Nursing program, students now have to complete not just biology but all their prerequisite courses with a 2.25/4.0 GPA, rather than just a 2.0. Also incoming A.A.S. Massage Therapy students in 2011 will need to submit documentation verifying that they have received at least one massage from a licensed massage therapist within the two years prior to admission. These requirements were updated in the NCCC catalog in 2010.

Student Life and Development Goals:

Goal: The College will provide a variety of social, cultural, health, and recreational programs to enhance the development of its students.

The College website states:

North Country Community College is fully committed to the belief that student development in social, cultural, athletic and recreational areas is an important part of its educational program. Students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular programs such as student government, clubs, intramurals, college activities and workshops. All extra-curricular programs are designed to foster this development.

Participation in on campus activities is an important part of the college experience at North Country. Clubs, organizations, sporting events, athletic teams, and our famous Winter Carnival and Ice Castle are just a few of the activities students find themselves doing when not involved in academic studies. If you don't see what you like, then we are here to help you start it!

Students are invited to participate in many of the committees listed earlier as well as the Student Government Association (SGA), campus clubs, and the College Senate. To encourage more participation, the Senate is exploring options for giving independent study credit to students who serve as representatives. The College has two honor societies that students may be invited to join, Phi Theta Kappa International and Lambda Nu for Radiologic Technology students. See Chapter 4 for a more complete description of student activities on the three sites.

Institutional Goals:

Goal: The College will assist in the professional development of faculty, staff and administrators to provide services appropriate to its students and community.

The College assists staff and faculty to further their professional development in various ways. Faculty are encouraged to attend off-site conferences as well as infrequent workshops on campus. Some money is made available, and time off is generally approved. According to VPAA Carole Richardson, \$200 from the VPAA budget is allocated per faculty member per year for voluntary attendance at workshops and conferences. If an individual is the College's official representative to a group, more money may be made available. Individual departments may budget their own funds. Also, by collaborating with other SUNY institutions, NCCC can provide financial assistance for staff and faculty to take courses at other SUNY schools. See Chapter 5. There is some concern about development opportunities available for non-faculty. The new College Senate Professional

¹³ See Appendix F and NCCC Catalog

Development Committee is working to increase development opportunities for staff at all levels and to ensure that funding decisions are equitable¹⁴.

There are opportunities for faculty to participate in initiatives at the SUNY level that can aid in professional development. For example, faculty member and former Interim VPAA Joe Keegan participated in SUNY's Strategic Planning Initiative, and other faculty members are serving on implementation teams for SUNY's strategic planning goals. One faculty member is on the team for "Innovative Instruction", which is charged with examining ways to improve the delivery of educational services throughout the system and state. The chair of the NCCC College Senate serves on the SUNY Shared Governance team and has attended governance workshops given by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and other related organizations.

Goal: The College will provide physical facilities appropriate to its mission and the nature of its service area.

Since 2000, through an innovative partnership with the NCCC Foundation, the College has built new campuses at both the Malone and Ticonderoga sites. These new facilities provide students at those sites, as well as members of those communities, "an innovative, challenging, supportive environment where the intellectual, career, personal, and creative aspirations of all interested individuals can be realized."

In 2000, the NCCC Foundation purchased and renovated buildings for the Malone campus, creating a comfortable and safe learning environment and establishing a permanent campus in Northern Franklin County. In 2003, the project was recognized by Niagara Mohawk, which awarded the NCCC Foundation the "National Renaissance Award." Included in the renovation was a hydropower generating plant. The Foundation brought the plant back on line, giving the College the ability to create and sell power. The purchase included 9+ acres of land which will allow for expansion of the campus in the future, should the need arise.

At Ticonderoga, the new campus also allows for expansion. The facility's upgrade provides space and accommodation for additional academic programs, including the LPN Certificate, which was instituted in fall 2006 and the RN which followed in 2009. The campus now affords the students at Ticonderoga a computer lab, library, and Learning Assistance Center with state-of-the-art technology. Enrollment at Ticonderoga has more than doubled since the new campus opened.

In recent years, the College has been involved in developing a Master Plan to update the facilities at the main campus in Saranac Lake. In fall 2008, the Master Plan was approved in concept by the sponsoring counties. The 2009-2010 academic year saw the hiring of JMZ Architects to create a more complete plan, which was unveiled in May 2010. The plan calls for a major building renovation expanding the main campus from its current 117,539 square feet of usable space. Currently, the maintenance department adapts the current space as possible and necessary, dividing or combining offices and classrooms to accommodate changes in staff and curriculum. Unfortunately, in fall 2010 the sponsoring counties rejected the proposed bond funding for the campus renovations. They expressed support for the College but cited the difficult economic times

¹⁴ Professional Development Survey Results

as the reason for their decision. They expressed willingness to take up the proposal again in the next budget cycle. See Chapter 2 for more about the Saranac Lake campus master plan¹⁵.

Goal: The College will operate in an efficient and accountable manner using innovations in affordable technology to gather, retrieve, and disseminate information required for effective decision-making.

Since 1997, the College has utilized the CAMS course management program. Use of the program has expanded each year, and the faculty and student portals are now heavily used to share information, enter and view grades, register students, teach distance learning courses, post employment information, manage parking and incident reports pertaining to students, and more. Online registration using CAMS speeds the process, permitting faculty and students to see available and closed courses in real time. It affords immediate access to information concerning degree requirements, helping to decrease errors in advisement. With all grade information being entered into the portal, it is now easier for the Records Office to extract data for required reports. For several years, some committee minutes have been posted to the portal by an administrator. In 2010, a “Committee Commons” area was added, in which committees can post their own minutes and reports. This has not been fully utilized, as the Asst. Dean of Institutional Research needs to train staff to do this and physically place folders on their computers, and his time is already over-allocated. (See Chapter 7)

The College has expanded its video conference and teleconference capabilities, increasing bandwidth significantly in 2010, thus allowing more collaboration among faculty and staff at the different campuses, as well as more communication among faculty, staff, and students and a greater variety of courses to be offered. There have been issues with these technologies, as well as with campus e-mail, portal, and telephone systems, and these are addressed as they arise. Currently, a request for proposals (RFP) has been issued for a new telephone system, which ultimately will allow video conferencing from individual offices to enable more efficient meetings among staff at different sites.

Goal: The College will continually review, evaluate and update its mission statement, goals, objectives, programs, and master plan to assess its future directions

As noted earlier, a comprehensive update of the mission statement has been completed as of spring 2010. Fall 2010 was devoted to developing new Strategic Directions for the College. Together, these have evolved into a full-fledged Strategic Plan. As discussed above, the College has been updating its Master Plan for the Saranac Lake Campus. Updates for Malone and Ticonderoga will occur once the Saranac Lake project is underway. Additionally, each academic program is subject to a review, including a self-study and external assessment, every five to seven years, per SUNY guidelines (see chapters 6 and 7). These program reviews often culminate in significant improvements.

¹⁵ Also see the architects’ presentation of conceptual plan for the campus.

STANDARD 6: INTEGRITY

In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.

The greatest measure of the College's integrity is its adherence to its own stated mission, vision, and values. The new statements were developed over the past year, but the values are not new. They are ones the College faculty and staff have always striven to uphold.

Assessment of Integrity

Institutional integrity is assessed in various ways among all areas of the College to ensure that the College is meeting its educational obligations. General education assessments are administered and reported on by departments on a staggered three-year cycle, according to SUNY guidelines. Departmental program assessment occurs every three to seven years, depending upon SUNY guidelines and outside licensing agencies for particular programs. Professional advisory boards and external reviewers are utilized for their expertise. Career and technical education (CTE) programs are evaluated yearly in compliance with the Carl D. Perkins federal grant funding guidelines.

Evaluation of all staff, faculty, and administrators had been intermittent for several years, but in 2009-10 a formal system of evaluation for all professional staff, including administrators, faculty, and management confidential employees has been put into place. For faculty this includes classroom observations by peers as well as a goal-setting and assessment process with the VPAA. Student evaluations have generally been performed in at least one class per semester for each instructor. At the same time, a new system of evaluation of CSEA staff was put into place, and supervisors were trained to administer it. These standardized and regular evaluation procedures are ensuring equity in treatment and promotion. The Board of Trustees has also been doing more self-assessment to ensure that its members are meeting their obligations to the College. (See Chapter 5)

Outside of instructional assessment, surveys such as the SUNY Student Opinion Survey and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) provide feedback from the students' perspective. Programs run by the Office of Campus and Student Life are evaluated with surveys of participants/attendees following the events. New initiatives, such as Pre-Allied Health Seminars, new student registrations, and changes in the admission process to Allied Health programs, now have assessment built into their processes, which are continually updated based on the findings.

Integrity with Students

The above assessments of instruction, programs, faculty, and student engagement demonstrate that NCCC has high standards for students and that the students rise to the challenge. In the 2009 CCSSE, 62% of students reported spending more than six hours per week preparing for class, and 36% reported more than 11 hours, which gives an indirect measure of the rigor of class work. NCCC students were above the mean of the CCSSE cohort in this regard. Most students reported that their experience at NCCC helped them to write and speak clearly and effectively, to think critically and analytically, and to acquire a broad general education. These results are backed up by more direct measures of student learning, including the results of the ACT CAAP Critical Thinking

exam which showed NCCC students with thinking skills above the mean for the cohort of two-year college students who took the exam in 2008¹⁶.

NCCC's strong results on these assessments were recognized by the *Washington Monthly* in its annual ranking of colleges nationwide. In 2010, NCCC was ranked at number 22 out of 650 community colleges nationwide. The College received the highest ranking of any New York State community college on the list. The list is compiled with benchmarking data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and four-year federal graduation rates. The categories for rankings included learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, support for learning and four-year graduation rates.

With regard to student-faculty interaction and support for learning, students receive many e-mails from the College regarding important dates, student activities, new courses and other valuable information. They also can easily contact their advisors or other faculty members, most of whom are in their offices many more than their required hours, and generally answer e-mails throughout the day and evening. Students can access their grades, schedules, financial aid and billing information and more on the student portal. When issues arise with academics, financial aid, or other concerns, students are encouraged to contact their advisors, or an office in charge related to those concerns. The College website shares information on how to contact all College officers and various offices.

The continual upgrading of video conference technology has the goal of increasing the integrity of video course offerings. As of fall 2010, there were still problems with equipment not functioning properly and lack of coordination between the transmitting and receiving sites, but these are being addressed. For example, a technical support person was hired and is now available on the Malone site to address issues there. In January 2011, the College constituted a Technology Advisory Board to assess current technological issues and make recommendations.

With regard to student complaints, formal and informal procedures are outlined in the College catalog under the Code of Conduct. If students do not feel their complaints are addressed at the initial stage, they are directed to file a grievance. In discussions and e-mail communication with the President's Office, Academic Affairs, Enrollment and Student Services it was found that in both the academic and student services areas of the College, most student complaints are handled at a low level and resolved before they reach the grievance stage. This seems to be an effective strategy as there are very few official grievances filed in these offices.

When students are charged with a Code of Conduct violation, they may appeal the charge through the Chief Justice of the College Review Board (CRB). If the appeal is not resolved, the student may request a hearing in front of the CRB. According to VP of Enrollment and Student Services Ed Trathen, only one case in 12 years has gone to a hearing.

Student complaints typically relate to the following:

Academics: Most appeals to the VPAA's Office are in response to academic dismissal or admission to competitive programs. Students ask for reinstatement or a review of the admissions applications. Reversal of academic dismissal will only occur in extenuating circumstances when a student should have been administratively withdrawn due to illness or other issues. In these cases students are retroactively withdrawn and readmitted. Though there have been few

¹⁶ See Appendix G – Comprehensive General Education Assessment Report

complaints regarding specific instructors or classes, when they do occur, most are resolved informally through student-instructor discussion, with the VPAA facilitating. The VPAA's office does not keep formal records of all complaints and appeals that are resolved at a low level.

Student Services: There are many ways for students to communicate their concerns with regard to campus life (incidents, parking, safety, programming, food service, etc.). Some of these include engagement with SGA to resolve problems, suggestion boxes for food service, and encouragement to speak with the Director of Campus and Student Life as issues arise. Students often have financial concerns, and the College does offer a couple of short-term emergency loans that students in unusual circumstances may access. These are administered through the Office of Campus and Student Life.

One step instituted to make it easier for students to address issues is the online Incident Report, which is easily accessed and submitted. Since 2005 the main campus in Saranac Lake has had its own food service, provided by the NCCC Association, which has decreased the number of complaints about the food. On the other hand, food service in Malone has only been intermittently available and continues to be an issue. The Office of Campus and Student Life has taken some steps to improve parking on the Saranac Lake campus. There is an appeal process for students who wish to challenge parking tickets.

College Policies

The NCCC catalog contains statements of policies and practices regarding institutional and student integrity. The catalog is available in print form as well as on the College website. The following policies are listed:

- Affirmative Action for Human Rights Statement
- Code of Conduct
- Computer System Use Policy
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Plan
- Equity Program Policy Statement
- FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act)
- Privacy Policy
- Responsible Use of Electronic Communications

Some of these policies are currently being examined and changes are being recommended by the College Senate. As an example, here are the official guidelines regarding academic integrity, found in the Code of Conduct section of the College catalog.

It is appropriate and reasonable to expect members of the College community to:

6. Complete their pursuit of knowledge following the highest levels of scholarship. For students this means abiding by the academic tradition not to plagiarize, nor seek, receive, utilize or provide unauthorized assistance in the completion of assignments and tests.

8. Avoid unauthorized and unlicensed duplication of copyrighted material found in paper media, computers, computer software, or the Internet.

To provide more guidance to both students and faculty, The College Senate Academic Policy and Standards Committee has developed new academic integrity guidelines including processes and sanctions. These were passed by the Senate and approved by the Board of Trustees in fall 2010. In

spring 2011 they are being incorporated into the Code of Conduct and publicized in the catalog, on the College website, on the student portal, and in a student-friendly flyer given to all students and faculty. An information literacy tutorial, including a module on plagiarism, is in development and will be made available from the NCCC Library web page in spring 2011.

Another policy currently being looked at is the Computer Use policy. An issue in question is the research, educational and academic value of social and recreational networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. Some faculty are concerned about censorship and believe that as technology changes, the College needs to continually examine and update its policies. The Academic Policy and Standards Committee of the College Senate will be taking up this and other current issues.

Integrity with Faculty and Staff

With regard to academic freedom, in accordance with SUNY regulations, the current (2006-2009) Agreement (extended through spring 2010) between the College, sponsoring counties and the NCCC Association of Professionals (NCCCAP) indicates on page 37 that

The College agrees to maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of inquiry, teaching and research. In the exercise of this freedom, faculty members may, without limitation, discuss their own subject in the classroom; they may not, however, claim as their right the privilege of discussing in their classroom controversial matters which have no relation to their subject.... The principle of academic freedom shall be accompanied by a corresponding principle of responsibility.

There is no evidence that this policy has ever been challenged or that any grievances have been made in regard to academic freedom. A similar definition is listed as a foundational policy in the 2010-11 Faculty Handbook. (See Chapter 5)

With regard to the faculty contract, the 2006-2009 agreement has remained in place at least through spring 2011 because turnover in leadership and issues with negotiating the CSEA contract made negotiation on the NCCCAP contract impractical until late 2010. Currently negotiations are proceeding at a slow but steady pace. In compliance with New York State's Taylor Law, all provisions of the contract remain in force in the absence of a successor agreement; however, wages do not increase. In late fall 2009, upon recommendations by President Brown and Interim VPAA Keegan, the NCCC Board of Trustees (BOT) agreed to roll over the contract with wage increases retroactive to September 2009. This was an indication of a positive change in the relationship between NCCCAP and the College administration. In the previous few years, the union had filed several grievances against the administrations of President Gail Rice and then Interim President Fred Smith, and NCCCAP had threatened a vote of no confidence in the BOT, alleging that the Board did not properly exercise its supervisory responsibilities in those incidents¹⁷.

One example of a grievance that went to arbitration was over the composition of the presidential search committee convened in 2007. Contrary to established legal precedent, NCCCAP representatives were chosen by the administration rather than by the union membership. The ruling resulted in the addition of three NCCCAP members to the already constituted search committee. Despite the conflict, the grievance proceeded according to established procedure and the resulting ruling was immediately enforced by the administration.

¹⁷ NCCCAP Proposed Vote of No Confidence

Currently, all NCCCAP grievances with prior administrations have been resolved or tabled, either through arbitration or through the intervention of President Brown. While issues continue to arise, the relationship between President Brown and NCCCAP leadership is one of mutual respect and cooperation with frequent communication. The same is true for President Brown's relationship with CSEA leadership. Many pay and hiring issues have been resolved and a new contract was ratified by the union membership in May 2010. Due to fiscal concerns, the sponsoring counties initially rejected the agreement but finally approved it in December 2010.

Thus some issues of integrity that have caused much friction between faculty and staff and the administration have been resolved. The hiring of a Human Resources Director in spring 2010 was a step to ensure proper enforcement of contracts. Previously salary and benefit issues were handled in several different offices, with inequities and inconsistencies arising as a result. The new Human Resources Director is working to codify policies and procedures that will ensure equal and fair treatment of all employees.

NCCC is and continues to be a small institution within which most employees and students know each other. This would appear to make way for open and honest communications and the sense that complaints can be handled more quickly and at a lower level than in a larger institution. When that proves untrue, guidelines for formal processes are followed to resolve the issues.

Integrity with the Community

The College fulfills its mission with regard to the communities it serves in a number of ways. One prominent example is the Essex and Franklin Scholars program in which county high school students who graduate in the top 20% of their class can attend NCCC for free. Community members have library privileges at NCCC. These include checking out materials from the collection, inter-library loan, and on-campus use of online resources.

In fall 2010, "Community Conversations" were held in Saranac Lake, Malone, and Ticonderoga to gather community input on the College's evolving Strategic Plan as it was taking shape¹⁸. Of the seven Strategic Directions¹⁹, the first two (*Workforce and Economic Development/Community Prosperity* and *PK-16: Seamless Transition*) are the most obviously geared toward integrity with the community, but as a community college, everything NCCC does is ultimately meant to benefit the communities it serves.

While the College does lack a director of CLL and a public relations officer, faculty and staff offer many events that members of the community can participate in, for example:

- Pro-bono community CPR/First Aid classes via NCCC to local agencies
- Leadership training for women via Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York
- Programs in stress management methods and techniques for victims of domestic violence
- Sponsorship of the National Outdoor Leadership School touring bus promoting environmental responsibility and care.
- Arts workshops including printmaking, framing and matting etc.
- Sponsorship of a week-long Celebration of the Arts on the Malone campus
- Presentation of long-running Night of the Arts in Saranac Lake each spring

¹⁸ See Appendix H - Notes from Community Conversations fall 2010

¹⁹ See Appendix I - Strategic Directions, Goals and Strategies: January 2011

- Lectures to the public and the college community on topics such as: Women's rights development in NYS, The J.F. Kennedy assassination, and political cartooning.
- Author readings including slam poets from NYC, Albany-area writers Hollis Seamon and Barbara Ungar, and local novelist Russell Banks
- American Red Cross blood drives on campus

Faculty and staff have lent their expertise to the community by serving on a variety of boards of directors including the following:

- Saranac Lake Public Schools Board of Education
- Town of North Elba Planning Board
- Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York (16 counties)
- Foothill Arts Society
- ComLinks Community Action Agency
- St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment Center
- Adirondack Medical Center
- Adirondack Economic Development Corporation
- Workforce Development boards

A Malone Advisory Committee meets regularly to explore ways to integrate the College into the community and vice versa. Similar committees will be formed for Saranac Lake and Ticonderoga as part of the first phase of the Strategic Plan.

The reinstatement of the positions of CLL director and public relations officer would greatly enhance the College's ability to publicize its contributions to the communities it serves as well as to engage more members of the communities in its offerings and to ensure the integrity of those offerings.

SUMMARY OF STANDARDS 1 AND 6

In regard to its educational mission and goals, NCCC demonstrates the elements of integrity with all its constituents. This is reflected in the College's ranking by the *Washington Monthly* as the best community college in New York State. In regard to internal processes with faculty and staff as well as relations with the community, there is still work to be done, but progress is rapidly being made. NCCC is moving to more formalized policies and procedures, and thus has implemented a College Senate and a Faculty Handbook; hired a Human Resources Director; updated its Mission, Vision, and Values; strengthened evaluation procedures for faculty, staff, and administrators; and begun a goal-setting process from the bottom up, so departmental goals can feed into the evolving Strategic Plan. All of these undertakings and more both demonstrate and increase integrity and trust among members of the College community.

SUGGESTIONS

Standard 1:

- 1.1 *Formalize a mechanism for review of mission and goals at least every five years.*
- 1.2 *Ensure access to essential information and data to allow faculty and staff to better achieve the College's goals.*

- 1.3 *Tie institutional effectiveness plan specifically to mission and goals.*
- 1.4 *Consider staffing possibilities to improve offerings to and connections with the community.*

Standard 6:

- 6.1 *Create a process for regular review of website to ensure all pertinent information is accurately provided to the public in an easily accessible format.*
- 6.2 *Review and improve procedures by which all constituencies (community members, staff, students, alumni, sponsors, etc.) can voice concerns in regard to the College's adherence to its mission, values, and goals.*
- 6.3 *Establish a process for regular dissemination and review of all College policies and procedures.*

INTERVIEWS

Nursing Program Director Mike Shepard

Former Radiologic Technology Program Director Elizabeth Wasson

Massage Therapy Program Director David MacDougall

Athletic Director Heather Conger

Former VPAA Tom Finch

Former President Gail Rice

Former Administrative Assistant to the President Sue Sherman

Interim President Fred Smith

Administrative Assistant to the VPAA Trisha Greenier

Former Director of Library Services Patrick MacIntyre

Director of Campus and Student Life Bobbie Karp

VP of Enrollment and Student Services Ed Trathen

Former NCCCAP President David Chapman

NCCC CSEA President Dianna Trummer

Registrar Sandy Baker

Saranac Lake Campus Coordinator of Campus and Student Life Ashley Andrews

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

List of current transfer articulation agreements

Inmate Education Five-Year Enrollment Report

SUNY Workforce Development Report 2009-10

Professional Development Survey Results 2010

Architects' presentation on conceptual plan for Saranac Lake campus renovation

NCCCAP Proposed Vote of No Confidence

CHAPTER 2: STANDARDS 2 AND 3

STANDARD 2: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the Strategic Plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

Institutional renewal is continually occurring at NCCC, and the approaches the College has taken to address externally imposed factors have often been creative and entrepreneurial. When New York State Inmate Higher Education Program (IHEP) funding was cut in the mid 1990s, the College identified Allied Health fields as programs with high need and high wages and responded by putting more resources into those programs, including a new (at the time) Massage Therapy program. Since then, many new programs have been created, and the Nursing program has expanded, increasing enrollment as well as hiring of more full-time faculty in science, many with PhDs. In the late 1990s, the Americans with Disabilities Act established new standards and gave the final push for NCCC to create a new campus in Malone to meet regulatory and programmatic needs. This was planned and executed in an unusual venture with the NCCC Foundation and resulted in a beautiful, unique campus that has become a center of cultural life in Malone. Since the retirement of long-time President Gail Rice in 2007, the College is once again renewing itself with new statements of mission, vision, and values and the creation of an overall Strategic Plan.

A Strategic Plan was last created in 2002²⁰ using an outside consultant and a limited group of participants. Parts of the plan were implemented, particularly with regard to enrollment management; however, the plan was never effectively communicated to the College community at large, nor was it utilized in a larger way. In fall 2009, new President Carol Brown convened a Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) Task Force that gathered input from all constituencies to begin building a Strategic Plan from the ground up. As discussed in Chapter 1, the new Mission, Vision, and Values statements have been adopted. In fall 2010, the College, with the help of members of the community, worked to devise seven long-term Strategic Directions. As of January 2011, specific institutional goals and strategies have been adopted and a timeline has been set for addressing the Directions throughout the College²¹. As the Strategic Plan works its way from the top administration down through the ranks, the creation of the new College-Wide Goals for Student Learning for all graduates is working its way up from the faculty and staff level to become a strong component of the overall plan. (See Chapter 7)

Simultaneously, the new College Senate Long-Range Planning and Budget Committee (LRPBC) has begun meeting to ensure shared oversight of planning and budgeting. As a new committee, created in 2009 as part of the new College Senate, the LRPBC is still working out its mission and function. The main mission is to make the Strategic Plan operational and recommend budget decisions based on the plan. As the Strategic Plan is currently under construction, and budget cycles begin 15 months prior to the start of the fiscal year, there will be some lag time before the LRPBC is fully engaged in the process. However, the committee does meet monthly, and plans to create a

²⁰ 2002 Strategic Plan

²¹ See Appendix I

calendar that identifies elements of review for each month (e.g. personnel in October for the next budget cycle). When it has recommendations, the committee will bring them to the full Senate, which will make recommendations to the administration²².

Master Plan for Main Campus

The process to create the College's recently completed Facilities Master Plan for the Saranac Lake campus included representation from all internal constituencies as well as from the county legislative bodies that fund NCCC. SUNY mandates a five-year Master Plan review. In 2007, a Master Plan Committee was convened and included representatives from academic departments, support services, administration, facilities management, the student body, the Board of Trustees, sponsoring county legislatures, and the community. This committee examined the Saranac Lake physical plant to determine its adequacy for current and proposed academic offerings and student services²³. The committee held two-hour meetings each Friday for months, and in August 2009, the sponsoring counties approved the concept of the Master Plan and funding for an architectural and design review and analysis, and SUNY has accepted this plan. See Chapter 6 for more about how the Master Plan was developed in line with educational offerings (Standard 11). Unfortunately, as noted earlier, the funding for the campus renovation was not approved by the sponsoring counties in 2010. However, the process that created that plan was exemplary of the best practices the College has followed in planning, and all elements of the plan that can be carried out within the current budget are being prioritized for implementation.

What distinguished the Master Planning process from many previous College planning efforts was its formality: representation from various sectors was publicly announced; the process involved capturing recommendations from specific members of the College community along with a general call for input; and meetings were frequent, with formal minutes taken. This process marked the beginning of NCCC's progress toward more formalized planning procedures, which have been further refined and implemented in the development of the Strategic Plan.

The following excerpts from the College's mission and goals directly guided the master planning process:

The College promotes a desire for excellence, a concern for lifelong learning, and an ability to adapt to a changing society. The College offers programs in:

Liberal Arts and Sciences

Vocational, Technical, and Business Careers

Lifelong Learning and Community Services

- *... The College will ensure that all ... sites provide equal quality instruction, access to services appropriate to the nature of the sites, and consistency of programs offered at more than one site.*
- *The College will provide degree and certificate programs that enable students to continue their education at other post-secondary institutions, to find gainful employment, or to enhance occupational skills.*

²² See Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee minutes

²³ Summary of the master planning process and also see Master Planning Commons on Portal

- *The College will provide physical facilities appropriate to its mission and the nature of its service area.*
- *The College will operate in an efficient and accountable manner using innovations in affordable technology to gather, retrieve, and disseminate information required for effective decision-making.*
- *The College will continually review, evaluate, and update its mission statement, goals, objectives, programs, and master plan to assess its future directions.*

The mission statement and the above highlighted goals outline the commitment of the administration of the College to provide a quality learning environment. The Master Plan echoes the commitment by identifying and offering solutions to the current inadequacies of the main campus infrastructure. For example, the Master Plan includes “SMART” classrooms, which can help accommodate varying student learning styles. The new facilities will enhance the role of the College in the community by providing new spaces which can be utilized by local organizations.

The planned Student Center will allow students more opportunities for personal enrichment by enabling the presentation of more planned student activities as well as by allowing more informal growth opportunities such as socializing with groups outside of their team/dorm/class/hometown comfort zones. It is hoped that the economic situation in the sponsoring counties will turn around so the campus upgrade can be funded next year.

ACADEMIC PLANNING

Strategic and operational planning occurs regularly in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs²⁴, which enroll more than half of the campus student population, particularly in the administration of Carl D. Perkins grant funding. The Perkins program requires a five-year plan²⁵ from each participating college. This plan is developed based on the Perkins legislative initiatives and input from advisory boards for each discipline. The 2008-2013 NCCC submission was developed primarily by the VPAA, who used information gathered from the various departments through informal meetings as well as formal meetings of the professional advisory boards. Since 2009, however, the academic coordinators from all disciplines have begun working together to craft the next Perkins plan as well as the overall direction of NCCC’s Perkins-funded programs in a more broad-based, inclusive manner. Assistant Dean of Grants and Funded Programs Maureen Sayles oversees the administration of the Perkins grant and coordinates the assessments.

Each year the College develops more targeted proposals for Perkins funding of specific “major efforts”. In 2009-2010, the two major efforts were upgrading of technology and synchronous distance learning capacity for CTE students and improving math success of CTE students. Both of these efforts were proposed in the five-year plan, and both were undertaken in the 2009-2010 academic year. All CTE programs have professional advisory boards that meet regularly to assess the state of the program and recommend changes.²⁶ These recommendations then become part of planning for the following years. The Perkins-prescribed composition of the advisory boards

²⁴ Career and technical education programs include Nursing (LPN and RN); Radiologic Technology; Massage Therapy; Wilderness Recreation Leadership; Sports and Events Management; Business Administration, which includes five degree and certificate programs; Human Services, including Chemical Dependency Counseling and Community Residence Aide Certificate; Criminal Justice; and Computer Graphics.

²⁵ Perkins Five-Year Plan

²⁶ CTE advisory board minutes

includes faculty, students, parents of students, professional practitioners from regional facilities and organizations, alumni, local workforce organizations, and administrators. Although at some colleges a single committee meets for all professional programs, at NCCC, most of the CTE disciplines have individual advisory boards.

Program initiatives may include strengthening general education requirements that underpin the system. This has occurred in recent years most notably in the Human Services programs as well as Criminal Justice and Computer Graphics, giving students in these programs a greater ability to enter the workforce prepared with basic skills or to transfer to four-year institutions. This in turn has increased choices for graduates of these programs, which in the past have not been geared toward transfer. A Criminal Justice Writing Project was instituted to correct deficiencies in student writing. This culminated in the development of a one-credit report writing course as well as the requirement for CRJ students to take English Composition II²⁷.

The liberal arts programs, like all other academic programs, have programmatic and departmental goals that are formally assessed in the five- to seven-year formal program review process, mandated by SUNY, which involves external reviewers. Changes are often made as a result. For example, as the result of the 2005 review of the A.S. Liberal Arts: Math and Science degree, the program was revised to ensure that students had at least one basic 101/102 science sequence as well as courses in specific general education areas, such as history, and more specific social science and humanities choices. See Chapter 7 for more on program review. Based on these periodic reviews, as well as other factors, these departments continually set goals and create their own budgets, communicating regularly with the VPAA and the VP for Fiscal Operations (CFO).

PLANNING PROCESSES

The College's mission statement serves as the umbrella under which any new initiatives are undertaken. Required proposals and reviews from SUNY and the New York State Education Department (NYSED), along with the funding control at the county sponsor level, help determine timelines. At the same time that these top-down planning and budgeting processes are occurring, there is a simultaneous bottom-up process. Department coordinators meet with the VPAA or other key administrators to discuss departmental needs. They create their own budgets, subject to approval by the VPAA.

Participants in the NCCC planning process are drawn from all staffing groups, including faculty, facilities, support and administrative staff, students, alumni, and the Board of Trustees. All staff, students and trustees are requested and encouraged to participate on College committees. In some cases, representatives from the different NCCC and/or community sectors are appointed; in others, volunteers are requested or accepted. Student representatives usually are nominated by and/or from the Student Government Association.

Program Planning

Program initiatives primarily arise from the above-mentioned processes. Academic, support and facilities areas and/or departments meet regularly and identify new opportunities and areas that need improvement. The Academic Council, the Curriculum Committee, and the College Senate Assessment Committee (formerly the General Education Assessment Committee) are among those that meet regularly to review academic issues and plan new programs and initiatives. In the past five

²⁷ See Appendix J – current and former program worksheets for A.A.S. Criminal Justice

years, five new programs have been approved: Certificate in Practical Nursing and A.A.S. Nursing in Ticonderoga (fall 2006 and 2009), A.S. Environmental Science (fall 2009), A.S. Fine Arts: Studio (fall 2010), and Certificate in Health Sciences (fall 2010). The A.S. Health Sciences degree is still pending state approval. These health sciences programs are specifically planned to increase retention of students not initially accepted into Allied Health programs and to create an academic ladder for their career development. The concept for the programs resulted from assessments of student learning performed by the Science Department, which led to discussion of the lack of fit between pre-Allied Health students and the A.S. Liberal Arts: Math and Science program into which those students have traditionally been placed when admitted.

The planning for the expansion of the Nursing program to Ticonderoga built on the identification by both the federal and state government of southeastern Essex County as a medically underserved region. To support anecdotal information regarding opportunities for graduates, the VP of Academic Affairs (VPAA) reviewed labor market data to ascertain that there was need for additional licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and registered nurses (RNs). Once the need was established, the College administration, including the VP for Enrollment Services, determined that there would be a large enough applicant pool to populate this program. Part of the analysis indicated that a number of applicants to the Saranac Lake campus program were from the southern part of Essex County, 75 miles away, and would benefit from a program closer to home that could incorporate additional clinical sites in the southern Adirondacks. This has allowed the College to accept more students into the Nursing programs, giving them more access to their desired careers and higher paying jobs.

Issues that required resolution were the ability to teach science laboratory courses and to offer synchronous education at Ticonderoga, linking nursing educators among the three campuses. To initiate the program, NCCC needed to identify adequate space. The College was asked by elected officials and civic organizations to remain in the downtown area of Ticonderoga to help revitalize the main street. With advice from community leaders, the President examined several sites and eventually identified the current location. Financing the building project involved the NCCC Foundation, which borrowed funds through the County Industrial Development Authority and then leased the space to NCCC (an entrepreneurial model created at the Malone campus). A written proposal was submitted to SUNY and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for approval. Two site visits were made by SUNY and NYSED to examine the site and discuss the program with the faculty and VPAA. The Ticonderoga campus opened in fall 2005.

As with many recent initiatives, no single document outlined this process. The President's Executive Advisory Committee discussed the plans. The VPAA and the Nursing department Director discussed the plans. The NCCC Foundation and the NCCC Board of Trustees were involved as advisory and then official participants in the process. The academic process involved the Curriculum Committee, informing the Academic Council of the process and timeline, and then the submission of the application to SUNY and NYSED for approval to create the nursing program at Ticonderoga. BOT and Foundation minutes and resolutions record the timeline. The decision to initiate the certificate program first was based on the community need and NCCC's unique one-plus-one (LPN to RN) program.

Another new program that has been created is the A.S. Environmental Science program at the Saranac Lake campus. NCCC's unique geographic location within the Adirondack Park created an opportunity to develop a degree program. Science Department Coordinator Judy Steinberg and other faculty members began discussions with the VPAA on the process. Information about

programs at nearby four-year colleges such as the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry was gathered, and a program was designed to provide students with an opportunity to transfer to those programs. New courses were developed and reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and Academic Council. Required information was collected and provided to SUNY for review, and approval came in summer 2009. This new program provides a response to community interest in economic development linked to the environment and employment opportunities at organizations such as the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC), various environmental organizations, and the Natural History Museum in Tupper Lake.

In line with SUNY requirements, all new program offerings are reviewed by other regional SUNY units to avoid duplication and saturation of fields. SUNY has a process and timeline that NCCC must follow to introduce new degree or certificate programs to ensure that there is an adequate enrollment pool from which to draw a critical mass of students to ensure viability of the program, both programmatically and financially, and to ensure that a new program does not detract from any other regional SUNY institutions. The VPAA coordinates this process. Allied health programs are reviewed by SUNY and NYSED, which oversee professional licensure. See Chapter 6 for more information on creation, assessment, and maintenance of academic programs.

Instructional Technology

The College employs a multi-year approach when planning technological resources. Due to the integration of technology into so many facets of the college, NCCC does have a comprehensive plan for upgrading equipment²⁸. Up to spring 2011, various committees worked independently on technology issues. New VPAA Carole Richardson has gathered all the committees under the umbrella of the Technology Advisory Board, which had its first full meeting in January 2011. The group is large and representative of the entire College. It has formed several subcommittees to address technological infrastructure planning, training needs, online education, video conferencing, the College website, appropriate use of College printers, and other issues.

NCCC has made considerable strides in creating and enhancing its technological infrastructure. In 2003, NCCC had one server; today it has a complete student and faculty portal, incoming fiber optic lines and backup and redundancy support. Computer software supports student and administrative functions as well as offering wireless internet access. Creating a virtual memory solution for storage and imaging and remote access to the Ticonderoga campus are examples of the advances the College has made. NCCC uses a blend of College personnel and consultants to maintain technological infrastructure. For example, an Information Technology Help Desk position was recently created to assist students with their College e-mail and student portal accounts as well as to assist faculty with instructional technology. A new full-time employee was hired in fall 2010 to staff the desk and to support faculty with video conferencing issues.

NON-ACADEMIC PLANNING PROCESSES

The Office of Campus and Student Life plans offerings through the entire year. New Student Orientation is one of the office's annual programs, and it is worked on all year long and changed based on previous years' assessments as well as outside factors such as changing incidences (at NCCC and nationally) of undergraduate drinking issues, sexual violence, illegal drug use and other potential problems that need to be addressed. For another example, the Campus and Tri-Campus Activity Boards review proposals and available funding to determine what activities will take place

²⁸ Technology Plan

throughout the year. The opportunity to make proposals is announced via e-mail to the campus communities. The committees can document their decisions through the specific programs and/or events funded through this process. All programs are evaluated and decisions are made as to whether the programs will continue in future semesters and/or whether they need to be modified. (See Chapter 4)

As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, facilities staff are continually planning for maintenance and upgrades to existing facilities. As a result of programs being added and changed, the facilities staff have repeatedly remodeled buildings and rooms on the Saranac Lake campus, responding nimbly and effectively to planned changes. Records Office staff continually review registration and other student tracking and advising processes and plan changes in classrooms and scheduling as needed. Enrollment Management and Financial Aid staff plan for enrollment changes overall and in specific programs and regularly report on their results.

Evolution of Planning

All planning processes at NCCC, both formal and informal, meet with several obstacles. First, there is the size of the College and the limited number of faculty and staff members. While almost all members of the College community participate actively on committees, what can be accomplished is often constrained by considerations such as teaching/work schedules, campus locations, and meeting times. Faculty and staff are spread among three campuses, and primary workloads are high. President Brown's inclusive philosophy and the development of the College Senate have created more opportunities for all members of the College community to become involved in the process of creating the new Strategic Plan as well as planning other aspects of College operations. Future technology upgrades will further facilitate broader participation.

STANDARD 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

The human, financial, technical, physical facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution's mission and goals, are available and accessible. In the context of the institution's mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution's resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

NCCC is funded through direct student tuition payments, sponsoring county support, and payment from New York State through SUNY. A student fee structure provides funding for student programming, special costs for specific academic programs, processing fees to offset the cost of operations, etc. NCCC has some limited funding from external sources such as grants, some gifts and minor miscellaneous revenues.²⁹ Student tuition and fees generate about 40% of revenue.

By virtue of inclusion in the State University of New York, there are many regulations that impact the College, especially in the area of finance. State appropriations and tuition and fee structures are either decided or regulated with minimal influence by the College. In 2009, the State reduced small college aid 6% or \$12,000, in addition to reducing NCCC's FTE aid by \$120,000 and rental aid by \$80,000, a cut that hit the College particularly hard because of its rental agreements with the NCCC Foundation for the instructional sites in Ticonderoga and Malone. More cuts were made in 2010, and more are anticipated in 2011, due to the State's fiscal situation. NCCC, like all SUNY community colleges, does have some freedom in setting tuition rates; however, there are political considerations that govern how much and how often tuition can be raised. Historically, NCCC has instituted small increases. Tuition is up 1.9% for the 2010-11 academic year.

Another significant external factor is the mandated funding of a portion of the budget by two sponsoring counties. Combined, the counties provide approximately 16% of the annual budget in direct contributions, though they also consider charge backs from other counties for out-of-county students who attend NCCC to be part of their share, raising it to around 23% (2007-8). Although the sponsors are generally in favor of the College, each year there is uncertainty regarding the funding level to be received. In fall 2010, the counties rejected the funding of the Saranac Lake campus's renovation plan due to the current financial crisis. Due to regional and national financial issues, the current budget included no increase in the sponsoring counties' contributions from last year.

External factors that influence the budget are demographic and geographic. The College's remote location in a sparsely populated, aging region results in a small pool of local students. Extreme and prolonged winters can increase the utilities and equipment costs and structural wear. Unfunded mandates from regulatory agencies can increase operating costs. The College balances the influence of these external factors with internal priorities, planning and mission. Part of the mission is to educate and train students in the sponsoring area so they may find employment. NCCC's VPs assess the service area for needs. Statistics from the New York State Department of Labor provide information on current and expected employment areas. Local businesses and organizations provide input through professional advisory boards. NCCC personnel attend SUNY committee meetings, which provide insights into what the system and specific regions are undertaking.

Personnel costs (salaries and benefits) are the largest expense component, with two-thirds supporting instructional faculty³⁰. To allocate the limited flexible resources, the most pressing needs are determined by review of data, how NCCC compares to other SUNY schools, and mandated

²⁹ See Appendix K – 2009-10 Economic Impact Report

³⁰ Appendix K

operations (e.g. OSHA, SUNY regulations, fire codes). Functional area concerns are matched as well as possible to department operating budgets in an environment where needs are great, resources are limited, and change is fast.

BUDGET PROCESSES³¹

Operating and capital budgets are reviewed jointly by the administration and the Board of Trustees. Capital budgets include facility renovations and substantive equipment purchases. SUNY and college policy guide and identify capital versus operating budget items. Interrelationships develop because capital budgets might include a one-time or limited term cost for the equipment or improvements, but the operations and maintenance of the equipment or facilities continue as part of the operating budget

Key components to the budgeting process are budget assumptions for both revenue and expense. These include anticipated statistics as well as dollar rates for individual revenues and expenditures. From each category, information is gathered or estimated and assumptions are derived. Many revenue and expenditures can be formula driven, based on a volume of activity multiplied by a dollar price or rate. For instance, there may be a dramatic change in enrollment (statistic) or fuel prices (dollar rate). Included in the assumptions are any significant changes in activities that may impact the budget. Examples include initiating a new program, opening a new building, or change in area high schools. Because there has not been a formal strategic plan in place, the budget has mainly been built from the bottom up and based on immediately identifiable needs. As noted above under Standard 2, the Long-Range Planning and Budget Committee is exploring its role in the strategic planning and budget process.

The budget process is inductive and begins at the department or unit level, where needs and opportunities are identified and activities planned. The coordinators and department heads develop annual budgets with their respective personnel and submit them to the appropriate vice president. Approvals and authorizations create a controlled environment where department leaders generally know of all decisions and/or purchases affecting their department.

The budget process begins in fall for the following fiscal year. All line items are examined at the vice presidential level. Monthly reviews of operations from the previous or current cycle will provide information to the budget leaders (directors, coordinators, VPs) about areas of concern (e.g. utilities, maintenance, increased shipping costs on supply purchases). Reviews determine what is one-time vs. continuing. In some cases, staffing may be adjusted to accommodate an increase in enrollment, but the departmental budget may not be increased permanently until it is clear if the change is continuing or one-time. The VPs will ask questions throughout the year to various operating units (departments, etc). Student retention, graduation, and licensure rates as well as alumni surveys are all assessments that are reviewed and can highlight areas that need budget analysis.

Discussions are held regarding what actions should be taken and then implemented by line item or department. The final budget proposal is taken to the Board of Trustees for their approval, then to the sponsoring county legislative bodies for acceptance, and a budget is approved. The funding is distributed in accordance with SUNY, state and county regulations and practice. Monthly financial reports are reviewed at BOT meetings.

³¹ See Appendix L - Budget Process memo to Business Office/Finance Dept.

FISCAL RESOURCES

Fiscal resources are controlled by various internal processes and policies, and those controls are assessed both internally and by means of external audits. As recommended by SUNY, the College uses internal control procedures set forth by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission's (COSO) report titled "Internal Control – Integrated Framework." From a big picture perspective, an annual budget is prepared and approved by the BOT and submitted to SUNY. Each year, the College's financial records are audited by an accounting firm. Audited financial statements are prepared, as well as an annual report for SUNY. Monthly reports are prepared and measured against budgeted figures at the line and cost center level. These reports are presented to and reviewed by the BOT. Monthly departmental reports are distributed and reviewed by department heads with their respective VP. Approvals and authorizations are required for purchase order and payment requests, ensuring that funds are budgeted before commitments are made.

A budgetary issue identified in recent years' audits has been the elimination of a negative fund balance, which finally was accomplished in 2010. As of 2005-6, a series of annual financial budget deficits brought the fund balance to negative \$1.3 million. By 2009-10, due primarily to a focused effort by Interim President Fred Smith, it was improved to negative \$100,000, and in fall 2010 it was eliminated completely. The College is now working to create a positive fund balance that will meet the SUNY policy range of 5% to 15% of annual operating expenses.

To maintain customary internal fiscal controls, policies and procedures define separations of duties, particularly in the financial area. To manage risk, the College's financial records are reviewed by an external audit firm annually to monitor compliance and control as well as prepare consistent financial statements in accord with State University of New York standards.

NCCC participates in both federal and state comparison reporting. Data is submitted annually which enable NCCC to routinely compare and examine operational staffing. Annual reporting includes financial and statistical data and establishes standardized measurements. Some other measures are costs per student, costs of operation, space allocations, and administrative costs. NCCC uses this information to advocate for additional funds and to review programs to ensure that costs are controlled.

The federal IPEDS report is one of the resulting reports that allow the College to regularly assess its performance *vis a vis* peer institutions³². NCCC participates in and consults with numerous SUNY associations to gain perspective and insight for self-assessment and evaluation. This data enables NCCC to see exactly where it ranks in a multitude of peer rankings and statistical analyses, such as cost per student, tuition rate, student to faculty ratio, etc.

NYSED provides comparative data that benchmarks NCCC information to state-wide information for similar programs based on the national HEGIS codes. These reports³³ are generated annually and each college is expected to review the information and provide a remediation report for any area that is below the state norm. The NYSED Office of Postsecondary Education monitors NCCC data and provides state-wide benchmarks for comparison. Perkins-defined "non-traditional" students are those under-represented by gender, e.g., women in Criminal Justice, Business, and Wilderness Recreation Leadership. To address the small number of women in Wilderness

³² See 2010 IPEDS and SUNY Community College Comparative Financial reports

³³ Perkins yearly report

Recreation, the program coordinator developed a plan to market to women. Department coordinators who are “non-traditional” include women in Business and Wilderness Recreation, and a man as Director of Nursing. These coordinators model the possibility of careers in the fields.

As committees and departments develop plans, the human and financial resources are specifically identified and levels are then committed. For example, the Computer Graphics program has, on the advice of external reviewers, increased requirements in general studio art courses as well as art history. As a result, staffing has been modified to meet the new needs with the hiring of an additional art instructor in Malone.

Physical Plant

NCCC performs an annual planning process of its physical needs. Each year a Physical Space Inventory³⁴ is performed by facilities staff in response to campus needs, SUNY mandates, fire inspections, and OSHA concerns, among others. SUNY guidelines assist in assessing needs. Maintenance and capital needs are identified, and planning and prioritization then occur. Renewal schedules and asset life expectancy are used to identify probable areas of need. NCCC views renewal and maintenance in four categories: routine, preventative, emergency and opportunities for savings or sustainability.

Technology

A multitude of factors play into the continual updating and changing of the physical campuses. Teleconference and video conference equipment is used heavily to deliver courses and for meetings. Equipment upgrades and maintenance are expensive and recurring. Configuration changes or supplements can be driven by technological considerations (bandwidth, etc) to maintain the reliable delivery of the College classes. The Technology Plan calls for replacement of student and faculty computers every three to four years³⁵. As outlined in the Technology Plan for 2010-2011, fiber optics were installed, video conference equipment was upgraded and new video rooms added. The College capital expense budget and Perkins grant funding was used.

ONE COLLEGE WITH THREE SITES

The college operates three campuses and offers multiple programs. NCCC has a “One College” policy with regard to the three instructional sites and strives for equity in funding. Resource distribution is proportionate to student enrollment, program size, and facility needs. Each site is affected by different external factors; for example, Saranac Lake and Ticonderoga are within the Adirondack Park. Malone is outside the Park, with different zoning and building restrictions.

Programs are reviewed to provide equitable, though not necessarily equal, funding. FTE counts can be used as one indicator of need along with the specifics of a particular program’s operations. Student fees vary based on the program in which a student is enrolled. In some areas, such as Student Activities, NCCC overall expenses are above SUNY averages because programs must be available to students on each campus and utility costs are high. Funding for services like the LAC at each site is continually reviewed to improve access for all students.

³⁴ See Physical Space Inventory

³⁵ Technology Plan

SUMMARY OF STANDARDS 2 AND 3

In spite of the challenges of diminishing funds, increasing costs, and being a small school split into three instructional sites, NCCC continues to offer a high quality education to those who seek it. In the past ten years or more, institutional planning has been guided by the overall mission of educating students, and many positive results have been generated, including two well-built and well-utilized campuses – in Ticonderoga and Malone – and several new academic programs. Currently, institution-wide planning is becoming more formalized and soon will be an integral part of the College’s operations, with the Long-Range Planning and Budgeting Committee helping to bridge the Strategic Plan with operational budgets. Budget processes have become more inclusive, and a significant negative fund balance was eliminated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STANDARDS 2 AND 3

Standard 2:

- 2.1 Finalize, implement, and assess the Strategic Plan.*
- 2.2 Continue to pursue full implementation of the facilities master plan.*

Standard 3:

- 3.1 Align budgets with the Strategic Plan.*

INTERVIEWS

Asst. Dean for Facilities and Grounds Shane Chatelle

Asst. Dean of Grants and Funded Programs Maureen Sayles

VP of Enrollment and Student Services Ed Trathen

Asst. Dean of Institutional Research Scott Harwood

VP of Fiscal Operations Bill Chapin

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

2002 Strategic Plan

Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee Minutes

Summary of Master Planning Process and Master Planning Commons on Portal

Perkins Five-Year Plan

CTE Advisory Board Minutes

Technology Plan

Financial Audits

SUNY Community College Comparative Financial Reports

Perkins Yearly Reports

Physical Space Inventory

Technology Plan

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON-LINE

Federal IPEDS Report 2010 -

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/Snapshotx.aspx?unitId=acb4afabadb3>

CHAPTER 3: STANDARDS 4 AND 5

STANDARD 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

As a public community college under the supervision of the State University of New York, NCCC's governance and leadership structure is determined by state education laws and SUNY regulations in addition to institutional needs. North Country is jointly sponsored by the counties of Essex and Franklin. It is regulated by the State of New York through SUNY as well as other state governing bodies discussed below. Locally, the College is administered by a 10-member Board of Trustees. All of these governing entities and their relationships with the College are subject to state law, as described below, and the College is in compliance with these laws. In addition to these external governing entities, the College has its own shared governance body, the College Senate. The College President, or CEO, is the bridge between the outside regulators, the College's Board of Trustees, and the College Senate.

THE NCCC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The College Board of Trustees (BOT) is comprised of ten members, of whom five are appointed by the counties of Essex and Franklin (on a three/two rotation), four are appointed by the NYS governor, and one is annually elected by the student body to serve as the student trustee.

The BOT is governed by NYSEL §604.2³⁶ and conducts public meetings on the third Tuesday of each month to fulfill its responsibilities through the following key activities:

- 1) Formulating and delegating responsibility for carrying out all policy governing the operation of the College
- 2) Reviewing the performance of academic officers, including the President
- 3) Approving appointments and promotion of College personnel
- 4) Approving final contractual agreements with College bargaining units
- 5) Assigning formulation of College budgets and giving final approval
- 6) Coordinating integration of SUNY and New York State policy as statutorily required

A comprehensive orientation process for new board members was implemented in spring 2010. The BOT now has two annual retreats, parts of which are devoted to setting their goals and assessing their effectiveness. Two self-assessments have been performed thus far, and the board has just completed their new goals in fall 2010. New board members are encouraged to attend a trustee training conference provided by the New York State Association of Community College Trustees (NYSACCT), of which the Board is a member. Most new members do attend this conference. The

³⁶ NYSEL §604.2

BOT adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy in June 2007³⁷ and it is now part of the orientation packet.

NCCC Board members are active in the College's events. Most participate in the graduation ceremony and attend the all-College awards banquet. Many members, including the chair, were involved in the World Cafés in which the new Mission, Vision, and Values statements and Strategic Directions were conceived and refined.

The BOT has official oversight of all organizations associated with the College, including the NCCC Association and Foundation (see below), though this is an "arm's length" relationship. A member of the BOT sits on the Association board and another on the Foundation board.

THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

As the chief executive officer of the College, the President is charged with all aspects of the daily operations and leadership of the College, organizational structure, recommendation and implementation of College and SUNY boards of trustees' policies and procedures, long-term strategic planning and a host of other duties as identified in NYS Education Law §604.3³⁸.

In September 2009, Dr. Carol Brown was inaugurated as the fifth President of North Country Community College. It was immediately clear that her style of leadership was one of collective involvement and shared responsibility. President Brown began by soliciting counsel and advice from all areas and stakeholders of the College, seeking out issues and goals of greatest priority, and implementing a collaborative structure to address both short- and long-term objectives. In the fall 2009 semester, Dr. Brown convened the first session of the College Senate and has supported the development of effective governance through broad institutional participation.

President Brown's charge to the College community has been to "complete the loop" of assessment, planning, implementation and re-assessment, while always maintaining a focus on the College's mission. To that end, she has established a President's Leadership Team, whose members include representatives from key administration departments, the College Senate, and leaders of the bargaining units. The group meets regularly to identify crucial College initiatives. Additionally, the President has employed a series of on-going "World Café" meetings to foster dialogue among constituents of the College about the College's mission and elements that are shaping the Strategic Plan. To enable broad participation, Dr. Brown has allowed College offices to close for World Cafés and other College-wide meetings and events. She put assessment at the heart of opening week activities for fall 2010 and is facilitating a new focus on measuring institutional effectiveness. This is a work in progress, as many large initiatives are proceeding simultaneously and the College's small staff carries many responsibilities.

The President's performance, including participation and leadership in governance, is assessed annually by the Trustees, though in past years this was often informal. In summer 2010, for the first time in many years, the BOT formally assessed the President's performance by completing their own evaluations and selecting a cross-section of College employees to complete evaluations, all of which were compiled by the BOT chair.

³⁷ See Appendix M - BOT Conflict of Interest Policy

³⁸ NYSEL 604.3

SHARED GOVERNANCE

In the College's 2005 Periodic Review Report, the institutional level governance structure included the use of various college committees, advisory groups and general assemblies. In the spring of 2006, it was unanimously determined by the faculty that this model was inefficient and not conducive to broad participation by various College stakeholders nor beneficial to the institution as it moved forward.

In fall 2006, a committee of faculty convened, with the support of the administration, to explore and develop ways of improving governance in order to best serve the needs of the institution during a time of great change and transition. Faculty drove this initiative after it became clear that NCCCAP, the faculty union, had become the de facto voice for faculty concerns, which often led to antagonistic situations rather than collaboration. The Governance Committee researched common elements from various governance organizations within and outside of SUNY community colleges and collaborated over a period of 12 months to draft a shared-governance plan to suit the needs and vision of the College as it moved into a new decade under new leadership.

In November 2007, a draft of the proposal was circulated to all members of the College community and feedback was sought. Representatives of all classifications of employees of the College were engaged in examination of the proposals, and feedback for improvement was accepted and incorporated into the final proposal.

In spring 2008, a College-wide vote was conducted to approve the draft proposals. Vote by secret ballot was open to all employees at all campuses after circulation of a final draft of the Governance proposal. The College's Student Government Association officers and the student trustee were eligible to participate in the vote. A total of 76 votes were cast, with 65 votes in favor and 11 opposed.

The committee sent the proposal to President Gail Rice with a request that it be enacted as a system of shared governance. In response, further collaboration between President Rice and the Committee was conducted until Dr. Rice's retirement in July 2008.

Collaboration with Interim President Fred G. Smith continued during his tenure at the College. Representatives of the committee met regularly with him to streamline and shape the original proposal. The results of the collaboration with Interim President Smith were circulated electronically and via hard copies in the libraries and to NCCC employees without e-mail.

Feedback was given to the committee and shared with Interim President Smith. The committee requested that he approve the proposed system of shared governance and that it be implemented beginning fall 2009, which did occur at that time upon the arrival of President Carol Brown.

When the College Senate began, the President sent out an e-mail to all employees about shared governance and included an attachment with the College Senate bylaws. The bylaws and all reports produced by the College Senate and all standing and ad hoc committees as well as minutes from meetings are to be posted on the CAMS portal for the College community. The posting often lags the meetings, however, because most committee leaders have not yet been given the access and training to post their own minutes. Agendas of all College Senate committee meetings are distributed by e-mail to all staff, faculty and student leaders.

NCCC's College Senate is the "grass-roots" level of governance and leadership at the College. The Senate is structured in a fashion that not only ensures broad participation by all members of the College community, but also an inherent degree of fluidity that allows the Senate to remain

effective and relevant during times of change. While the Senate clearly meets the minimum statutory requirements identified in NYSEL§ 605.1, its purpose and function extends beyond those confines to encompass the role of College sounding board and collective think-tank³⁹. Faculty Council of Community Colleges (FCCC) President Tina Good has visited NCCC twice to give workshops on shared governance, at first in 2009 to jumpstart the new Senate and then in 2010 to help members work through some of the issues that came up during the first year. Her input has resulted in some committee restructuring but on the whole has affirmed the good work done in designing and implementing the Senate.

Under the current structure, the Senate as a whole is “rooted” at the Saranac Lake campus, with meetings chaired from the Malone site via video conferencing to Saranac Lake and Ticonderoga. A centralized structure promotes a “One College” approach to overall governance in which all personnel are encouraged to participate. Faculty, non-teaching professionals (NTPs) and support staff from all campuses can volunteer or are asked to serve on standing or ad-hoc committees. Within the past five years the College has supported the participation of satellite site personnel on all College committees and initiatives, without having to travel, by using video conferencing technology for committee meetings. The College has recently begun to explore purchase of an enhanced web-based phone system to better assure ease of access to meetings. The initiative for this was forthcoming from meetings of the President’s Leadership Team and the recommendation was approved by the College Senate. A digital phone system is scheduled to be installed by fall 2011, which is the first step in the process.

Student representatives are recruited as members of the College Senate and as members on some of its standing committees. The Student Government Association (SGA) is working to formalize election of student representatives to the College Senate. The Student Trustee of the NCCC Board of Trustees is a member of the Senate. There has been difficulty in getting full participation from students, as their schedules do not always coincide with those of the College staff, but this is an area the College is continuing to work on.

Statutory Requirements

New York State Education Law § 605.1 Faculty role.

The faculty shall participate in the formulation of the policy relating to student health, scholarship, standards of admission, attendance and discharge of students, curriculum and other study programs, the granting of degrees, student activities, extra-curricular activities and student discipline. The faculty shall also present recommendations to the President regarding (a) the instructional budget, and (b) appointments, reappointments...

The College Senate is composed of representatives from all constituencies of the College and further has established the following standing committees, comprised of faculty, staff, and student volunteers:

- Academic Policy / Standards
- Advising
- Assessment
- Campus and Student Life
- Curriculum

³⁹ See Appendix D - Senate Constitution and By-Laws

- Enrollment
- Executive Committee
- Faculty and Staff Professional Development
- Governance Committee
- Long-Range Planning and Budget

It is the responsibility of all College Senate representatives to bring concerns of their constituents to the Senate. Prior to the beginning of each semester, faculty and department meetings are held at which topics of governance can be discussed, and given the size of the College, it is easy for any staff member to find a Senate representative to convey questions, concerns or suggestions to the Senate as a whole. The Senate Chair meets monthly one-on-one with the College President and serves on the President's Leadership Team, which also meets monthly. Thus, there is a clear pipeline for issues to be conveyed from staff to administration and vice versa.

The Senate has established a Governance Committee which is charged with performing an annual survey of the College community to assess the Senate and its performance. The first survey was conducted in spring 2010, and data was processed and shared in fall 2010⁴⁰. Preliminary results show that most of the respondents have a sense of how the Senate operates and how to participate. They also have hopes that the body will facilitate participation by all in College governance, but many expressed the thought that it was too early to tell how well it was working.

Informal assessment occurs through regular meetings between the College Senate Executive Committee and the Senate committee chairs; and between the Senate Chair and the College President. A report from the Chair of the College Senate is on the regular BOT agenda.

THE FACULTY COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The College fully supports NCCC's participation in the governance practices of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges. The group represents community colleges across the state and meets every six months to deliberate and make policy recommendations to the SUNY Board and SUNY Administration. NCCC contributes to the FCCC website where governance documents and suggested best practices are shared. The chair of the College Senate and an elected FCCC representative attend the FCCC meetings and share information from its recommendations with the faculty, administration, and members of the College Senate. As noted above, FCCC President Tina Good has come to NCCC twice, most recently in September 2010, to give workshops to Senate members to help guide the continued development of the shared governance process at the College.

OTHER COLLEGE ORGANIZATIONS

SGA

The Student Government Association (SGA)

... is comprised of every full- and part-time NCCC student and their elected officers. The official SGA Constitution reads, "The purpose of Student Government at North Country Community College is to involve and integrate students into the operations and ongoing development of policies, activities, and governance matters of the College."⁴¹

⁴⁰ 2010 Senate Survey

⁴¹ See NCCC.edu

Elected officers on each campus are the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Senators. There is one Student Trustee elected each year from the Saranac Lake campus, who is charged with representing the students on the BOT as well as in the College Senate. The Student Trustee traditionally speaks at graduation. The Student Trustee and other SGA officers may serve on the Association Board and other committees. The SGA President represents the students at all College ceremonies and functions and presents student recommendations to the College and to the Association.

NCCC Association

According to the NCCC website, the NCCC Association

... is an independent, not-for-profit group formed to enrich the lives of students at North Country Community College by providing services that NCCC cannot. These include college stores on each campus, student housing, food service, Athletics, and Student Government.

Its mission is to "promote and cultivate educational, social, cultural, and recreational relations among students, community, alumni, and faculty of North Country Community College by assisting them in every way possible in their study, work, living, and extra-curricular activities."

The Association is not funded by NCCC. The Association does not receive direct state aid. Fees for service support the housing, food service and stores. Students are assessed fees to support the student government and the athletics program. While NCCCA is a separate and distinct entity from North Country Community College, its main purpose is to benefit the College by providing auxiliary services to the College community.

The governing Board of Directors includes representatives from faculty, staff, students, alumni and administration.

Faculty, staff, and students have a lot of contact with the Association through the bookstore, the food service, and the residence halls. There has been some conflict between the Association and the faculty with regard to textbook prices and ordering practices, but this is not unique to NCCC. The entire college textbook market is in a state of transition, and it is expected that this will have an impact on NCCC and the Association.

In fall 2010, Association Board President Larry McFaddin organized a College-wide meeting to share concerns regarding student textbook purchases. The meeting was attended by faculty, administrators, Association board members and Association Executive Director Diana Friedlander. Faculty raised concerns that many students do not buy books at all, and this seriously interferes with their academic success. This is a problem among all students, but one action being taken to address the issue is an initiative by the Athlete Mentoring Program (AMP) Committee and the Athletic Department to begin educating athletes throughout the recruitment process about the necessity of buying textbooks. Another strategy is that as part of the new student registration process, the VPAA addresses the importance of textbooks in her welcome presentation to students.

The Association's bookstore profits provide major support to NCCC athletic teams, so the Association is concerned about declining revenue due to online book sales, e-books, and book rentals. The bookstore began its own rental program this year, which many students successfully used, but the Association only receives a small commission on each rental, so revenue is still lost. Some faculty feel frustration that the bookstore sometimes orders fewer books than may be needed to accommodate changing course enrollments. According to McFaddin, a follow-up meeting will need to be held in 2011 as a work session to try to find solutions to these issues.

NCCC Foundation

Most College personnel and students have little contact with or understanding of the NCCC Foundation, which is described on the College website as

... a not-for-profit corporation established to enhance and provide assistance for the educational programs of North Country Community College.

Its purposes include:

- *Granting student, faculty, and staff scholarships and fellowships;*
- *Supporting development and research projects including in-service workshops, seminars, and conferences;*
- *Providing a focal point for philanthropic support of the college*

The NCCC Foundation annually awards scholarships to students who demonstrate accomplishment and promise and who require financial assistance. Substantial financial support of the educational aspirations of worthy NCCC students is the principal focus of the Foundation's efforts.

The Foundation does offer a wide array of scholarships for students, and the Enrollment Management office puts together a yearly brochure for students listing all of them in addition to scholarships from outside sources.

In the last decade, the building of new campuses in Malone and Ticonderoga was enabled by the Foundation, which paid for the facilities through a combination of loans through county industrial development agencies and community fundraising. The College now leases the campuses from the Foundation. This entrepreneurial model was possible because branch sites, unlike the main campus in Saranac Lake, do not have to be owned by the sponsoring counties.

COLLEGE SPONSORS: ESSEX AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES

Since the sponsoring counties formulated and received approval for the establishment of NCCC in 1967, the sponsors' statutory role in governance and leadership of the College now falls within two primary fiduciary areas: budgetary oversight/approval and funding of operational and capital costs, as delineated in NYSEL §604.1⁴². In recent years, the counties' influence over the budget has changed from having a line-item veto to simply being able to approve or reject the budget as a whole. They also must approve the College's contracts with its two collective bargaining units.

Historically, the sponsors have always met their obligations of "maintenance of effort" even during the most difficult of fiscal times. This obligation is met by direct appropriation and by "charge backs" from counties whose students attend NCCC. In addition to the budgetary approval process, the sponsors maintain an active presence in the governance and leadership of the College through their appointment of five members of the College Board of Trustees. County legislators/supervisors were represented on the search committee in the most recent presidential search.

⁴² NYSEL §604.1

NEW YORK STATE

NCCC is one of 64 colleges in the SUNY system. Community colleges have a degree of autonomy in this system that state-operated campuses do not. For example, the SUNY BOT does not appoint the College President, as it does for the state operated campuses, but it does have to approve the appointment by the NCCC BOT⁴³. The same is true for changes to tuition and fees. The SUNY BOT does not directly make decisions regarding the operation of NCCC or any other community college, but it does have influence both statutorily and because of past practice and political realities.

The University of the State of New York, not to be confused with the State University of New York (SUNY), exercises final authority over all public, private and proprietary degree-granting institutions operating in the State of New York. Through the NYS Education Department (NYSED), the University of the State of New York approves all certificates and degrees offered by the College. The certificate and degree programs are reviewed and approved using a standardized evaluation process that includes confirmation of institutional fiscal resources, employment of appropriate faculty, transferability to a four-year degree, employability of graduates, non-duplication of degree with surrounding institutions, and sustainable enrollment.

COLLEGE GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

North Country balances its governance structure between its own oversight activities and actions that it must statutorily submit for approval to county and state authorities like the State Education Department and the SUNY Board of Trustees.

The NCCC Board of Trustees schedules and conducts regular monthly meetings. The Board has put the College Senate as a permanent item on its agenda. The Senate meets monthly. Its committees meet at least once per semester and usually several times per semester, as needed.

Matters not needing approval at the state level are approved locally by the College Board of Trustees with recommending powers invested in the College President with advice from the College Senate.

⁴³ See SUNY.edu for more information on the role of the SUNY BOT

STANDARD 5: ADMINISTRATION

The institution's administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution's organization and governance.

As discussed in Standard 4, the President is the chief executive officer of the College. Dr. Brown is a highly experienced administrator who has led several colleges through periods of transition such as NCCC is currently experiencing⁴⁴. She brings extensive experience in assessment and strategic planning, and in just over a year has made many changes in the operations and direction of the College.

Under the President, the main organizational structure of NCCC falls into three areas under three vice presidents: Academic Affairs, Fiscal Operations, and Enrollment and Student Services. During the previous presidential administration of Dr. Gail Rice, Student Services, which had been its own division, became subsumed into Enrollment and Student Services. Prior to 2007, the title of vice president was not used, but there was a Dean of Academic Affairs and a Dean of Student Affairs and an Assistant to the President for Enrollment Management as well as a Business Manager. Since then, these functions have been reorganized under the three vice presidents. However, in 2009-2010, President Brown unlinked Enrollment from Student Services, with the renamed Office of Campus and Student Life now reporting directly to her. The Athletic Department, which had been supervised by the VP of Enrollment and Student Services, is now officially under the VPAA to better support student-athletes academically. The 2010-11 organizational chart⁴⁵ reflects these changes.

In addition to the vice presidents, the Human Resources Director, Assistant Dean of Facilities and Grounds and Assistant Dean of Grants and Funded Programs report directly to the President. The Assistant Dean of Institutional Research and Support reports to the VPAA. His work directly supports that of all three vice presidents as well as that of many faculty and staff. As a result of this, he has been stretched very thin. In fall 2010, an assistant was hired to allow him to focus more on technology and institutional effectiveness.

The three vice presidents oversee the satellite instructional sites in their respective areas. The two satellite campuses operate without formally titled campus administrators. Over the years, individuals have been asked to serve in positions (“academic coordinators”, “lead faculty”, or “coordinators of campus and student life”) that report to the VPs. These individuals assist department coordinators and other offices at the Saranac Lake campus as well. Currently, Bella Doolittle serves as Coordinator of Campus and Student Life in Ticonderoga and Andrew M. McKee serves as Academic Coordinator for the Malone site⁴⁶. Both Ms. Doolittle and Mr. McKee generally oversee the daily operations of their respective campuses.

Shalena Duprey, Associate Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid, oversees the operations of enrollment and financial aid and serves as the supervisor for CSEA staff on the Malone campus. The Business Office is represented by Dory Dustin.

⁴⁴ Resumes for all College administrators are on file in the Human Resources Office

⁴⁵ Organizational charts from 2005 to present; also Appendix N - Building Bridges update May 6, 2010

⁴⁶ Institutional Job Descriptions

The three vice presidents have academic credentials and experience that support their roles in the College. Newly hired VPAA Carole Richardson began work in fall 2010. Her credentials include a PhD in Public Administration from Western Michigan University, completion of the program in Management and Leadership in Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and an On-Line Education and Training Certificate from the University of London. Prior to coming to NCCC, she was Academic Affairs Director and Special Projects and Title III Project Manager at Central Michigan University (CMU) for five years. She has held various administrative positions in academic affairs at CMU, Hagerstown Community College, and Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College. VP of Fiscal Operations William Chapin has an MBA from Sage College, and prior to joining NCCC in 2006, he had five years of experience as chief financial officer of Mercy Uihlein Health Corporation and 11 years administrative experience at American Management Association. VP of Enrollment and Student Services Ed Trathen has an MST from SUNY Potsdam and prior to coming to NCCC in 1999, he was an admissions officer and assistant director of admissions at SUNY Potsdam. He has been a New York State public hearing officer and arbitrator since 2003.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

In keeping with the entrepreneurial, flexible nature of the College and its organizational structure over the past ten years, changes have occurred within the academic affairs division as well. In the 2005 PRR, NCCC reported:

In the Academic arena, decision making has been organized into smaller more concise units. The institution dedicated funding to allow greater release time for individuals to become coordinators, department chairs, etc., versus retaining larger, less specific areas: For example, grouping Math/Science into one department. Although more costly in terms of personnel, this reorganization has allowed greater contact with adjuncts, development of departmental goals and allows faculty to be more significant arbitrators of their own departmental future.

Coordinators and department chairs advise and consult with the VPAA in monthly meetings as well as continual e-mail communication.

Academic programs are created and overseen by faculty members, particularly department coordinators, working in conjunction with the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Council and the VPAA, who supports and advocates for faculty. New programs generally arise from faculty discussion of perceived opportunities and needs. For example, in the past couple of years, the Science department created the A.S. Environmental Science program; the Art department created the A.S. in Fine Arts - Studio, and the Science and Allied Health departments have been working together to create a degree and certificate in Health Sciences and a proposed certificate for Certified Nursing Assistants.

In 2009-2010, the academic coordinator system came under the microscope, particularly in regard to inequities in work load of coordinators in different disciplines. A Coordinator Task Force was formed to study the issue. One of the Task Force's main recommendations was the potential need of an Assistant to the VPAA. The purpose was for this person to handle some of the issues that the Coordinators were struggling with such as adjunct hiring, course scheduling, book issues, and to act as a liaison between the faculty and the VPAA. With the very flat organizational structure in Academic Affairs, the VPAA is stretched thin.

Because of the fluid, informal nature of relationships between faculty and administration, new programs and initiatives germinate easily and are carried to fruition with the strong support of administration. However, prior to fall 2009, the faculty had no official voice in College governance,

and thus the faculty union, NCCCAP, became the default voice, which ultimately resulted in many grievances being filed. With the College Senate in place, the union returns to its primary role of negotiating contracts and assuring healthy working conditions for its members. The same is true for the CSEA union and its members.

In general, the lines of communication between administration and staff seem to be open, with frequent use of e-mail, telephone, and in-person communication during work hours. President Brown and all three vice presidents are often seen at College dinners and sports events, making themselves accessible to staff and students in an informal atmosphere. In the other direction, administrators and all staff have access to minutes from department and committee meetings, so they can have a sense of what is happening within the daily workings of the College.

Open lines of communication have been re-established with the CSEA collective bargaining unit as the President meets with the local CSEA President on a monthly basis. As discussed in chapter 1, this led to the resolution of an impasse in contract negotiations. President Brown and the NCCCAP President meet regularly, resulting in the resolution of previous grievances.

SUMMARY

As in other areas of this report, it's clear that NCCC is meeting its statutory obligations as well as the spirit of its mission. The Board of Trustees and administration have worked continually to ensure the quality of education at the College, and significant changes are being made that allow broader participation in decision making with consistent procedures to combat arbitrariness and inequities. The benefits of the College's small size and relatively flat administrative structure, most notably ease of communication and encouragement of creativity, are still being actively nurtured.

The College Senate and other groups such as the President's Leadership Team, as well as the open, participatory process of writing the Strategic Plan, have created more cooperative interaction among all levels of employees of the College and shared responsibility for decisions made. Accountability is shared as a result. This has allowed faculty and staff to contribute their expertise to the College in areas outside of the classroom and office⁴⁷. Faculty and staff are now more directly involved with the development of policy and the daily operation of the College.

SUGGESTIONS

Standard 4:

- 4.1 *Institutionalize BOT goal-setting, planning, and assessment processes.*
- 4.2 *Continue to regularly assess the newly established College Senate and its processes.*
- 4.3 *Continue to ensure all constituencies (students, staff, faculty, administrators) are represented by voting members of the Senate.*

Standard 5:

- 5.1 *Ensure an organizational structure with clearly established lines of communication and authority for supervision and addressing issues.*

⁴⁷ See Appendix O – Middle States Staff Survey

- 5.2 *Continue to refine and implement a comprehensive College-wide evaluation process for all faculty, staff, and administrators.*
- 5.3 *Ensure equitable administrative oversight of operations at the Saranac Lake, Malone, and Ticonderoga sites.*

INTERVIEWS:

Edwin Trathen, VP Enrollment and Student Services

Joseph Keegan, Interim VPAA

Don Paulson, College Senate Chair

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

Relevant New York State Education Laws

Resumes for all College administrators

Organizational charts from 2005 to present

Institutional job descriptions

CHAPTER 4: STANDARDS 8 AND 9

STANDARD 8: STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND RETENTION

The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the students' educational goals.

Like many community colleges, NCCC has seen its enrollment rise dramatically over the past ten years, from a headcount of 1301 in 1999-2000 to 2725 in 2009-2010. Full-time equivalents (FTEs) went up from 734 to 1311. As an open admission institution, NCCC accepts any student who has a high school diploma or GED, or who passes the federally mandated Ability to Benefit (ATB) test. Students not meeting those requirements may take courses on a non-matriculated basis. The following policies ensure that these students are accountable for meeting the College's expectations. Once they have completed 24 credits, students must matriculate into a program of study. All matriculated students must maintain a certain GPA (dependent on how many credits they have completed) in order to maintain good academic standing⁴⁸. Once out of good standing, students are placed on warning and may be academically dismissed at the discretion of the VPAA.

Students may be denied admission to competitive programs such as Nursing; however, they can still matriculate in other programs. Up to and including 2010, students denied placement in Allied Health programs have been placed into the A.S. Math/Science program; however, the newly approved one-year Certificate in Health Sciences and the proposed A.S. in Health Sciences and Certified Nursing Assistant Certificate were created/proposed to find a better fit for these students. It is hoped that these programs will increase retention of students denied admission into the competitive Allied Health programs. As each of these programs is instituted, retention and graduation data will be analyzed to assess their effectiveness. (See Chapter 7)

Outside of Allied Health programs, students are only denied admission to the College for failure to respond to admissions requests or to provide information to determine their acceptance to the College. Unlike most four-year schools, which can control their applicant pool and the outcome of the recruitment process, NCCC's student profile is shaped more by outside factors than actual College policies. The College purchases names of students to use within a direct mail campaign, enrollment counselors actively visit high schools within a certain geographic area, and the NCCC Foundation offers scholarships to the top 20% of local students, but for every top student that enrolls, the College may receive applications from ten students who have barely graduated high school (or haven't, under GED programs and ATB). In 2008, the College instituted the Essex and Franklin Scholars Program, which provides free tuition for county students who graduate in the top 20% of their class. In fall 2010, the College enrolled 53 of the 200 students in the counties who met this requirement.

As a recruitment strategy, the College has developed quality print materials to be circulated to prospective students. Recruitment publications include the following⁴⁹:

- 8 x 8 inch, full-color viewbook or "road piece"

⁴⁸ NCCC Catalog p. 26 – Standards for Academic Progress and Dismissal

⁴⁹ Recruitment materials

- 4 x9 inch, full-color, front/back brochures for all academic programs⁵⁰ as well as for the Athlete Mentoring Program (AMP)
- Residence Life (tri-fold, color) brochure
- Financial Aid Materials: FAFSA, FSA bookmark and brochure; 4x9 Financial Aid Office contact information card, “A College Education IS Affordable” card/mailer

These publications generally advance the College’s mission by outlining the degree programs and options. However, the viewbook/”road piece” states that the College aims “to provide high-quality, public post-secondary education to local residents, as well as those outside of the region, who desire to live, learn and grow in a unique educational setting”, which is not the actual mission statement of the College. New publications will include the current mission statement.

Each academic program brochure contains a brief introduction to the program, the type of degree offered (i.e. A.A., A.S., A.A.S., or certificate) and the credit hours and individual courses required to complete the program. A more comprehensive description of each program and its requirements is found in the NCCC catalog (offered online and in print, upon request. A print copy of the catalog is provided to each incoming student, as the Code of Conduct and other policies outlined within delineate the student’s contract with NCCC).

Program requirements, course descriptions, general education requirements, transfer policy, Code of Conduct, and more are all available in the online catalog and through other links. The “Admissions” link explains admission processes and policies, including placement testing, acceptance of transfer credit and credit earned through other programs, as well as policy on students with GEDs and/or Ability to Benefit as determined by testing.

Assessment of student success is ongoing. Each year the College puts together an Institutional Profile that tracks graduation, retention, and transfer rates, among other data. While NCCC’s institutional assessment data is not directly available on NCCC.edu, it is accessible to the public elsewhere through SUNY, IPEDS, and other informational sites. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SUNY is available on the SUNY Provost’s website.

Efforts are continually being made to increase graduation, retention, and transfer rates. For example, another effort to increase retention of pre-Allied Health students was begun in fall 2009. Pre-Allied Health Seminars were instituted that help students applying to these competitive programs to know in advance what their options are if denied admission and to inform them of resources available to help them plan their academic and work careers in that event.⁵¹ The seminars educate students on the realities of these fields, including exposure to bodily fluids, which helps students to make more informed career choices. Preliminary assessment of the seminars shows that students have found them helpful. The seminars did not run in fall 2010 due to turnover in administration and the departure of the coordinator of the Radiologic Technology program, which has necessitated a lot of active involvement by new VPAA Carole Richardson. It is anticipated that the seminars will resume in spring 2011. See Standard 9, for other efforts being made with new student registration, orientation, and learning assistance to improve student success.

⁵⁰ See NCCC.edu for complete list

⁵¹ Health career seminar assessment data.

FINANCIAL AID

The Enrollment Management division houses both Admissions and Financial Aid and has five full-time professional staff members cross-trained in both. The Financial Aid office also has one full-time administrative assistant.

Student feedback and staff input have contributed to ongoing, though informal, analysis of the effectiveness of NCCC's financial aid processes. According to the 2009 CCSSE, 20% of students said that the College emphasized providing financial support "very much"; 24% said "quite a bit"; 34% said "some"; and, of most concern, 23% said "very little". One way to bring these numbers up might be for the Enrollment Management office to install computers on which staff could help students having trouble with the online financial aid application.

Since 2009, students have been able to access their financial aid and billing information on the student portal. New changes using the College's CAMS course management system will enhance the delivery of aid and reduce the amount of time currently spent in manual processing of student records. It is anticipated that with this change, students could receive an award letter much more quickly, and the process of awarding aid and notifying students of aid pending could become more automated. This would leave the financial aid staff more time to focus on students with specific needs while also giving them time to be more proactive about improving processes and counseling students.

Currently, staff are trained to correspond with students and parents about the financial aid process and to award aid based on a student's ISIR information (the Institutional Student Information Report, an electronic copy from the Dept of Education of the FAFSA the student initially filed). In an effort to increase student support services related to financial aid, the Enrollment Management division has taken various steps to be more "customer friendly". At the Saranac Lake campus, four professional staff members serve the Saranac Lake and Ticonderoga campuses. One full-time professional staff member based in Malone serves students there. As a new initiative, staff from Saranac Lake have begun to travel to the Ticonderoga campus for "Instant Admission Days" to allow students to take care of financial aid needs in person. Six of these days were offered in the summer of 2010. Saranac Lake staff fill in at the Ticonderoga and Malone sites when needed, to ensure that there is always someone students can talk to instead of relying on phone calls and e-mails. Initial feedback from students and staff at the Malone and Ticonderoga campuses indicate a positive view of the increased campus presence. In the summer/fall of 2010, student visits at the Ticonderoga campus were logged. Spring 2011 data will be logged and added so that a full year cycle can be analyzed to more efficiently focus staffing during periods of high need and identify common issues that will need action plans. In the meantime current coverage will continue at all sites.

STANDARD 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

From the moment a student applies to NCCC, his or her experience is scaffolded by various support services that are an integral part of how NCCC achieves all aspects of its mission and goals. All students are eligible for these services, many of which are supported by student fees.

REGISTRATION

Once students are accepted to the College, they are scheduled to come to an on-campus registration. Since the 2005 PRR, the procedures have changed dramatically. Students are now scheduled for sessions throughout the day, relieving the long waits that used to occur. Many faculty members can now advise students in their own offices, where students can be more comfortable and get a better sense of individual connection. The biggest change has been the ability to register students entirely online, with a minimal amount of paper involved. Besides the elimination of waste, advisors are now able to see instantly when courses are closed, so Records Office staff don't have to run around from room to room writing lists of closed courses on the blackboards, as used to occur.

As of summer 2010, registration processes have evolved even further to address issues that were revealed in the 2009 CCSSE. That report showed that while the quality of relationships new students formed with other students, with faculty, and with administrative personnel and offices at the College was around the mean for the CCSSE cohort, there was still room for improvement.

The new registration process differs from previous years in three important ways. First, there is now an initial welcome by the VP of Academic Affairs or another College representative, which provides a short orientation to the College before students are thrust into testing. In addition to explaining the day and many aspects of the College, the meeting emphasizes the importance of making a strong effort on the placement tests, something students had previously not always done because they didn't realize how their test scores could affect their class progression. It stresses the importance of taking their studies seriously and buying and using textbooks and introduces the many support services available.

The second major change is in presentation and student assistance. "Ambassadors", who are both students and staff, are clearly identified by their shirts and name badges, and are stationed in prominent locations. Their job is to guide students and parents to where they need to go and to answer questions. The results are a more professional look to the institution and better service to the students. Third, students are offered orientation sessions to the school e-mail and portal systems. The College uses these methods of communication extensively, so it is important that students realize this and start to use them right away.

Faculty attend pre-registration meetings to discuss procedures, courses needing increased enrollment, what to do about students who can't get into courses, and related issues. Then for the rest of the day, faculty work one-on-one with students to advise them into the best possible schedule for their program and individual life situation. Faculty advisors are given access to their advisees' placement test results, college transcripts, degree audits, and midterm grades through the Faculty Portal. This allows advisors to assess students' progress and intervene when they are in trouble. Effort is currently being made to allow advisors access to students' high school transcripts. An

Advising Handbook assists faculty when they are advising students outside of their program area and also provides a reference with regard to standard math sequences and courses appropriate for students who test into developmental writing, reading, and/or math courses. The Advising Handbook is updated regularly by the Advising Committee of the College Senate and will soon be accessible on the faculty portal.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Assessment regarding students' need for supportive services is an all-encompassing, continuous process involving most areas of the College at various times. From the moment a student applies, members of the Enrollment Management team assess students' personal finance and demographic information, determining whether or not financial assistance can be given.

To identify students who might need ADA-504 accommodations, students are given opportunities during the application and registration process to self-disclose any learning assistance needs. The ADA-504 Coordinator tracks the incoming confidential paperwork and makes sure proper accommodations are in place for students who qualify. The coordinator monitors the progress of students who choose to utilize services and those who refuse services through discussion with students, faculty, and LAC staff. Additionally, the Coordinator is a liaison between students and agencies such as Vocational Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), as well as between students and instructors if problems arise connected to disability or limitation qualified under ADA.

Services for students qualifying under ADA-504 may include the following: extended time for tests, testing environment with minimal distraction, test reading, note-taking services, test scribing, recorded texts and assistive technology. Testing and note-taking services are offered in the Learning Assistance Center and monitored by the LAC staff.

When students are first registered at the College, they take the Accuplacer computerized test as the initial tool to determine if they need remediation in English and/or math. The math and English departments have set cutoff scores to reflect what each department thinks is appropriate for the student to start at a particular level⁵². The College offers remedial pre-algebra (MAT095), which does not count for college credit, and elementary algebra (MAT100) which counts only for general elective credit. In English, the College offers developmental writing (ENG100), also a general elective, and, in addition, remedial reading (RDG099), for no college credit, for students whose placement scores are particularly low. In spring 2011, the College is piloting the "Springboard" program, which is a learning community for students needing remedial and/or developmental work in both English and math⁵³. (See Chapter 6)

Because of the complex nature of the writing process, computerized tests do not always accurately assess writing abilities, particularly for nontraditional students who may not be used to computers. Thus to ensure the accuracy of placement, all students in ENG 100/101 write an essay on the first day of class. At that point, the instructor may flag students who seem to be misplaced. There are usually only a few students moved each semester, and the English department has made very few changes since the cutoffs were first established.

⁵² Accuplacer cutoff scores

⁵³ See Appendix P - Springboard program description, and "NCCC to Begin Pilot Project in 2011" article in Adirondack Daily Enterprise 12/4/2010

The Math department has recently stopped retesting students on the first day of class because they were not seeing much movement between classes, but students are encouraged to brush up their skills at Math.com and retake the Accuplacer if they feel they have been misplaced. The Math department has made several changes over the course of using Accuplacer to find the best cutoff scores to ensure that students are placed appropriately.

Occasional problems occur with students who register over the phone and do not take the placement tests. Such students are generally advised by Records Office staff, based on high school and/or transfer transcripts and conversation with the student. These students are often placed into courses either above or below their level. This is a problem for the students and for the College, as section populations can change significantly during the first week of class, something the placement test was instituted to prevent. The Registrar is currently looking into doing online placement testing or doing a mass testing session during orientation, so that schedule changes for these students can be made before classes actually start. The plan is to have one or both of these options in place by summer 2011. Another suggestion was to have a faculty advisor available one day a week during the summer.

ORIENTATION

To provide students with information about NCCC's services and resources and opportunities at the College that will enhance their learning and living environments, every fall semester begins with a full-day Orientation session⁵⁴. Spring semester Orientation is abbreviated, usually occurring during an Activity Period or evening session in the first week of class. Activity periods are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:05 to 1:30 p.m., a time in which few or no classes are offered to enable clubs and committees to meet as well as participation in campus activities. There is some discussion about making the spring Orientation a full day like the fall.

The College's Orientation program plays a major role in helping with retention and student success by breaking the ice and connecting students with faculty and staff right at the beginning of the semester. This affords students the chance to address their needs on an individual basis with faculty or staff members that they already feel comfortable with. As noted above, many of the activities that until now have taken place at Orientation are being moved to registration days, so that Orientation can now reinforce the College's expectations and the connections students have already made, in addition to providing more opportunities to create those connections.

Goals of Orientation include the following:

- Inform students about resources available, including but not limited to online resources, student government and clubs, critical academic and financial aid information, and academic advising
- Provide opportunity to foster relationships with faculty, staff, and other students
- Help retain students by connecting them with the College resources including department coordinators, advisors, and returning students
- Provide leadership opportunities for returning students by including them as volunteers with the event
- Provide students with a convenient time to take care of tasks, including but not limited to obtaining student identification, parking permits, and books, as well as dealing with financial aid and billing issues

⁵⁴ Recent Orientation schedules

The Orientation sessions, like all Campus and Student Life (CSL) programs, are assessed (Standard 7) with post-event questionnaires administered to all participants, including faculty, guest speakers, and facilitators, as well as students⁵⁵. Information and recommendations on service and future programming are collected and used to plan and strengthen future Orientations. This feedback impacts other programs, including the parent sessions that the Director of Campus and Student Life leads during new student registrations.

The fall 2009 Orientation survey yielded information pertaining to student fears and concerns. The fear of failing or not doing well was identified by many students. The Office of Campus and Student Life used this information to inform parents of their concerns so that they could begin encouraging students earlier through the process and support them through the transition, especially during the first six weeks. A learning styles workshop was added to the Orientation program in 2010. Students were shown techniques appropriate to their own predominant learning style to help them with note taking, text reading, and information retention.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN STUDENT SERVICES AND ACADEMICS

Academic faculty and student services personnel often work together to provide programming in the classroom to help students to realize their “intellectual, career, personal, and creative aspirations,” as is spelled out in the College Mission. Programming and services are developed to support and enhance curricular programs, courses, College services including advisement, and engagement with the community. Sample programs and services include but are not limited to job preparedness presentations within Allied Health programs; fire prevention and safety guidelines for commuter and residential students; and sexual assault awareness and prevention in concert with local police departments and community sexual assault education specialists.

Other examples include the *Northern New Yorker*, an annual literature and art publication of student work from all campuses of NCCC⁵⁶. The publication would not be possible without collaboration between student services, faculty and students. Another collaboration is Night of the Arts in Saranac Lake, an annual evening program showcasing the talent of students, faculty and staff of NCCC. In Malone, faculty and staff have expanded to a week-long celebration of the arts, which would not be possible without collaboration among all areas of the College. Ticonderoga offers a celebration of Constitution Day each year, with a live reading of the Constitution as well as other celebratory activities. Each semester, all three sites host a number of academic speakers and programs, including trips to museums, which are at least partially financed and planned by the Campus Activity Boards (CABs). The CABs are made up of faculty, students, and student services personnel, and they actively solicit faculty and student input on programming, which is paid for by student activity fees.

LEARNING ASSISTANCE AND REMEDIATION

Since the 2000 Self-Study, the Learning Assistance Centers on all three sites have added more staff, including part-time professional tutors⁵⁷. Each branch campus has staff in place to oversee their respective students in need of remediation. Malone has a similar operation to that of Saranac Lake, though smaller. On the Ticonderoga campus, the LAC has only been officially operating since the

⁵⁵ Orientation assessment results

⁵⁶ Northern New Yorker copies

⁵⁷ See Appendix Q - Saranac Lake LAC Assessment Reports

2008-2009 academic year. A former reading instructor has been hired to assist students, organize study groups, and conduct workshops.

In fall 2009, the College began using an online LAC referral form, easily accessed through the Faculty Portal, to more efficiently refer and track usage for students in need of learning assistance. This referral form is available for use with students on all three campuses, including those enrolled in online-only distance learning courses⁵⁸. The Learning Assistance Center provides one-on-one and small group tutoring, as well as small study groups and writing assistance to increase writing skills across the curriculum. See Chapter 7 for more on assessment of the LAC.

LIBRARY/LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

In August 2009, Dr. Linda Larkin was hired as Director of Library Services for North Country Community College to fill the position created by Patrick McIntyre's retirement. At that time, the director's position was changed from a 9-month to a 12-month position.

During the 2009-2010 school year, library services at all three North Country Community College campuses were enhanced by the addition of a library web page providing Internet access to all library databases and by joining Ask Us 24-7, a cooperative library consortium providing online reference service to students 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

While these enhancements benefited all NCCC students, they were probably most needed at the Ticonderoga and Malone campuses, where library hours are most limited. In addition to the services listed above, staffing at both Ticonderoga and Malone was improved over the past year. Both sites now have part-time librarians available 32 hours per week. Before this past year, the Ticonderoga campus did not have any regular library staff, and Malone only had a 20-hour library assistant. In spring 2011, Sunday hours are being piloted in Saranac Lake. (See Chapter 7)

There is a small materials budget for the libraries at Ticonderoga and Malone to use for periodicals and reference books. However, as more journals become available online, the periodical subscriptions are being reduced. Exceptions are made when the paper journals are heavily used or an online format just does not make sense. Some nursing and art journals are examples.

Space limitations at both branch campuses, as well as limited funding, indicate a need for a centralized circulating collection at Saranac Lake. No circulating materials are being purchased for Ticonderoga or Malone; however, reference materials are available and are continually being updated, and circulating materials requested from Saranac Lake are normally available within a day of being requested.

OFFICE OF CAMPUS AND STUDENT LIFE (OCSL)

Many of the services offered by OCSL in support of the mission and goals are detailed in Chapter 1. OCSL specifically helps the College provide *...an innovative, challenging, supportive environment where the intellectual, career, personal, and creative aspirations of all interested individuals can be realized.*

Most NCCC mission goals are advanced by OCSL, but the most relevant are the following:

- *The College will provide services that enable students to clarify their current and future educational, vocational, personal, and social goals.*

⁵⁸ Recommendations for Use of LAC Referral Form

- *The College will provide a variety of social, cultural, health, and recreational programs to enhance the development of its students.*

Career Counseling/ Transfer Articulations/ Employment Opportunities

The Director of CSL (Bobbie Karp) as well as the Malone and Ticonderoga coordinators work directly with students to help them assess their career and educational goals. The offices maintain transfer agreements to promote and facilitate the transition of qualified NCCC students into parallel programs in four-year institutions. Staff provide information on employment opportunities, work with the Discover Program to allow students to search career and educational information and work with students to assist in interview skills and reviewing resumes. Director Karp also offers career planning workshops to students in CTE programs. For example, Allied Health faculty regularly design a job preparedness unit with CSL including mock interview and resume writing assignments. Employers seeking to recruit on campus are scheduled throughout the year in addition to the annual career fairs at all sites.

The CSL coordinators and director are nine-month positions, so currently career and transfer services are not provided during the summer, though the Director is available via e-mail to assist students and alumni.

Activities

The results of the 2003 SUNY-wide Student Opinion Survey appeared to indicate a need to increase offerings in social, cultural, health and recreational programs. This indication catalyzed the enhancement and expansion of the student programming committees into campus and tri-campus activity boards in 2003. Members are a cross-section of the College community (CSL, Academic Affairs, staff and students).

A reorganization of personnel in the Student Affairs area occurred in 2004 to assure further attention to student needs. This reorganization added a full-time staff person whose principal duty is to implement expanded and enhanced programs in the areas indicated by the findings of the Student Opinion Survey. The organizational structure changed again in spring 2010. The Director of CSL, Bobbie Karp, now reports directly to President Brown. The department includes three coordinators of CSL, one for each campus, and an administrative assistant based in Saranac Lake. The former assistant director is now the Saranac Lake CSL Coordinator.

A concerted effort has been made to move away from only performance-oriented activities and to add cultural diversity, health awareness and lifelong nutrition and exercise programming for the entire College community. SUNY Student Opinion Surveys and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) are conducted approximately every three years and are being used to assess, monitor, and where needed, realign programs. When asked in the 2009 CCSSE how much the College emphasizes providing the support students need to thrive socially, 9% said “very much,” 23% “quite a bit,” 41% “some,” and 28% “very little.” On the other hand, when asked how much time students spent each week participating in college-sponsored activities, 70% said none. These results prompted a change in the fall 2010 Orientation program toward spending more time on activities to help students connect with each other.

The 2009 CCSSE reports that 72% of students said the college provides the support they need to succeed academically. However, only 22% said the same for helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities. This suggests that the College is doing well with academic support programs but needs to focus more attention on support of students outside of the classroom realm.

Some specific groups and activities overseen by OCSL include the following:

- RAVE (Reduce Alcohol and Violent Experiences) Committee
- Student Government Association
- Campus and Tri-Campus Activity Boards
- Promotion of employment opportunities

Counseling

Under “Student Life” on nccc.edu, the following is written under “Counseling”:

*In the event of a mental health or physical emergency, call 911.
The college refers students to a local support network. For referral information, contact your Office of Campus and Student Life representative.*

The College has not had a licensed mental health counselor on staff since 2006. This is an area of concern to faculty members who often end up doing informal counseling of students. Currently, the following procedures are followed to support students:

- Faculty suggest programs to OCSL and recommend guest speakers to address counseling needs of students.
- Director of CSL finds referral links and creates materials publicizing these resources.
- Faculty attempt to deal with situations until they can advise CSL director and referrals can be made.
- Director of CSL trains Residence Hall Director, resident assistants, security personnel, etc. on NCCC emergency procedures leading to referrals.
- Director of CSL provides brief immediate intervention before referral can be made and consults with other administrators on specific cases involving procedures and student status.
- Residence Hall Director consults with Dir. of CSL on specific incidents and referrals.
- Director of CSL monitors students as requested by students, staff, or administration.
- Director of CSL will make direct referrals to agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students.
- Residence hall Director, CSL coordinators, and CSL Director weekly assess the climate of the students. If there are behavioral concerns, an informal process of monitoring and support will take place. Disruptive behavior is addressed per the Code of Conduct.

The Director of CSL seeks and receives feedback from various parties involved in specific incidents. In fall 2010, CSL piloted a student feedback study in which students were asked to rank their concerns, and one item on the survey addressed the need for mental health counselors. The Campus and Student Life Committee of the College Senate is currently investigating possibilities for counseling services⁵⁹.

Discipline

Several committees and individuals are charged with developing guidelines and sanctions and administering discipline. The Residence Hall Committee, made up of faculty, staff, and students, develops parameters for behavior within the residence halls and requirements to live there. Sanctions are generally administered when necessary by the Residence Hall Director, with appeals

⁵⁹ CSL Committee minutes

heard by the Director of CSL. The Director of CSL implements discipline processes and procedures as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. The Behavioral Assessment Committee, established in 2009, assists the Director in determining what actions to take. In regard to academic and classroom behavior, the VPAA deals with student issues in conjunction with the Director of CSL, who can provide referrals and support for the student. Faculty serve on the Academic Standards Committee of the College Senate, establishing procedures for cases involving academic integrity. (See Chapter 1)

Health and Wellness

Under “Student Life” on nccc.edu, the following is written under “Health Services”:

North Country Community College does not maintain an on-campus health-service staff. Students who encounter medical problems must seek assistance by contacting local medical professionals or their family physician. The Office of Campus and Student Life provides information on medical services available in the community.

In case of accident, all full-time students are covered under the College's mandatory accident insurance program. Optional insurance coverage for illness is available at an additional cost. Students using a private physician service should be prepared to satisfy their financial obligations to the physician by cash or through individual or family health insurance programs.

While the College does not provide healthcare services, there are a variety of wellness programs on all campuses. Faculty and staff participate on the POWER Committee and develop initiatives to promote wellness, such as distributing fresh fruit, organizing fitness activities, and creating bulletin board displays with information on health and nutrition. The committee recommends possible programs and speakers to address needs of students. The Director of CSL organizes a health fair each year, bringing in many community organizations to supply information on a wide range of health issues.

During registrations, parent sessions advise parents to line up medical services prior to the start of the semester. The local Uninsured Task Force is now invited to address parents in response to concerns expressed in 2008 regarding families’ and students’ lack of health insurance.

Alcohol and substance abuse prevention is a big part of College health and wellness. The Asst. Dean for Grants and Funded Programs has obtained a grant for substance abuse prevention and administers it along with the RAVE (Reducing Alcohol and Violent Experiences) Committee, made up of faculty, staff, and students. The grant funds programs and literature that fight and prevent alcohol and substance abuse. In regard to sexual issues, condoms are available outside the CSL office, and yearly programs are presented regarding all aspects of sexuality. Confidential HIV testing and counseling are offered through partnership with the Health Department.

The College complies with state and federal regulations regarding immunization of students. The Records Office ensures the collection of health and immunization records and warns and dismisses students who do not supply the necessary records. The Records Office also collects information and compiles the athletic health reports for the Athletic Department as required by the athletic conference.

Housing

The residence halls on the Saranac Lake campus house 96 students and a director. Student services and residential life collectively function to promote a positive living and learning environment for

the College community. The NCCC Association Board, made up of faculty, staff, students, and others, develops and revises policy involving housing. The Executive Director of the Association guides implementation of housing fees, services, procedures, and processes. The Residence Hall Director implements housing processes and procedures and helps to oversee structural improvement as directed by the Association. Room and board payments are collected by the Business Office for the Association. Beginning in 2010-11, the Residence Hall Director will be conducting exit interviews with students leaving the residence halls to assess and improve operations.

The Director and Saranac Lake Coordinator of CSL provide programs for housing residents to create a total campus experience. More and more programs are being offered at the residence halls or around the gym and athletic fields in the evenings to encourage participation in positive interactions with peers rather than dangerous behaviors such as drinking. Examples include drive-in movies, game nights, massages and beauty treatments, and intramural athletics. A program on self defense garnered positive evaluations, prompting the Saranac Lake CSL Coordinator to offer it again this year.

Child Care

NCCC has not offered on-campus child care since 1996. However, a clerical staff member (Kathy Reyome) administers child care subsidies for students. She projects costs and works with Asst. Dean for Grants and Funded Programs (Maureen Sayles) to apply for child care funding which is paid directly to care providers. There is a child care center that rents space in the College's River Street Hall.

Security

In 2008, administrators assessed a need for security on the Saranac Lake campus due to a population increase as well as increased national attention to campus safety. Now contracted security personnel provide traffic control and parking enforcement, communicate with local authorities when needed, help allay parental fears at Orientation and registration, and attend athletic events to help with crowd control and traffic flow. The strengths and weaknesses of outsourcing security services are continually being assessed. The Malone and Ticonderoga sites do not have security services at present.

CSL Assessment

In addition to participant evaluations of programs and a survey of graduates, the Office of Campus and Student Life administers the following externally created surveys for measurement of college needs

- CORE (name of institute specific to alcohol and drug prevention)
- Student Opinion Survey (SOS)
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
- Alumni Survey
- National College Health Assessment (NCHA)
- Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)

Changes have been made as a result of these assessment results. Some are detailed above. Others include changes to substance abuse prevention programming using both on-campus and online educational programs. The department also assesses its operations by monitoring each staff member's activities and initiatives undertaken.

ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

As part of the National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association (NJCAA), Region III, NCCC fields teams for men's and women's soccer and basketball and women's softball. Athletic teams are based at the Saranac Lake campus. In 2008, the men's and women's hockey teams were cut due to budgetary and winter travel issues. However, as of fall 2010, NCCC is fielding men's and women's cross-country running.

As in all other areas of this small college, various offices and individuals work together to facilitate the athletic program. To emphasize that student-athletes are students first and foremost, the AMP Coordinator, faculty, LAC staff, and coaches work together to provide academic services to athletes so they can not only maintain eligibility but ideally excel in the classroom as well as on the field (see below). Additionally, as of fall 2010, all student-athletes are mandated to attend a weekly study hall, and the Athletic Dept. has begun conducting exit interviews with departing student-athletes to assess their experience and is currently reviewing that data as well as continuing the interview process.

Athlete Mentoring Program (AMP – SL campus only)

The Athlete Mentoring Program (AMP) is a way in which the College supports athletes in their academic lives. Begun in 2002, the AMP won an award for the 2007-2008 Outstanding Student Affairs Program from the SUNY Office of University Life and the Council of Community College Chief Student Affairs Officers.

The AMP mission statement is as follows:

The North Country Community College Athlete Mentoring Program is designed to monitor, assist, and retain our student-athletes. The main goal is to insure that our athletes progress successfully in their academic, athletic, and personal endeavors. The desired outcome for our athletes is to earn a degree, maintain eligibility, and continue their academic, professional, and athletic careers at a four-year institution if desired.

The program was developed by the AMP Committee, formed in 2003, which consists of faculty, staff, and student-athletes. The program is coordinated by Larry McFaddin, a senior faculty member, former men's soccer coach, and former director of student activities. He monitors athletes' progress through weekly referrals made from instructors via the faculty portal. When students are referred, a sequence of steps is initiated,⁶⁰ and ultimately an intervention plan is agreed upon by both the student and the instructor for success in the class. Such plans may involve meeting with instructors and/or requesting tutoring services from the LAC. Prior to 2009, student-athletes who didn't comply with AMP requirements were only removed from the AMP program, but as of 2009, students may be removed from their teams.

Data on referrals, student-athlete compliance with the program, changes in GPA, frequency of low grades, number of withdrawals, and attempted-to-earned credit ratios as a result are compiled on a semester basis. The overriding philosophy and strategy of the AMP is for early intervention and action; therefore the data serves to provide the AMP Committee with information which then is used in the formation of strategies and policy. The data clearly indicates that student-athlete compliance with the policies contained in the AMP Sequence and Timeline document generally

⁶⁰ See Appendix R - AMP Sequence and Timeline

leads to better overall academic success, increased GPAs, improved attempted to earned credit ratios, and ultimately, progress towards a degree⁶¹.

For example, in fall 2009, 51 student-athletes were referred. Of those, 34 met with the AMP Coordinator to create an action plan for success. Twenty-seven of those increased their GPA from midterm to final grades as compared to eight whose GPA decreased. Not all of those students actually complied with their action plan, but 23 of those who did increased their GPA from midterm to final grades.

SUMMARY OF STANDARDS 8 AND 9

NCCC enrollment has generally been increasing with each year⁶², and the entire College does work together to improve retention with a strong commitment to supporting students in all aspects of their college experience. Faculty and staff care deeply about student success and are continually improving processes and taking initiatives to increase it. Access to support services of all kinds is being increased at the Malone and Ticonderoga sites; and in Saranac Lake, the LAC and the AMP have grown in recent years. Registration, orientation, advisement, admission, and financial aid processes are all being continually updated to improve outcomes based on assessment results.

Many suggestions that came from this Self-Study process as well as other assessments have already been accomplished or are currently being actively worked on. For example:

- The College has adopted an online referral and tracking system for the LACs, similar to the one that has been successful for the AMP.
- The AMP has improved results by not allowing the athletes to play until they comply with their AMP action plan.
- A full library presence and limited LAC facilities have been provided at the Ticonderoga site.
- Registration and Orientation now include workshops in the computer lab where students set up their e-mail accounts and learn about the student portal and DL procedures.
- Orientation has been expanded by providing workshops and programs during the first week of classes and throughout the semester that continue to support the student where the College targets specific needs and groups (i.e.: athletes, international students, non-traditional students, etc.)
- The Saranac Lake LAC is rearranging its space to create better and quieter study, tutoring, and test-taking spaces for all students.
- OCSL and Enrollment are preparing an orientation for international students to educate them on visa procedures, discipline consequences, and general differences in culture.

SUGGESTIONS:

Standard 8:

8.1 Continually evaluate and improve the procedure for identification of students in need of remedial and developmental coursework and provide them appropriate coursework and support.

8.2 Include the current mission statement in new recruitment publications and on the website.

⁶¹ AMP data reports

⁶² See Appendix A

8.3 Continue participation in the CCSSE and the SUNY Student Opinion Survey and use results in each College area's assessment and improvement plan.

Standard 9:

- 9.1 Continue to assess usage and outcomes for LAC and library to ensure that facilities and services are meeting students' academic needs.*
- 9.2 Assess current Orientation structure to determine whether all students are being connected with necessary resources.*
- 9.3 Increase student usage of career/placement/transfer counseling services to be on par with peer institutions.*
- 9.4 Provide academic advisors with records of all prior and current academic courses of their advisees, including high school and SUNY general education transcripts.*

INTERVIEWS

Director of CSL Bobbie Karp

AMP Program Coordinator Larry McFaddin

LAC Coordinator Innam Dajany

Interim VPAA Joe Keegan

Former Asst. Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid Steve Conger

Library Director Linda Larkin

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

NCCC student recruitment materials

Accuplacer cutoff scores

Recent Orientation schedules

Orientation assessment results

Northern New Yorker copies

Recommendations for Use of LAC Referral Form

CSL Committee minutes

Academic Advising Handbook for faculty

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON-LINE

“NCCC to Begin Pilot Project in 2011” article in Adirondack Daily Enterprise 12/4/2010, adirondackdailyenterprise.com

CHAPTER 5: STANDARD 10

STANDARD 10: FACULTY

The institution's instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.

NCCC's Mission Statement is the backbone of the policies, practices, and outcomes of the institution, in which the relative roles of teaching, creation and preservation of knowledge, and service are balanced relative to the nature of constituents to be served. Teaching and the creation and preservation of knowledge are what faculty members are hired to do, what they do best, and what largely defines their purpose. It follows, then, that the role of faculty in that aspect of mission maintenance is primary.

In addition to teaching, faculty take a leading role in most aspects of operations, previously through ad hoc or standing committees, and more recently through the College Senate. This includes adjunct faculty, who also serve as Senate representatives and members of committees. Faculty from most areas of the College were represented on the Master Planning Committee for the Saranac Lake campus and have been closely involved with all aspects of the committee's work. (See Chapter 2) Through the portal and surveys, all faculty were and continue to be invited to provide input to the committee for setting priorities, and as the planning has gone ahead, there have been ample opportunities for exchange of information and views on the progress of each phase of the plan among faculty and the members of the planning committee.

NCCC's President's Office maintains the performance programs, job descriptions, and job announcements for faculty positions. These documents indicate the required credentials for each position, application procedures, the duties and responsibilities of each position, and the selection procedures (search). The documentation for each individual search is supporting evidence that those selected meet the stated requirements. NCCC has 42 full-time faculty members: 17 instructors, 16 assistant professors, 7 associate professors, and 2 full professors. Their academic qualifications are listed on NCCC.edu under "Faculty and Staff." The College does employ many adjunct instructors, many of whom have been with NCCC for years, most of whom have master's degrees at minimum in addition to significant work experience in their fields. The current faculty/student ratio according to the 2009-10 Institutional Profile IPEDS report is 1:17. This allows for small classes and individual attention for students.

Full-time faculty are selected via search committees which are provided with the documentation describing minimum qualifications, along with duties and responsibilities, although final decisions rest with the President and the Board of Trustees. Job descriptions are updated each time the position is searched. Most faculty members in recent years have not received their job descriptions, and until 2009-2010, no faculty handbook had been in place since 2001. In 2009-2010, however, a handbook was created with extensive input from faculty, as a "living document" which states general faculty responsibilities as well as procedures⁶³. It is evolving into a resource for teaching and practice. Additionally in spring 2010, a Human Resources Director was hired, and one of his jobs will be to develop and have full-time faculty sign updated job descriptions.

⁶³ NCCC Faculty Handbook

As a unit of SUNY, North Country Community College is bound by New York State education law and by SUNY regulations in hiring faculty. The College's practices in these areas are audited on a regular basis by SUNY and NYSED to ensure compliance.

APPOINTMENT, PROMOTION, AND TENURE

In general the process and procedures for appointment, promotion, tenure, grievances, discipline, and dismissal are outlined and governed by the contractual agreement between the counties of Essex and Franklin, the Board of Trustees of North Country Community College, and the North Country Community College Association of Professionals (NCCCAP), as follows:

Appointment of faculty is made by the BOT and the President after a search process. Generally an appointment letter is sent to the faculty member with the terms of the position. Continuing appointment (formerly called tenure) is granted after five years of one-year term appointments. In recent years, appointment letters have not been regularly issued, nor has there been any acknowledgement of the transition to continuing appointment. This has been raised as an issue in NCCCAP meetings, and it is hoped that the situation will change with the institution of the HR Director position.

For promotion it is the responsibility of the faculty member to prepare the appropriate paperwork and vitae as well as know the guidelines and timetables. The VPAA informs the faculty about the process on a yearly basis. The NCCCAP President communicates with the members on the timelines for submission.⁶⁴ In recent years, the promotion process became murky and inconsistent, both with regard to how decisions were made and in the differing treatment of faculty and non-teaching professionals (NTPs), despite the fact that both are represented by NCCCAP under the same contract. For years faculty had requested feedback on why promotions were denied but were told the College could not provide such feedback because of liability issues. In summer 2009, a Promotions Committee began meeting to draft new procedures and a rubric which was used to make fairer, more transparent decisions and to provide feedback to faculty⁶⁵. This rubric and process were used for the first time in summer 2009, and they are still under revision, as the process of faculty evaluation in general is being revised, but many positive changes have already occurred and there is much more open communication about processes. Promotion applications were accepted and many were granted in 2009-10, and applications are once again being accepted in 2010-11.

In 2009-2010, the College re-implemented a system of yearly faculty evaluations after having been out of compliance with the contractual agreement for several years⁶⁶. Because of the academic coordinator structure and potential contractual issues regarding supervisory roles of members of the same bargaining unit, a peer evaluation process for classroom effectiveness was instituted. A group of evaluators is selected or volunteers each year, and each faculty member is able to choose two evaluators from that group to perform two separate observations. After the observation is written up⁶⁷, the evaluator meets with the faculty member to discuss the evaluation, and then the finished report is submitted to the VPAA. If faculty members disagree with the evaluations, they have the opportunity to respond to them. The process of making all these changes has been conducted in an

⁶⁴ See NCCCAP Agreement 2006-9

⁶⁵ See Appendix S - Current faculty promotion guidelines and rubric

⁶⁶ NCCCAP Agreement 2006-9 p. 34

⁶⁷ See Appendix T - Peer Classroom Evaluation Form

open, transparent fashion, with input being solicited from as many people as possible. The new procedures form part of the Faculty Handbook.

In fall 2009, a system of *overall* faculty evaluation was reinstated, inclusive of classroom observations as well as other components of the job, including committee membership and leadership, professional development, community service and other aspects of professional service. Faculty now complete professional growth plans in the fall and self-evaluate their progress at the end of the spring semester. The VPAA reviews the self evaluations, the classroom observations, and other evidence and gives an overall evaluation of each faculty member. In 2009, there was no standard form for these professional growth plans, as many faculty did not want to return to the structured form that was used in previous years before being discontinued in the early 1990s. A standard form was developed in 2010 to align with the promotion guidelines and is now in use.

GRIEVANCES, DISCIPLINE, AND DISMISSAL

As stated on page 39 of the NCCCAP Contract:

“It is the purpose of this procedure to secure at the lowest possible administrative level, equitable solutions to alleged grievances of professional staff through procedures under which they may present grievances free from coercion, interference, restraint, discrimination, or reprisal, and are afforded adequate opportunity to dispose of their differences without the necessity of administrative agencies and/or courts. Both the Administration and the NCCCAP Union have further lawyer council resources should a solution fail.”

The procedure outlined in the contract for a professional staff member to follow is to first bring the grievance to his or her supervisor with the objective of resolving the matter informally. If the grievance concerns a decision made by the supervisor, then the College must designate a different person to be the decision-maker in this first stage.

If the matter is not resolved informally, then it is committed to writing, and the supervisor must respond in writing. If this still does not resolve the issue, after a 10-day cooling off period, the process proceeds to stage 2 – appeal to the President. Stage 3 is when the grievance is brought to arbitration.

In recent years, due to friction between faculty and administration, several formal grievance procedures were entered into by NCCCAP (discussed in Chapter 1); however, since President Brown was hired in fall 2009, many issues that would have gone to arbitration have been resolved at a lower level.

Grievances of dismissals may be made in regard to determination of whether the dismissal violated the terms of the Contract. However, article 7.2 – Term Appointments says that “the decision to grant an additional term or continuing appointment shall not be subject to arbitration.”

Retrenchment of faculty with continuing appointment may only be done following very specific procedures outlined in the Contract. The last retrenchments of faculty occurred in 1999 and 2001, though there was an unsuccessful attempt to retrench the Massage Therapy program and its faculty in spring 2009 under Interim President Fred Smith. NCCCAP filed an Improper Practice grievance with the NYS Public Employees Relations Board (PERB)⁶⁸, and the matter was settled informally in the Union’s favor.

⁶⁸ Improper Practice filing April 2009

Discipline of faculty that does not rise to the level of just cause for dismissal is generally undertaken informally by the VPAA, though records may be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Professional Development

One of NCCC's mission goals states:

The College will assist in the professional development of faculty, staff, and administrators to provide services appropriate to its students and community.

The institution supports faculty development by budgeting for conferences and workshops when finances allow. Currently, with increased departmental autonomy in budgeting, departments may request the funds in their budgets. Requests must be approved by the coordinator and the VPAA. After review of the request and discussion with the faculty member, requests may be approved in full, denied, or partially funded by the College. Faculty are notified by the Assistant Dean for Grants and Funded Programs of appropriate outside funding availability.

The College has, from time to time, scheduled faculty development days, either during semester opening days or during the school year. Topics have ranged from incorporation of critical thinking techniques to use of new technology. Such days have also been used to allow departments to develop and/or conduct student learning assessments or trainings relevant to their area⁶⁹. A survey performed by the College Senate Professional Development Committee indicated that staff would like to see more on-campus conferences and workshops⁷⁰.

In recent years, several faculty members have pursued advanced degrees and have presented at conferences⁷¹. Several have joined SUNY committees and initiatives such as task forces on Governance and Innovative Instruction.

TEMPORARY AND PART-TIME FACULTY

In addition to faculty on term or continuing appointment, NCCC hires adjunct (part-time) and temporary full-time faculty. The processes for appointment and supervision of such faculty are different from those for full-time faculty.

To solicit resumes for upcoming adjunct and temporary faculty positions, advertisements are placed in local papers, depending on the campus. Resumes are directed to the VPAA's office. Once received, the resume is distributed to the director/coordinator for the department who then reviews the resume and contacts qualified candidates. Once the candidate accepts, the director/coordinator notifies the Academic Affairs office. A letter is sent to the candidate along with a request form for official transcripts from colleges/universities. Resumes and official transcripts are required to remain on file in the Academic Affairs office.

Department coordinators or directors are responsible for supervision of temporary and adjunct faculty. Temporary full-time faculty are covered by the NCCC Association of Professionals (NCCCAP) Contract, and adjunct policy is governed by the Faculty Handbook. Faculty are to contact their coordinator to assist with such items as course syllabi, books, student issues and concerns, policy and procedures of the College, and faculty absences.

⁶⁹ List of in-house professional development workshops offered

⁷⁰ Professional Development Committee survey results

⁷¹ See Appendix O

Temporary faculty, since they are on campus full-time, have the opportunity to interact daily with their colleagues and the administration to ask and answer questions. Supervision of temporary faculty varies little from that of full-time faculty. Such faculty have all the rights and responsibilities of other full-time faculty as outlined in the Faculty Handbook, and they become members of NCCCAP.

The methods for supervision of adjunct faculty vary, depending on the nature of the adjunct's position. Adjunct faculty members are asked to follow the same administrative procedures as full-time faculty. All are assigned NCCC e-mail accounts and are therefore able to communicate easily, not only with supervisors and colleagues, but also with students.

Typically department coordinators observe the adjunct faculty in the classroom at least once per year and meet with the instructor afterward to discuss results of the observation. Most courses, regardless of instructor, are evaluated by students online and faculty receive the results for future improvement. In many departments, informal mentoring of adjuncts is done by full-time faculty who teach the same courses, or in the same area, maintaining communication with the adjuncts, either in person or via e-mail. Adjuncts are always welcome, though not required, to join in department and college-wide meetings, and many do when their schedules permit. In general education areas, adjuncts have been involved in assessment of student work. Spring 2011 saw the implementation of formalized adjunct workshops at the beginning of the semester⁷².

FACULTY AND CURRICULUM

Educational curricula are designed, modified, and maintained entirely by faculty, subject to administration approval. Academic departments are responsible for assessing the student learning outcomes of the coursework they instruct (Standard 14).

The process of standardizing course outlines, and therefore course objectives, is one of the most established procedures within academics at the College. For nearly 20 years all departments have followed a template for the creation and revision of course outlines across all departments. Within the context of the course outline, the department determines the particular objectives appropriate and standard for any given course. Faculty writing these objectives take into account what is expected in any similar course offered by colleges and universities across the country. Furthermore, in particular career-oriented programs, objectives in those courses comply with program objectives established for individuals entering the selected field.

Department meetings are held regularly (generally monthly), and the department chairs/coordinators, together with the faculty, review the divisional course outlines at least every five years to ensure that they are up to date, and that the learning objectives in each course are of a level and rigor to warrant acceptance by other institutions of higher learning.

Faculty, full-time and adjunct, use the departmental course outline as their guide for what needs to be accomplished in any particular course. Course objectives speak to 1) specific concepts and/or material that need to be included in the course, 2) more general abilities such as writing or presentation of material that the student will engage in, and 3) assessment goals, wherever appropriate.

All faculty members (except, in a few cases, adjunct instructors) create their own course syllabi based on the departmental course outline. Additionally, faculty members select, in concert with

⁷² See Appendix V - Adjunct Workshop agenda

their department, the text used in teaching the course. In many departments, the textbooks for core courses are determined by the department and not by the individual instructor. Therefore, if there are six sections of a particular course offered across three campuses from both full-time as well as adjunct instructors, all follow the guidelines of the established course outline and the textbook chosen by the department. In this way, a certain standardization of the course, regardless of location or instructor, is achieved.

Departmental course outlines include catalog descriptions, course objectives, course content, student evaluation methods and percentages, general education assessment (if required), special course requirements, and a bibliography of materials that may be helpful to the instructor. Those documents are located in the office of the Senior Typist for the VPAA. Individual course syllabi include course descriptions, objectives, and content; requirements and methods of the course approach; grading and evaluation methods and procedures; material coverage schedule; and textbook(s). Those documents are also located in the office of the Senior Typist for the VPAA. A sample syllabus is provided in the Faculty Handbook. Both course outlines and syllabi for any course and instructor may be viewed by other faculty and staff by request. New faculty and adjuncts are often provided with several instructors' syllabi for the course in question, as well as the course outline, and mentored by the department chair/coordinator in developing their individual course syllabi.

The syllabi that students receive list the course objectives, content, and evaluation methods. The oversight of individual course syllabi is undertaken by department coordinators, program directors, and the office of the VPAA, any of whom may require revision. In general, there is little variation in how syllabi look from instructor to instructor, given that course objectives, content, and evaluation methods have been established by the department.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic freedom is expressed by individual instructors in the manner in which they choose to meet the course goals. The course outline, and therefore the syllabus, act as templates for what needs to be covered and how evaluation of learning takes place. It is the general guide for what needs to be accomplished in the course of the traditional semester. And even though all instructors of courses with multiple sections may use the same textbook(s), how they creatively approach the material and thus the course goals is left in their hands. Ten different instructors may display ten very different styles of teaching. The approach to a particular topic, or discussion of a particular reading, will take on the flavor of that given instructor based upon his or her perceptions, interests, and training/education. Thus, while any two sections of a particular course achieve similar learning outcomes, they are at the same time unique creations of the people teaching those courses. Academic freedom is a premise upon which each course is taught. Although objectives and course content give the general parameters for a course, the reasonable interpretation of the course's intentions is in the hands of the instructor.

An important caveat in this discussion is that academic freedom cannot be used or accepted as an excuse for ineffective teaching. As much as NCCC encourages a creative approach to teaching a topic, poor teaching is still not acceptable at any level of education. Academic freedom is meant to promote the competent expression of ideas. It should never be used to rationalize why better instruction cannot be offered. To this end, mentoring and classroom observations by department coordinators and peers help guide faculty in identifying the best possible strategies for presenting material.

Ultimately, the design of a course is determined by goals established by faculty acting in concert with departments on up through the Curriculum Committee and the College Senate itself. The realization of those goals is the responsibility of instructors. It is this symbiotic relationship that allows academic freedom to flourish within a structure guaranteeing quality with the assurance that students are well prepared as recognized by established standards within their ultimate professions. This guarantees the integrity (Standard 6) of the College's educational offerings (Standard 11), making sure that course delivery is aligned with the College's mission as well as stated objectives for individual programs and courses.

While course outlines are continually updated, and syllabi are regularly revised by individual instructors, curriculum review on a larger scale is occurring simultaneously. Requirements for all degrees are examined every five to seven years as part of the program review process required by SUNY. For example, the A.S. Math/Science degree (HEGIS 5649) was most recently revised in September 2005. At that time, degree requirements were strengthened by requiring at least one science sequence in addition to the simple number of science courses. Liberal arts elective requirements were changed to require students to fulfill more General Education SILOs. Most program reviews in recent years have gone in the direction of strengthening the liberal arts core, even of the professional programs such as the A.S. Criminal Justice and the A.S. Human Services degrees, among others. This is in line with NCCC's mission of educating students to give them "the ability to adapt to a changing society," as the critical thinking skills infused throughout the general education curriculum are what are most needed in today's world.

It is part of the periodic program reviews to ensure that remedial course work does not count for credit toward meeting the program requirements for the degree, that the coursework for undergraduate credit is sufficient to be considered college level work, that appropriate prerequisite knowledge is required for upper level courses (e.g., a 200-level course typically requires a 100-level prerequisite, though exceptions exist), and to identify courses which bear credit toward the degree either as program requirements or as electives.

If curricular changes are recommended by the departments as a result of the program review process, these changes must be approved by the Curriculum Committee. The committee is made up of faculty representatives from the various academic disciplines within the College as well as a representative of the Registrar's office and the Assessment Committee, among possible others. The group reviews and evaluates all new course proposals, program changes, course title changes, course deletions, etc. Faculty members make proposals in these areas, and departments review the proposals and forward the supporting documentation to the Curriculum Committee. Curriculum Committee members make recommendations for modifications to the proposals and forward the finished product to the College administration for final approval. Membership on this Committee is rotated and the chairmanship is also rotated among teaching faculty. The documentation on Curriculum Committee actions is contained in NCCC's Records Office and meeting minutes are available via the Faculty Portal. The Committee has published a mission statement and protocol that clarify its role, timeline, and procedures.⁷³

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION

NCCC faculty take their responsibilities seriously, and most are actively engaged in continually upgrading their teaching skills, by reading current literature in their discipline and/or in the field of

⁷³ See Appendix W - Curriculum Committee Mission and Function Statement

general pedagogy, by pursuing advanced degrees, and by attending and presenting at conferences. Often faculty achievements are recognized informally in the VPAA's e-mail updates and occasionally formally through the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence. Faculty achievements are also recognized in the promotion process.

Other successes that are generally publicized informally include student achievements of degrees or licensures earned in career programs; advancement of institution educational goals as a result of grants and/or awards; ongoing program accreditations by various governing bodies (i.e. state education); and the percent of students who have transitioned to further higher education and professional careers. Often, however, most members of the College community are unaware of the successes occurring in areas outside their own.

Last year the Senate Professional Development Committee recommended, and President Brown implemented, staff appreciation breakfasts during which faculty and staff were honored for achievements as well as years of service. These occurred at the close of the spring and fall 2010 semesters. Additionally, faculty and staff can publish their creative work along with that of their students in the yearly *Northern New Yorker* publication of literature and art. They are invited to perform and exhibit artistic work at the annual celebrations of the arts in Saranac Lake and Malone.

In fall 2009, the VPAA began soliciting best practices in classroom management, teaching, and student learning assessment (Standard 14) to be published internally as a resource for all faculty and to celebrate the accomplishments of those who have developed these practices.

SUMMARY OF STANDARD 10

NCCC has dedicated, well-qualified faculty who fulfill their teaching responsibilities with skill and creativity. Some have been pursuing advanced degrees and other avenues of professional development. Faculty take active roles in College governance, to the fullest extent possible, most importantly creating and revising curriculum and assessments. While some processes and practices have slipped from "best practices" in recent years, the quality of instruction was never compromised, and the last couple of years, particularly since the arrival of President Brown in fall 2009, have seen a return to more formality and consistency with the creation of a Faculty Handbook, a rubric for promotion, and a new evaluation system for faculty in addition to the inception of the College Senate.

SUGGESTIONS

- 10.1 *Develop a formalized plan to assess and implement professional development that addresses institutional, departmental and individual needs.*
- 10.2 *Provide logistical and financial support to improve integration of part-time/adjunct faculty into department operations.*

INTERVIEWS

Thomas Finch, former Vice President for Academic Affairs
 Assoc. Prof. Jane Carpenter
 Administrative Asst. to the VPAA Trisha Greenier

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

NCCC Faculty Handbook

NCCCAP Agreement 2006-9

NCCCAP Improper Practice filing April 2009

List of in-house professional development workshops offered

Professional Development Committee survey results 2010

CHAPTER 6: STANDARDS 11, 12 AND 13

STANDARD 11: EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.

The College offers ten career-based programs culminating in A.A.S. degrees which enable graduates to enter the workforce in their field upon graduation. In areas such as Nursing and Massage Therapy, graduates are able to sit for licensing examinations required for entry to their respective professions. Six one-year certificate programs are also offered, enabling graduates to enhance their job skills and credentials, thereby furthering advancement within their chosen field of employment. NCCC also offers curricula leading to A.A. or A.S. degrees in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, as well as degrees in other areas that are well-grounded in liberal arts for students desiring to transfer to other institutions of higher learning. (See Chapter 1) The following chart from the 2009-2010 Institutional Profile shows enrollment in each program for fall 2009.

Degree program	Number of Students
AA Lib Arts & Sci:Hum & Soc Sci	225
AAS Business Administration	59
AAS Business: Office Technology	21
AAS Chemical Dependency Counseling	29
AAS Computer Graphics & Design	31
AAS Criminal Justice	101
AAS Human Services	66
AAS Individual Studies	22
AAS Massage Therapy	24
AAS Nursing (ADN/RN)	63
AAS Radiologic Technology	47
AAS Retail Business Management	11
AS Business Administration	37
AS Environmental Science	4
AS Fine Arts - Studio	-
AS Liberal Arts & Sci:Math & Sci*	302
AS Sports & Events Management	30
AS Wilderness Recreation Leadership	24
Cert. Comm Residence Aide (CRAT)	3
Cert. Computer Graphics	5
Cert. Gerontology	0
Cert. Office Technology	4
Cert. Practical Nursing	96
Non Matriculated	1006
Totals	2210
* Most A.S. Liberal Arts: Math and Science students are actually Pre-Allied Health	
** Most nonmatriculated students are dual enrollment (College Bridge) students	

IDENTIFYING NEEDS FOR NEW COURSES AND PROGRAMS

As delineated in Chapter 5, the current process for new course development and approval is relatively straightforward. New course needs are identified through a variety of means, depending on the academic area, and those then become ideas for coursework which germinate and are developed within the respective department. One mechanism that applies universally to all programs offered at the College is the use of program reviews. Internal and external program reviews serve to identify necessary curricular changes, including the development of new courses. For many terminal programs, including the A.A.S. Massage Therapy, A.A.S. Chemical Dependency Counseling, Practical Nursing Certificate, A.A.S. Nursing, and A.A.S. Radiologic Technology, these needs are also determined by external review bodies (generally either state or other accrediting boards) that set standards which graduates must be able to meet. In other terminal programs without formal accrediting bodies, such as A.A.S. Business Administration, A.S. Wilderness Recreation Leadership, and A.A.S. Criminal Justice, the needs are identified by faculty members in those departments through a variety of means, including tuning into industry trends locally and nationally through use of professional advisory boards⁷⁴; employer feedback; print and web-based scholarly materials; and attendance and participation in state, regional and national conferences.

Finally, for the College's largest area of study, the liberal arts and sciences, the process of identifying needs for new courses is more fragmented because there is no one program director. Those departments that largely serve the A.A. Liberal Arts - Humanities and Social Sciences and A.S. Math and Science (Math, Science, Social Science, and Humanities) have taken on the responsibility for keeping the curriculum up to date. A less formalized process, this has been accomplished through many of the same mechanisms previously mentioned, such as program review, as well as reviewing regional and national trends at comparable two-year institutions and at nearby four-year institutions.

There is a direct relationship between the course objectives in both new and existing courses and overall programmatic objectives, but the specificity of this relationship varies depending on the program. For programs such as A.A.S. Massage Therapy, A.A.S. Chemical Dependency Counseling, Certificate in Practical Nursing, A.A.S. Nursing, and A.A.S. Radiologic Technology, which have licensing requirements, the challenge has been to develop courses that, through a combination of logic and art, will weave an educational experience that meets those requirements while academically enriching the student beyond simple training. There are some best practices established that illustrate how this has been successfully implemented. Two programs that exemplify these practices are the A.S. Wilderness Recreation and A.A.S. Massage Therapy.

Using the Wilderness Recreation Leadership (WRL) A.A.S. Spring 2005 Internal Review⁷⁵, one finds that this relationship was considered in both the review and the consequent changes. In that review, WRL Coordinator Stef Kearns noted:

Upon informal evaluation in 2001 ...it was decided that WRL must take a new direction to meet student and employer needs. The mission statement and curriculum were rewritten to emphasize professionalism and outdoor recreation as a career choice. This was a departure from the previous mission which emphasized leadership development.

⁷⁴ Professional Advisory Board minutes

⁷⁵ WRL 2005 Program Review

That revised mission statement served to delineate the WRL Program Objectives and naturally led to the identification of the basic academic, professional, interpersonal, professional and outdoor technical competencies required for the students to be successful in their career path. These competencies served as guides to the development of the courses within the WRL degree program and led to the creation of course objectives designed to meet these competencies.

Another best practice comes from A.A.S. Massage Therapy. Upon their arrival to NCCC in 2002, David and Johnna MacDougall updated the Massage Therapy degree to more accurately reflect the field. They utilized their professional experience, participated in NYS Council of Massage Therapy Educators annual meetings, and reviewed other community college programs to guide their program changes. Pulling from these varied sources they formulated the Programmatic Objectives which can be found in the document titled Goals and Objectives of the A.A.S. Massage Therapy Degree Program and Outcome Assessment found as part of their spring 2006 review⁷⁶.

These activities required a reformulation of the program that included rewriting several of the core courses and the course objectives. As with WRL, Massage Therapy's course objectives were created to move students creatively towards their degree and future success in the workforce. As Massage Therapy is heavily science-based, it required a great deal of collaboration and coordination with the Science department to make sure students were prepared for their clinical practicum in their second year. In addition, it became clear that many students were likely to be self-employed following graduation and to better prepare them, a business math course was put into the curriculum. Like all programs, Massage Therapy is continually evolving. In 2010, the required science curriculum was re-examined and changed to better align the course objectives with Massage Therapy program skill and knowledge requirements⁷⁷.

Liberal Arts is the largest area of study at NCCC (fall 2009 headcount: A.A. 225, A.S. 302⁷⁸), and the two degrees in this area are largely designed to prepare students to transfer to four-year institutions. Program reviews were completed in 2005, and programmatic objectives were reviewed and updated in fall 2008 and sent on to the VPAA. Discussions with faculty from all of the liberal arts areas (Humanities, Math, Science and Social Sciences) make clear that reference to written program objectives when considering course objectives has not been routine practice; however, the areas do discuss and consider how course objectives serve the interests of students in meeting General Education competencies, institutional expectations, and preparation for transfer to four-year schools. The issue of alignment of objectives is addressed in suggestion 11.2 below.

Regarding assessment of the course and programmatic objectives (Standard 14), this too varies by area of study. In general, across the college, each course's objectives are spelled out in the course outline and course syllabus, and student performance on course exercises, exams and other projects is evaluated. In programs with external accreditation bodies such as A.A.S. Massage Therapy, A.A.S. Chemical Dependency Counseling, Practical Nursing Certificate, A.A.S. Nursing, and Radiologic Technology, a requirement of a grade of C (73%) or better in core courses serves as the measurement of meeting or failing to meet the course objectives. Students failing to meet this minimum standard must repeat the course and may be prohibited from proceeding to higher level courses (depending on the degree).

⁷⁶ Massage Therapy 2006 Program Review

⁷⁷ Curriculum Committee minutes fall 2010

⁷⁸ See Appendix A - 2009-2010 Institutional Profile

This use of the C grade as a minimum requirement extends into other degree programs as well. In the A.S. Wilderness Recreation Leadership, a C or better is required in some courses in order to progress. For the liberal arts degrees, there are no core courses per se, but the institution requires a cumulative grade point average of C (73%) or better to graduate; thus the C grade serves as a measurement of course objectives within these programs as well as more broadly across the college. Additionally, progress from MAT100 to a higher level of math, and progress from ENG100 to ENG101 and from ENG101 to ENG102, requires a C- or better. These requirements stem from general education assessment in which a C is the lowest grade that “meets” the standards for those general education subjects⁷⁹.

Programmatic objectives are evaluated using other means, again depending on the program. For those programs with external accreditation bodies such as A.A.S. Massage Therapy, A.A.S. Chemical Dependency Counseling, Practical Nursing Certificate, A.A.S. Nursing, A.A.S. Radiologic Technology and A.S. Wilderness Recreation Leadership, a variety of instruments are employed including exam pass rates for certification, credentialing and/or licensure, and employer and student post-graduation feedback.

The directors of each of the three Allied Health programs indicate that the numbers of students passing the licensing exams is high. The anomalous low number for Massage Therapy in 2009 may be a result of the attempted retrenchment of that program in 2008. That unilateral action by the administration became a public debacle and affected student enrollment and retention. An Improper Practice action filed by the faculty bargaining unit (NCCCAP) caused the decision to be reversed, and the 2010 and 2011 numbers should reflect the recovered strength of the program.

Year	Radiologic Tech.	LPN	RN	Massage Therapy
2009	92%	88%	91%	71%
2008	95%	90%	93%	100%
2007	100%	81%	82%	93%
2006	100%	90%	94%	93%

For the liberal arts degrees, which by design, do not have a formal connection to industry, the process of evaluating program objectives leads to different measurements. These include:

- Transfer Rates
- General Education Assessment
- Baccalaureate Institutional Feedback
- Midterm/Final Grades
- Retention Rates
- Graduation Rate
- Program Review, which includes external Peer Review (five- to seven-year cycle)
- Student/Alumni Evaluation⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Appendix X – Current General Education Assessment Plan

⁸⁰ See Appendix U

As noted elsewhere, NCCC's annual transfer out rate (as of the 2009 IPEDS report) was 21%, which is above the comparison group median at 15%. Additionally, two of the more important measures of student success are information literacy and critical thinking skills. These are general education outcomes that have been assessed according to NCCC's general education assessment plan. In 2008, 77% of students met or exceeded standards in understanding and using basic research techniques and locating, evaluating, and synthesizing information from a number of sources. These skills were assessed using a research paper written for English Composition I (ENG101). Eighty-nine percent of students met or exceeded standards in performing the basic operations of personal computer use in 2006. This outcome was assessed by using final grades in courses in basic and intermediate computer skills (CIS100 and CIS130). In 2008, 84% of students taking English Composition II (ENG102) met or exceeded standards in identifying, analyzing, and evaluating arguments as they occur in their own or other's work, and 65% met or exceeded standards in developing well-reasoned arguments. These outcomes were assessed using the ACT CAAP Critical Thinking test. See Chapter 7 for more on assessment of these general education outcomes.

Programs have typically been formally reviewed every three to seven years. The process includes a self-study followed by bringing in independent reviewers from outside the college to assess the program. These reviewers are provided with documentation from the VPAA that spells out the role of the reviewer according to SUNY requirements. Areas taken into consideration include academic rigor, adequate financial resources, facilities and equipment, faculty quality, quality and consistency of delivery methods, retention rates, graduation rates, comparability with similar programs, and preparation for employment and/or transfer.

As in an accreditation visit, program reviewers are provided with a copy of the College's Self-Study on the program; given access to all documents that might assist them, including programmatic descriptions and objectives, syllabi, faculty credentials, etc.; and empowered to meet with students, staff and faculty within the program as part of their review. The reviewers then evaluate and make recommendations on the program including any of the areas outlined above or other areas they see fit. Reviewers' recommendations are considered by the departments and the VPAA and often provide impetus to make needed changes.

Since the 2005 PRR, there have been numerous minor changes to programs, from renaming/renumbering of courses to adding and/or deleting courses from a program, and these are expected outcomes of continuous review. Additionally, there have been several major changes in programs, four of which will be highlighted here. The first comes from the A.A.S. Computer Graphics and Design. In 2006, the Computer Graphics and Design program review⁸¹ led to a number of changes in program structure, including the following:

- increasing course offerings in art and graphics areas by hiring a new full-time faculty member with shared responsibilities in those areas;
- reconfiguration of core course content focusing on creative as well as technical problems in design, and the reassignment, where appropriate, of CIS courses to ART designations with appropriate updates in content (this had the added benefit of increasing art electives for the general student population); and
- developing and/or leasing adequate, functional instructional space for art classes on both the Saranac Lake and Malone campuses in order to better support the program objectives.

⁸¹ A.A.S. Computer Graphics and Design 2006 Program Review

A second major change in program structure involved the development of the LPN certificate (2006) and A.A.S. Nursing degree (2009) programs offered at the Ticonderoga branch campus. This required the hiring of new faculty, the offering of support courses, the establishment of sites for clinical experiences and the development of articulation agreements with those sites.

A third major change has been a revision and revitalization of the Community Residence Aide Training Certificate (CRAT). In collaboration with Essex and Franklin county employers and the Human Services department, the certificate program was modernized, streamlined and redesigned to meet the employers' needs and industry competency standards. Students spend significantly more time on campus in traditional coursework, sharing classes with the other Human Services degree students and receiving numerous benefits that result from integration and sharing of ideas. These courses better prepare students to further their education, should they choose to.

Finally, in the course of a program review of the A.A.S. Individual Studies degree in spring 2007, a year-long process took place to redesign the program to better serve students. The original Individual Studies program required students to choose a concentration in a particular academic area. In 2006, however, SUNY ruled that the degree had to be made more general or else each concentration needed to be registered as a separate degree within the department of that concentration. The College complied with this by stripping out the concentration but keeping the requirement that students take a particular number of classes in each career field, which made the degree more restrictive than the Liberal Arts: Humanities and Social Sciences degree and somewhat random in its requirements.

Because the degree is multidisciplinary, a task force with representation from liberal arts and career programs examined the program and recommended changes. The task force considered options and looked at other schools' programs, then made recommendations. These recommendations were examined and refined by the external review team, and a program change proposal was submitted to the Curriculum Committee. Following much debate, the new Individual Studies A.A.S. became official in fall 2008. The main thrust of the changes was to open up electives so students could choose their own path or simply gain a degree when they had not completed a professional program. At the same time, the A.A.S. Individual Studies retains a large core of liberal arts courses, far more than statutorily required for an A.A.S. degree. It is now a flexible program that can meet the needs of students in different situations⁸².

PROGRAMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

These changes in programs not only affect the quality of instruction but also place different demands on existing infrastructure. As the three-phase Master Plan (2007-2010) (Standard 2) was developed, the Master Planning Committee had to take into account both current and projected educational offerings in order to ensure that the plan supports the College's mission and goals.

North Country Community College was established in Saranac Lake in 1967. The main administration building, Hodson Hall, was originally built in 1917 as a hospital serving Saranac Lake residents. The most recent additions to the Saranac Lake campus infrastructure occurred in 2002 with the renovation of Clermont Hall (Nursing building) and the 2005 renovation of College Hall, which houses the Enrollment Management and Financial Aid offices. The main teaching buildings, McCormick and Mulholland Halls, were built in 1978 and have had very few renovations since. The only updates since the buildings were constructed have been in technology, including

⁸² A.A.S. Individual Studies Program Review 2007, task force minutes, and current degree worksheet

computer wireless access and audiovisual equipment. The electrical panels in Hodson Hall were updated over ten years ago but the wiring has essentially remained the same.

The need for new facilities to maintain a high educational standard is obvious when examining the current Saranac Lake facility history. The Master Plan addresses the many technological limitations that exist in the current facilities. All course offerings would be improved through the creation of the new campus. The proposed addition of an auditorium would provide the community with additional meeting and conferencing space. It would also enhance the College's ability to offer a more diverse curriculum. The creation of a true science building would consolidate the science offerings into one location which would assist in the sharing of ideas and skills of both students and faculty. The current science labs are outdated, which limits the types of classes being offered and the quality of instructional tools available. The current facilities do not meet the needs of the students. Classrooms are small and overcrowded, and there are too few of them, limiting the options available for scheduling. The Master Plan directly supports the College's mission, which was continually referred to in the planning process (see Chapters 1 and 2). Unfortunately, due to the economic climate, the sponsoring counties were not able to fund the planned renovation in 2010. Currently, the College is prioritizing pieces of the renovation to be accomplished piecemeal until the plan can be fully funded.

COURSE SCHEDULING

New York State Education Law (NYSEL) requires that each course being offered for credit be part of a registered curriculum (NYSEL 52.1(f)). "In order for a curriculum to be registered it shall show evidence of careful planning and have carefully defined in writing institutional goals and objectives" (NYSEL 52.1(b)(3)). Under section 52.2 (c)(2) the institution is required to ensure that courses will be offered with sufficient frequency to enable students to complete the program within the minimum time for completion, which for an associate's degree is two academic years of full time study (NYSEL 52.2(c)(2), (c)(6)).

"To ensure that courses will be offered with sufficient frequency," a process of scheduling the next semester's classes begins in the first month of the previous semester. Coordinators/directors of the various departments set their offerings to allow program students to take required classes without conflict. This is easier in standardized programs such as Radiologic Technology and Nursing than in Liberal Arts programs. The advising committee has been working with departments to come up with a recommended sequence of courses for each program that coordinators/directors can refer to in helping them to decide what to offer. The liberal arts elective courses are offered as frequently as possible, so students in those programs always have options available. Conversation that occurs both formally in meetings and informally through e-mail and other means allows department coordinators to ensure that required classes don't conflict with requirements offered by other departments. The resulting schedule is reviewed by the VPAA, the Registrar, all coordinators/directors, and all faculty before being finalized.

As of 2010, in response to federal law, the course offering now includes textbook information, including ISBN numbers and prices, when it is released to students.

After all registrations are final, considerations of the population of the class versus the cost of the class and whether the course is necessary for any students to be able to graduate on time determine whether or not the course will definitely be offered. A large slate of courses utilizing differing technologies such as video conferencing and online delivery methods also offer students the opportunity to succeed in the statutorily required time frame. The course scheduling process is

currently under review by the VPAA. The goal is to make the process more structured so there are standard procedures for when and how course sections should be canceled and/or added to the schedule.

North Country Community College has fulfilled its statutory requirements by registering programs, offering courses in a timely and sequential manner allowing students to succeed in the required timeframe, and ensuring that branch campuses offer the same courses as the main campus when doing so makes fiscal sense and is necessary for degree programs offered on those campuses. For the NCCC 2006 cohort, graduation rate of first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates within normal time to program completion was 30%. The rate within 150% of normal time to program completion was 43%. In the 2010 IPEDS comparison group, the median graduation rate within normal time was only 9% and within 150% of normal time was 22%. NCCC far exceeds its peers in this regard.

Library services play an integral role in support of educational offerings at the Institution, as discussed in Chapter 4. Additionally,

- Faculty regularly reserve media resources for student use in fulfilling course requirements. These are often compiled by library staff, greatly facilitating student usage.
- Interlibrary loan is used to supplement library holdings for student course requirements and to aid professional development of faculty and staff. Requests are processed quickly.
- ENG101, required of all students, assigns a research paper, and most faculty build in a session or two where students are introduced to the library resources, the most helpful of which are the knowledgeable staff members.
- Library staff are available to assist students in locating and accessing resources needed for completion of class assignments, and the new “Chat with a Librarian” feature on nccc.edu is available at all times to help students with research.
- The librarian has secured grants and solicited suggestions regarding materials to support specific programs, e.g. massage therapy.
- In 2011, the Saranac Lake Library is doing a pilot program of opening on Sunday afternoons.

STANDARD 12: GENERAL EDUCATION

The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

In 2000, the SUNY system began a retooling of general education and assessment. A committee of system-wide faculty and administrators (the GEAR Group) created a list of areas to be assessed with specific “SILOs” (learning objectives) for each area⁸³. In order for SUNY to accept a course as meeting a general education requirement, NCCC must show that the designated objectives are met by the course⁸⁴. The course must include assessment measures, and it must be included in the general education assessment plan.

In spring 2010, the College updated its list of general education courses. The Assessment Coordinator took the master list of all courses offered the previous year and added columns indicating whether they were already designated as general education courses and in what area. There were also columns indicating suggested changes in designation. This document was circulated among all departments several times for input and revision. Using the SUNY guidelines, some departments were able to create their own specific rubrics to determine whether a course truly fit the general education designation⁸⁵. Suggested changes went to the VP of Academic Affairs' Academic Council (advisory group of department coordinators and other faculty and staff) and the final changes were submitted to and approved by SUNY in spring 2010. The new list is now available in the College Catalog as well as on SUNY's website.

In line with NCCC's mission (Standard 1), the SUNY-mandated general education program provides “an ability to adapt to a changing society.” The SILOs cover the entire spectrum of liberal arts as well as computer and information management skills, and requiring that students take at least one course in each SILO area ensures that they have a breadth of knowledge that allows them to put important issues in perspective. The information management and critical thinking objectives are infused throughout the curriculum and ensure that students have these skills that will allow them to find their way in any field or area of concern. In regard to the goals of the mission statement, the following ones are most related to general education:

- *The College will provide degree and certificate programs that enable students to continue their education at other post-secondary institutions, to find gainful employment, or to enhance occupational skills. (General education courses are highly transferable, by definition, both within SUNY and to other colleges.)*
- *The College will provide services that enable students to clarify their current and future educational, vocational, personal, and social goals.*

For both of these goals, the breadth of general education is essential.

Once the NCCC courses that fulfill the specific SILO objectives are identified, each department develops various appropriate assessment measures to determine to what degree the learning objectives have been fulfilled (Standard 14). These assessment tools are implemented and

⁸³ See Appendix Y - Complete list of SUNY general education subject areas and learning objectives.

⁸⁴ SUNY guidelines for general education course designation

⁸⁵ See Appendix Z - Rubric for Evaluating Social Science General Education Courses

completed on a SUNY-specified schedule, with each area being assessed at least once every three years. The 2005 PRR reported on NCCC's successes with general education assessment since the inception of SUNY's initiative, and overall the assessment process has been on a steady course of improvement over these last five years. As NCCC's new general education objectives are developed and adopted, assessment will need to occur in career program courses (see below) as well as in the general education courses themselves. See Chapter 7 for a more complete description of current and planned assessment processes.

GENERAL EDUCATION FOR TRANSFER

From 2000 to 2010, SUNY mandated that students must take courses that fulfill the ten general education SILOs and two infused competencies in order to graduate with a bachelor's degree. At that time SUNY requested that community colleges assist students in achieving at least seven of the ten before transferring. SUNY has now changed its requirement so that now students only need to complete seven out of the ten in the course of obtaining a bachelor's degree. Despite this easing of the requirement, NCCC continues to encourage students to fulfill seven of the SILOs in the course of completing an A.A. Liberal Arts: Humanities and Social Science or A.S. Liberal Arts: Math/Science degree. Outside of history and foreign language, in each of which the College only offers a few courses, taught either by adjuncts or by faculty teaching outside of their main specialty, students have adequate choices in all of the general education areas.

Additionally, as an institution, NCCC has focused on including more general education courses into all programs. All two-year degree programs, with the exception of Nursing and Radiologic Technology, require at least 15 credits of liberal arts/general education courses, and most require more. Human Services, Chemical Dependency Counseling, Computer Graphics, and Criminal Justice programs all now include English Composition II (ENG102), for more practice in writing, research, and critical thinking, as well as stronger general education requirements in the liberal arts. Additionally, some of the general education SILO objectives are embedded into the vocationally oriented coursework. Research assignments in both career and transfer programs require the building and use of information management, critical thinking, and communication skills, all of which are SUNY-designated general education outcomes. When the new College-Wide Goals for Student learning are in place, assessment of general education outcomes will be expanded to all programs, not just in the general education courses.

STANDARD 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The institution's programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.

BASIC SKILLS

As discussed in Chapter 4, when students are first registered at the College, they take the math and sentence skills placement tests. The College offers remedial pre-algebra (MAT095), which does not count for college credit, and elementary algebra (MAT100) which counts only for general elective credit. In English, the College offers developmental writing (ENG100) and remedial reading (RDG099) for students whose placement scores are particularly low. Students placed into ENG100 complete a written essay on the first day of class to ensure they were properly placed. The essay is scored with a departmental rubric and if the student performs well, he or she may be advised to switch to ENG101.

The College is constantly seeking ways of assisting students in need of basic skills instruction. NCCC has experimented with various configurations and delivery methods for remedial and developmental courses over the years. For years ENG100 was taught in a networked computer lab until faculty reported that the computers seemed to hinder more than help instruction. A combined MAT095 (remedial)/MAT100 course was tested on a four-day schedule rather than the current two- or three-day schedule. This one-year experiment did not work due to scheduling issues and the amount of material students needed to absorb. The 100-level courses in math and English were graded as pass/fail for many years, with the option of “Developmental Repeat” for students who did the work but didn’t meet standards for passing. Now both courses assign letter grades. All students in basic skills courses are repeatedly encouraged to seek regular tutoring in the LAC.

In spring 2011, the College is piloting the “Springboard” program, developed by Saranac Lake LAC Coordinator Innam Dajany. This is a learning community for students placed into developmental math and English. Courses are eight weeks long to allow students to focus more intensively on improving their basic skills⁸⁶. Enrollment in this pilot program closed out before the final registration for the spring semester, giving a preliminary indication that students feel it will be beneficial. Grade and retention data for these students will be compared to that of comparably skilled incoming students to determine the success of the program. If successful, Springboard will be expanded to the other campuses and perhaps to more course sections in Saranac Lake.

Basic skills courses have become increasingly important. The 2009-10 Institutional Profile documents a steep decline in students’ English placement test scores in the past five years. Placements in developmental MAT100 have also increased as placements in college-level math have decreased over the same period.

⁸⁶ See Appendix P

FIVE-YEAR ENGLISH PLACEMENT RESULTS SUMMARY

	FA-05	FA-06	FA-07	FA-08	FA-09
Remedial Level English (Reading Skills)	-	25	48	40	66
Lower Level English	126	99	96	79	168
College Level English	200	221	164	156	102
Number of Students Tested	326	345	308	275	336
Total Number of Students	339	361	331	315	374

FIVE-YEAR MATH PLACEMENT RESULTS SUMMARY

	FA-05	FA-06	FA-07	FA-08	FA-09
Remedial Level Math	78	95	-	-	80
Lower Level Math	120	118	202	175	161
College Level Math	131	131	105	97	99
Number of Students Tested	329	344	307	272	340
Total Number of Students	339	361	331	315	374

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

NCCC currently offers six certificate programs (Practical Nursing (LPN), Community Residence Aid Training (CRAT), Office Technology, Gerontology, Computer Graphics, and Health Sciences), three more than in the 2000 Middle States Self-Study. In spring 2009, 92 students registered in certificate programs, and it is anticipated that this number will rise with the implementation of the Health Sciences certificate as of fall 2010. In the past five years, 84% of students registered in certificate programs have been LPN students⁸⁷.

Each certificate program is unique in its curriculum and entry-level job requirements. The certificate curricula are designed to provide students with appropriate technical, communication and personal skills for an entry-level job in their field. The College provides the courses in a sequence designed to allow a student to finish the programs in one year of study. Specific requirements for each program are described in both the College Catalog and on the College website.

Job Prospects for Certificate Graduates

According to the NYS Department of Labor, in their long-term occupational projections (2006-2016) Office Technology certificate employment prospects are variable depending on the specific job title. Office clerks are listed as having very favorable employment prospects with 60 annual average openings in the North Country region, at a median wage of \$24,140. Executive secretaries and administrative assistants are listed as having very favorable employment prospects with 40 annual average openings and a median wage of \$39,840.

⁸⁷ See Appendix A – 2009-2010 Institutional Profile

Currently, the employment prospects for licensed practical nurses in the North Country Region are very favorable with 50 annual average openings. The median wage for an LPN in the counties surrounding the College is \$32,510.

Job prospects for graduates with the Community Residence Aid Training (CRAT) certificate program were not specifically addressed in the NYS Dept. of Labor statistics, but graduates in the more general category of Social and Human Service assistants have very favorable employment prospects and 20 annual average openings with a median wage of \$27,950. There are a number of large employers in the two counties served by the College. Students working toward the CRAT certificate are often employees of local agencies, and the certificate qualifies them for advancement within the organizations.

Although there appears to be a limited need for individuals working in Gerontology in the areas surrounding the college, there are positions with the counties, such as senior services aide. This program would be useful, however, for anyone in Allied Health who works with the elderly. In the last five years, the College has only had two students register in this program, so in a new approach, the College is seeking to register Gerontology as an online program. This would be the first entirely online program to be offered at NCCC⁸⁸.

INTEGRITY (STANDARD 6) OF CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

The College articulates expectations of student learning for certificate programs in the same ways as it does for all programs in accordance with the College mission statement: *The College will provide degree and certificate programs that enable students to continue their education at other post-secondary institutions, to find gainful employment, or to enhance occupational skills.*

The College Catalog outlines each certificate program's objective and goals, as well as the professional employment opportunities that may be gained with successful completion. Each class within each certificate program (and all programs) requires a syllabus, and expectations are clearly stated in each of those (see Chapter 5).

Of the six certificate programs, three have very clear, practically seamless transitions to similar associate's degree programs. The LPN certificate is a common and almost expected prelude to the A.A.S. Nursing (RN). Also, the newly instituted Health Sciences certificate is geared for the transition to any Allied Health program. Office Technology and Computer Graphics and Design both have practically seamless transitions between the certificate and degree programs. The Community Residence Aide (CRAT) program does not have a specific degree program corollary; however, it has been purposely coordinated with the A.A.S. Human Services degree, so that is available to CRAT graduates, with a program requirement waiver. The Gerontology certificate does not have any corollary degree.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

To enhance students' educational experiences and support the mission of the College (Standard 1), traditional educational delivery methods are augmented with Experiential learning opportunities. According to the Characteristics of Excellence, page 53: "Experiential learning generally refers to knowledge or skills obtained outside of a higher education institution. Recognition of college-level experiential learning, which is derived from work, structured internships, or other life experience,

⁸⁸ See Appendix AA - Gerontology DL Program Application

may facilitate a student's progress without compromising an institution's integrity or the quality of its degrees."

All NCCC professional programs utilize practice labs, internships, campus-based and on-site clinical practice, field experiences and volunteer service to provide the venues for integrating theory with practice in career preparation. See below for an annotated list of programs that include internships as experiential learning. These internships are guided and administered by an internship coordinator who works with the student to initiate the placement and then monitors the student's participation and completion of the requirements. Internships include an Intern Agreement Plan stipulating what projects or tasks will be completed, the timeframe, and the basis for evaluation.

The Carnegie unit for internships is 135 hours of time for three credits. The course outlines for internships usually state a minimum of 120 hours, which does not include the time doing the weekly logs and other required paperwork. The student's work is evaluated as described in the individual course outlines. See the course outlines for BUS 200, BUS223, BUS 224, OFT 240, CRJ 218, and REC 201. The internship coordinator evaluates the student's preparation of a resume, letter of interest, letter of reference from a faculty member, weekly log, evaluations of the site supervisor, meetings with the internship coordinator and specific requirements for individual courses. In some cases, students meet with internship advisors at the conclusion of the experience for a final debrief at which time the advisor and the student discuss the effectiveness of the experience in meeting the student's and the program's educational goals.

Internship programs are assessed in various ways. In the Human Services and Chemical Dependency programs, the overall measure of effectiveness is placement of students in jobs following the internship. Though numbers have not been kept, anecdotally these placements are high, especially for Chemical Dependency students, according to Program Coordinator Joe Keegan. Keegan noted that the internship was used as an informal assessment of the program itself in 2004, when agencies reported that students often began their internships with very little knowledge of what to expect and what to do on the job. In 2004, the Introduction to Human Services course (HUS100) was changed to incorporate several site visits, and the rest of the curriculum was changed to focus more on providing students with the skills necessary for success in the internship. The result, according to the programs' professional advisory boards, has been students who are much more prepared and consequently much more successful in their internship experiences as well as subsequent jobs⁸⁹.

Other internship and experiential learning opportunities and requirements are as follows:

- **Massage Therapy:** Program has experiential learning embedded within coursework, e.g. massage of classmates. On-campus student clinic and outreach programs provide experiential learning in environments similar to professional work settings.
- **Human Services:** Internships are a program requirement and volunteer service is used as a course requirement. Internships include a learning contract which spells out to all what the student must do and the types of experiences the agency must provide. In-service training contracts stipulate specific requirements to meet course and program objectives.
- **Sports and Events Management:** Volunteer service, a community project and a program development project including a class presentation and paper are used. Students design a

⁸⁹ See Adirondack Daily Enterprise "NCCC gets \$21,000 to train addiction counselors", 12/2/2009 and "A great example of community and college", 12/3/2009.

leisure, recreational, or sports business or program using community resources within the project. A highlight and critical component to the program is a three-credit REC 201 Recreation Management Internship course with a 135-hour on-site requirement. Additionally, REC102 and REC120 students do over 300 hours of volunteer work with local agencies/events, including Winter Carnival, the local youth center, and the Olympic Regional Development Authority.

- **Criminal Justice:** Internships with local and State Police departments and the Federal Bureau of Prisons are used. Some are observational, and others are hands-on. Students see the models, theories, and philosophies put into practice first hand, even when only observing. With the exception of some administrative tasks, it is not possible to have students perform law enforcement functions. The application process for some internships (e.g. State Police) is a learning experience itself.
- **Wilderness Recreation Leadership:** Due to the inherently experiential nature of the discipline, all WRL courses include experiential learning components offered in both traditional classroom and field-based settings. There is a 30-day fall practicum as well as an 18-day winter practicum, in which students use and hone their skills on extended camping expeditions. Elective skills-based PED courses are largely experiential in nature and meet at off-campus locations for extended sessions to facilitate skill repetition, application and acquisition. Courses based in the classroom (e.g. Wilderness Management) will often include field trips or off-campus site visits.
- **Radiologic Technology:** The program has experiential learning embedded within program coursework, e.g. positioning class/labs. This is supplemented with clinical assignments at a variety of off-campus diagnostic facilities.
- **Nursing:** Classroom labs are supplemented with clinical assignments at a variety of off-campus medical facilities.
- **Business and Office Technology:** Internships are offered and encouraged but not required.
- **Internship-type experiences** are also done under the heading of independent study in programs such as Liberal Arts that do not have an official internship offering. For example, students who participate in plays produced by Pendragon Theatre, a local professional company, or who perform with groups such as the Adirondack Singers, can receive independent study credit for courses in drama or music.

DISTANCE LEARNING

In spring 2011, the College is offering 28 online distance learning courses, 17 video conferenced courses, and 6 hybrid courses, two of which are video conferenced for the classroom portion⁹⁰. NCCC uses “distance learning” or “DL” to refer to online courses specifically. These are asynchronous courses that currently use the CAMS portal for delivery of content. Video courses are broadcast from specially equipped rooms at one site to similar rooms at one or two other sites. They are essentially traditional courses with assigned meeting times. The only differences between video and traditional courses are that the professor is not always physically in the room with the students and the technology sometimes interferes with course delivery. Hybrid courses deliver at least half the content in the classroom and the remainder online, usually meeting only once a week in person.

For online distance learning courses, the portal includes a discussion forum that many instructors use to complement the notes, reading, and other assignments. Courses have weekly or more

⁹⁰ See Appendix B - List of Distance Learning, Video, and Hybrid Courses Spring 2011

frequent assignment deadlines. Because academic integrity is a particular issue with online courses, many instructors have incorporated proctored on-campus testing for midterms and/or final exams. The Learning Assistance Centers (LACs) on all three campuses assist with this and can help the student arrange proctoring at other institutions if they are out of the area. Students must bring a photo ID to the testing site. The LACs are available for online and onsite tutoring. The library has a number of online resources including journal databases and Ask 24/7, an online research service. These are available to all students through NCCC.edu.

To insure integrity, students always must use their College-assigned username and password to access the portal for all distance learning courses as well as grades and resources for their other courses.

The number and scope of classes offered in a DL format changes each semester and in summer and winterim (January) offerings. In recent years, DL courses have become more popular than campus-based courses for summer and winterim. Students are able to leave the area or work full-time and still complete their course requirements. Because no degree or certificate programs are currently registered as online programs, students must complete at least half of their credits for all programs in the classroom. The Gerontology program is currently awaiting approval from NYSED as an entirely online program⁹¹.

Several departments have experimented with hybrid courses that meet once a week in the classroom and do the rest of the work online. Because of low enrollment, Calculus has been taught this way, twice. The Criminal Justice and English departments have also piloted hybrid courses. In spring 2011, Concepts of Windows Based Software (CIS130) and two Radiological Technology courses are being offered as hybrids. It is too early to fully assess the results of these offerings; however, the English department has already made a change based on student feedback. During the first two semesters, the ENG101 hybrid classes met on campus for an hour and 15 minutes, but students recommended a longer meeting time, so in spring 2011, the course will meet for a two-hour session once per week in addition to the online work.

To ensure integrity of course offerings, distance learning, video, and hybrid courses use the same course outlines and textbooks as the same courses taught in all other formats. Syllabi are posted for students and generally contain course objectives, course content, schedules and evaluation methods. Syllabi for online courses tend to be more detailed than those for traditional classes, as there is no opportunity to convey the course information face to face. There is some concern that these syllabi need to say more about academic integrity, building on work done by the Distance Learning Task Force and the Academic Policy and Standards Committee of the College Senate. For general education outcomes, DL classes are assessed along with traditional delivery sections and have shown no appreciable difference in results. DL course syllabi are kept on file along with all syllabi in the office of the senior typist for the VPAA. A student evaluation form for online classes was developed in 2010, and in 2011 procedures are being developed for peer observation of faculty teaching online courses.

Persistence in online courses is examined every semester, in cooperation with SUNY's Directors of Online Learning (DOODLE). In fall 2009, from the census date to course completion, there was a

⁹¹ See Appendix AA - Gerontology DL Program Application. This application details many aspects of NCCC's online education program.

persistence rate of 73%. This improved last spring (2010) to 86% of students completing online courses with a passing grade between A and D-.

The following data was gathered by the chair of the DL Task Force:

Semester	# of Courses	Enrollment (Start of second week – after add/drop period)	Enrollment (Census – 2 wks. after start)	# at Completion	Persistence (%)
F 10	21	348	303	239	77.71
SP 10	22	398	361	308	85.73
F 09	19	330	276	204	73.91

According to a survey of data from fall 2007, grade distributions show some variability between course delivery methods⁹². The largest difference lies between number of A grades earned in traditional and video courses, at 18% and 19% respectively, vs. 13% in distance learning, and B grades earned with 18% in video vs. 11% and 14% in traditional and distance learning respectively. There is noticeable variability between the number of F's earned in video classes at 5% versus Traditional and Distance Learning courses at 11% and 12% respectively. Other grades in the distribution were generally between 0-7% of each other between the various course delivery methods.

This data appears to show that students in video conference courses do slightly better on a couple of measures than students in courses with other delivery methods. This may be attributable to the fact that many of the video courses are core courses for students in the Nursing program, who have been subject to higher admission standards and who tend to be more motivated than the general population of students. Also, many video courses are ones with prerequisites or very low enrollments on each campus and thus have more faculty-student interaction. Still, video classes have proven to be challenging for both students and instructors. The technology has been faulty, broadband width inadequate, and equipment substandard. While the broadband width was expanded in summer 2010 and much equipment was upgraded, students and instructors still complained of audio/visual inconsistencies into fall 2010. Other system and equipment upgrades performed in summer 2010 have increased the number of rooms equipped for video conferencing. A new staff member was hired in fall 2010 to assist students and faculty with technology issues. The staff member is based in Malone so now is often available to troubleshoot video equipment there as well as portal issues via the Student Helpdesk. It is too early to assess any decrease in problems; however, anecdotal reports are positive.

In addition to technology problems on the College's end, there are problems in online course delivery due to geographic and socioeconomic factors. Many students live in areas with only dial-up internet service or are not able to purchase home computers at all or, if they do, cannot afford the standard proprietary software. Their work and home responsibilities may interfere with their ability to come to campus to do their DL work.

⁹² See Appendix BB - Fall 2007 Course Grade Distributions by Modality

A Distance Learning Task Force has worked over the past few years to examine minimum standards for students interested in taking DL courses. According to Task Force Chair Dr. Price, focus was on two concerns: 1) college readiness, and 2) success at college. They found that the best marker for readiness to do college-level work, regardless of delivery modality, is a student's placement test scores. If students can place into ENG 101 (English Composition I), they are deemed ready for college-level work as partially indicated by their readiness to accomplish the work necessary in ENG 101. Data analyzed regarding success of students having completed ENG 101 or enrolled in ENG 101 at the time they were taking an online course showed both groups achieving GPAs above C. However, developmental students (students enrolled in ENG 100) did perform lower than the others, just barely making a 2.0 GPA⁹³. As a significant amount of writing is required in a majority of online classes, concurrent registration in or previous completion of ENG 101, online or in the traditional classroom format, was recommended and has been adopted as school policy. Continuing students must maintain a GPA of at least 2.0 to be eligible to take online courses.

The following table summarizes the study of 1875 students enrolled in DL courses fall 2007 through spring 2009.

ENG101 enrollment	Number of students	Average DL course GPA	% initial DL course cohort who withdrew
No	279	2.0	20.1%
Concurrent	336	2.24	19.3%
Prior	1259	2.41	19.6

There is currently no formal training for instructors planning to teach video or online courses. Most obtain help on an individual basis from department coordinators or other College staff. As yet there has been no analysis of the differences in instructional load involved in teaching in these modalities. The Distance Learning Task Force, which in 2010 was changed from an ad hoc to a standing subcommittee of the new Technology Advisory Board, has been charged with addressing some of these issues. See suggestion 13.2, below. There is now a Distance Learning information page on NCCC.edu that answers many questions students have about DL courses, and an online tutorial for the portal is in development.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL LOCATIONS

North Country Community College has a main campus in Saranac Lake and additional instructional sites in Ticonderoga and Malone. As discussed elsewhere in this report, consistency of educational offerings among the three sites is maintained by the following practices:

- Oversight by department coordinators, including class visits and conferences
- Instructors using the same course outlines for the same courses offered in any format and on any campus

⁹³ Analysis of need for ENG101 prior to DL course enrollment

- Instructors of the same courses in many departments using the same textbook(s)
- Instructors teaching at more than one campus
 - Examples of courses taught by instructors traveling to different campuses include biology, nursing, criminal justice, math and human service courses
- Video conferencing to include more than one campus at a time
- Asynchronous distance learning by instructors who also teach in the classroom
- Department meetings held by video conferencing to all campuses
- Assessment of specific courses with the same assessment tool
- Learning Assistance Centers (LACs) available at all three campuses
- Library services available at all campuses, as of 2010 with credentialed librarians at each site
- Online library catalog and research databases available to students on all campuses through NCCC.edu

To evaluate consistency of rigor between campuses, analysis of grade distribution data provides some insight. A study was done of final course grades from all three campuses for fall 2007. A total of 4,968 grades (duplicated headcount) in 308 courses were analyzed. Several trends became evident in examination of the data. First, there is small variability within each grade level between the campuses, with the smallest range being .25% and the largest range being 4.1%. The largest variability occurred between the Saranac Lake and Ticonderoga campuses at the A grade level with “A”s representing 17.28% and 13.9% of the grades respectively, representing a range of 4.1%. The second largest variability occurred at the F level with 10.17% at Ticonderoga and 13.6% at Malone, representing a range of 3.43%. All other distributions were below a 3% range among the three campuses. Without a detailed statistical analysis, it is unclear how much of this variability is due to sample size vs. other factors. In general, however, grade standards seem fairly consistent among campuses.

Grade	% DL students	% SL students	% Malone students	% Ti students
A	13.24%	17.28%	13.18%	13.9%
A-	7.04%	7.42%	7.32%	6.70%
B+	8.45%	7.10%	7.80%	9.18%
B	14.08%	9.89%	11.32%	12.41%
B-	7.32%	7.32%	7.80%	9.18%
C+	4.79%	6.52%	5.87%	7.20%
C	5.35%	7.39%	8.35%	5.96%
C-	2.54%	4.38%	3.59%	4.47%
D+	1.69%	2.25%	2.97%	2.23%
D	1.97%	3.33%	2.69%	2.48%
D-	0.85%	1.23%	1.24%	0.99%
F	11.83%	12.86%	13.66%	14.89%
W	20.85%	11.52%	13.60%	10.17%
Other		1.53%	0.63%	0.25%
# of courses assessed	22	168	88	30

NON-CREDIT OFFERINGS

As discussed in Chapter 1, NCCC's Center for Lifelong Learning (CLL) is currently without a director, and lacks the full cohort of classes that have been offered in the past. However, one class that has been very successful has been the Wilderness First Responder training, organized by the Wilderness Recreation Leadership (WRL) Program Director. The success of this course is largely attributable to her promotional efforts. This demonstrates the potential of the CLL if properly organized and marketed.

A variety of educational services is offered to the public by College faculty and staff. Some are directly related to the career aspirations of North Country residents while others provide opportunities for personal health and development, intellectual stimulation and creative expression.

Career-related offerings include:

- Admission and financial aid workshops and counseling for displaced workers, high school students, guidance counselors and the general public
- Provision, through a SUNY grant, of workforce development training funds to businesses and organizations throughout Essex and Franklin County⁹⁴

⁹⁴ SUNY Workforce Development Report 2009-10

- Sponsorship of EMT training via a NYS agency including free use of classroom space
- Keyboarding testing for Civil Service candidates and members of the public desiring certification of keyboarding speed

Other offerings are as follows:

- New York State Pre-Licensing Course
- Defensive Driving and Drinking Driving courses
- Personal Enrichment Courses such as Belly Dancing and African Dance
- Swimming / Children's Programs
- Hundreds of online courses through partnership with Ed2Go

Outside of evaluation forms for individual courses, no assessment is being done in continuing education programs or community outreach. Due to financial constraints, the position of Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning was eliminated in 2008. Currently, the administrative assistant in the Academic Affairs office is coordinating any courses offered.

SUMMARY OF STANDARDS 11, 12, AND 13

NCCC's educational offerings are diverse and of high quality. Degrees, certificates, basic skills courses, and distance learning choices serve the unique needs of the local population. All programs are regularly examined and updated so students can more seamlessly transition to further study or to the workplace. General education is a strong underpinning to all the College's programs, and it is undergoing a reimagining in 2010-2011, which will culminate in a more organic, faculty- and staff-designed program that addresses the qualities all students need to cultivate as part of their education. As part of the work on programs and improving student learning, technological infrastructure, human resources, and assessment processes are continually being improved.

SUGGESTIONS

Standard 11:

- 11.1 *Ensure that all course outlines identify measurable learning outcomes, indicate how they will be assessed, and include the applicable general education statement when appropriate.*
- 11.2 *Ensure alignment of course-level learning objectives from program goals to departmental course outlines to individual syllabi.*
- 11.3 *Annually assess program outcomes and alignment of transfer degrees with four-year transfer institutions.*

Standard 12:

- 12.1 *Indicate courses that meet general education objectives on the course offering list on the NCCC website and other pertinent documents, including program worksheets and degree audits of vocationally oriented programs.*
- 12.2 *Implement an information literacy requirement for all two-year degrees.*

Standard 13:

- 13.1 *Create a position for a workforce/economic/ community development officer.*
- 13.2 *Create distance learning guidelines to ensure that DL courses have the same standards and expectations as on-site offerings.*
- 13.3 *Ensure adequate technology and staffing at remote sites for video conference classes.*

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

NCCC Academic Program Objectives

Professional Advisory Board minutes

Program Reviews for all degree and certificate programs

Curriculum Committee minutes

A.A.S. Individual Studies Program Review 2007, task force minutes, and current degree worksheet

Analysis of need for ENG101 prior to distance learning course enrollment

SUNY Workforce Development Report 2009-10

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON-LINE

“NCCC to Begin Pilot Project in 2011” article in *Adirondack Daily Enterprise* 12/4/2010, AdirondackDailyEnterprise.com

SUNY guidelines for general education course designation,
<http://www.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation/GenEdGuideApp.cfm>

SUNY listing of approved NCCC general education courses,
<http://www.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation/CourseList/mastercampuslist.cfm>

Adirondack Daily Enterprise “NCCC gets \$21,000 to Train Addiction Counselors”, 12/2/2009 and “A Great Example of Community and College”, 12/3/2009, AdirondackDailyEnterprise.com

CHAPTER 7: STANDARDS 7 AND 14

STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

Despite not having had a true strategic plan until this year, the College has had and still has clear institutional and program-level goals. These goals are continually being assessed at different levels and in different ways, some formal and some informal. All units are measuring outcomes, but what remains to be done is to put all the results together and make the data accessible to all in the College community so that it can be used to improve the College's overall effectiveness. This is a current focus by Assistant Dean for Institutional Research and Support Scott Harwood and the College Senate Assessment Committee.

An organic part of NCCC's culture is a continual drive toward improvement that shows itself throughout the institution and its processes. An informal example has been that at the end of the past two years, many faculty and staff have gathered to look back on the year and discuss issues and successes and what could be done to improve matters. One result of these informal assessment sessions was the formation of the Behavioral Assessment Committee to address concerns about student behavior.

For another, more formal, example, the development of the College Senate arose from the realization that faculty and staff were being left out of key decisions and often not even informed that those decisions had been made. Responding to that need, a group of faculty began work on what ultimately became the Senate, as detailed in Chapter 3. Now that the Senate is in its second year, some changes have been made in response to the experience that has been gained, the first survey that was conducted, and input from Faculty Council of Community Colleges (FCCC) President Tina Good, who has provided an outsider's perspective on NCCC's evolving governance system. One change has been the decoupling of the Enrollment and Advising Committee into two separate groups with different charges. Both are actively addressing issues of student success raised in earlier chapters of this report but do so from different angles. Another change has been the evolution of what began as the Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee, which is now the Long-Range Planning and Budget Committee because of a realization that the planning has to precede the budgeting. Other changes have included the formation of a Governance Committee to assess the Senate on a regular basis and the formation of an Executive Committee to set the agenda and make sure that issues are followed up.

In spring and fall 2010, SUNY partnered with Middle States to present workshops by Middle States Vice President Linda Suskie on creating a campus "culture of assessment." The spring workshop began with a one-day retreat for campus leaders. Demonstrating the College's commitment to assessment, President Carol Brown and Interim VPAA Joe Keegan, as well as the chair and another member of the Assessment Committee attended that retreat. Much brainstorming was done during the workshop, and one result was the current development of College-Wide Goals for Student Learning detailed later in this chapter. The following day of Linda Suskie's workshop was devoted to more hands-on assessment design work, and three members of the Assessment Committee and the Interim VPAA participated. This fall when the workshop was offered again, two other members of the Assessment Committee as well as new VPAA Carole Richardson attended. A key take-away

point from these workshops was in regard to how to write measurable objectives for assessment, and that is being applied to the development of the College-Wide Goals as well as this year's initiative to update all master course outlines and programmatic objectives.

SUNY'S ROLE IN ASSESSMENT

NCCC's assessment program, both academic (Standard 14) and institutional (Standard 7), has often been guided by SUNY's required processes. From the beginning of SUNY's most recent assessment initiative, in November 2000, the College has taken the stance that despite being mandated by an outside agency to perform assessment, faculty would take control of the process to use it for improvement of the College. In 2004, the General Education Assessment Committee wrote a mission statement that spoke to this: *The mission of the general education assessment committee is to provide a framework for NCCC to continually improve general education instruction and thus the transferability, marketability, and success of our students*⁹⁵.

General education assessment is discussed further under Standard 14 and briefly in Chapter 6. One development in the evolution of SUNY's general education initiative, however, was the requirement to assess student engagement, which NCCC did by administering the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in 2009. The CCSSE gave the College a lot of positive feedback (enough to be ranked by the *Washington Monthly* as the number one community college in New York State as well as number 22 nationwide). The CCSSE also showed a few areas of concern that are currently being addressed, many of which are discussed in earlier chapters of this report. As noted, one action to improve student engagement was the institution of changes in the new student registration process, detailed in Chapter 4. This change will be assessed by measuring retention of the fall 2010 cohort vs. previous cohorts as well as re-administration of the CCSSE in the next couple of years to compare results. Another current initiative is to target student activities to different populations of students (resident and commuter) to increase participation above the 30% reported in the CCSSE. Obviously re-measuring participation will assess the initiative, but student GPAs will also be compared between students who participate in events and those who do not.

Like so many positive results of assessment, the changes in the new student registration process did not grow directly out of a particular statistic. Rather, after the CCSSE report was completed, Interim VPAA Joe Keegan, Director of Campus and Student Life (CSL) Bobbie Karp, Malone Coordinator of CSL Bruce Kelly, and Assistant Dean for Institutional Research and Support Scott Harwood attended a workshop given by CCSSE on interpreting and using the data from the survey. During that workshop, the four brainstormed on ways to change existing processes in order to improve student engagement, and the result was the new registration process detailed in chapter 4. The process has already been modified somewhat based on initial results. For example, an important component is a session orienting students to the student portal and e-mail systems. At first this was scheduled at the end of the day, but that didn't work because students were finishing their testing and advisement at different times. As a result, the session was moved to before testing so the entire cohort of students could be present.

In addition to the CCSSE, the College administers the SUNY Student Opinion Survey (SOS) every three years. Information gleaned from the SOS has led to the reintroduction of a travel abroad program for students.

⁹⁵ See Appendix X – Current General Education Assessment Plan

The CCSSE is just one example of how the College has successfully followed SUNY's mandates and utilized the results for improvement. The downside of the mandates, however, has been that the word "assessment" has been almost exclusively associated with SUNY, and thus SUNY's requirements have often seemed to absolve the College of creating its own self-directed assessment program. Two factors have caused this to change. The first is that NCCC's new administration has made assessment a priority and integrated it into all new initiatives, from Strategic Planning down through the entire institution. The second change is that SUNY is no longer mandating or overseeing assessment⁹⁶.

As the Strategic Plan (see Chapter 2) is being created and put into place, the College is working on a parallel track to identify College-Wide Goals for Student Learning for all students to achieve at NCCC. Once these are refined and approved, they will be incorporated into the curriculum of all programs and assessed within each program as well as non-academic departments. The timeline is to have departmental assessment plans complete by the end of spring 2011 and initial assessments performed in fall 2011. While these are specifically goals for student learning (Standard 14), they will be the basis of comprehensive institutional assessment due to implementation in all areas of the College and the fact that student learning is the main mission of all higher education institutions.

The development of the College-Wide Goals was begun at the start of fall 2010 with an all-college workshop to brainstorm priorities. Over the course of the fall semester, the Assessment Committee worked to refine the goals to a manageable list⁹⁷. The list was presented to non-academic departments in early January 2011⁹⁸ and to academic departments two weeks later, during opening week of the spring 2011 semester. All departments immediately began work to refine the list and the wording of the goals, and, most importantly to establish where and how the goals will be taught and assessed within the department's offerings. The Goals were presented to adjuncts during the new adjunct orientation workshops the College held in January. Once input on the goals and their wording is collated, the Assessment Committee will put together a final version to take to the College Senate for approval. The current timeline is to present the goals at the February 2011 Senate meeting and to hold a vote to approve them in March.

As this self-study report is being finalized, preliminary work with the College-Wide Goals is already yielding results. The following are just a few examples. The Registrar reported that the Records Office meeting on how to incorporate and assess the Goals was the most productive meeting the office had ever had, with many ideas coming forth for improvement of the office, including better ways to use social media to connect with students. Non-math departments are having conversations about how to measure students' use of math skills and concepts within their fields as opposed to only assessing the math courses, as has been done under SUNY's general education assessment mandate. (For example, the English department is looking into assessing the use of statistics by English Composition I students in their research paper assignments.) Both assessments are necessary because they do not both measure the same outcome. Any discrepancy between the two will be a catalyst for interdepartmental conversations about how to improve the outcome of students' ability to apply their knowledge in their fields.

⁹⁶ SUNY Memo to Presidents

⁹⁷ Appendix CC - December 2010 e-mail to all staff re: College-Wide Goals for Student Learning

⁹⁸ Appendix DD - Minutes from Non-Academic Assessment Meeting 1/6/2011

Running on a parallel track to the development of the College-Wide Goals for Student Learning has been the development of the overall College Strategic Plan. In November 2010, an all-College session was held to put the last pieces in place for the Strategic Plan. In that session, several of the work groups named strategic objectives that were items already being addressed in the parallel track of student learning goal development described above. While both processes have been open to all members of the College community, actual participants have not always been the same, so the confluence of the two goal-setting processes is a sign that the College is moving in the right direction. The Strategic Plan creation has been led by administration, particularly President Brown, but the content and wording of the Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Directions have been created by members of the entire College community in World Cafés and other meetings. The administration sparked the process of creating the College-Wide Goals for Student Learning, but since then the process has been entirely led by the faculty and staff on the Assessment Committee, with input from all members of the College community. The College Senate is an integral part of these processes; the Assessment Committee and Long-Range Planning and Budget Committee report monthly to the Senate, and the final plans will have to be approved by the Senate.

CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Institutional Profile

Currently, the main comprehensive tool for ascertaining Institutional Effectiveness is the Institutional Profile. This annual report compiles student demographics, including a freshman profile, and presents performance, retention, and graduation rates. It contains enrollment statistics, including head counts and full-time equivalents that include trends over the previous ten years. These statistics are utilized by academic coordinators in reviews of specific programs in order to determine the effectiveness of these programs. Each program can assess whether it is attracting qualified students and whether its efforts to retain students are successful. Program goals are compared with enrollment, graduation rates, and performance on state licensing exams. Yearly trends are evaluated by departments and the VP of Academic Affairs (VPAA) to see if these figures are increasing or decreasing over time. Evaluations are then made as to whether the programs are meeting their goals and why or why not. Decisions can then be made regarding possible expansion or retrenchment of programs.

The needs of NCCC programs and of the institution as a whole can be assessed based on information contained in the Institutional Profile. For example, the expansion of the Learning Assistance Centers was driven in part by retention information gained from this profile. The Institutional Profile has also been used to obtain Vocational Educational Act (VATEA) funding for the College. In regard to the Master Plan for construction and expansion of the Saranac Lake campus, the Institutional Profile was used to help determine space needs for different departments as well as specific needs for equipment, faculty and other personnel.

Programmatic Goals and Assessment Documents

Every program has created a statement of objectives and assessment measures⁹⁹. For example, the A.A. Liberal Arts: Humanities and Social Science degree has graduation rates as one assessment measure. The 2009-10 Institutional Profile shows that graduation rates (within 150%) have

⁹⁹ Academic Program Objectives

increased from 30% for the fall 2002 program cohort to 35% for the fall 2006 cohort. One of the goals listed is that students *have a solid foundation of critical thinking, general collegiate level knowledge and problem solving skills to enter the workforce*. General education assessment results indicate that NCCC students are slightly above the norm for peer institutions in critical thinking skills. In 2008, 84% of students taking English Composition II (ENG102) met or exceeded standards in identifying, analyzing, and evaluating arguments as they occur in their own or other's work, and 65% met or exceeded standards in developing well-reasoned arguments. These outcomes were assessed using the ACT CAAP Critical Thinking test.

As of spring 2011, the documents containing programmatic objectives and assessment measures for all programs are being revised along with the development and implementation of the College-Wide Goals. Most of these documents have not been revised for many years, and most use overall institutional outcomes such as graduation and retention rates as primary measures of programmatic success. The faculty workshop on the College-Wide Goals focused on how to incorporate more student learning outcomes assessment in the programmatic assessment process.

Alumni Survey

An alumni survey is administered each year both six months and one year after graduation. This is a SUNY requirement and the response rate is required to be at least 70%. The survey determines whether alumni are employed, seeking employment, or continuing with their education. This can be used in program reviews to show whether students are being prepared effectively to enter the workforce or transfer to other institutions. Statistics for 2008-2009 graduates from the Alumni Survey are as follows¹⁰⁰:

- Placement (employed or continued education) rate within six months of graduation: 96.28%
- Graduates employed in field of study within six months: 38%
- Graduates employed in a field not directly related to degree program within six months: 21%
- Graduates transferring to a 4-year College or University within six months: 37%
- Average Annual Salary of Graduates (1 year after graduation): \$26,490.69

While the alumni survey has been administered every year, oversight of the administration and data collection has changed year to year, and the format and nature of the data collected has changed. The systemization of the data and implementation of the survey is being undertaken along with efforts to systematize and disseminate all institutional assessment data in 2011.

SUNY Mission Review

Institutional assessment has included the process of mission review initiated by SUNY, which resulted in the creation of the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under which the College currently operates¹⁰¹. The MOU is composed of institutional data affirmed by SUNY to show that the College is meeting its stated mission. The document is the product of various institutional assessments, most notably comparing the College's circumstances and outcomes, many of which are reported in the annual Institutional Profile, to those of peer institutions both inside and outside the SUNY system as well as in and out of state. Other data reported are enrollment numbers and plans to increase them, economic impact of the College in the local communities; faculty

¹⁰⁰ NCCC.edu – “Statistics”

¹⁰¹ SUNY 2007 MOU

profile, retention, and review; academic program status and plans; and student graduation and retention rates. The data in the document results from institutional research, and the document is created by the College administrators, who include their own summaries and qualitative assessments of college activities in addition to the numerical data.

In addition to data included in the periodic MOU's, every year the College sends multiple pieces of information gathered to SUNY at different times, with at least one report going out weekly during the academic year. According to Assistant Dean for Institutional Research and Support Scott Harwood, NCCC produces about 250 reports per year that go mainly to SUNY, Middle States, and other state as well as federal agencies. With SUNY, the College has recently completed a three-year benchmarking project to compare NCCC's outcomes and data with those of other SUNY two-year institutions¹⁰². SUNY's information gathering has recently evolved into a comprehensive database (SIRIS) with a four-part reporting process. It is hoped that this database will be online soon so the College can extract more statistics for use in institutional assessment. Currently it is very difficult to track data like post-graduation transfer rates and success.

Overall Institutional Research

Unfortunately, because of budgetary constraints, the College has had a one-person institutional research (IR) department. The Assistant Dean for Institutional Research and Support not only performs all of the College's IR functions, but he also maintains and upgrades the CAMS course management system and assists in all areas of technology ordering, installation, maintenance, and upgrade at the College. Thus, IR at the College has consisted mainly of sporadic data mining for particular purposes and creating reports for outside entities such as SUNY and the U.S. Dept. of Education. In 2010 the College has hired an assistant for Asst. Dean Harwood, who has taken on the day to day issues with student and faculty portal and e-mail accounts as well as video conferencing. This has freed up some time and energy for institutional research and assessment.

Currently, the College Senate Assessment Committee is working with Mr. Harwood to create an interface or "dashboard" in the CAMS portal in which all members of the College community can access data in order to do their own relevant assessments. People mine the documents for particular information at particular times, but many probably don't even know these documents exist and that the data they may need for a project is available. When Faculty Council of Community Colleges President Tina Good visited NCCC to conduct her second governance workshop with the College Senate in September 2010, she noted that this is not generally a function a Senate committee would be responsible for, as it is more administrative in nature. However, given the lack of personnel performing IR functions, it is probably still necessary for the Assessment Committee to take these projects on. The time frame will just be longer than initially hoped.

As noted in Chapter 4, NCCC's institutional assessment data is not directly available on NCCC.edu, but it is accessible to the public on the Internet through SUNY, the U.S. Department of Education (IPEDS), and other informational sites. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SUNY is available on the SUNY Provost's website.

¹⁰² SUNY Benchmarking Report

ASSESSMENT IN DIFFERENT AREAS

Campus and Student Life

The Office of Campus and Student Life and other groups including the Residence Life Committee, Campus Activity Boards, Student Government Association, RAVE (Reduce Alcohol and Violent Experiences) and POWER (Promotion of Wellness, Education and Responsibility) committees identify target areas and populations to serve based on anecdotal and reported data provided by students, faculty and staff, and the community. Information on student learning is gleaned from evaluations of Orientation and student programs, the Alumni Survey, and national surveys and education programs. Standardized assessment instruments include but are not limited to the CCSSE; Student Opinion Survey; National Collegiate Health Assessment; CORE Institute Survey (surveys extent of substance use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs); and Under the Influence, Marijuana 101 and Alcohol Wise education program evaluations. One result of these assessments has been to increase the use of the above substance abuse education and prevention programs.

Enrollment

According to VP of Enrollment and Student Services Ed Trathen, the enrollment staff continually evaluates its efforts, as it has two enrollment cycles each year. They look at whether their recruitment at particular schools is working and, if not, whether it's worth spending limited resources at those schools or shifting to others. Because the population of Essex and Franklin counties is so sparse, the Enrollment Management office has had to be creative with recruiting out-of-county and international students to reach enrollment goals. NCCC is a founding member of the new International Recruitment Council led by SUNY Vice Chancellor Leventhal and the SUNY Office of Global Affairs. This initiative, begun in spring 2011, will be assessed annually.

Library and LAC

Much of the past assessment in other academic areas of the college, for example the Library and the Learning Assistance Center (LAC), has been in the form of collecting usage data. The Library has always collected statistics on circulation, traffic, interlibrary loan requests and fulfillments, and reserve use to report to the administration as well as to state and federal agencies. Generally the Library Director is the one to collect and report this data. In 2010, Library Director Linda Larkin conducted a survey of Saranac Lake students in regard to their use of the library. This survey¹⁰³ was initiated to inform the architects for the Saranac Lake campus renovation project in regard to redesign of the library. One result of the survey was documentation of students' desire for library hours on Sunday afternoons. As a result of this assessment and a focus group discussion with the Student Government Association (SGA), Sunday hours are being piloted in the Saranac Lake library for spring 2011. These hours will be staffed by one certified librarian (rotated among the librarians from the three campuses) and a student assistant. Usage data will be collected and students will be surveyed to assess the pilot. If it is successful, it may be expanded to the other campuses and additional staff may be hired.

In the Learning Assistance Center there has been a feedback loop where usage data is looked at to assess which programs (workshops, study groups, specific subject tutoring, coaching, etc.) bring in the most students. The LAC has begun to do more outcomes assessment to evaluate the success of the various programs¹⁰⁴. Up to 2009, the LAC had only informally assessed its outcomes (Standard

¹⁰³ Saranac Lake Campus Library Survey 2010

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 4 and Appendix Q

14) by asking instructors how their tutees had done, and most often receiving good reports. The LAC has seen its usage triple over the last few years, often due to word of mouth, student-to-student.

In fall 2009, the LAC began an online referral process¹⁰⁵, similar to that used for the Athlete Mentoring Program (see Chapter 4), as a first step toward better tracking of student use and outcomes, both for improvement of services and to capture state and federal grant money. Then, in 2010, Saranac Lake LAC Coordinator Innam Dajany began to do more outcomes assessment and found that the passing rate for students tutored regularly in the LAC ranged from 76% in fall 2009 to 79% in spring 2010¹⁰⁶. The overall college passage rate of the general population is 74%. Because of the open admission policy, for many students it is an achievement simply to pass a course, and many of the students placed into basic skills courses use the LAC, so it is difficult to get a true baseline for assessment. With better institutional research capacity, individual students' grades can be analyzed before and after LAC intervention for a more complete picture. Assistant Dean for IR and Support Scott Harwood believes that this capacity will come online in 2011 with a current update to the CAMS system.

NEW INITIATIVES

In fall 2010, 214 applications were received for the A.A.S. Radiologic Technology and 472 for the A.A.S. Nursing. Admission is restricted to 24 in Radiologic Technology and 120 (40 per campus) in Nursing, but the College seeks to retain the students who are not accepted into those programs. Through spring 2011, such students were placed in the A.S. Liberal Arts: Math and Science degree program. The FAQ regarding admission to the Allied Health programs on NCCC.edu states:

Students who were denied admission by the Allied Health Admissions Review Committee into a competitive program are still accepted to the College within our A.S. Liberal Arts: Math and Science program. This program is referred to as our 1+2 program whereby a student spends a year enrolled in this program taking classes needed to meet the admissions requirements for any competitive program for the next academic year. Students in this program are given preference during consideration for the next admissions review cycle provided they now meet the minimum criteria....

According to Assistant Dean for Institutional Research Scott Harwood:

Many of these students never enroll and the others (we estimate over 90% of them...) often go to Math/Science. A five-year sample indicates that about 20% of these students are admitted to Allied Health programs (at some point). Another 4% finish A.S. Math/Science (most of these students probably intended to do so vs. Allied Health). Another 3% complete non-allied health programs. The remaining 73% are non-completers (some likely transfer... but we don't know exactly how many). At the 1000 foot level we likely lose roughly 65% of the students we admit to Math/Science under the 'Pre-Allied Health' concept.

The issue of retention of pre-Allied Health students has sparked two initiatives, both mentioned earlier in this report. (See Chapter 4) The first is the creation of other health-related programs that suit the interests of the students and address the fact that even outside of nursing and radiology, the health industry is a growing job market. The first of these programs to be approved has been the

¹⁰⁵ LAC referral form

¹⁰⁶ Appendix Q - LAC Assessment Report and Statistics

Certificate in Health Science, which came online in fall 2010. These program proposals were based on the above numbers added to the creative energy generated in course assessment sessions within the Science department. Enrollment in the Certificate in Health Science has been slow to take off (three students in fall 2010 and three more added in spring 2011). More marketing, perhaps during the next Pre-Allied Health Seminar, will be necessary to increase enrollment in that program.

Pre-Allied Health Seminars were begun in 2009 as another effort to retain students not admitted to the Allied Health programs. The seminars help students applying to these competitive programs to know in advance what their options are if denied admission and inform them of resources available to help them plan their academic and work careers in that event.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, the seminars educate students on the realities of these fields, including exposure to bodily fluids, helping students to make a more informed career choice. Preliminary assessment of the seminars shows that students found them helpful. On the Saranac Lake campus in fall 2009 all 14 participants rated the program 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, with 5 meaning “excellent.” In spring 2010, 32 students participated in Saranac Lake, and 29 rated the program 4 or 5. These proportions were replicated on the other two campuses in fall 2009. In spring 2010, however, the program was video conferenced to the other campuses, and because of technological issues was not as well perceived in Malone. Video conferencing technology and bandwidth have been upgraded significantly as of summer 2010.

Assessment of the success of these two initiatives in retaining students will include analysis of retention and graduation data for students who initially applied to Allied Health programs. The enrollment and graduation data for the Certificate in Health Science will need to be examined, and alumni will have to be surveyed as to how they are able to use the certification.

¹⁰⁷ Pre-Allied Health Seminar assessment data

STANDARD 14: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

Assessment of student learning has many components, both course-based and institutional. The Curriculum Committee, made up of faculty and staff from all academic departments as well as the Records and Enrollment offices, is one of the institutional components that ensure that assessment plays a role in the development and revision of curriculum. The committee reviews newly proposed and revised courses and programs, as well as proposals for the termination of courses, programs, and requirements. When considering new course outlines or revisions of existing courses, specific attention is given to catalog descriptions, course objectives and content, evaluation measures, and bibliographies of useful instructional resources for coherence and standardization. A representative from the Assessment Committee sits on the Curriculum Committee to ensure adherence to the assessment plan for general education courses. See the Curriculum Committee Mission and Function statement¹⁰⁸.

The Curriculum Committee approves the course outlines, which are then translated by individual instructors into syllabi (Standard 10). The purpose of the syllabus is to communicate to students the key learning outcomes that are required to successfully complete a class as well as the course texts, assignment schedule, and evaluation methods and percentages. In preparation for this self-study, students in nine class sections were asked to complete an informal survey regarding the syllabus¹⁰⁹. Ninety percent of students surveyed reported that the syllabus in their course was at least reasonably helpful (rating 6 out of 10). Based on the data from this survey, students appear to believe that the syllabi explain the key learning outcomes necessary to successfully complete the courses. In a study analyzing a 10% sample of syllabi from spring 2010 (n=27), it was found that all but one listed course learning objectives, generally taken directly from the departmentally created course outlines; however, only half of the syllabi contained measurable behavioral objectives. As the new initiative regarding College-Wide Goals for Student Learning moves forward, this will be addressed, potentially with workshops for faculty on how to write measurable course learning outcomes.

In order to assess whether students are actually achieving the outcomes delineated on the syllabi and course outlines, various assessments, both quantitative and qualitative, are utilized.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS

As discussed in Chapter 2, CTE programs have several levels of assessment, including program review and Carl D. Perkins grant review. Data on enrollment, retention, graduation, Perkins-defined special populations, and general demographics are collected through the College's institutional research and departmental records. Professional licensure attempts and pass rates are collected by the program directors, who work with College administrators to review this data and determine if College targets are met and how NCCC compares with other SUNY units. In addition, more targeted assessments are performed to evaluate the effectiveness of purchases made with Perkins grant money. For example, grant money was used to purchase canoes for the Wilderness Recreation

¹⁰⁸ Appendix W - Curriculum Committee Mission and Function Statement

¹⁰⁹ Syllabus survey data

Leadership program in order to safely teach the skills required, and students' canoe proficiency scores are measured¹¹⁰ as an assessment of that purchase.

Allied Health programs are subject to regular external review by state/national accreditation/licensure agencies. The programs submit information, including statistics and curriculum, which is reviewed by the agencies, and any deficiencies identified must be remediated. Site visits are a component of this. In 2008, in response to an accreditation review by JCERT (specialized accreditor), the Radiologic Technology program updated its curriculum significantly to increase clinical hours and provide more instruction in newer digital imaging technologies. The changes went to the Curriculum Committee, where concerns from other departments were taken into account, and the final changes were approved¹¹¹. Additionally, the Nursing department has added the HESI (Health Education System Inc.) computer-based comprehensive final at year end of both the certificate (LPN) and degree (RN) programs on all three campuses, changed their nursing sequence so the math requirement has to be completed for the LPN rather than only for the RN, updated nursing texts available in the library, and added a Kaplan review course to enhance NCLEX licensing exam results.

As noted in Chapter 6, the numbers of students passing the Allied Health licensing exams is very high. The anomalous low number for Massage Therapy in 2009 may be a result of the attempted retrenchment of that program in 2008. That unilateral action by the administration became a public debacle and affected student enrollment and retention. An Improper Practice action filed by the faculty bargaining unit (NCCCAP) caused the decision to be reversed, and the 2010 and 2011 numbers should reflect the recovered strength of the program.

Year	Radiologic Tech.	LPN	RN	Massage Therapy
2009	92%	88%	91%	71%
2008	95%	90%	93%	100%
2007	100%	81%	82%	93%
2006	100%	90%	94%	93%

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

As discussed above, as part of the strategic planning process and an intentional effort to expand the culture of assessment at the College, new College-Wide Goals for Student Learning are currently being developed and implemented. These goals mostly encompass areas that fall under the aegis of general education. However, what is new is that the goals are now not to be simply taught and assessed in general education courses but across the curriculum and even in the non-academic areas of the College. For the last decade general education assessment was structured by SUNY requirements and administered only in particular general education courses (see below); therefore, the College has not taken the initiative to set its own overall goals in that time period. So far, creation of the new goals has been a messy process¹¹², but it is progressing as described above, and

¹¹⁰ See Perkins yearly reports

¹¹¹ See Curriculum Committee minutes for 2/15/2008

¹¹² See Assessment Committee minutes from fall 2010

the plan is for the goals to be finalized, taught, and assessed, at least in a preliminary way, in 2011. Presentations of the goals to academic and non-academic staff in January 2011¹¹³ were well received and feedback is currently being compiled by the Assessment Committee to revise the goals before submission to the College Senate for approval in February.

The SUNY Assessment Initiative

In November 2000, the SUNY Provost's office mandated assessment of general education courses on a three-year cycle as well as review of all academic programs on a five to seven-year cycle¹¹⁴. For general education, a committee of system-wide faculty and administrators (the GEAR Group) created a list of areas to be assessed with specific "SILOs" (learning objectives) for each area¹¹⁵. The general education assessment measures were initially to be identical across SUNY campuses in order to allow comparability of schools. The faculty councils of both the community colleges and the four-year schools objected, and the result was "Campus Based Assessment" (CBA), in which campuses would submit their own plans for assessing the SILOs. These would be subject to approval by the GEAR Group.

In 2001, NCCC formed its General Education Assessment Committee, which created a plan to assess all the SILOs, and faculty began implementing the plan. The original plan was well-intentioned but has undergone much revision since its inception. See the General Education Progress Report of 2005 and the Closing the Loop report of 2008 for a summary of how the original plan was implemented and modified over time.

In 2003, a part-time assessment coordinator (Shir Filler) was designated to coordinate both general education assessment and program review. This position evolved from being compensated with three credits of release time to coordinating just the general education component with no release time as part of faculty service. In 2007, the assessment coordinator served on a SUNY discipline panel to create a rubric for assessing critical thinking and subsequently helped train faculty state-wide in the use of that rubric. In 2009, Ms. Filler resigned the assessment coordinator role, and general education assessment became the responsibility of individual departments under the nominal oversight of the VPAA. Shortly afterward, the College Senate and the new Assessment Committee were constituted, and these entities are currently working to establish workable assessment and reporting processes.

SUNY's assessment initiative strengthened the requirements of program review, basing the evaluation more on outcomes assessment than what had been required previously. All degree and certificate programs have been reviewed and are on a five- to seven-year cycle for further review. Many improvements to programs (detailed in earlier chapters) have been made as a result of these reviews. Student advisement has improved as faculty have become more aware of the general education requirements for transferring to four-year SUNY units. All program review reports are available in the document room.

In 2004, the SUNY Provost's office amended CBA to include "*Strengthened* Campus Based Assessment" or SCBA, which focused more heavily on the four areas deemed most important: writing, math, critical thinking, and student engagement. A standardized system-wide assessment

¹¹³ Presentations of College-Wide Goals for Student Learning

¹¹⁴ See SUNY Provost website

¹¹⁵ See Appendix Y

was once again proposed and once again defeated by the faculty councils. In 2006, SCBA was adopted in a modified form, giving campuses three choices of assessment measures, rather than mandating a single one.

In 2006, NCCC submitted its SCBA plan, which included using SUNY-developed rubrics to measure the writing and mathematics SILOs and a standardized test to measure critical thinking, as well as the CCSSE to measure student engagement. In 2009, the College completed the first three-year SCBA cycle, and results of all the assessments have been gathered and are available for review¹¹⁶.

Between 2004 and 2006, the mathematics SILOs were changed from

- 1) Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and
- 2) Data analysis, Quantitative reasoning

to

- 1) Interpret and draw inferences from mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables, and schematics;
- 2) Represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally;
- 3) Use arithmetical, algebraic, geometric, and statistical methods to solve problems;
- 4) Estimate and check mathematical results for reasonableness, determine alternatives, and select optimal results; and
- 5) Recognize the limits of mathematical and statistical methods.

This was a major change that required complete rethinking of the mathematics assessment methods and process. The department went from using standardized and locally created short answer tests to having to generate involved test questions and projects and score them using a rubric, something math instructors rarely have to do. However, the Math department has more than met this challenge.

Currently, the Mathematics department uses a common method of assessment wherein they have created pools of exercises specific to various NCCC mathematics courses that satisfy General Education requirements within SUNY, and incorporate them into the final exams of these courses. Of the current four general education courses assessed, two are assessed each fall, another course every spring, and the last course every third fall (due to the course not being offered every semester). At given points of the school year, a selected part of the department assesses a portion of all past final exams of the previous year (as described above), while another part of the department reassesses 20% of these exams for congruency in assessment.

The tools used to assess student learning outcomes vary by department. The “Closing the Loop” report discusses the development of “General Education Statements”¹¹⁷ that were to appear on the course outline of every general education course. This was to be accompanied by inclusion of the SILO language in the course objectives of each relevant course as well as by the inclusion of the approved assessment measure in the evaluation section of the course outline. This has occurred in many courses, but not consistently across departments. As the new College-Wide Goals for Student Learning are developed in 2010-11, the general education statements will be updated and an effort will be made to put them on all course outlines. These statements and changes to the course outlines ensure that the methods used for assessment are embedded in the course, regardless of who teaches

¹¹⁶ See Appendices G and FF

¹¹⁷ See Appendix X

it and on which campus. See suggestions 11.1 and 11.2, above. The member of the Assessment Committee who sits on the Curriculum Committee is charged with ensuring that new and revised courses conform to these guidelines. (See Chapter 5)

SUNY Assessment Data

To this point, a summary of the collected general education assessment data has been submitted to the Assessment Coordinator for inclusion in NCCC's yearly report to SUNY. While the College has been submitting assessment results since 2002, there has been little to no feedback. After the first year's results from all schools were submitted, SUNY's records were subjected to a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request, and results that campuses had been assured would be confidential were required to be released to the press. Following that controversy, SUNY asked campuses not to submit the actual numbers but to write an annual summary report giving general results for each subject area and detailing what was done with the data and what was learned regarding the assessment. Then due to budget cuts at SUNY, as of 2009, SUNY no longer asked campuses to submit any reports other than the schedule for administration of assessments. Campuses were asked to keep results on file, subject to occasional audits. Now, as of 2010, SUNY has withdrawn from any oversight of general education assessment, though they still require it for courses designated as meeting SUNY's general education requirement.¹¹⁸

Results of Assessment

According to faculty, an important benefit of assessment has been creation of opportunities for communication among faculty within disciplines – both full-time and adjunct. More time in department and committee meetings is now devoted to discussion of instruction and evaluation as well as creation of assessment instruments, norming sessions, and actual assessment work. This increased communication has led to standardization of course content by agreement among instructors as opposed to having standardization imposed from above. Other results have included new course offerings and changes in content of particular courses to remedy deficiencies found through assessment. Most departments regularly invite adjuncts to participate in assessment sessions, and as of spring 2011, pre-semester Adjunct Workshops have been instituted to give part-time faculty more information about and more of a voice in assessment activities.

Lastly, most degree programs have been revised over the past couple of years to include more general education courses for more rigor and better transferability. One highlight is the requirement for students in the A.A.S. degrees in Human Services, Chemical Dependency Counseling, Computer Graphics, and Criminal Justice to take English Composition II, a liberal arts course that focuses on communication and critical thinking. Students in the revised A.A.S. Individual Studies degree now take enough liberal arts courses for the degree to qualify as an A.S. The certificate programs in Computer Graphics and Office Technology are now working through the Curriculum Committee to require students to take English Composition I, where before they could have taken Essentials of Effective Writing, a developmental writing course.

Each department at NCCC can use assessment data in a way of its own choosing. The coordinators of each department, in consultation with their faculty, the Assessment Committee, and the VPAA, determine how to use assessment data to improve teaching and course offerings.

¹¹⁸ SUNY BOT resolution 2010

The Science department has evaluation questions inserted into the final exams of several courses. Since 2002, General Biology, Human Biology, Environmental Science, Life on Earth, Adirondack Biology, General Chemistry, Earth Science, Ecology, and Geology have been evaluated. The questions designated for assessment are written by the instructors of these courses and approved by the department. The performance of students on these questions are used to determine whether any change in the course content or teaching style of the instructor needs to be employed in order for the students to more successfully meet the course objectives. Discussion that arose from departmental review of assessments led to the creation of the new Health Sciences Certificate as well as changing pedagogy to use less lecture and include more hands-on work and more visual aids.

The Humanities department oversees assessment of basic communication. This skill is assessed in English Composition I - ENG101. Norming sessions are held, and then faculty assess papers from sections other than their own. When discrepancies occur, special sessions or regular department meetings are used to discuss the samples and come to consensus. Several changes and recommendations have been generated in order to “close the loop” regarding the use of assessment to change the way courses are taught and assessed. These have included a more unified approach between faculty members in requiring the submission of multiple drafts of assignments, and more class time teaching revision skills. The department is piloting a final exam in spring 2011 that will assess revision as well as other writing skills. With regard to research writing, insufficient development of a thesis and following through with that argument have been shown to be the major reasons for failure of many students to meet assessment standards (and to pass ENG101), and instructors have met several times to strategize over how to raise student performance in this area. The research paper will be assessed again in 2011 and the results compared.

Critical thinking has been addressed by the Humanities department in response to needs identified in the assessment process. The department has developed a Critical Thinking course and has assessed critical thinking skills using the ACT CAAP administered to students in the last half of English Composition II. This course was chosen because it is taken in the second semester or later by all students in the A.A. Liberal Arts program, who also take many other general education courses. Thus it was determined to be a good place to measure critical thinking skills as infused throughout the general education curriculum. In 2008, NCCC students performed slightly above national norms. From this effort there has developed a greater impetus to include the teaching and discussion of critical thinking skills in ENG102 as well as other humanities courses. When the College-Wide Goals are adopted, they will lead to more teaching and assessment of critical thinking and other important thinking skills across the curricula of all programs.

Assessment efforts by the Art department have resulted in treating the three areas of the arts separately. These areas are drama, music, and the visual arts. NCCC's course offerings are strongest in the visual arts and therefore most of the assessment work has been done there. Assessment of students' drawing and photography has resulted in greater group cohesiveness among different members of the Art department faculty. Sharing of instructional methods among faculty members has improved faculty understanding of the principles of education, evaluation, and assessment of the visual arts. With a set of assessment criteria now in hand, faculty in this department now find they are better able to communicate expectations and goals to their students.

The Social Sciences department has used research papers and article reviews in its 200-level courses to assess student understanding of how social scientists explore social phenomena. Knowledge of other major concepts is assessed using questions from course final exams in the 100-level courses. The assessment process as well as the information obtained has resulted in a number

of recommendations. These have included new course assignments related to key objectives, assignment of more structured article summaries in 100-level courses as well as improved communication among different social sciences faculty members. The article summaries prepare students better for their more advanced work with social science research writing in the 200-level courses.

PREPARATION FOR ASSESSMENT

Program Review

Department chairs or coordinators are notified by the VPAA when their programs are up for review (every five to seven years). They are given the SUNY guidelines for conducting the review as well as all the institutional documentation needed to write their Self-Study report. Models of successful reports are provided for additional guidance. Department chairs and coordinators are also provided by the VPAA's office with logistical support in contacting an external review team and bringing that team to campus. (See chapters 5 and 6)

General Education Assessment

The preparation of faculty members for their roles in general education assessment varies across the curriculum, mainly for the reason that some areas have departments, and others, because NCCC is so small, do not. For example, History and Foreign Language are two general education areas that are staffed entirely by adjuncts or by faculty overloading outside of their primary fields. These areas account for four out of the ten general education areas identified by SUNY. Efforts have been made by members of the former General Education Assessment Committee to meet with those faculty members and coach them through the general education assessment process, but there should be a more formalized structure for this. Still, assessment results in those subjects show progress¹¹⁹.

Areas which do have departments have seen success in educating their members on assessment theory and methods, providing norming sessions, and coaching faculty in the assessment process. Most departments within the liberal arts had at least one representative on the General Education Assessment Committee, and many of those have continued to serve as the committee transitioned to institutional assessment as part of the College Senate. These representatives serve as liaisons between the committee and their department and are the primary facilitators of assessment in their areas. See the Closing the Loop report¹²⁰ for more detailed information. In the transition to the College Senate committee structure, departmental representation was not a priority in populating the Assessment Committee. Currently the sciences, humanities, and social sciences are well represented, as is the administration; however, there are no faculty from professional programs, which is something that will be addressed in 2011.

NCCC's strength in general education assessment comes from a combination of an outside mandate (the SUNY assessment initiative) and a faculty dedicated to the improvement of teaching and learning, as noted above.

USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

As assessments have been implemented, some have been found to be inadequate or unwieldy, and have been modified. For example in the 100-level social science courses, the SUNY learning

¹¹⁹ Appendices G and FF

¹²⁰ Appendix FF – NCCC Closing the Loop Report 2009

objective being measured is *Knowledge of major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences*. Previous to 2007, this was assessed with comprehensive departmental final exams. However, in 2007, Department Chair Bill Price proposed a more targeted “course exit survey”¹²¹ In the last assessment summary report sent to SUNY in 2008¹²², the following information was reported:

During the fall 2007 semester, Course Exit Exams (CES) were developed for PSY 101, SOC 100, ANT 100 and ECO 101. These 20-item inventories were administered to approximately 200 students taking introductory social science courses across our three campuses. Based upon the SUNY criteria categories, our results are viewed as both acceptable and realistic for our population. Based upon CES results, 22% exceeded the standard, 27% met the standard, 31% approached the standard, and 20% did not meet the standard. Our conclusion is that the short 20-item CES very adequately assesses the first SUNY objective for social science courses.

Although there were some differences in CES difficulty, our intention has always been to view the assessment process as a work in progress. Assessment activities this spring focused on evaluating the items on each CES for appropriateness and difficulty. After an item analysis of each instrument is completed, department faculty will examine questions that might need to be reworded or replaced.

This item analysis was performed and the CES for PSY101 – Introduction to Psychology was revised. This assessment is being administered again in fall 2010 with results to be reported in spring 2011.

Many departmental assessments have found that instruction appears to be on track to promote student success. For example, in the same 2007-8 summary report, it was noted that 75% of students in ART101- Drawing met or exceeded the standard for the objective *Understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein*. The department concluded:

These results show that not much change needs to be made to instructional methods. The rubric continues to be refined to take into account changes in student skill over the course of the semester.

On the other hand, some assessments have shown a need for serious work. When research papers in English Composition I (ENG101) were assessed that same year, the following was reported:

The results of this assessment were fairly dismal. Only about 24% of the 124 English Comp. I research papers assessed met or exceeded the standard. By far the biggest issue with these papers was lack of a thesis; thus they did not meet the part of the objective that reads “develop an argument.” The same papers were used to measure Information Management objectives 2&3 (Research), which fared better. The students could find relevant sources and even put them together reasonably well, but most of them ended up writing reports rather than argumentative essays.

The following semester the results were analyzed further, looking at comments the evaluators had made on each essay as well as the page count of each essay. Most of the essays were five to six

¹²¹ Appendix GG - Course Exit Survey Proposal

¹²² See Appendix EE - 2007-8 General Education Assessment Summary Report

pages long. The department had recently changed its requirement for the paper from eight to ten pages to five to ten pages. Some discussion centered on the need to reverse that change. The main comment written by evaluators on the papers was that they lacked a thesis, so another follow-up action was to teach more argumentative writing in ENG101 prior to the research paper, so that students could have more practice in the skill of developing and supporting a thesis.

The English department in 2010-11 is working on revising its assessment rubric in order to perform the assessment of research papers again in 2011. Some discussion in the department has centered on the idea that ENG101 may not be the best place to measure this outcome, as it is the first course in which students are taught and required to write a college research paper. It would probably be better to measure their skill in later courses. The department will follow up on this by trying to identify courses down the line that could be used to assess the objective. Until such courses are identified and a process put in place, the department will continue to assess research papers in ENG101.

ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS

In addition to general education assessment, NCCC has various ways of attempting to ensure student success in meeting course objectives. First NCCC uses the Accuplacer Computerized Version to place incoming students into their first English and math course. The system is set up to determine what skills the student already has and to recommend an appropriate NCCC English and math course for the student to start with, so that they can be successful at NCCC. Additionally, 100-level courses in all subjects are set up to prepare students for higher levels of learning.

As part of this Self-Study, several course sequences were evaluated as to how well completers of the first course were able to complete (or not), the next course in the sequence.

- 153 students took MAT100¹²³ FA-06, 52% completed successfully.
 - Of those that completed successfully, 95% completed another MAT class, 68% of them successfully.
 - 8% took MAT108, 52% took MAT121, 11% took MAT123, 3% took MAT125, 5% took MAT128, 22% took MAT129.
 - Of the 48% that did not complete MAT100, 36% took MAT100 over, and 50% of these students successfully completed.
 - 8% of the students that completed MAT100 on a second attempt never completed a higher level MAT class.

Ultimately, about half the students who take MAT100 complete it and about two-thirds of them successfully complete a higher level MAT course. About a quarter of students who are initially registered for MAT100 never complete a higher level MAT course.

These numbers do not take into account normal dropout rates or academic dismissals. According to Asst. Dean of Institutional Research Scott Harwood, approximately 30% of incoming students are non-completers (they step out and do not return to any college).

¹²³ MAT100 – Elementary Algebra; MAT108 – Technical Math; MAT121 – Statistics; MAT123 – Geometry and Trigonometry; MAT129 – Intermediate Algebra. MAT100 and MAT108 count only as general electives in most degree programs.

With about 50% of the students who continue onto another course successfully completing (C- or better) then it would appear that MAT 100 is adequately preparing students for the next course in the math sequence. However, there is certainly room for improvement in these numbers.

Another popular course sequence that many students take in service of their transfer degree or interest is Introduction to Psychology (PSY101) and then Developmental Psychology (PSY202)

The following chart shows the grade distributions for the grades in PSY101 and PSY202 starting with a 2005 cohort in PSY101 and following those students through the fall 2008 semester.

Grades	PSY 101 Grades (All students)	PSY 101 Grades (Students who took PSY 202)	PSY 202
A's	161 (14%)	51 (18%)	58 (21%)
B's	323 (28%)	116 (41%)	111 (40%)
C's	320 (28%)	91 (33%)	50 (18%)
D's	124 (11%)	16 (6%)	11 (4%)
F's	228 (20%)	3 (1%)	28 (10%)
W's	3 (0.25%)	3 (1%)	22 (8%)
Total	1159	280	280

Students who continue on to PSY 202 after PSY 101 appear to be adequately prepared for the course work in PSY 202. The grade distribution between the two courses is fairly similar, with only a 9% increase in F's and 7% increase in W's.

To determine the connection between general education assessment and students' successful completion of general education courses, final grades and assessment results from five courses were compared and graphed¹²⁴. The courses were ENG101, PSY 101, PSY202, HIS151, and HIS103. The best correlations between assessment results and grades are seen in PSY101 and HIS151 because the SUNY-defined objectives being assessed map well onto the major objectives of the courses. For the other courses, the objective assessed was only one of several major objectives of the course. That said, there is still a reasonable correlation. In ENG101 and HIS103, the assessment results are generally stronger than the course grades as a whole. In both courses, several SUNY-defined objectives were assessed, and this comparison was only done against the first objective. In PSY202, assessment results were much lower than the course grades. That is because the assessment measure, a structured research paper, is very difficult for students, and again, is only one component of the course, though a major one. The Social Science department is re-evaluating this assessment measure in order to bring it more into line with the objectives of the course itself. In general, discrepancies between assessments and grades are indications of the compartmentalization of skills being assessed versus the holistic evaluation comprised in a final course grade.

¹²⁴ Appendix HH - Comparison of general education course grades and assessments

SUMMARY OF STANDARDS 7 AND 14

Institutional effectiveness assessment at NCCC is a work in progress. NCCC currently collects a great deal of institutional data and is beginning to develop a “culture of assessment” and formalized processes in which that information will be shared and utilized across the College community. In regard specifically to student learning assessment, the great strength of NCCC’s program is that it is driven by a faculty committed to student learning and success. Academic departments put a lot of effort into assessment and try to “close the loop” by utilizing the results in planning and teaching. In many general education areas, this has become an organic process of continual improvement. The goal now is to widen the scope of assessment, particularly assessment of student learning. This is a focus of the new Strategic Plan and the development and implementation of the College-Wide Goals for Student Learning. As these initiatives progress, existing assessments will be woven in as measures of the College’s achievement of planned objectives. New assessments will also have to be devised. The Assessment Committee is working to bring together the new with the ongoing and to create a usable interface to involve the entire College in the assessment cycle.

SUGGESTIONS:

Standard 7:

- 7.1 *Create and implement an institutional effectiveness assessment plan to ensure adherence to Strategic Plan and to coordinate assessments at all levels.*
- 7.2 *Optimize staffing to ensure consistent performance of thorough institutional research.*
- 7.3 *Create a mechanism for sharing assessment results within the College.*

Standard 14:

- 14.1 *Establish College-Wide Goals for Student Learning, and incorporate and assess them throughout the institution.*
- 14.2 *Develop a plan for assessment of College Bridge courses in line with courses taught on the three campuses.*
- 14.3 *Optimize membership of the Assessment Committee to include representatives from all academic areas.*

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

Academic Program Objectives

SUNY Benchmarking Report

Saranac Lake Campus Library Survey 2010

LAC referral form

Pre-Allied Health Seminar assessment data

Syllabus survey data

Perkins yearly reports

Curriculum Committee minutes

Assessment Committee minutes

Presentations of College-Wide Goals for Student Learning, January 2011

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ON-LINE

Memorandum of Understanding: NCCC and SUNY, March 2007,

<http://www.suny.edu/provost/North%20Country%20MOU.pdf>

SUNY 2010 Board of Trustees Resolution on General Education Requirements

http://www.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation/TrusteesResolution2010_006.cfm

CONCLUSION

The Self-Study process that has created this document has been a coordinated institutional assessment that has uncovered much information that demonstrates how well NCCC is achieving its mission. It has also highlighted some areas that need improvement. Some of the chapters in this document were initially followed by 20 or more suggestions. Those have been revised for this final draft into recommendations that relate directly to Middle States standards. However, the original suggestions have been compiled and divided up among various work groups in the College¹²⁵. Some have gone to the Senate or to Senate committees, some to the President, some to the unions, and others to particular staff members for action. This ensures that all the work done to research these chapters and recommend changes will not just sit on the shelf when the document is done, but there will be a process to move forward for further improvement. Many of the suggestions have already been implemented.

The process of creating this document has gone along on a parallel track with the creation of a Strategic Plan and the implementation of the College Senate. The results of this Self-Study have fed directly into the goals of the Strategic Plan and the charges of the Senate committees. While it has been challenging to drive all three of these trains at once, it is now clear that they have pulled the College further than any one alone could have done.

¹²⁵ Appendix II – Middle States Self-Study List of Suggestions and Follow-Up

LIST OF ACRONYMS

A.A.	Associate of Arts degree
A.A.S.	Associate of Applied Science degree
A.S.	Associate of Science degree
AMP	Athlete Mentoring Program
BOCES	Board of Cooperative Educational Services
BOT	Board of Trustees
CAMS	Comprehensive Academic Management System – the College’s course management system
CBA	Campus-Based Assessment (SUNY general education initiative)
CCSSE	Community College Survey of Student Engagement
CLL	Center for Lifelong Learning
CSEA	Civil Service Employees Association (staff bargaining unit)
CSL	Campus and Student Life
CTE	Career and Technical Education
DEC	Department of Environmental Conservation
DL	Distance learning
FCCC	Faculty Council of Community Colleges
GEAR	General Education Assessment Review group established by SUNY to assist campuses in complying with SUNY’s general education assessment requirements
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (federal publication of institutional-level data)
IR	Institutional Research
JCERT	Accrediting agency for Radiologic Technology program
LAC	Learning Assistance Center
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse (certificate program)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCCCAP	North Country Community College Association of Professionals (faculty and professional staff bargaining unit)
NCLEX	Nursing licensing exam
NYSED	New York State Department of Education
OCSL	Office of Campus and Student Life
POWER	Wellness Committee
PRR	Middle States Periodic Review Report

RAVE	Reducing Alcohol and Violent Experiences (grant-funded program)
RN	Registered Nurse (A.A.S. program)
SCBA	Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment
SILO	SUNY's Student Learning Objective for general education
SIRIS	SUNY's comprehensive database of student information
SOS.....	SUNY Student Opinion Survey
SUNY	State University of New York
VP	Vice President
VPAA	Vice President of Academic Affairs
WRL	Wilderness Recreation Leadership