

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

to

New Mexico Military Institute
Roswell, New Mexico

April 4-6, 2011

for

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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Dr. James Martin, Associate Dean of Academics and Quality Assurance, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

Purpose of Visit

To conduct a decennial reaccreditation site visit review by the Higher Learning Commission.

Organizational Context

New Mexico Military Institute has roots dating to the late nineteenth century, with special recognition as one of ten distinguished military schools received in 1909. NMMI opened a junior college in 1915, with North Central Association accreditation to endorse it conferred in 1917. A number of efforts to restructure the Institute throughout the twentieth century led to its designation as “the official state military college and college preparatory high school in New Mexico” in 2010.

Today, NMMI is a four-year college preparatory high school aligned with junior college and U.S. Service Academy preparatory programs. The Institute is located in Roswell (population 50,000 citizens) in southeastern New Mexico. NMMI cadets come from a diverse background and are organized in the tradition of a military cavalry with headquarters, squadrons, and troops. Cadets may complete a high school diploma or spend six years at NMMI to earn an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree. While junior college students may aspire to become U.S. Army officers by completing ROTC at NMMI, only some cadets plan careers in the military.

A. Unique Aspects of Visit

N/A

B. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

N/A

C. Distance Education Reviewed

A minimal curriculum offered in Distance Education at NMMI is in keeping with its military school mission and organizational structure.

D. Interaction with Constituencies

Academic Dean

Advisor, Third Squadron Leadership

Assessment of Student Learning Committee

Assistant Dean, Curriculum Planning

Assistant Director, Athletics

Associate Athletic Director

Associate Dean and Library Director

Associate Dean, Human Performance/Athletics

Associate Dean, Humanities
Associate Dean, Library and Cadet Academic Services
Associate Dean, Science and Mathematics
Associate Dean, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Business, Leadership, and Criminal Justice
Athletic Director
Board of Trustees
Chair, Behavioral Science/Leadership Department
Chief of Staff
Commandant of Cadets
Commandant/Dean of Students
Criterion III Committee
Criterion Four Group Co-chairs
Deputy Commandant for Operations
Deputy Commandant for Support
Deputy Director NMMI Library and Museum
Deputy Director, Learning Resource Center
Director of Financial Aid
Director of Learning Center
Director, Admissions and Financial Aid
Director, Applications, Development and Support
Education Technology Faculty Member
Education Technology Officer
Faculty (23)
Federal Compliance Team (7)
Institutional Research Officer
Manager, Network Operations/User Support
President/CEO NMMI Foundation
President/Superintendent
Public Affairs Officer
Registrar
Self-Study Chair
Self-Study Co-chair
Student Representatives (19)
Student Support Services (53)
Vice-Dean of Academics
Vice-Dean of Academics/High School Principal
Vice-President for Enrollment Management
Vice-President of Facilities
Vice-President of Finance
Vice-President of Technology
Vice-President, Technology/Chief Information Officer

E. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

Annex One – Organization/Process
Annex Two - Initiatives
Annex Three – Institute Assessment Plan
Answers to Accreditation Team Questions April 1, 2011
Application for the HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning
Articulation Agreements (Binder)
Assessment Documents
Cadet Blue Book 2010-2011
Cadet Honor Manual 2010-2011
Catalog 2010-2011
Chart: Faculty Participation Percentages – Individual Course Assessments
Corps Profile
Courses Using Blackboard Spring 2011
Criterion III (Binder)
Division of Social Sciences, Business Administration, and Criminal Justice Course Critique
 Analysis by Question Order
Faculty Handbook
Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2009
Financial Statements w/Independent Auditor’s Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2010
HPER Course Critique Analysis by Question Order
Initial Strategic Initiative Proposal/Worksheet
Math Course Critique Analysis by Question Order
New Cadet Required Knowledge and Skills Qualification Book 2010-2011
New Mexico Military Institute 2010-2011 Catalog
Operations and Procedures Manual
Organizational Chart
Paul Horgan Library Information Flyer
Personal Confidential Performance Evaluation
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning
Presentation: Overview of Early Commissioning Program Statistics
Science Course Critique Analysis by Question Order
Self-Study Report, 2011
Snapshot
Strategic Plan
Syllabi
White Paper: Defining the Military School: The NMMI Example

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

NMMI began planning its self-study process in February 2009. A self-study coordinator was selected through a peer process and notification of preferred dates for the accreditation visit was shared with the Commission by the institution in March. Key NMMI administrators attended the

Commission's Annual Meeting in April. In May, the self-study steering committee established a structure for self-study work. Throughout the summer, the self-study coordinator prepared and planned for work to be conducted in first semester. In fall 2009, three phases of the institution's strategic plan were shared with the campus-community. Self-study criterion chairs attended the Commission's Annual Meeting in 2010. In summer and fall, sub-committees gathered data, analyzed input, and prepared initial reports for review. A first draft of the Self-Study report was completed in time for review in fall 2010. The steering committee shared copies and collected input about this version from the campus-community in October. Self-Study drafts were completed and submitted to Academic Dean, President, and Board of Regents for approval in late November 2010. The self-study coordinator completed distribution of the report to internal constituents in January 2011. Third party comments were collected in February. The coordinator sent a complete set of evaluation materials to the evaluation team and to the Commission staff liaison in early spring.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The integrity of the Self-Study report was confirmed by a review of documents provided to the team before and during the visit. Group meetings and interviews were conducted on campus sites for further validation. While the team found the report lacking in content, detail, and analytical depth, a review of evidence to address each criterion was provided in writing by NMMI in time for the visit.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

On pp. 5 and 6 of its Self-Study, NMMI presents an account of accreditation history since 2001 when the last visit was conducted. Among areas the 2001 team identified as lacking are:

- A completed assessment of student learning plan
- A formal list of General Education outcomes and assessments for these outcomes
- Leadership with functional responsibility for assessment
- A clarification of roles and responsibilities for individuals, committees, administration, and academic units
- Assessment initiatives as they relate to planning and budgeting processes
- Demonstrated examples of data-driven decision making

As a result of its visit to the campus, the 2011 HLC accrediting team recognizes sufficient improvement in each of these challenges. Supporting documents in this regard were supplied by NMMI.

In addition, the previous HLC Team Report (2001; pp. 57 and 58) noted additional challenges: "aging campus," "Federal Compliance," "Institutional Research," "Leadership for Future Plan," "Developmental Education program," and "Title IX." Sufficient written evidence and information gleaned on the ground during the time of the visit suggest that these challenges have also been adequately addressed.

D. Third Party Comments

NMMI adequately posted requests for the submission of third party comments. Eight letters with favorable and supporting comments were received. The team reviewed each.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The HLC accrediting team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and found each to be in order. Details and results of this review are presented in the Appendix of this report.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

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

Evidence that Core Components are met

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

The Institute has clearly articulated functions, commitments, goals, and visions in its statement of mission. These include a strong commitment to high academic standards. NMMI’s mission statement conveys ways that meet stakeholder’s needs. In 2008, NMMI negotiated changes in the Performance Indicators (PI) with the State Legislative Finance Committee and the State of New Mexico Department of Finance and Accounting. The new PIs allow for a more accurate and valid assessment of institutional accomplishment. This empirical data is included in the Annual Performance Report (p. 5).

Further validation that NMMI fulfills its mission and guards its integrity is contained in a series of surveys presented in the Annual Performance Report (pp. 12-30, 98-121). Among instruments used for assessment include:

- An annual faculty/staff climate survey
- Commandant’s cadet life survey
- National Study of Living Learning Programs Report
- Walch Marketing Plan Research findings.
- National Student Clearinghouse Report
- Various alumni data are provided in the Resource Room.

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

NMMI’s mission statement clearly articulates a “student” and “learning centered” focus. Furthermore, the Institute recognizes and supports the diversity of its “family” of constituents. Shared learning outcomes identify a two-tiered structure, with an emphasis on helping students

attain a “fundamental knowledge of the human and physical worlds and to internalize uncompromising character.” A record of regular review of mission statement documents that the institution completes is commendable, and there is sufficient evidence that NMMI is accessible to students and its region.

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

Printed and electronic versions of mission statements and other related documents are available to cadets and the institutional community. In addition, NMMI makes efforts to align strategic planning goals with mission statement development. No survey results in the Self-Study are available to support these claims, however.

The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission. (Core Component 1d)

The College has acquired new presidential leadership within the last eighteen months. Greater collaborative governance has occurred and, as a result, dormant committees have been reactivated to help seek and consider key constituent input. The Board of Regents undertakes a regular review of this leadership, along with policies and practices of the Institute. In addition, a restructuring of the organization in selected academic areas and services has been accomplished. While all this is meritorious, there is still may be some concern on the campus about shared governance.

The organization upholds and protects its integrity. (Core Component 1e)

One of the noticeable values NMMI abides by is its maintenance and protection of integrity. A review of financial statements, strategic plans, and academic programs is conducted regularly. In a summary statement on p.17 of the Self-Study, NMMI states that the Institute guards integrity owing to its honor codes of cadets and a credo for faculty member. Such was confirmed by the visiting team during its visit.

An Instructional System and Process Improvement Team serves to check and create official processes, student records has a variety of systems to assure academic integrity, the institution recognizes and abides by FERPA regulations, a student conduct policy provides clear expectations, and the NMMI has an unblemished record over the last twenty-five years with respect to fiscal responsibility and integrity.

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

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

NMMI is still in the process of including the current mission statement on all official documents. The HLC accreditation team recommends that such be accomplished at once. It is also noted

that the change in State administration in Santa Fe and the subsequent selection of some new Board of Regents members has necessitated a further review of the Board of Regents policy manual.

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

None noted.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up.

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met. There is no need for commission follow-up.

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

1.Evidence that Core Components are met

The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends. (Core Component 2a)

In a society that puts a priority on leadership development, NMMI allocates resources to such an aim around the clock. NMMI is a residential campus, and student government and residential life programs are patterned after the Army. The three major components of the mission include development in the areas of academics, leadership, and physical well-being. Primary responsibility for leadership is the responsibility of the Commandant. Because he lives on the campus, the Commandant is able to oversee academic and physical development programming.

The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future. (Core Component 2b)

NMMI has allocated significant resources to support non-teaching personnel that should position the institution to demonstrate exemplary initiatives in areas such as assessment of student learning and the development of quality education programs. Non-teaching personnel consists of approximately seventy-five percent of the employees of NMMI. This allocation of employees could result in NMMI becoming a leader in the assessment of leadership and physical development.

The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.
(Core Component 2c)

NMMI is nearly finished with its participation in the HLC Assessment Academy. Comments about this and the assessment of student learning program in general are presented elsewhere in the Assurance and Advancement sections of this report.

All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission. (Core Component 2d)

NMMI allocates resources to recruiting individuals as students from a wide range of diverse backgrounds. Data provided during the visit shows enrollment from forty-three states and twenty-one foreign countries. Female enrollment consists of approximately eighteen percent, while non-Caucasian enrollment represents approximately fifty-six percent. Non-Caucasian ethnic classifications include Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American and Pacific Islander.

Based on financial ratios and audits, NMMI has demonstrated fiscal responsibility that will better allow it to meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Financial ratios used by HLC to monitor financial stability include primary reserve, net income, return on net assets, and viability. A formula supplied by HLC results in a Composite Financial Index (CFI). NMMI reports that its CFI was 6.7 in 2008, 4.6 in 2009, and 9.5 in 2010. These figures are especially noteworthy and confirm the strength of NMMI's financial position.

NMMI has an attractive physical plant and excellent facilities. The team noted evidence of the campus being well cared for throughout the visit. Such is commendable.

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

None noted.

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

None noted.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met. There is no need for commission follow-up.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met:

The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible. (Core Component 3a)

Course syllabi at the New Mexico Military Institute list include course-level goals for student learning. The faculty at NMMI recognizes that the articulation of intended learning outcomes is the essential first step in the assessment of student learning and that students are more likely to meet expectations for learning when they clearly understand what those expectations are.

NMMI has recently articulated general education goals for student learning and has developed a process to assess these goals on a regular basis using matrices or rubrics. The Institute also assesses some of its general education goals using the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP). According to the Assessment Task Force, when they are available this spring, assessment results will be reviewed by faculty, who will then make improvements to the curriculum based on those results.

The organization values and supports effective teaching. (Core Component 3b)

NMMI provides all full-time faculty the opportunity to attend and participate in professional development activities. These activities include coursework, conferences, and/or workshops. Funding for these activities is based on a set of criteria defined in the Faculty Handbook. Funding may be used for travel, registration fees, tuition, meals, and lodging.

The organization creates effective learning environments. (Core Component 3c)

The organization employs, when appropriate, new technologies that enhance effective learning environments for students. In fall 2009, NMMI joined a New Mexico state consortium of schools which gives access to the Blackboard course management system. Prior to adopting Blackboard, NMMI used WebCT as its course management system. Although the Institute offers very few courses completely online, many faculty members supplement their face-to-face courses with a Blackboard course website. In addition, all of the academic buildings on campus have wireless internet access and most classrooms are equipped with computers, projectors, and document cameras.

The organization ensures access to the resources (e.g., science laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, and computer labs) necessary to support teaching and learning. Although many of NMMI's science labs are starting to show signs of age, its computer labs are more than adequate, its library collection is excellent, and its theater and musical rehearsal spaces have recently been renovated.

The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.
(Core Component 3d)

The Institute provides effective staffing and support for teaching and learning. The library, for example, is well staffed and has excellent learning resources. With 13 FTE employees, the technical department is also well staffed. As another example, one of the duties of NMMI faculty is to provide tutoring outside of the classroom for students who need additional help with their coursework. Many of the NMMI cadets also meet with private tutors.

Recognizing the diverse abilities of its incoming students, NMMI provides developmental coursework for those students not ready for college-level coursework. The organization uses ACT, COMPASS, and a locally-developed math exam as its course placement instruments.

The Institute evaluates teaching and recognizes effective instruction. Faculty members are assessed by means of end-of-course student evaluations and classroom observations by peers and administrators. The results of these evaluations are discussed at annual performance reviews and are used in the development of annual professional development plans.

The faculty at the New Mexico Military Institute are well qualified to determine curricular content and strategies for instruction, as evidenced by on-campus interviews and a review of the college and university transcripts in faculty personnel files.

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

The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible. (Core Component 3a)

The 2001 comprehensive visit team expressed concern that NMMI did not list its goals for general education in its catalog or on its website. Since NMMI did not define its "Tier Two" (institutional level or general education) intended learning outcomes until February 2011, there has been no systematic analysis of whether or not students are meeting those intended outcomes. The first assessment matrices or rubrics developed to assess these intended learning outcomes were developed fall 2010. According to the institution's assessment plan, the development of these assessment rubrics or matrices will continue for another two years (spring 2013).

Although the faculty at NMMI are collecting assessment data, the team could find little if any evidence that they are using assessment results to make improvements in teaching and learning or inform the planning and budgeting processes. NMMI implemented its current plan for the assessment of student learning in fall 2009 as part of its participation in the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy.

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

None noted.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met. There is no need for commission follow-up.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

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

Evidence that Core Components are met

The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administration, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning. (Core Component 4a)

The institution provides, and financially supports, significant opportunities for the faculty and staff to develop themselves professionally and intellectually. Between the Faculty Academic Development Grants, yearly professorships funded by the NMMI Foundation, and the Funk Excellence in Teaching Award all faculty members have opportunities to compete for developmental funding from their first year on campus. Staff developmental activities are planned based upon surveys administered each year by NMMI Human Resources.

Though some may confuse the academic and military values of the Institute, faculty and students are accorded academic freedom as expected in any institution of higher learning. The NMMI “Operations and Procedures Manual” presents the Institute’s policy concerning academic freedom and affords everyone appropriate protections for their intellectual inquiry.

The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs. (Core Component 4b)

Though confusion in terminology is evident concerning general education outcomes, the Institute integrates its core learning outcomes throughout the undergraduate curriculum and student life. Largely because of this unique blending of core outcomes between the Dean and the Commandant’s spheres, the Institute demonstrates strong linkages between curricular and co-curricular outcomes that support lifelong learning in a diverse society.

The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. (Core Component 4c)

Course assessment was evident, but no specific evidence of systemic program or institutional reviews was found. The Institute has joined the Assessment Academy to improve its programs

and the significant work done on a newly created assessment database will allow for programmatic and institution-wide data collection and analysis in the near future.

The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly. (Core Component 4d)

The Institute publicly states its Honor Code in appropriate public documents and on its website. The existence of this Honor Code, adhered to as a strong cultural bond by students, faculty, administrators, and staff, ensures that the Institute lives up to the ethical standards expected in its instructional and research activities.

The Institute clearly identifies to students and faculty the responsibilities associated with intellectual property rights. Students receive specific instruction on this topic during the new First Year Cadet Experience course and faculty, staff, and students alike are reminded of these responsibilities in the published NMMI Operations and Procedures Manual.

Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

The lack of published core learning outcomes in public documents such as the catalog or website, beyond those identified by the Commandant, could result in a lack of understanding of the educational mission of the Institute by alumni, parents, and prospective students.

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

None noted.

Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up.

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met. There is no need for commission follow-up.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways valued.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations. (Core Component 5a)

The organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in valued ways. NMMI seeks to develop critical thinking, leadership and physical well-being in its Corps of Cadets.

The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities. (Core Component 5b)

NMMI identifies military entities such as the service academies and the active military as important external partners. Written evidence confirms that NMMI successfully offers courses intended to prepare students for admission to U.S. service academics. These initiatives fall under the NMMI Service Academy Preparatory Program. NMMI supports the United States Army ROTC program by affording students the opportunity to complete partial requirements for receiving a commission.

The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service. (Core Component 5c)

Camps, concerts, speakers, and a golf course are readily available to the campus community. Roswell also offers service learning opportunities for cadets. Among examples are tutoring, flag ceremonies, parade appearances, mentoring, blood drive donations, and the like.

Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides. Core Component 5d)

The Economic Impact Study (2003) indicates the economic impact of NMMI on the Roswell community exceeded \$70,000,000 annually and supported more than 800 jobs. An updated study is currently being conducted. Additional activities of interest include youth sports, church, service club activities, youth leadership development, and participation in community advancement programs.

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

None noted.

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

None noted.

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

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met. There is no need for commission follow-up.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. Affiliation Status

No change.

B. Nature of Organization

1. Legal status

No change.

2. Degrees awarded

No change.

C. Conditions of Affiliation

1. Stipulation on affiliation status

No change.

2. Approval of degree sites

No change.

3. Approval of distance education degree

4. Reports required

None.

5. Other visits scheduled

None.

D. Summary of commission review

Timing recommendation for next comprehensive visit (academic year – 2020-2021)

Rationale for recommendation:

Based on evidence provided in the Self-Study report, resource documents made available to the consultant-evaluator team, and numerous interviews with faculty, staff, students, and administrators at New Mexico Military Institute, the team finds patterns of evidence that support that the institution has met the five identified criteria and their respective core components.

As is true of virtually all colleges, NMMI faces challenges in the future. Among challenges are in reviewing and reissuing College mission statements and the assessment of student learning. The HLC accrediting team has trust that the institution's leadership team, its Board of Regents, faculty, staff, and students are poised to meet these challenges by turning them into opportunities. While we require no subsequent formal, written reports or focused visits, we urge NMMI to tackle these responsibilities head-on. To not do so seems completely apart from the serious nature of the College, its culture and, more significantly, its genuine emphasis on students' academic achievement. Such judgment is based on the overwhelming and well deserved sense of pride the College has in itself, the strong capacity NMMI has for development and growth, and the "family oriented" partnership all campus constituents have with each other.

Having said all this, we remain optimistic about NMMI's future. The team asserts that the College has a solid foundation on which to continue to evolve. We recommend, therefore, that New Mexico Military Institute be granted full reaccreditation for a ten year period.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

See following Federal Compliance Worksheet.

WORKSHEET ON

Federal Compliance Requirements

INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWED BY THE TEAM:

- New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) 2011 Institutional Self Study Report
- Emails submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in response to NMMI's solicitation for third-party comments.
- The team also interviewed the NMMI staff members responsible for the section of the Self Study on Federal Compliance

EVALUATION OF FEDERAL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

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

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

The team has reviewed this federal requirement and finds NMMI to be in compliance with expectations.

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

The team has reviewed this federal requirement and finds NMMI to be in compliance with expectations.

3. Transfer Policies: *The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.*

The team has reviewed this federal requirement and finds NMMI to be in compliance with expectations.

4. Verification of Student Identity: *The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identify of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education.*

The team has reviewed this federal requirement and finds NMMI to be in compliance with expectations.

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

- **General Program Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Financial Responsibility Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Default Rates, Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information, Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies:** *The institution has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*
- **Contractual Relationships:** *The institution has presented evidence of its contracts with non-accredited third party providers of 25-50% of the academic content of any degree or certificate programs.*

The team has reviewed this federal requirement and finds NMMI to be in compliance with expectations.

6. Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials: *The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.*

The team has reviewed this federal requirement and finds NMMI to be in compliance with expectations.

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

The team has reviewed this federal requirement and finds NMMI to be in compliance with expectations.

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

The team has reviewed this federal requirement and finds NMMI to be in compliance with expectations.

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

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A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Donald Claycomb, President, Linn State Technical College, Lima, Missouri

Dr. William Tammone, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Illinois Central College, Peoria, Illinois

Dr. James Martin, Associate Dean of Academics and Quality Assurance, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Dr. Thompson Brandt (chair), Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences, Highland Community College, Freeport, Illinois

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I. Overall Observations about the Organization

New Mexico Military Institute has been through significant changes in senior leadership in the past six years, including the Superintendent, Dean, and Commandant. These changes appear to be for the better, but there is still work to be done. One of the first observations made by the team is the continued approach by the institution that it is “special” and unlike other institutions. The team respectfully disagrees with this approach and suggests that the Institute should endeavor to be “distinctive” instead. The word “special” was repeatedly used to point out to the team why NMMI wouldn’t have systems like other similar junior colleges, when in fact it often does have such systems but with differing names or structures.

Any institution that educates nearly 500 young men and women needs systems to plan, coordinate, assess, and evaluate their programs. NMMI’s students, faculty, and staff simply approach these issues in a military manner, but they still provide academic content at the freshman and sophomore level. The team believes NMMI is “distinctive” with a distinctive mission and should focus on that fact. A second observation is the continued need for improvement in assessment. Steps have been taken in the right direction, but the senior leadership of the Institute must follow through this time and take the assessment program to the level expected after twenty years of comments by visiting teams.

II. Consultations of the Team

The New Mexico Military Institute has struggled with the assessment of student learning for many years. The comprehensive visit team in 2001 recommended a Focused Visit on assessment, which took place in March 2004. The Focused Visit Team continued to have concerns about assessment and recommended a Progress Report on this issue. A Commission Staff analysis of that Progress Report in 2006 led to the assignment of a Monitoring Report on the assessment of student learning, which was scheduled to be due by December 31, 2007. In lieu of that Monitoring Report, however, the Institute elected to participate in the Higher Learning Commission’s Academy for Assessment of Student Learning. NMMI began participating in the Assessment Academy in February 2008, and we understand that the Institute will continue to participate in the Academy until early 2012.

NMMI has made notable progress on assessment in recent months. For example, although the Institute’s goals for general education are still not published in the Catalog or on the website, they have now been identified. The Institute has also recently developed a process to assess whether or not students are meeting those goals. Now, it is incumbent upon the organization to implement its new assessment process and demonstrate that the faculty is using assessment results to improve student learning and inform the planning and budgeting processes.

NMMI asked the team to provide “examples of how other schools approach the task of integrating, analyzing, and then implementing assessment results. What kind of organization and process do they have to do this?” Two specific ways immediately come to mind to accomplish this when dealing with a military institution. The first would be to study the United States Military Academy and its methodology for bringing together the assessment of outcomes from academic and cadet activities and weaving them together to assess the entire student experience. West Point’s assessment leadership has published widely on the model that it recently created, and it appears that it could be a good match for NMMI’s needs. Although the potential downside is that the program is very complex, NMMI appears to have the ability to implement it for the junior college.

Another approach could be to use a more “military” related method, commonly referred to in the U.S. Army as the “accountable instruction system.” This system is merely a revised ADDIE process (analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate) that introduces a public review of data at specific points in the cycle. For instance, forty-five days after the completion of a course direct and indirect assessment data and analysis for that course is presented to institutional leadership. After conversations regarding the analysis, potential modifications are proposed by faculty and the overall implications of those modifications on the overall core outcomes are identified. This system works well for core courses that are inextricably linked through the overall institutional learning outcomes. Almost any system will work for NMMI if it focuses on bringing together assessment data on outcomes that have broad effects on the academic programs.

While faculty members are responsible for the curriculum, NMMI’s academic leadership has a responsibility to consolidate assessment evidence on institutional learning outcomes and examine trends across courses and departments. It is only through such a process that successful program review will allow what is, in essence, effective assessment of general education outcomes. One way to approach would be to turn NMMI towards its military roots. Every unit in the U.S. Army conducts “after action reviews” after operations, exercises, or specific missions. Academics are merely another mission for a military school, and if NMMI chooses to approach assessment with the same dogged determination military units approach the after “action report process,” success may be realized. Such “after action” reviews are accomplished at the course level and, to some extent, at the department level. The real missing component is a system of “after action” reviews which are conducted at the Academic Dean’s level.

NMMI asked the team provide consultation on “Teaching/Learning/Educational Technology Interface” and “The relationship between IT and the faculty.” The technology found in NMMI’s classrooms is a mixed lot. Some classrooms have necessary technological equipment and some have very little. The first thing that may need to be done, and no evidence of it was observed, is an analysis of what classes would benefit most from the learning technology interfaces and

schedule those in the appropriate classrooms. Based on our observations, students are not allowed to have computers in classrooms and, therefore, access to wireless resources is limited or not used as part of the learning process.

While some disciplines applaud focusing students on course material and not technology, such an argument rings hollow. NMMI prides itself in preparing its students to be lifelong learners and successful when they leave the Institute. The world outside of NMMI's campus is a technological one and that fact should not escape its leadership. Technology is nothing more than an enabler in learning. It is how an instructor or institution chooses to use it that dictates whether it is a distraction or a tool for student learning. The team understands the institution's concerns about cell phones and their potential negative impact on good order and discipline, but the generations NMMI is trying to educate gathered information through technology long before they arrived on campus.

Perhaps NMMI should examine a program to focus on the proper use of technology in learning science and create an environment where part of the student code is how to use mobile technology with integrity and judgment. That would allow the integration of IT with student learning, communication, and faculty development. Another large military institution, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, recently published "The Army Learning Concept." This document reflects a military learning environment and it is largely focused on identifying how to harness the technology savvy of America's youth rather than trying to curb it.

One question concerning the second part of the consultation "the relationship between IT and faculty" is whether they work cooperatively or in opposition. In outfitting new classrooms for a military educational facility, the institution created a model classroom and changed equipment based on a joint analysis between faculty and the IT staff. Faculty members know what they need to teach and how they want to approach the classroom from a pedagogical perspective. IT personnel understand what new technological products are on the market and the technical aspects of making such products work. Neither alone can excel at designing a technological teaching environment. Working together is the key to building relationships between conflicting groups to create the best learning environments for students.

The team recommends that NMMI continue investing in professional development for everyone involved in the assessment process. In addition to recommitting itself to the Assessment Academy, the organization might consider sending teams of faculty and administrators to the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference and conferences focusing on assessment. Highly-regarded assessment conferences worth considering are those sponsored by Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and the American Association of Colleges and Universities.

The Institute should also consider purchasing multiple copies of some of the important publications on assessment. The team recommends the following as potentially valuable resources:

- Allen, Mary. J. *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education*. Anker Publishing, 2004.
- _____ *Assessing General Education Programs*. Anker Publishing, 2006.
- Leskes, Andrea and Ross Miller. *General Education: A Self-Study Guide for Review & Assessment*. AAC&U, 2005.
- Leskes, Andrea and Barbara Wright. *The Art and Science of Assessing General Education Outcomes: A Practical Guide*. AAC&U, 2005.
- Palomba, Catherine A. and Trudy W. Banta. *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing and Improving Assessment in Higher Education*. Jossey-Bass, 1999.
- Stevens, Dannelle D. and Antonia J. Levi, *Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time, Convey Effective Feedback and Promote Student Learning*. Stylus, 2004.
- Suskie, Linda. *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*, 2nd ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Walvoord, Barbara. *Assessment Clear and Simple*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
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III. Recognition of Significant Accomplishments, Progress, and/or Practices

While significant work remains on the Institute's assessment program, the work done by Charity Schwalm on the assessment database is a significant accomplishment. If used as designed and continually improved, this system will allow the aggregation of assessment data across learning outcomes, departments, and courses in order to create the analysis that is currently lacking at NMMI. The team was impressed with the original work that she did and congratulates her on being the shining light of progress in the NMMI assessment process.

The individual tutoring that the team observed in the library throughout the visit is a practice we commend. This is one of the advantages of a smaller institution, and NMMI is taking advantage of it to provide students with all the academic assistance they need to succeed at the Institute. It is in keeping with the NMMI mission to create critical thinkers who are capable of sound analysis, as this type of one-on-one engagement allows for this type of intellectual growth.

The three areas of academics, leadership, and physical well-being of the individual are initial components of the mission of NMMI. In the eyes of many, these are important components relative to the well-being of our nation. NMMI is to be commended for acculturating these values.

The physical plant is attractive, appears well maintained and is clean. This is the type of curb appeal that is attractive to families of potential students.

During the visit the team was exposed to a number of dedicated supportive alumni. NMMI is to be commended for its uncommon level of alumni support.

NMMI should be proud of and commended for its fund that allows faculty members to apply for funding of individual grants for faculty development. Consideration should be given to (1) increasing the pool as well; (2) allowing faculty to apply for a sizable grant with the understanding if granted the faculty would not be eligible for grants in a given number of years; and (3) giving priority to applications that address assessment of student learning.

*Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS*

INSTITUTION and STATE: New Mexico Military Institute, NM

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW (from ESS):

DATES OF REVIEW: 4/4/11 - 4/6/11

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

DEGREES AWARDED: A

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: None.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS: Prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: New Commission policy on institutional change became effective July 1, 2010. Some aspects of the change processes affecting distance delivered courses and programs are still being finalized. This entry will be updated in early 2011 to reflect current policy. In the meantime, see the Commission's Web site for information on seeking approval of distance education courses and programs.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

OTHER VISITS SCHEDULED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2000 - 2001

YEAR FOR NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2010 - 2011

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2020 – 2021

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: New Mexico Military Institute, NM

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

Educational Programs

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

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:	Present Activity:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Additional Locations:	None	
Course Locations:	None	

Out-of-State:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Additional Locations:	None	
Course Locations:	None	

Out-of-USA:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Additional Locations:	None	
Course Locations:	None	

Distance Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

None

Recommended Change:
(+ or -)

Correspondence Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

None