

Nevada State College

Year One Self-Evaluation Report

March 2, 2012

Submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities



Table of Contents

YEAR ONE REPORT	1
Introduction.....	1
Institutional Overview	1
Preface	3
Brief Update on Institutional Changes since the Last Report.....	3
Recommendation 1.....	3
Recommendation 2.....	3
Recommendation 3.....	4
CHAPTER 1: MISSION, CORE THEMES, AND EXPECTATIONS	5
Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3	5
Authority	5
Mission and Core Themes.....	5
STANDARD 1.A	5
Mission Statement.....	5
Vision.....	5
Statement of Institutional Strategic Goals (from 2009-14 Strategic Plan)	5
Interpretation of Fulfillment of the Institution’s Mission	6
Articulation of an Acceptable Threshold of Mission Fulfillment.....	6
Quantitative Standards.....	6
STANDARD 1.B	8
Core Theme 1: Promote Student Success.....	8
Rationale for Core Theme #1 Indicators.....	9
Core Theme 2: Foster Educational Opportunity	10
Rationale for Core Theme #2 Indicators.....	11
Core Theme 3: Strengthen the Community.....	12
Rationale for Core Theme #3 Indicators.....	13
CONCLUSION	14



YEAR ONE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report represents the culmination of a comprehensive and collaborative effort among college employees, students, and stakeholders. In developing this report, the NSC accreditation team began from the foundation established by our Institutional Strategic Plan to ensure that our mission, core themes, and objectives incorporated and supported our strategic goals. In further developing this framework, the team cultivated a consensus among college administrators, academic and administrative faculty, classified employees, student leadership, alumni, local business and community leaders, and the College's foundation board. The resulting document reflects the existing strengths and core values that have guided the College to its formative accomplishments, and it conveys the goals and aspirations that will drive our future successes.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

As the first and only four-year institution in the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), Nevada State College (NSC) places a special emphasis on the advancement of a diverse and largely under-served student population. Located on a developing 500-acre campus in the foothills of Henderson, Nevada, the College was established in 2002 as a new tier in the state system between the research universities and the two-year colleges. In this role, the College emphasizes high-quality instruction, exemplary service, engaging learning experiences, and innovation as a means to more efficient, effective outcomes in all corners of the campus.

As a member of the NSHE (two research universities, one state college, four community colleges, and a research institute), NSC operates as a critical access point to a baccalaureate degree in a state that long has struggled with regard to educational performance measures. For example:

- Only 22% of Nevadans hold a baccalaureate degree;
- 53% of recent high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education immediately following graduation;
- 37% of recent high school graduates attend college in Nevada; and
- Approximately 55% of NSC's first-time freshmen require math remediation.

When considering the statewide environment, NSC is uniquely positioned to improve Nevada's culture by bringing educational opportunities to those who historically have been unable to pursue a baccalaureate education.

As prescribed in our mission statement, every facet of the College is guided by the philosophy that "excellence fosters opportunity." To this end, the College focuses on the rigorous recruitment, selection, and developmental evaluation of superb faculty and staff. Our faculty are distinguished by their disciplinary expertise, exceptional teaching skills, and a singular commitment to the development and mission fulfillment of a growing college. In 2011, 100 percent of the tenured or tenure-track faculty at NSC possessed the highest degree in their fields. Their focus on student learning and close mentorship is facilitated by an average class size of 23 students, with a maximum enrollment of 40 students for face-to-face classes and 30 students for online courses.





Our student population has an average age of 29, is composed of 75 percent women, and reflects a balanced mix of non-traditional students, community college transfers, and recent high school graduates. As of fall 2011, all of our students commute to campus, the majority (73 percent) work over 30 hours per week in off-campus employment, and close to 39 percent of degree-seeking students qualify for a Pell Grant. Nearly 49% of our 3,192 students come from self-reported ethnic minority backgrounds, giving NSC the most diverse student population in the state system of higher education. Forty-nine percent of our students are Caucasian, 19% are Hispanic of any race, 12% are African-American, 10% are Asian, less than 1% are American Indian, 2% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 5% report mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Enrollment at the College has increased rapidly, climbing from 177 students at its inception in 2002 to 3,192 students in fall 2011. As seen in Figures 1 and 2, retention and graduation metrics have improved substantially in recent years as the College implemented new practices and systems designed to promote student success. These and other advances are defined by a college culture of self-evaluation and data-driven improvement. In recognizing these efforts, the Northwest Commission commended NSC for its assessment practices, the quality of its full and part-time faculty members, and its provision of effective educational programs in the face of recurring budget hardships.

Nevada State College is organized into three separate schools: a School of Education, a School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, and a School of Nursing. The School of Education offers a Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Education Program, bachelor's degrees in Elementary Education, Elementary Bilingual Education, Elementary Special Education, and Speech Pathology, and Secondary Education degrees with concentrations in English, History, Biology, Environmental & Resource Science, and Mathematics. The School of Liberal Arts & Sciences provides courses that meet the core curriculum requirements of the College and offers bachelor's degrees in Biology, Business Administration, Criminal Justice, English, Environmental & Resource Science, History, Integrated Studies, Public Administration in Law Enforcement, Management, Psychology, and Visual Media. The School of Nursing offers a bachelor's of science in nursing that features four distinct tracks, three of which are pre-licensure tracks, including a traditional 2-year track, a 1-year second-degree accelerated track a 2½-year part-time track, and one that is a post-licensure RN to BSN track.

Figure 1

Fall to Fall Retention Rate of NSC IPEDS Cohorts

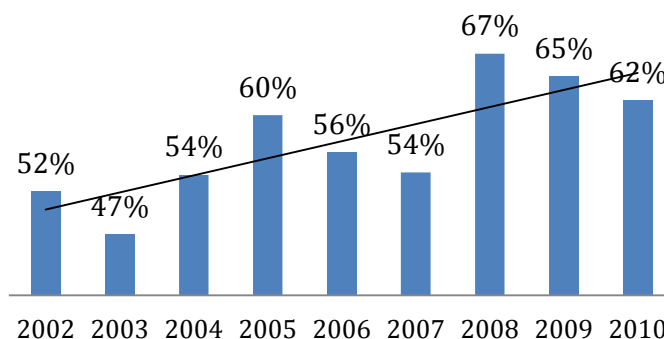
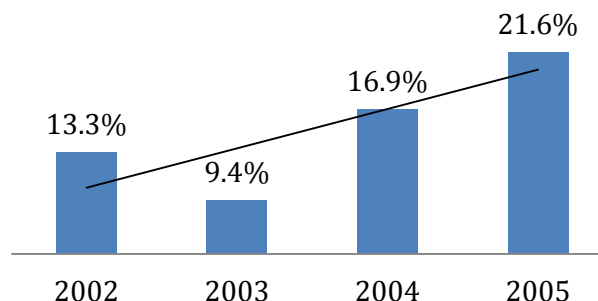


Figure 2

Six-year Graduation Rates of NSC IPEDS Cohorts



PREFACE

Brief Update on Institutional Changes since the Last Report

In July 2011 the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) granted initial accreditation to Nevada State College at the baccalaureate level. In granting this accreditation, effective September 1, 2010, the Commission asked the College to address the three recommendations from its Comprehensive Initial Accreditation Peer-Evaluation Report. The recommendations were as follows:

1. *While the evaluation committee found ample evidence of regular program review of student learning and teaching effectiveness, a similar regular review of degree designators, titles, and programs would provide the College with an opportunity to align faculty intentions with generally recognizable fields of study and practices common to institutions of higher education (standards 2.C.1 and 2.C.3)*
2. *As a young and changing institution, the Committee recommends that NSC review its policy and program changes to ensure that they are fully and accurately documented in its catalog, website, and other institutional publications (Standard 2.D.5).*
3. *While Nevada State College's Board, the Nevada Board of Regents, appears to engage in some forms of self-review, Standard 2.A.6 and 2.A.8 require that the Board regularly evaluate(s) performance and revise(s), as necessary, its policies to demonstrate to its constituencies that it carries out its responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner (Standard 2.A.6 and 2.A.8).*

As requested by the Commission, Nevada State College provided an initial response to these recommendations in an addendum dated August 1, 2011. In the section below, we outline the progress the College has made in the intervening seven months and delineate our plans to continue addressing each recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 1

In response to recommendation 1, the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs and Standards committee developed a formal program review policy for all degrees granted by the College. Drafted in fall 2011, this policy yields a systematic, data-driven approach to the evaluation of programs, including the extent to which faculty intentions are aligned with generally recognizable fields of study and practices common to institutions of higher education. This policy, in turn, guided a review that yielded revisions to the titles of multiple degree programs. Moreover, the policy will continue to provide actionable guidance in the evaluation of new degree programs, minors, and other academic offerings.

RECOMMENDATION 2

As a relatively new and rapidly developing institution, NSC fully appreciates the importance of thoroughly and accurately documenting its policies, programs, and related changes. However, by virtue of this same newness and rapid development, maintaining the currency of published materials has posed a consistent challenge. Consequently, as noted in our initial response to the Commission, the Office of the President, working in conjunction with the Faculty Senate, established



a campus-wide committee in fall 2011 to review and amend the existing guidelines on policies and associated procedures. This committee has been tasked with developing a clear and concise approval and routing procedure for all new and/or revised policies. Accordingly, policies that influence all students or other campus constituents in their entirety (e.g., all staff), regardless of discipline, will receive final approval from the College president and will be stored and updated from a central server location with direct oversight by the president's office. All published and publicly viewable materials will be crafted in html format and hyperlinked to the documents on this server, thereby ensuring that revisions and updates are automatically – and seamlessly – updated in all relevant campus materials.

Policies that only affect an individual division (e.g., a revision to textbook ordering procedures for LAS faculty) will remain the responsibility of the unit in question. A robust but user-friendly content management system (CMS) allows trained representatives from each division to add, remove, and revise website content on a regular basis. The parameters set by the CMS ensure that different portions of the website maintain stylistic and technical consistency, but the decentralized approval system yields an efficient and expeditious means of keeping content up to date. Each division has been charged with auditing its website on at least a semester-by-semester basis, though in many cases these reviews are conducted more frequently. Similarly, each semester all academic divisions update policies as needed and convey this information to students and other stakeholders via handbooks, syllabus templates, and advising.

Finally, the Faculty Senate Curriculum Review Committee will continue to enforce a systematic approval and division notification procedure for all degree program revisions, additions, and deletions.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The College submitted this recommendation to the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents. In response, the offices of the Chancellor and the Board identified their ongoing effort, conducted through the Board's Efficiency and Effectiveness Initiative, to regularly review the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations, policies, and institutional academic and business operations. To date, this initiative has spurred changes to meeting schedules and streamlined the Board's approval process, and currently it guides the examination of Human Resources, Payroll, and Purchasing operations. This latter effort is expected to contribute to a host of meaningful changes that span the entire system. This process of self-review also extends to Board meetings, where regents regularly discuss and examine Board policies as needed.



CHAPTER 1: MISSION, CORE THEMES, AND EXPECTATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS 2 AND 3

Authority

Nevada’s Board of Regents governs the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). Elected to serve a six-year term, the 13 Regents set policies and approve budgets for Nevada’s entire public system of higher education, which includes four community colleges, one state college, two universities, and one research institute. The Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents has authorized Nevada State College to operate and award baccalaureate degrees.

Mission and Core Themes

The institution’s mission and core themes are clearly defined, can be disassembled into measurable elements, and were formally and legally approved by our governing body, the Nevada Board of Regents, on March 2, 2012. NSC provides baccalaureate degree programs in 27 areas of study. The mission statement guides the growth and allocation of funding for the College.

These degree programs are sufficient in content, depth, and rigor. Each program includes a substantial number of general education credits that serve as a prerequisite to the area of study. As a member of the Nevada System of Higher Education, NSC fulfills its designated mission and coordinates courses of study with its sister institutions throughout the state. The commitment to high standards is evident and is supported by the dedication of the faculty and staff.

STANDARD 1.A

MISSION STATEMENT

At Nevada State College, excellence fosters opportunity. Excellence in teaching leads to innovative, technology-rich learning opportunities that promote the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. Quality, affordable four-year degree programs open the door to career success and enhanced quality of life for a diverse population of students. Our graduates, in turn, foster the greatest opportunity – the promise of a stronger community and a better future for all of Nevada.

VISION

Nevada State College promotes the civic and economic strength of Nevada by providing an exemplary, learner-centered education to a broad population of students.

STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC GOALS (FROM 2009-14 STRATEGIC PLAN)

1. Advance academic programs
2. Increase retention, persistence, and graduation
3. Competitively position NSC within the local, state and regional market





4. Build a culture of community
5. Encourage and support an institutional and individual entrepreneurial spirit
6. Enhance technology and information literacy to educate faculty, staff and students in the use of print and electronic resources

INTERPRETATION OF FULFILLMENT OF THE INSTITUTION'S MISSION

The mission of Nevada State College will be fulfilled when we provide objectively-validated educational opportunities to a broad population of largely under-served students who, as a result, experience career success and improved quality of life and who, along with our faculty, strengthen the state through civic contributions, shared knowledge, and the provision of a more diverse, competent workforce.

ARTICULATION OF AN ACCEPTABLE THRESHOLD OF MISSION FULFILLMENT

Nevada State College faces several longstanding and incipient challenges that, in the near future, necessarily temper our thresholds for mission fulfillment. Foremost among these is our status as a relatively new institution that targets an under-served population and consistently operates within stringent budget parameters. For example, the College's pre-opening state appropriations were less than 5 percent of the median funding for recent start-up institutions of similar size and scope, and the students served by NSC grapple with nearly every risk factor described in the retention literature.

More recently, owing to consecutive yearly cuts in statewide appropriations and double digit enrollment increases, the College aims to serve roughly 3200 students with an annual operating budget that demands rigorous efficiencies in every facet of the institution.

Likewise, our student population is challenged as never before. No state has been harder hit by the recession than Nevada, and NSC students are among its most severely disadvantaged constituents. The need for full-time employment, coupled with considerable family obligations, make it difficult for many of our students to pursue a four-year degree, and harder still for them to complete one. Several nascent initiatives – such as the implementation of a robust early warning system for at-risk students and comprehensive improvements to online instruction – should pave new inroads to success, but we nevertheless approached our thresholds with circumspection.

Despite these challenges, we remain resolute in our commitment to NSC's unique mission. In establishing thresholds, we aimed to address the core elements of our mission statement: excellence and innovation in teaching, educational opportunities for a broad population of individuals, student success, and meaningful contributions to our community and the state of Nevada.

Quantitative Standards

Excellence & Innovation in Teaching

1. Degree Program outcomes assessment:
 - Observe a statistically significant increase in student performance from initial assessment (conducted at roughly 60 credits earned) to final assessment (conducted at roughly 120 credits earned)
 - By Year Five of the accreditation cycle, at least 70% of student artifacts in the final assessment will be rated "proficient" or higher

2. NSSE items:

- At least 80% of respondents will continue to rate the entire educational experience as “Good” or “Excellent”
- Demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in the proportion of students who report having an “Enriching Educational Experience” at NSC
- Demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in the proportion of students who contribute to the welfare of their community “Very much” or “Quite a bit”

Student Success

1. Increase six-year graduation numbers by an average of 1 percent annually, including those of key underrepresented groups

Educational Opportunity

1. Continue to offer most the most affordable 4-year degree programs in the Nevada System of Higher Education
2. Increase enrollment of underrepresented groups (equal or eclipse percentages in Nevada population by Year Five of the accreditation cycle)

Contributions to the Community

1. Maintain a higher percentage of graduates who remain employed in Nevada relative to other public, four-year institutions in the state across a five year rolling average
2. Maintain a rating of “Good” or better on NSC Community Survey about perceptions of institutional impact



STANDARD 1.B

CORE THEME 1: PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS

Nevada State College faculty, staff and administrators are united by an unwavering commitment to the success of our students. As stated in our mission, the College facilitates this success on a broad scale through “excellence in teaching.” This excellence, in turn, yields learning experiences characterized by *innovative engagement*. This engagement is manifested in “innovative, technology-rich learning opportunities that promote the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills.” Our innovative methods routinely incorporate experiential learning opportunities, an active examination of real-world issues, and the pursuit of progressive instructional practices. The “technology-rich” approach immerses students in the study and application of technology and keeps them poised to adapt to the increasingly sophisticated demands of the modern world.

Taken together, these efforts are expected to promote a variety of essential student learning outcomes. In promoting the acquisition of “interdisciplinary knowledge and skills,” we strive to impart students with the critical thinking ability needed to solve complex real-world problems and adapt to the shifting challenges of a rapidly evolving society. Moreover, the broad availability of free, high-quality information engendered by the Internet era compels our educators to place an increased emphasis on the effective evaluation and application of this information. Successful students also develop strong written and oral communication skills and exhibit the integrity and discipline-specific expertise needed to thrive in a chosen career path. Finally, in the pursuit of “a stronger community and a better future for all of Nevada,” successful graduates cultivate a respect for all forms of diversity, a commitment to the common good, and an ability to work well with others.

STANDARD 1.B	
1. Develop effective critical thinkers and communicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. General Education outcomes assessment b. Assessment Technologies Institution (ATI) Testing c. Educational Benchmark, Inc. (EBI) Exit Survey items about teamwork and collaboration d. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) items about overall educational experience, integrating concepts, analysis, judgment and decision-making, applying concepts and theories, and communication skills



Promote Student Success	
3. Instill discipline-specific expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Licensure pass rates (Praxis II, NCLEX) b. Degree program outcomes assessment c. NSSE item about college experience contributing to the acquisition of job or work-related knowledge and skills
4. Cultivate learning experiences characterized by Innovative Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Overall number of instructional innovations introduced by faculty each year b. NSSE items about class discussions, class presentations, learning communities, solving real-world problems, and using computing and information technology c. Student course evaluation items about instructor effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows course relevance to the practical world • Encourages student questions • Effectively directs and stimulates discussion d. EBI questions regarding instructional methods e. NSC technology survey

Rationale for Core Theme #1 Indicators

The indicators for Objective 1.1 and 1.2 are assessable because they rely on quantifiable observations that fall within the purview of specific campus divisions. The assessment of general education outcomes is an ongoing and systematic process conducted every other year by faculty in the Liberal Arts & Sciences. The NSSE is administered each spring through a collaborative effort of Student Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research, and the EBI and ATI are administered on a yearly basis by the School of Education and the School of Nursing, respectively. General Education Outcomes assessment is meaningful because it provides a direct measure of student progress in the domains of critical thinking, communication, and citizenship. The NSSE is meaningful because the chosen items clearly address our conceptualizations of the targeted skills, it is well validated by an independent arbiter, and it is administered at over 700 institutions, thereby permitting comparisons between our students and students at selected institutions. As with the NSSE, the ATI and EBI are meaningful because they provide a valid, standardized examination of the relevant student skills.

The indicators for Objective 1.3 are assessable because, as with the indicators for objectives 1.1 and 1.2, they represent regular, ongoing means of evaluation that are clearly designated as the responsibility of a specific campus division. The PRAXIS II is meaningful because it is standardized, specifically designed to measure student mastery of educational principles, and broadly accepted as an important measure within the field of education. Likewise, the NCLEX exam is a standardized measure of student performance in areas of nursing that are deemed essential by the field. Degree program assessment is meaningful for the same reasons attributed to general education assessment – as a direct measure of student learning, it provides our best insight into the disciplinary knowledge of students on a comprehensive scale, particularly in the Liberal Arts & Sciences, where standardized tests of disciplinary knowledge are less widely used.

Under Objective 1.4, the number of innovations introduced each year is assessable because faculty provide this information in their annual evaluation submissions (“innovations” are defined loosely as new instructional methods and assessments designed to improve the student learning experience). This indicator is meaningful because it directly measures faculty efforts to explore



new teaching endeavors, and, as an element of the annual evaluation process, implicitly encourages continued innovation. The rationale for why the NSSE and EBI are assessable and meaningful is described in the preceding sections. The remaining indicators for Objective 1.4 also are assessable for similar reasons. Since the inception of the College, course evaluations have been administered for all classes at the end of each semester. The protocol and responsibility for administering these evaluations are clearly delegated to each School. These evaluations are not a direct assessment of student learning or instruction, but they provide insight into a comprehensive array of important teaching endeavors. The NSC Technology Survey, administered in a web-based format by the Office of Instructional Technology, affords an opportunity to learn about student experiences and preferences regarding instructional technology, including the extent to which technology is used for NSC courses and how it impacts the learning experience.

CORE THEME 2: FOSTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Nevada State College is founded on the belief that all students deserve an opportunity to succeed at the highest level. The fulfillment of this goal hinges on the provision of “quality, four-year degree programs” to a “diverse population of students” from largely under-served, first generation, non-traditional and/or financially challenged backgrounds. A large proportion of the students the College recruits and supports are particularly likely to benefit from our dedicated faculty and staff, personalized service, and focus on teaching and learning. As such, one of our chief aims is to “open the door to career success and enhanced quality of life” for students who otherwise might face limited opportunities for success in higher education.

To accomplish this, we offer a wide array of affordable four-year degree programs in flexible learning formats that meet the needs of a working, commuter student population. Our School of Education helps address a statewide need by preparing highly qualified educators and speech language pathologists who will respond to the needs of all learners and educate students to reach their highest potential. The School of Nursing provides critical support to Nevada’s health care community and offers degrees in a variety of learning formats, including a second degree accelerated track, an RN to BSN track, and a part-time program designed for students whose external obligations prohibit full-time enrollment. A range of bachelor’s degrees in the Liberal Arts & Sciences prepares students for success in a number of fields, from professional careers in medicine, psychological counseling, and law enforcement to rapidly growing fields in business, biotechnology, visual media, and the digital humanities.

Students are guided along each of these degree paths by personalized student support services in critical facets of the college experience. The combined goal of our service and educational initiatives is to “open the door to career success” by improving the retention, persistence and graduation rates of our students. The College aspires to improve the outcomes of all students, particularly those who come from first-generation, non-traditional, and other under-represented backgrounds. Our success in this regard plays an integral role in the future economic and social health of a state burdened by one of the lowest proportions of college graduates in the nation. The graduates of Nevada State College are expected to leaven this burden and contribute to a more diverse workforce and diversified economy.

Foster Educational Opportunity	
Objectives	Indicators
1. Recruit & support a diverse array of students	<p><i>Note: Where possible, data will be disaggregated by gender, Pell grant eligibility, ethnicity, and 1st generation status.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Headcounts & FTE (proportional representation to Nevada statewide demographics) b. Number of financial aid applications and awards c. Cost of degrees relative to other 4-year programs in Nevada d. Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) items on quality of student support services
2. Improve Student Retention/Timely Degree Progression	<p><i>Note: Each indicator below will be evaluated in terms of the official IPEDS cohort and non-IPEDS cohort students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. First-year to second-year retention rates b. Six-year graduation rate for 1st time/full time students & all students c. Course completion rates (ratio of completed/attempted)
3. Graduate a diverse population of students in diverse fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of graduates disaggregated by key demographics b. Number of graduates disaggregated by discipline c. Number of graduates accepted into graduate/professional programs

Rationale for Core Theme #2 Indicators

The indicators for Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 are assessable because they rely on easily quantifiable information that is collected on a routine basis by designated campus divisions. The majority of the data – including those relating to headcounts, full-time equivalency, retention, course completion, and graduation – are tracked by the Offices of the Registrar and Student Affairs. Key demographic information, including ethnicity, gender, first generation status, and Pell Grant eligibility, is self-reported by the vast majority of students on our college and financial aid applications. The progression of these students, from their first semester to eventual graduation, is recorded and maintained by the registrar’s office. The number of financial aid applications and awards is assessed and stored on a local database by our Financial Aid Office. This office also oversees the yearly administration of the Student Satisfaction Inventory in a web-based format. The tracking, maintenance, and utilization of these data will be facilitated by the recent replacement of an outdated student information system with a more robust, user-friendly PeopleSoft system. Finally, the number of students accepted into graduate and professional programs is monitored by the Office of Alumni Relations and the division heads who oversee degree programs (or clusters of degree programs).

The indicators for each objective are meaningful in large part because they allow us to parse student success according to key demographic variables, thereby permitting us to examine whether we are achieving the goal of serving a diverse population of students. The indicators also are meaningful because they address the goals established for the institution by external constituents and stakeholders, including those set by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and our institutional Complete College America (CCA) goals. As a teaching institution and the middle-tier in a three-tier system, NSC is expected by the state of Nevada to provide a broad range of opportunities to a diverse population of students. Our indicators address this objective by measuring the cost of our degrees (which should remain low), the number of financial aid



applications and awards (which should remain high), and the demographic composition of our students (which should match or exceed the diversity present in the Nevada population). Likewise, the SSI allows us to quantify, in the eyes of students, the extent to which our support services are promoting their success.

Importantly, CCA and the NSHE both define “student success” primarily in terms of timely degree completion. Consequently, the indicators we selected for Core Theme 2 are meaningful because they directly measure student success in these terms. As noted in the literature, 1st year to 2nd year retention rates are strongly predictive of future persistence, course completion rates correlate strongly to the likelihood of graduating (and are amenable to strategic influence, such as changes to course availability and mode of delivery), and the six-year graduation rate is the defining “end-goal” metric for the student population embraced by NSC. Finally, the number of graduates we produce helps us determine whether the provision of educational opportunities ultimately translates into goal attainment for our students.

CORE THEME 3: STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY

As a public institution, Nevada State College is determined to provide returns on the investment made by the state and its citizens. Foremost among these returns, as stated in our mission, is the development of graduates who can deliver on “the promise of a stronger community and a better future for all of Nevada.” Aided by the knowledge, skills, and integrity they acquire at NSC, our graduates support existing, high-demand fields and help fulfill the needs of growing industries that promise to diversify the state economy.

This effort to strengthen the community extends to our faculty and staff, who establish partnerships that advance the fortunes of public and private entities across the region. Furthermore, our faculty share their expertise with the community in productive ways, and community leaders are likewise welcomed to contribute their expertise to the growth and edification of our students. Ultimately, we hope that the sum of these endeavors is a community strengthened by a more civic-minded populace and a more diverse, capable workforce.

Strengthen the Community	
Objectives	Indicators
1. Foster Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of “outbound” community partnerships b. Number of “inbound” community partnerships (i.e., number of community members involved in Executives in Residence programs)
2. Promote Student Contributions to the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. School of Education Employment Survey b. School of Liberal Arts & Sciences Employment Survey c. School of Nursing Employment Survey d. Number of graduates produced in “high demand” fields as determined by the strategic directives of NSHE e. Proportion of graduates who remain in Nevada
3. Promote Faculty/Staff Contributions to the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Total number of hours of faculty engagement with the community b. NSC Community Survey about perceptions of faculty and/or staff impact

Rationale for Core Theme #3 Indicators

The indicators for Objective 3.1 are assessable because they are regularly compiled by the Office of the President, in conjunction with the Associate Vice President for College Relations, and can be quantified in simple terms by counting the number of partnerships entertained by the College. Each year the president's office asks all campus divisions to provide information about the number and nature of partnerships maintained in their areas. Their responses, in turn, are noted by the Office of College Relations, which updates a master list of partnerships with any needed additions, deletions, or revisions.

These indicators are meaningful because they directly reflect our efforts to integrate the campus with the community. "Outbound partnerships" involve college constituents who leave the campus confines to serve the community in a substantive fashion. Examples include School of Education agreements to place student teachers in local K-12 schools and School of Nursing partnerships with area health services organizations. Conversely, "inbound partnerships" bring community members to the campus. A key example is a formative Executives in Residence program that gives community and business leaders an opportunity to tour our facilities, meet faculty, and share knowledge with students in formal and informal settings. Both types of partnerships provide community members with a firsthand appreciation of the quality of our students, faculty, and campus resources, which is critical in light of our extremely modest marketing budget and relatively low, if increasing, level of public awareness.

The indicators for Objective 3.2 are assessable because they rely on data that are readily collected and quantified. Participation in our employment surveys – administered online through a proprietary system – is solicited in a twofold manner: in capstone or other culminating courses, and via emails from the Office of Alumni Relations to recent NSC graduates and alums. The Office of the Registrar relies on existing record-keeping procedures to track the number of graduates produced in high demand fields, and Alumni Relations surveys these graduates to track the proportion who remain in Nevada. All of these indicators for Objective 3.2 are meaningful because they assess what is arguably the most important student contribution to the community – the provision of a capable workforce that promises to support and diversify Nevada's economy.

The indicators for Objective 3.3 are assessable because the relevant data are quantifiable and can be collected via existing campus offices and procedures. The number of hours of faculty and staff engagement with the community will be solicited via a survey from the provost's office that asks faculty and staff to report how many hours they spent in the past year participating in community events, fulfilling community obligations (e.g., service on advisory boards), or otherwise contributing to the community in a substantive fashion. This indicator is meaningful because it provides a recognizable and mutable benchmark (hours served) of faculty and staff involvement with the community. The survey of business community partners about perceptions of faculty and staff impact will be administered by Office of College Relations in a convenient web-based format. It affords an opportunity to thoroughly assess the extent to which our faculty, staff and, ultimately, the College are addressing the needs of the community.



CONCLUSION

As noted in the introduction, this report emerged from a broadly collaborative effort among NSC employees, students, and stakeholders. The core themes and objectives in the report reflect our institutional strategic plan, but shift the focus from the means of providing an education to the ends. That is, we acknowledge the pathway to several objectives (e.g., the hiring of superb faculty), but maintain an emphasis on the outcomes the institution can achieve for its students and the surrounding community. As such, the overarching goal was to establish an institutional foundation that supports and guides the success of a unique and largely under-served student population. This goal reflects the statewide mission of the College, but it also reveals the singular purpose that unites our campus – to guide students through educational and career accomplishments they otherwise might not have achieved. The corresponding mission statement reflects this lofty ideal, but nevertheless is grounded in clear, measurable indicators of student success.

The path to this success is paved largely by educational opportunities that motivate, engage, and edify students. Consequently, the centerpiece of our report is the provision of innovative learning experiences that convey essential knowledge, practical skills, and real-world applications. As we cultivate these experiences we will continue to increase our focus on issues of accountability, particularly by more effectively harnessing our assessment practices in the pursuit of comprehensive institutional improvements. To this end, we will continue to improve student persistence, increase graduation rates, and better integrate the College into the community.

These advances, coupled with our longstanding entrepreneurial spirit, will help the College continue to embody the excellence and educational opportunity that anchor our mission, even in the face of a shifting economic, political, or educational landscape. Ultimately, NSC will produce graduates who can exert a positive and much needed impact on the community and the state economy. Thus, as we improve the fortunes of a diverse population of students, they will improve the civic and economic well-being of Nevada.

CONCLUSION



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Erika Beck, Ph.D., Provost and Executive Vice President
Tony Scinta, Ph.D., Accreditation Co-Chair
Neil Woolf, Accreditation Co-Chair
Bart Patterson, President
Buster Neel, Senior Vice President of Finance & Administration
Spencer Stewart, Ed.D., Associate Vice President for College Relations
Andy Kuniyuki, Ph.D., Interim Dean of Liberal Arts & Sciences
James LaBuda, Ed.D., Interim Dean of Education
Shirlee Snyder, Ed.D., Dean of Nursing
Lee Young, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Student Services & Diversity
Russell Raker, Associate Vice President for Development
Robin Herlands, Ph.D., Chair of Faculty Senate
Mikayla Morgan, Interim President for Nevada State Student Alliance
Angela Brommel, Vice Chair, Faculty Senate
Amy Chaffin, Ph.D., Parliamentarian, Faculty Senate
Joanna Shearer, Ph.D., Secretary, Faculty Senate
Gregory Robinson, Ph.D., Ex Officio Advisory Member, Faculty Senate
Beverly Canfield, Nursing
Sebern Coleman, Office of Admissions
Kathy Damm, Ph.D., Liberal Arts & Sciences
Hon-Vu Duong, M.D., Liberal Arts & Sciences
Angela Favela, Faculty Senate Assistant
Kevin Graziano, Ph.D., Education
Kate Hahn, Library
Chris Harris, Ph.D., Liberal Arts & Sciences
Linda Jacobson, Nursing
Kebret Kebede, M.D., Liberal Arts & Sciences
Kat Mulvey, Office of Information Technology
Lori Navarrete, Ph.D., Education
Gwen Sharp, Ph.D., Liberal Arts & Sciences

NSC Faculty

NSC Staff

NSC Students & Alumni

Community Members

FORMATTING AND PUBLICATION

Sita Sales, Assistant to the Provost