ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE NAPERVILLE, IL

JAN. 25-27, 2010

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit was to conduct a comprehensive review of North Central College for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission.

B. Organizational Context

North Central College has seen a significant growth in its traditional undergraduate population since the last comprehensive visit in 2000. It has also closed down its weekend college and stopped using a location in southwestern Naperville it had opened for the purpose of offering a nontraditional MBA program. The college has enjoyed outstanding fund raising success having raised one hundred and ten million dollars since the last visit. This success has enabled the college to significantly enhance its facilities in that time.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

None

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

None

E. Distance Education Reviewed

None

F. Interactions with Constituencies

President

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Vice President for Business Affairs

Vice President for Enrollment Management, Athletics, and Student Affairs

Director of Admissions and Financial Aid

Director of the Physical Plant

Assistant Dean of Student Success

Director of Graduate and Continuing Education Admissions

Assistant Vice President of Human Resources

Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Director of Community Development

Director of Leadership, Ethics, and Values

History Department faculty members

Registrar and Director of Institutional Research

Director of the Library

Director of Financial Aid

Director of Integrative Programs

Director of Alumni Relations

Director of Multicultural Affairs

Director of International Programs

Director of Athletics

Chairs of the Divisions of Arts & Letters, Economics & Business, Human Thought & Behavior, and Science

Dean of Students

Chairs of Faculty Welfare and Faculty Professional Development Committees

Director of the Office of Academic Opportunities

Assistant Dean for Student Life

Liaison to Student Affairs, Director of Advising and Academic Support Services

Director of Ministry and Service

Director of Student Involvement

Faculty Athletics Representative

Director of Center for Teaching and Learning

Academic Programs Assessment Committee

Academic Programs and Policies Committee

Faculty Professional Development Committee

Faculty Personnel Committee

Self-study Steering Committee

General Faculty meeting

Board of Trustees

Students

Alumni

Staff (74 present)

Local community representatives

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

North Central College Self-study report

Self-study report executive summary

Institutional snapshot

North Central College web site

Undergraduate catalog

Graduate catalog

North Central College Statistical Report, January 2010

North Central College at 150: The Path Ahead (Strategic Plan 2007-2012)

History of Athletics

First-year student survey

North Central Now Magazine

Fundraising summary 1999-2009

Trustee handbook

Faculty handbook

Student Handbook

North Central College Central Time

Leadership, Ethics, and Values brochures

Office of Student Success program information

A College in its Community

Key Indicators Tool 2009 North Central College retention plan 2009-2010 Institutional assessment and evaluation plan for Office of Human Resources Master Land Use Plan 2010-2020 Sesquicentennial Capital Campaign plan summary **NSSE Binder Admissions Viewbook** Graduate programs brochures "What Does it Mean to be Central?" **Trustee Meeting Minutes** 2009 College Wide Satisfaction Survey Redbook Financial Statements **President and Cabinet Review Process Program Review Guidelines** Faculty Enhancement Guidelines **Academic Support Services Brochure Study Abroad Programs** Career Development Survey Plagiarism log

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

Third party notification materials Campus Safety communication Community Testimonials

Campus Crime Report

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The team was very impressed with the comprehensiveness of the Self Study Process. Several team members commented that this was one of the best self studies they had read. There was obviously broad involvement in the process by many of the campus constituencies which demonstrated a very strong commitment to the self study process.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

Our conversations on campus have led us to believe that the self study presents a very accurate picture of North Central College. The institution was very candid about the challenges it faces as well as the institution's many strengths. We found no evidence that the institution was attempting to cover up areas in which they need to work in the days ahead.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The institution has made adequate progress in addressing the challenges raised by

the previous accreditation team.

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

Notification of evaluation and solicitation of Third-Party comments has been met.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. See new Federal Compliance Form which accompanies 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.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Interviews with a wide range of students, faculty and staff, and trustees suggest that North Central College is a mission-driven institution, existing to provide a stable and supportive community that facilitates individual growth. Most stakeholders could characterize a sense of what North Central College stands for that corresponds to key elements of the mission statement and said that the mission statement seemed to express what they believed in.

In interviews, students, faculty, and staff expressed enthusiasm for the range of international and multicultural programs in place. All commented on the generally welcoming, safe and caring environment that North Central College affords.

Discussions with trustees revealed that the board is well-versed in key issues facing North Central College. Giving records indicate that the trustees show remarkable commitment in supporting the college financially, in endorsing its outcomes and seeking to improve the processes of institutional effectiveness. In addition, the trustees expressed great appreciation and gratitude for the leadership and faculty of the college.

The institution is to be commended for being remarkably transparent in sharing key information both with the campus and external community under the "Transparency" section of its web site located in the "About Us" section immediately off the home page. An interested party can learn a great deal about the college, its programs, services, governance, costs, strategic plan, and even the accreditation process from this site.

A review of meeting minutes shows that the North Central College trustees review the mission and institutional purposes of the college. The mission is accounted for in the planning that the trustees undertake.

An examination of various institutional documents reveals that North Central College

makes its mission statement widely available to various constituencies. The mission is included in the strategic plan, the faculty handbook, the academic catalog, the student handbook, the web site, and admissions recruiting materials.

The mission statement includes a strong commitment to high academic standards. According to the mission statement, North Central College provides an educational experience rooted in the liberal arts with a distinctive emphasis on leadership, ethics, and values.

The college mission documents address diversity, and North Central College has a history of engagement with racial and cultural minorities. Reports from community members indicate that they value the diversity of students, faculty, and staff that North Central College brings to the Naperville area.

A review of governance documents shows that the North Central College governance system is effective in carrying out the college's mission and strategic goals. Reports from trustees and staff indicate that the trustees collaborate effectively with the president and the administration to exercise effective leadership. The organizational structure supports effective decision-making, accountability, and employee engagement and performance. Faculty and staff describe the campus climate as transparent and supportive.

Interviews with staff and a review of documents indicate that North Central College upholds and protects its integrity. The Board structure and actions are consistent with relevant laws and fiduciary requirements of the State of Illinois. Financial statements are audited annually, and the audit is reviewed by the Board. Student and staff handbooks are updated regularly and include statements and policies on plagiarism, affirmative action, harassment, and discrimination. FERPA guidelines are reviewed for parents and faculty as needed.

A review of documents and interviews with the director reveal that the Leadership, Ethics, and Values Program is a critical and visible extension of the North Central College mission. The primary procedural goal of the program is to affect every undergraduate student at the college by helping to develop skills in leadership, ethical behaviors, and a values orientation. This objective is directly tied to the mission of the college to develop "informed, involved, principled, and productive citizens and leaders over a lifetime."

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

A review of departmental mission statements shows that while they contain meaningful statements of academic goals and purposes, they do not explicitly address and support student learning outcomes related to institutional mission. Particular attention should be devoted to the incorporation of the principled aspect of institutional mission. In many cases we could verify that the principled aspect of the college mission was in fact incorporated into the curriculum, but the departmental mission statements did not adequately reflect this.

While we believe good faith efforts are being made to incorporate ethics and values across the curriculum, attention is only marginally given to measuring the effects of these activities and programs. The Leadership, Ethics, and Values Program provides an excellent forum where that assessment can occur; however, the institution is only beginning to consider such assessment efforts.

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

None.

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

None.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion One is met. No Commission follow-up is recommended.

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

If an institution is going to be effective in recruiting students, raising funds and achieving excellent student learning outcomes, that institution will need to pay careful attention to the societal and economic trends in the environment within which it operates. North Central's strategic plan for 2007-2012 is grounded in a recognition of the events that have influenced higher education in today's society, including: issues of demographic shifts; the economic downturn; cost, competition, and perceived value; a growing culture of accountability; the changing technology and new models of supporting teaching and learning. A particularly important and effective strategy the College has employed in this endeavor is that of seeing a greater connection and collaboration with the city of Naperville and recognizing the importance of local, regional, and global partnerships.

An institution that has an effective organizational structure which encourages and develops strategies for continual improvement will effectively link the important functions of planning, budgeting, implementing and assessing. North Central College has achieved this integration in its strategic plan with a set of reports and measurements used annually to track progress towards the plan's accomplishments. Planning and budgeting are further linked to targets in areas such as student learning outcomes, salaries, retention, financial aid, net tuition and the enhancement of facilities. The open and inclusive manner in which discussions in this area take place

is especially important in helping the College achieve this linking that we see missing on many campuses. Strong, reliable evidence documents the College's success in developing a continual improvement process in achieving some of the primary goals of the strategic plan, e.g. Strengthen the Distinctiveness of North Central College's Identity and the goal of Building on Strategic Assets of Quality People, Facilities, and Financial Assets. Several other goals are more difficult to measure and require a much more collaborative process, such as (1) Establishing a Culture of Inquiry and (2) Bridging Cultural, Institutional, and Disciplinary Boundaries. Yet, there appears to be a strong commitment to achieving success across all goals of the strategic plan and, given the success over the past ten years in areas of shared governance that has facilitated the necessary enhancements to the learning environment, the team felt confident in the institution's commitment to success in these areas as well.

The College's academic sector has fully embraced the continual improvement model through a well designed system of program improvement. Each academic department engages in program review once every seven years. The Academic Programs and Policies Committee is fully engaged in this process. The team was able to see evidence that the results of this process had a definite effect on improving student learning.

Over the last ten years, North Central College has demonstrated a record of consistently balanced budgets and achieved remarkable success on virtually every front that has enhanced the resource base of the institution.

- Since the last comprehensive visit, full time undergraduate enrollment has increased from 1715 to 2333, net tuition revenue has increased from \$20 million to \$38 million and retention has improved.
- 2. To support this growth, the College has significantly increased the number of full time faculty, increased the residential character of the institution, increased the salaries of faculty (significantly in regard to comparison institutions), and provided a robust program of faculty development (and most recently staff development).
- 3. The organization has substantially improved its physical environment completing \$90 million of physical plant upgrades involving new residence hall construction, academic buildings and support facilities renovation, construction of campus life support spaces, improving art, theatre, music and other performing arts spaces, and athletic and recreational space.
- 4. These improvements have been funded primarily through fund raising efforts with the College securing only \$17 million of additional debt.

Many of these improvements have directly resulted in enrollment growth and academic support for the affected academic programs as well as improved engagement with the residents of Naperville and beyond.

In terms of its physical facilities, the college is to be commended for a well-developed and carefully managed master plan that has enabled the college to grow its undergraduate residential character, build programs of excellence (especially in the fine and performing arts), support campus life (in terms of recreational and living space), plan for and secure the resources for new initiatives. In the recent past, the physical exercise and recreation center and the performing arts center are two examples of this enhancement of its facilities and in the near future the science center is the next big project on the horizon. This expansion has occurred in a highly

disciplined fashion, securing the resources before committing to the construction. Further, the college has developed a maintenance and replacement process that insures that its physical assets are well maintained and kept modern and thus meet the needs of the changing populations, learning environment and demand for facilities.

In terms of financial support of students and the key learning enterprises of the college, North Central's endowment, even with financial disruptions of 2008-2009, has grown from 52 million to 71 million dollars and the organization has increased its external support through a strong record of giving that has averaged \$11 million per year for the past ten years. Net tuition increases have helped to support this growth and the funding of strategic initiatives although of late financial aid has been a rising expense (now representing almost 40% of gross tuition and fees). In terms of measures of institutional financial well-being, the benchmark measure of financial ratios reflects very strong performance on all counts.

The strategic planning document produced by the College demonstrates that planning, budgeting and measures of institutional effectiveness are effectively linked. The administration provided specific examples of situations where measures of institutional effectiveness indicated a need for improvement. Those improvements were then included in the strategic plan which then drove the budget building processes.

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

The institution is less clear in assessment that speaks to mission goals of principled, informed, involved graduates who are productive and successful leaders who serve society especially as it relates to general education and its support from areas outside the classroom. This assessment would be especially meaningful in study abroad experiences, internships and student volunteer activities. There are also potentially rich opportunities to assess support for general education goals in the many strong co-curricular activities sponsored by the college.

Second, the process and efforts to connect the contributions of non-academic areas (e.g. human resources, instructional technology, and student life) to institutional effectiveness is less well developed. This is undoubtedly the area where strategies for continually improving institutional effectiveness are most in need of the College's attention. Continual improvement strategies for the office of the President and those of other major administrators should also be forthcoming, especially considering the likelihood of upcoming transitions at important College leadership positions.

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

None.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require

Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion Two is met. No Commission follow-up is recommended.

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

For an effective assessment program to result in continual improvement in student learning, the first requirement is that clear student learning outcomes must be established for all academic programs. At North Central College, these outcomes have been established and are systematically used in assessment. The College is now using these outcomes, assessing the degree to which they are achieved and using the results to refine and revise their student learning objectives. The assessment website includes program objectives for each academic program and for general education. The Academic Programs Assessment Committee has been reconstituted and exercises oversight of academic assessment for programs. The committee has taken the lead in helping to articulate program goals. The general education subcommittee has established goals for the general education program.

Data has been collected on specific learning objectives for every program over the past three years. The Assessment reports which are filed regularly demonstrate an understanding of how to evaluate student achievement and a willingness to use the data to think critically about the programs and recommend improvements. This data is being integrated and carefully considered in the institution's program review process conducted by the Academic Programs and Policies Committee.

The institution has established a campus wide culture of assessment. There is a growing acceptance of the value of assessment in improving student academic achievement. The Academic Programs and Policies committee now requires that any proposed curriculum changes make reference to program review and assessment of student learning. All new general education courses must demonstrate how they will meet general education learning outcomes for the purpose of assessment.

The Faculty Personnel Committee considers teaching to be the most significant factor in promotion and tenure considerations. Probationary faculty members are reviewed in odd years by division/department chairs and in even years by the Committee. The Faculty Personnel Committee pays careful attention to a wide range of information in seeking to determine the effectiveness of an instructor and provides detailed feedback during the probationary period. The institution's faculty development program provides resources and support for faculty members seeking to improve their teaching in response to this feedback. Assessment of student learning is a major consideration

in tenure and post tenure review decisions.

The institution makes it clear that it recognizes and rewards excellent teaching. Teaching is the major focus of the post-tenure review process. The establishment of teaching fellowships and awarding of endowed chairs are based on teaching, demonstrates the importance of excellent teaching, and publically celebrates those who are identified as the College's best teachers. Merit salary increases are based on teaching excellence.

The Institution has established an exemplary faculty development program that encourages faculty to enhance their scholarly expertise. The faculty understands, appreciates and takes advantage of this development program. Establishment of the center for teaching and learning, faculty development grants for teaching and curriculum building and the professional term are related directly and indirectly to strengthening North Central's faculty and academic programs. The faculty professional development committee provides workshops on teaching, and assists in the orientation of new faculty members.

The institution has established a number of programs that encourage and strengthen a culture of inquiry among students and faculty. Student/faculty collaboration in research is supported by faculty development grants, is expanding in numbers and in the range of disciplines represented. The number of students involved in summer research projects, Richter Independent Study Grants, the Rall Symposium and the independent work of students, all demonstrate the breadth and depth of the culture of inquiry.

North Central has invested in providing a number of facilities that enhance the effectiveness of its programs. The expansion of the Fine Arts facilities has created an impressive space that supports the participation of students in the arts and provides a bridge between the institution and the community. Instructional technology has been incorporated into classrooms providing instructors with access to the tools needed to teach effectively. Progress is being made on improving the library by moving to the third phase of the renovation, pending funding. The institution made extensive upgrades to the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system in the Krohler Science Center and Goldspohn Hall, two large classroom buildings, in response to difficulties raised in academic program reviews.

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

None

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

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require

Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion Three is met. No Commission follow-up is recommended.

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

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

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

A life of learning for faculty members is valued and promoted at North Central College by means of a well planned and continuously implemented program of faculty evaluation. The Faculty Personnel Committee conducts faculty evaluations during the six years leading up to the tenure decision and then every five years for tenured faculty.

The Faculty Professional Development Committee has an annually calculated amount, usually in excess of \$120,000, to award to faculty members for summer work in instructional development or academic research. A separate fund is available to support projects dealing directly with general education. Finally, the College also awards grants for student undergraduate research.

The College pursues continuous development of each of its majors by means of a seven-year cycle of program review. In addition to appraisal of faculty credentials and performance, departmental equipment and facilities, assessment of student learning outcomes is the primary focus of the program review report. The committee that evaluates the departmental report, composes a letter summarizing its judgments and publishes it to the whole faculty. The large role played by assessment in this solidly entrenched program review process assures that assessment of student learning outcomes is a built-in feature of the academic culture.

At the request of the faculty, a Center for Teaching and Learning now is established. Its mission simply is to enhance teaching and learning at the College by promoting dialogue among faculty, leading to greater understanding of learning and teaching processes, thereby ultimately improving student academic performance. The Center began its work with faculty by sponsoring workshops on "engaging pedagogy."

The North Central general education program provides students with a breadth of knowledge and skills first of all by requiring courses in the various academic divisions of the College: Arts and Letters, Economics and Business Human Thought and Behavior, and Science. It also requires an intercultural seminar, a religion and ethics course, and another seminar in its distinctive Leadership, Ethics, and Values Program.

In addition to critical thinking and communication skills development, the general education program explicitly works to relate knowledge to a diverse and everchanging world and to draw connections between different fields of knowledge. A subcommittee of the Academic Program Policy Committee approves courses for inclusion in the general education program, in the process critically evaluating each proposal's incorporation of the overall learning goals of general education (and their assessment) in the description and syllabus for the course. Data from assessment of learning in general education courses have led to the removal of some courses from the program.

North Central College offers six graduate programs on the master's level, the most recent of which were added in 2007 after serious discussion with regard to which of a number of proposed programs had the best fit with institutional mission. These graduate programs, however, have been declining in enrollment: 338 enrolled in 2008 and 276 in 2009; 252 applications in 2008 and 199 in 2009. Such decline is the obverse of the rather dramatic increase (+36% over ten years) in undergraduate enrollment, an increase that has brought the College very close to the capacity of its campus.

NCC made a strategic decision in the 1990's to focus its recruitment and development efforts on undergraduate, residential, and traditional age students, that is, to become a "liberal arts college... plus" (namely a strong liberal arts college with a few graduate programs). The saturation in undergraduate enrollment and the decline in graduate enrollment now challenge the institution to make further strategic decisions about an academic future that will be consistent with its mission. The first step is being taken: NCC is doing thorough evaluations of the existing six graduate programs. They are scheduled along with other departments in the program review cycle. The second step, part of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, is to evaluate new initiatives in graduate education. For both evaluations, there are two decisive criteria: the fit with institutional mission as this evolves in changing contexts, and responsiveness to the needs of the surrounding community.

There is clear evidence that North Central College has the ability to conduct graduate programs of high quality. They are purposeful about the master's programs they have chosen to conduct, verifying that such programs are in agreement with the Mission Statement. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education keep quality concerns high in the priorities of the graduate programs through assessment of student learning and program review. Oesterle Library maintains 92 data bases to support inquiry, and faculty (graduate and undergraduate) select the materials for the Library to acquire. Finally, the College makes grants, generous both in their number and in their amounts, available to faculty for research and for design of new courses.

International study programs are available in 36 sites, as a result of sustained efforts by the North Central faculty to make study abroad a distinctive feature of its undergraduate curriculum. Moreover, by 2010-11 at least one faculty member from

every academic department will have participated in a study abroad experience. The College offers generous financial support to students to make it easier for them to obtain this global experience, made possible by a generous donor in the form of the Richter Study Grants.

Diversity in world cultures is found in numerous places in the undergraduate curriculum, due to study abroad, the intercultural general education seminar, and courses with a global dimension in the majors.

The College supports the technology of teaching and learning by means of systematic maintenance and cycles of replacement of equipment, faculty experimentation with technology in the classroom (e.g., "smart boards"), and faculty workshops dealing with productive uses of technology. The desired outcome is primarily that the use of technology will enhance the quality of student learning, but also that students will be familiar with and thus knowledgeable about cutting edge technology.

Oesterle Library at the north end of the campus provides professional-grade support for the inquiry activities of faculty and students. The Library is clearly busy, both in the use of the 92 databases to which it subscribes (and which, of course, can be accessed from all over campus) and in terms of circulation of print and media resources. The Library's problems deal with the arrangement of interior space, but the planned Phase III of building renovation should remedy these inconveniences.

North Central College educates students in the ethical responsibilities involved in the discovery and the use of knowledge by means of clear and forceful policies on academic dishonesty and plagiarism. The English Department every year updates and publishes an online guide to proper documentation of sources, peer tutors are educated in the use of this guide, and course instructors, including part-time faculty, apply the policy in the classroom. The team also saw documentation which supported the college's assertion that cases of plagiarism are treated seriously.

The College's outstanding Leadership, Ethics, and Values Program (LEV) was started in 1989 with the intention of becoming a distinctive trait of the whole undergraduate curriculum. Part of that purpose has been fulfilled in the capstone seminar for the general education program, in the ethics courses offered in some majors, in the availability of a formal transcript designation (earned via additional coursework) in LEV, and in the development of the master's degree program in Leadership Studies. North Central fully intends to continue the process of making the LEV perspective and commitment permeate its academic culture.

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

As NCC moves forward with its efforts for diversity among students, faculty and staff, it is important to pay attention to the notion that successful initiatives must take into account the many campus contexts including formal and informal interactions that inform and impact compositional diversity as well as the frequency and quality of

intergroup diversity in order to generate meaningful learning experiences. It would be therefore helpful to connect these efforts with curricular and co-curricular learning to ensure that the efforts are integrated into NCC's philosophy which should be a campus-wide effort. Further, it will be helpful to more fully utilize institutional research resources to identify and generate data to drive institutional strategic planning in this area. It will also be important to give appropriate attention to socio-economic diversity, not only in terms of providing financial aid, but in terms of creating an environment where learning from each other is the focus.

The College is to be commended for implementing the junior level writing course as a general education requirement, yet at the present time if a student transfers in two writing courses at the first year level from another institution, that student is currently not required to take the junior level course at NCC. The team does not see how this practice maintains the standard of quality in writing established in the general education requirements and believes institutional action is necessary to insure this important standard is met by all.

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

None.

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

None.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion Four is met. No Commission follow-up is recommended.

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

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

The engagement strategies identified in the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan have been implemented with some strategies already completed and others well on their way to full implementation. Interviews with students and staff confirmed that, as outlined in the strategic plan, the first year experience was reviewed and changes made to orientation as well as other first year programs related to transitional issues.. The advising system was reviewed as well and an advisor evaluation was developed. The team saw evidence that the evaluation form is currently used to provide faculty with feedback on their advising performance. This was coupled with the introduction of the Student Involvement Record and Faculty Development programs to assist faculty and staff with implementation. A meeting with the staff from Academic Support confirmed that this engagement plan had indeed been implemented. The Student Involvement Record results from the implementation of the section of the Strategic Plan which states "Strategically link co-curricular and extra-curricular interests with student goals in their first year."

A review of alumni surveys as well as interviews with alumni and current students demonstrated that the College eagerly solicits alumni input and engages them in a variety of programs. The Premier program was started as a result of alumni input and alumni continue to help with aspects of the program including mentoring and socializing with the students. The Premier program is designed to assist underrepresented first-year students make a successful transition from high school to college and ultimately to a successful graduation.

Interviews with students, staff, and a review of documents reveals that the reorganization of Enrollment Management, Athletics and Student Affairs, the expansion and reorganization of the Office of Ministry and Service, including its physical relocation, have all served to enhance engagement, service and success for students. This engagement is evident in campus life, athletics and the local community.

The Office of Ministry and Service has done a very good job showcasing what students learn as a result of participating in their programs. This is evidenced by the Constant Contact Survey--a reflection and documentation of what students learn. Students report that they test their assumptions and document what they learn-ranging from conflict negotiation, social justice concepts, career pathways, and leadership to developing meaningful relationships and friendships.

The College, through its processes of determining constituent needs, introduced various enhancements to the curricular and co-curricular learning environment. Examples of these include the establishment of the "D" Term (a December term for innovative courses) and the introduction of the student involvement record. The introduction of this record enables students and their advisors/mentors to intentionally plan and document curricular and co-curricular involvement over four years. It also fosters intentional interactions between students and their advisors.

North Central College is deeply engaged in the community it serves. The College shares its expertise and facilities with the greater Naperville community. Of note here is the Conflict Resolution program that trains student mediators to provide peer mediation on campus and in the local community as well as co-mediate with local attorneys in conflicts referred to them by local businesses and churches. Students in the program also edit and contribute articles to the Illinois State Bar Association publication *In The Alternative*. The College's faculty and staff are also deeply engaged in the greater Naperville and Chicago community through community organization projects, service, and local high school and elementary school collaborations.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs provides students with a variety of ways to develop multicultural competencies as well as support for underrepresented students to successfully transition from high school to college and ultimately to a successful graduation.

The College is committed to the connection between service and learning. This is

demonstrated through the service learning course list. For the 2009-2010 year there are 11 courses with service requirements. These include courses in English, Psychology, Sociology, and Leadership.

The College enjoys transfer relationships with various institutions in the area as is evidenced by articulation agreements in place, the robust transfer numbers, as well as the variety and number of institutions from which these students come.

Student organizations provide opportunities that enhance students' curricular experiences by supporting inquiry and practice and fostering creativity. Student learning and development is demonstrated via measures such as NSSE, the student opinion survey, and the Constant Contact Survey.

External constituents understand and express their support for the college's mission and educational purposes and see North Central an asset to the community. In a meeting of alumni and community members there was significant positive feedback about the value of North Central College to the local community by means of service engagement, support and involvement in community projects and organizations, and the availability of cultural, fine arts, and athletic events on the North Central College campus. Community members were also very appreciative of the cultural and ethnic diversity the College brings to the Naperville community. The level of charitable support from local community donors also indicates appreciation for what NCC brings to the community.

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion Five is met. No Commission follow-up is recommended.

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

No change

2. Approval of degree sites

No change

3. Approval of distance education degree

No change

4. Reports required

Progress Report None

Monitoring Report None

Contingency Report None

- 5. Other visits scheduled None
- 6. Organization change request None
- D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action None
 - 1. On Notice None
 - 2. Probation

None

3. Denial or Withdrawal of Status None

E. Summary of Commission Review

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

North Central College is a strong institution. While the team identified several areas where the institution needs to make some improvements, we are of the opinion that the faculty and administration has both the resources and the commitment to make those necessary changes without Commission follow-up. We are therefore recommending that the next comprehensive visit be scheduled for the academic year 2019-2020.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

None.

North Central College: Visit No. 1101

INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWED BY THE TEAM:

Dr. David W. Kale, Director of Assessment, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Mount Vernon, OH 43050 (Chair)

Dr. William T. Mangan, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Briar Cliff University, Sioux City, IA 51104

Dr. John Nichols, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Saint Joseph's College, Rensselaer, IN 47978

Dr. Mary Oling-Sisay, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Saint Norbert College, De Pere WI 54115

Dr. Ronald A. Slepitza, President, Avila University, Kansas, City, MO 64145

Dr. Andrew R. Weiss, Director, School of Business, Heidelberg University, Tiffin, OH 44883

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 component of federal compliance.

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 component of federal compliance.

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 component of federal compliance.

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 component of federal compliance.

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.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.

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 component of federal compliance.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance.