



Northern Marianas College | **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**  
**Self Evaluation Report | Oct. 2012**

Prepared for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

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## Preface

It has been six years since the WASC Senior Commission has reviewed the accreditation of the Northern Marianas College (NMC) School of Education (SOE). During this time, self-evaluation has consistently been a focus of the SOE's administration and faculty.

In September of 2011, the current faculty of SOE began in earnest to learn and understand the entire accreditation process by attending conferences and workshops. Since their participation in WASC Outcomes Based Review Workshop in February of this year, the administration, faculty and staff of the SOE have met on a regular basis to work on successfully meeting the accreditation requirements. The *WASC Preliminary Self-Review Under the Standards* worksheet became the basis of the preparation for the self-evaluation report. In focus groups, the faculty and staff of the SOE met weekly in their respective groups to review each standard, dialogue and to insert acceptable evidence, identify actionable improvement plans and participate in a self-evaluation.

This collective effort has been outstanding and highlights the cohesion and unity of the SOE and the college which the learners and future teachers enrolled in the program. The self-evaluation process has reaffirmed SOE's strong commitment to its stakeholders and demonstrates its keen awareness of the ethnic and cultural traditions and the respective needs of this diverse community. Particular areas of strength include sensitivity to multicultural education, awareness of diverse learning styles, provision for opportunities for active learning, student involvement in hands-on practical learning, the continued advancement in the use of technology, and a commitment to overall academic improvement of the entire community.

To ensure involvement of all of the stakeholders in the self-study process, members of the Program Advisory Committee (PAC), and learners from each concentration of the degree program were invited to participate in the process and product. Also, an ongoing part of the review of the SOE program has been continued reflection on its' mission statement which has brought about revision and the modifications and clarifications of the program's SLOs as seen in this document.

## **History of the Northern Marianas College**

NMC was founded in 1981. In January 1983, the CNMI Legislature passed PL3-43, which gave the NMC a statutory based designation as a college and as a public non-profit corporation. NMC was recognized as the State Agency for Higher Education and was accepted for candidacy by the ACCJC-WASC.

*The mission of the Northern Marianas College shall be to provide the best quality and meaningful postsecondary and adult educational opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the individual and for the Commonwealth as a whole. The college shall be responsible for providing education in the areas of adult and continuing education, postsecondary and adult vocational education and professional development for the people of the Commonwealth.*

Seventeen years later, in 2000, the SOE assumed responsibility in providing a baccalaureate in Elementary Education, Endorsement in Special Education, and certifications in Early Childhood, Early Intervention, and Related Services Technician. With the accreditation by the Senior Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), thirty students graduated in Spring 2002 with a B.S. degree in Elementary Education.

## **History of SOE**

### **School of Education Mission Statement**

*The mission of the School of Education is to promote excellence in the art and science of teaching through research-based pedagogy and assessment so as to assist in the improvement of the quality of life within the Commonwealth by providing superior education programs for aspiring and veteran professionals in the fields of Education and Human Services whilst in support of the mission of Northern Marianas College with understanding of regional and global diversity in a changing world.*

Education programs at NMC are a strong component of the original charter and mission of the college beginning with an Associate of Arts degree and certificate program for the Public School System's (PSS) teacher aides in the mid 1980's. With time and development of the program, NMC partnered with the University of Guam to offer a baccalaureate degree program to offer 300 and 400 level education courses. In 2000, the School of Education program received initial accreditation from the WASC Senior Commission and SOE assumed full responsibility for the Baccalaureate Degree in Elementary Education.

Since its inception, the NMC SOE has been dedicated to enhancing the quality of education in the CNMI. The SOE provided a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Elementary Education and certificate programs in Early Childhood and Special Education Related Services. Today, the SOE provides a Bachelor of Science degree in Education with concentrations in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Special Education and Rehabilitation and Human Services.

The mission statement of the program commits to ensuring quality service for aspiring teachers in the initial preparation and continuous professional growth in academic achievement. The faculty and staff are dedicated to promoting the art and science of teaching, research-based pedagogy and assessment, while recognizing regional and global diversity in a changing world.

The School of Education comprised of an instruction unit, a College Lab School, the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and the Education Technology Department until the Summer of 2005 when the SOE continued the baccalaureate degree, certification in Elementary Education and a Curriculum Resources Center (CRC). The CRC shifted management to the NMC Library Services Department where it continues to be managed.

The Teacher Preparation Program of the SOE utilizes many of its own graduates to serve as part-time and full-time cooperating teachers. The program has seen significant changes from Spring 2008 to Fall 2012 that include the following milestones:

- Mapping and assessment of education courses and mapping to identify alignment to the general education program,
- Increase in number of students entering and completing the program,
- Course alignment in the program to support a more program-centered instead of person-centered approach leading to stability in the courses regardless of faculty turnover,
- Relocation of the SOE to a more centralized location making it accessible and convenient for all our students, and supporting cohesiveness with the rest of the college community, and
- Hiring SOE graduates as faculty.

In February of 2006, the Senior College Commission reaffirmed accreditation for the NMC School of Education. The SOE awaits the positive institutional accreditation from WASC for the continuity of its program.

In 2008, as a part of the program review and assessment process, a three-pronged community assessment was launched by the SOE to identify areas within the program needing improvement and expansion. The first part of this assessment was an employer satisfaction survey. The survey was administered to the principal and vice-principals in the PSS which has historically been the primary employer of the SOE graduates. The survey yielded results that indicated a need for the SOE to offer four other concentrations; Early Childhood Education (ECE), Special Education (SPED), Secondary Level Education and Mathematics. Meetings between the SOE and the PSS HRO followed and the same requests were iterated by the representatives.

The SOE was realistic with resource availability at the time and based on these resources, it was decided that the most feasible areas of development would be in the ECE and SPED concentrations.

The second part of the assessment was a graduate survey that gauged seven years of SOE graduates' reflection on how well the program had prepared them for the teaching profession. From the graduates, the results came in specifying the need for additional training in response to inclusion of learners with disabilities.

The third and last part of the assessment was an observation process wherein the student teaching coordinator at the time, conducted observations in the classrooms of the graduates. The goal behind this part of the assessment was to identify gaps between program instruction and employer performance expectations and to find areas to improve in the Program Learning

Outcomes (PLO) and Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) to better meet the needs of the educational community.

In 2009, the Academic Council recognized the need for expansion in SOE to include the two concentrations; Early Childhood and Special Education. Simultaneously, the two-year degree in Rehabilitation and Human Services funding grant ended and a survey of the learners' needs indicated interest in continuing into a four-year degree program of the same field. With learner needs in mind, the Academic Council incorporated this program into the SOE increasing the number of concentrations to four; the existing Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Rehabilitation and Human Services. The Individualized Degree Plans (IDP) for all four concentrations was reviewed and approved by the Academic Council in Fall of 2010.

The Northern Marianas College serves a population which comprises of various nationalities and multilingual speakers. In addition to its diverse environment, the NMC boasts a variety of learners; recent high school graduates, first generation degree seekers, and part-time and full-time workers who avail of courses offered during the day, evening, and weekends.

## **Organization of this report**

The body of this report consists of four essays on each of the WASC Standards. It is followed by a Concluding Essay: Looking Back, Looking Ahead. Included are appendices, Required Data Exhibits, Evidence and Required Appendices and attachments.

To maintain the integrity of our report, we have addressed commendations and recommendations from the Progress Report, 2007, Mid-Term Report in 2009, a self-evaluation based on the *WASC Preliminary Self-Review Under the Standards* Template and findings of focus groups. The SOE is aware that some issues will be addressed in one or more Standards and have noted this accordingly.

Each essay will include six elements. It begins with a Standard with its WASC definition followed by key issues that will be addressed. A Descriptive Summary with the overall ideas, a Self-Evaluation and an Actionable Improvement Plan will be the final three elements. The Descriptive Summary will refer to a primary overview of the institution and standard. The Self-evaluation will refer to the analysis and evaluation of the SOE's performance against the standard. The Actionable Improvement Plans will refer to areas in need of change and the steps SOE has selected to actualize these changes. This format was selected by the SOE as it is required to provide a report for both the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU).

Institutional reports and processes also utilize Key Performance Indicators, Program Review Outcomes and Assessments (PROA), Form 1, 2 and 3 that respond to elements three to sixth.

The SOE received both commendation and recommendation from the visiting team and WASC Commission following the site visit (Graham, Progress Report, 2007).

**The NMC-SOE was commendations:**

- Curriculum design evidencing current literature and theory of teacher education.
- Establishing positive working relationships with PSS personnel and collaborating with PSS personnel in curriculum development for K-8 schools in PSS.
- Willingness to participate in scheduled professional development initiatives for the PSS.
- Identifying and implementing student learning outcomes for all courses and for significant attempts to use SLOs in program improvement.
- Attempts to move SOE faculty into one location with facilities to support and nurture unit dialogue and collegiality.
- Exemplary effort of how the college's mission is being translated in a program that serves Commonwealth needs.

**The visiting team and the WASC Commission made six broad recommendations:**

- Clarity in specific SLO evidence that supports curriculum changes and to simplify the reporting process for documenting both the evidence and the changes in program design (*Standards 2 & 3*).
- Monitoring of workload limitations of faculty in the Bachelor degree program by providing adequate faculty resources to deliver the curriculum of the elementary education program (*Standard 3*).
- Review of workload credit assigned for work on grant proposal preparation and implementation/administration (*Standard 3*).
- Review of the original intent and the current appropriate "fit" of the Bachelor degree program in Elementary Education in the mission of the institution to assure that collegial relationships exist among all faculties in the learning community of NMC by the administration and the Board of Regents (*Standard 1*).
- Diligent work toward maintaining and building positive and constructive relationships with the PSS to provide a professional dialogue involving both the NMC perspective and the PSS perspective on best practices for preparing and supporting teachers in the Northern Mariana Islands by the administration and faculty of SOE (*Standards 2 & 4*).
- Review of adequacy of VTC delivery of courses to Rota and Tinian to develop both criteria for and evaluation of student learning outcomes using this mode of delivery (*Standard 3*).

## **ESSAY ON STANDARD I: DEFINING, EVALUATING, AND ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

*The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with its purposes and character. It has a clear and conscious sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in the higher educational community and its relationship to society at large. Through its purposes and educational objectives, the institution dedicates itself to higher learning, the search for truth, and the dissemination of knowledge. The institution functions with integrity and autonomy.*

The issues to be addressed in this essay have been compiled into 3 themes:

- Appropriate institutional statements (CFR 1.1)
- Clear Educational Objectives (CFR 1.2)
- Institutional Leadership (CFR 1.3)

### **Descriptive Summary**

NMC defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with its purposes and character which can be found in the *Institutional Excellence Guide (IEG)* (Appendix 2). The IEG was finalized and implemented in December 2008. The guide recognizes the constituencies of the college, identifies the roles of each in the governance processes, and contains founding ideas, Guiding Principles and institution-wide Strategic Goals. Strategic Goals identified for 2008-2012 are as follows:

Goal One	<b>Promote student learning and success</b>
Goal Two	<b>Respond to the professional development, continuing education, and personal enrichment needs of the Commonwealth</b>
Goal Three	<b>Optimize financial and human resources</b>
Goal Four	<b>Accelerate the upgrade of physical and technology infrastructure</b>

NMC is a shared governance institution which includes a Board of Regents, president, Management Team, College Council, other standing committees, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate. The SOE has representation in standing committees and shared governance bodies (Attachment 1a).

The Board of Regents reviews and approves Board policies. The President is responsible for ensuring procedures are developed to support policies. Directors are responsible for short and long-term planning for the program based on NMC's PROA Strategic Plan 2008-2012, from this plan more specifically the NMC Fiscal Year 2012 Operational Plan Goals and Priorities, and participate actively in other governing organizations. This directorship will be discussed further in the **Essay for Standard 3**. Pre-service teachers and human service providers are made aware of all policies, procedures and expectations as they are clearly stated in the NMC General Catalog, website and on NMC Online Learning Management System.

As members of the NMC community, the SOE is required to align General Learning Outcomes with program outcomes. This will be further discussed in the **Essay for Standard 2**.

## Self-Evaluation

The SOE has recently revisited its mission statement (Attachment 1b) to better align itself with the institution. Since 2010, the SOE reviewed its mission statement on three different occasions and adopted a new statement which was approved by Academic Council on July 13, 2012. The revised and approved mission statement is as follows:

*The mission of the School of Education is to promote excellence in the art and science of teaching through research-based pedagogy and assessment so as to assist in the improvement of the quality of life within the Commonwealth by providing superior educational programs for aspiring and veteran professionals in the fields of Education and Human Services whilst in support of the mission of Northern Marianas College with understanding of regional and global diversity in a changing world.*

SOE and the Public School System's (PSS) collaborative efforts continue to occur through meetings with key PSS personnel to discuss community needs - specifically the teacher training needs. Based on dialogue and market demand, in 2009, the SOE has continued to be successful in offering four areas of concentration in the Bachelor of Science in Education. These four concentrations are Special Education (SPED), Early Childhood Education (ECE), Elementary Education (BSEE), and Rehabilitation and Human Services (RH).

In addition, the SOE faculty have facilitated and participated in workshops (Attachment 1c) for and by other institutional departments. Connections with facilities and student learning will be further discussed in the **Essay for Standard 3**. Faculty of the SOE facilitate workshops for the overall institution and other community agencies, such as the Community Guidance Center, Department of Youth Services, Adult Basic Education, Community Development Institute, Relative Care Program and the Headstart Program. In addition, faculty perform adjunct duties for other departments within the institution.

The SOE's unique learner profile consists of first time generation college students. The population consists of traditional and non-traditional learners who are part or full-time teacher aides, older and returning students.

To meet the needs of the non-traditional learners, the SOE course schedules (Attachment 1d) reflect this need.

The Teacher Preparatory Program of the SOE continues to utilize graduates to serve as part and full-time cooperating teachers for pre-service teachers and human service providers. Seventy four percent of SOE graduates are currently employed in PSS from 2009-2012.

The program continues to see changes from Fall of 2009 to the present:

- Ongoing course alignment allowing for course-centered instruction and consistency in courses regardless of faculty turnover,
- Continuing use of alternative capstone student teacher experience for students,
- Hiring of additional faculty,
- Hiring of SOE graduates as adjunct and full time instructors,
- Continuous planning to develop the program to meet community demands,

- Increased enrollment.

Enrollment numbers have increased in the Bachelor of Science in Education. This growth is due to factors including the accessibility of the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, the availability of the RH, SPED and ECE concentrations, and the US Department of Education's federal program's criterion which requires 50% of all Headstart employees to possess a bachelor's degree in ECE or a related field by the year 2013.

Data such as enrollment (Required Data Exhibit 1), course completion (Required Data and Exhibit 2) and retention rates (Required Data and Exhibit 2) are compiled by semester. The SOE had an enrollment of 499 learners as of Spring of 2012, an 89% course completion rate as of Fall 2011, and an 82% retention rate as of Spring 2012.

The SOE offers a variety of learning experiences including in class, hands-on practicum, internships and a capstone student teaching experience. Historically, Video Telecommunication Conferencing was also offered, however this has since been discontinued due to concerns regarding the accessibility resources and its effect on instruction.

Quality education and student learning are forefront in the mission statement of the SOE. The SOE is evidence-based and outcome-focused. All Student Learning Outcomes must be approved by the Academic Council and are found in the Course Guides and in all course syllabi. This is further discussed in **Essay for Standard 2**.

### **Actionable Improvement Plan**

A continued review of the SOE mission statement and its alignment with the college mission.

To ensure proper representation, the SOE will actively participation in various shared government bodies and standing committees.

In collaboration with the OIE, the SOE will continue to collect and analyze evidence of student learning and needs as well as program evaluation.

Data collection will be the responsibility of work study personnel under the supervision of the Administrative Manager.

## **ESSAY ON STANDARD II: ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES THROUGH CORE FUNCTIONS**

*The institution achieves its institutional purposes and attains its educational objectives through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity and support for student learning. It demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively and that they support one another in the institution's efforts to attain educational effectiveness.*

The issues to be addressed in this essay have been clustered into 3 themes:

- Appropriateness of content, standards and language for degree level (CFR 2.1)
- Curriculum design and its assessment (CFR 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7)
- Community Service and Service Learning (CFW 2.5)

### **Descriptive Summary**

The NMC had a General Education Committee which was responsible for the General Learning Outcomes. The Liberal Arts Coordinator who oversees the General Education Committee charged with developing and facilitating the assessment of the General Education Learning Outcomes. This data is then reported to Program Review Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC) for the use of institutional assessment and program review efforts (IEG guide, 31). The Liberal Arts Coordinator now oversees the General Education component of NMC academic curriculum and has articulated a matrix for all academic programs to include the School of Education.

NMC SOE adopted the Nichols 5-Column model or Form I (Attachment 2a and 2b) as an assessment for course and program evaluations. Each semester, a Composite Report for Form 2 (Evidence and Required Appendix 1), end-of-the semester course and instructor evaluation are completed by the SOE.

The SOE focuses on student learning as a driving force behind the Teacher Preparatory Program. As pre-service teachers and human service providers reach the 300 level, they are required to apply for Teacher Candidacy. With admission into Teacher Candidacy, learners begin taking methodology and hands-on practicum experiences at the PSS and private school environments or internship in other government agencies.

### **Self-Evaluation**

To accommodate learner needs and program improvement and establish institution and programs standards requires SOE to provide assessments for all courses per semester in Form I, as well as, identified courses for Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) assessment in the five-year staggered course assessment (Attachment 2c and 2d). Form I provides standardized, consistent and continual dialogue for each semester and has enabled the SOE to identify, gather and compare data more efficiently and effectively throughout the semesters. This data is shared and analyzed for implications to improve learner achievement.

The SOE has clarified specific SLO evidence that support curriculum changes to simplify the reporting process for documenting both the evidence and the changes in program design by revisiting Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (Attachment 2e and 2f) , Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and NMC's General Education Outcomes (GEO).

The SOE PLO and SLO's were streamlined with NMC's General Learning Outcomes to close the loop. A revamp of the PLOs occurred as recommended in the WASC Assessment Workshop on Program Review in Honolulu, Hawaii in February of 2012 with Dr. Amy Driscoll.

The SOE continues to review course SLO's sequential order to determine areas needing inclusion, improvement, and the overlapping of content. All SLO's have been mapped and 3-5 SLO's are required to be reviewed and assessed for each cycle of Program Review and Assessment.

Student learning and program success is continually evaluated by the SOE. Some measurement tools of quality learning and instruction are based on the Form I and the Course Completion data compiled by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Additional measurement is found in students' performance tasks such as teachbacks, simulations, demonstrations, practicum experiences, self-reflections and e-portfolios (Required Evidence Appendix 2). Additional assessments used to review the SOE program and services are learner-evaluations (Be Blunts) and end of the semester course and instructor surveys.

To support first year freshmen success and program outcomes, the SOE curriculum changed to include the core curriculum course BE 111- College Success and the removal of ED 406 – Teaching Linguistically Diverse Students in the ECE, BSEE and RH Individualized Degree Plans.

Course Outcomes, SLOs, Assessment Measures, text and materials are evaluated, revised and updated with Course Guides (Attachment 2g and 2h) on a three-year cycle. Instructor recommendations run concurrently with the update of respective Course Guides and is approved by the Academic Council. Texts and supplemental materials nearing five years require updates to remain current with the offerings of the SOE. The template for Course Guides has been institutionalized by the Academic Council to ensure consistency and uniformity for all programs. To date, all SOE course guides have been updated.

The SOE faculty gather to review, analyze, discuss and map course content throughout the program and to identify possible changes to improve pre-service teacher and human service provider learning as well as, to maintain alignment of PLOs and SLOs with the General Education Learning Outcomes. The SOE program and learner outcomes data are reviewed and developed using the I, R, E mapping method to address learner and program needs. Data collected is used to address learner and program needs.

The SOE holds high expectations for its pre-service teachers and human service providers and stresses professionalism from the onset of the program. Because of this, the SOE utilizes the Code of Conduct/Ethics (Attachment 2i) which was developed in the Fall of 2008. This Code of Conduct/Ethics is included in each syllabus (Attachment 2j and 2k) and in the revisited SOE Student Handbook. Clearly defined learning outcomes can also be found in course syllabi.

A faculty (Attachment 2l) and learner handbook are being revised to feature institutional policies and procedures, as well as, program procedures and information.

The collaboration between the SOE and the Office of Admissions and Records (OAR) in using information for progression and completion rates which has resulted in the distinction between entry-level learners and Teacher Candidates.

The SOE has an admissions process which is aligned with the Teacher Candidacy Application (Attachment 2m). Due to the newly offered TEACH Grant Program, the SOE has identified a set of requirements and implemented an official admissions process in collaboration with the Financial Aid Office.

The SOE Individual Degree Plan (IPD) require hands-on practicum or internships for all pre-service teachers and human service providers and is part of Service Learning. The SOE is cognizant of the 50% substantive change requirement and continues to review and

On March 19, 2012, the Academic Council approved the inclusion of PRAXIS II (Content Knowledge test 0014) as an exit test in ED 471 Integrated Lessons and Activities. This is the course prior to the capstone experience. The pass score for ED 471 is 146. Some SOE pre-service teachers have opted to take PRAXIS Tests in other fields of interest.

The PRAXIS I pass scores have been changed to 170 for Reading (Test code 710), 170 for Writing (Test code 720) and 170 for Math (Test code 730) respectively or an aggregate score of 510, to be in sync with state licensure requirements. Successful completion of the PRAXIS I test is a requirement for the Teacher Preparatory Program or Teacher Candidacy at the SOE.

Student data and program pass rates in certification and licensure requirements (PRAXIS) are reported to the U.S. Department of Education Title II annually.

SOE pre-service students pass rates for PRAXIS I.

Year	Passing Rate	Passing Score
2012	92%	510 combined
2011	100%	480 combined
2010	100%	480 combined
2009	100%	480 combined

PRAXIS data is based on submitted scores and 1<sup>st</sup> time test takers.

Since 2009, the NMC has graduated 68 students with a B.S. in Education, Elementary Education concentration. The SOE, in its expanded form has seen the separation in graduate rates (Required Data Exhibit 3) due to interest in other concentrations.

### **Actionable Improvement Plan**

The use of Form I and program review assessments will be used to identify evidence that supports curriculum changes for the SOE. Collection of direct and indirect evidence and its analysis will be used in planning and determinations in closing the loop. Consolidated monthly reports will be discussed in efforts to identify courses that overlap and to assist in student learning. The SOE will to maintain a positive partnership and open communication with all stakeholders.

The SOE will continue to address the importance of the Annual Curriculum Mapping Retreat.

The SOE will continue to strengthen partnerships and dialogue with PSS and other government agencies as needed to include participation of the Program Advisory Council.

The RH, ECE and SPED concentrations will identify an exit test from the ETS PRAXIS Series that is aligned with the state licensures. A study on passing scores should be completed and finalized within the next academic year.

### **ESSAY ON STANDARD III: DEVELOPING AND APPLYING RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY**

*The institution sustains its operations and supports the achievement of its educational objectives through its investment in human, physical, fiscal and information resources through an*

*appropriate and effective set of organizational and decision-making structures. These key resources and organizational structures promote the achievement of institutional purposes and educational objectives and create a high quality environment for learning.*

The issues to be addressed in this essay have been clustered into 1 theme:

- Workload (CFR 1.3)
- Leadership (CFR 2.1)
- Organizational structures: Faculty (CFR 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)
- Technological resources to sustain a collaborative learning environment (CFR 3.7)

### **Descriptive Summary**

The seven full-time instructional faculty, one administrative manager and one acting director assists pre-service teachers and human service providers. All instructors hold Master's degree in their respective fields of study. Of these seven, three instructors have successfully come full circle as former students of the program and have returned to serve the institution at the instructor level. To mirror the SOE learner population, three instructors and the administrative manager are indigenous to the Commonwealth while other instructors have a deep rooted sense of belonging and service to the NMI Community.

Instructional faculty are assigned to teach 30 credit hours per academic year (Evidence and Required Appendix 3). Board Policy 4425 and the professional contract further recognize faculty responsibility (Evidence and Required Appendix 4).

The SOE has continually attempted to increase the number of full-time faculty and staff to meet the growing needs of its learner population. Historically, the use of adjunct instructors has been used for carefully identified courses to lessen workload for full time instructors. The Dean of Academic Programs and Services has enforced the NMC policy on overloads which requires justification of the department director.

Continued partnership with the Human Resources Office (HRO) and the Academic Council to increase faculty and staff has occurred. All hiring is prioritized by the NMC's PROA Strategic Plan 2088-2012 which is ultimately linked to careful review and analysis. This process begins at the department level with the identification of necessary personnel. These positions must be justified by the SOE Director and are approved by the Academic Council. The HRO compiles criteria for the position which are reflected in the job announcement. These vacancies may be announced internally and externally. The HRO verify all job descriptions, prepare job vacancy announcements then review all applications to ensure qualifications are met. A list of qualified applicants is submitted and interviews are scheduled. Employees participate in the hiring process as interview committee members.

### **Self-Evaluation**

#### **Organizational Infrastructure and Leadership**

The SOE instructors work cooperatively with the director. The director oversees the procedures for the department which ensures that policies are met, is accountable for the annual budget,

collaborates with the bookstore on book orders, manages the participation of faculty and staff and actively representing the SOE in governing bodies and day-to-day operations of the SOE.

Sustainable leadership is a high priority for the SOE. The SOE continues to address the need to maintain a full-time, dedicated director who will provide long-term and consistent guidance. In the past three years, SOE has seen the resignation of three full-time directors and one acting directors. The SOE team keeps high spirits as members are bound by common goals and strive to provide consistent, high-quality educational experiences for all pre-service teachers and human service providers.

The institution is actively recruiting additional instructors for the four concentrations. Budgetary constraints and a brief period of freeze in hiring require instructors to take-on additional course loads. Instructors are aware of the additional responsibilities of overloads and willingly accept these overloads to ensure quality, consistent service and the progression of pre-service teachers and human service providers for the program.

Faculty overloads Spring 2006 – Spring 2012

<b>Year</b>	<b>Semester(s)</b>	<b>Overload Averages</b>
2009	Spring only	8.3
2010	Spring, Fall & Summer	11.06
2011	Spring & Fall	6.2
2012	Spring	6.5

(Institutional Response to ACSCU Recommendations, 2009)

The use of adjunct personnel has increased in an effort to limit workload of full-time instructors. The use of adjunct provides additional staff and professional input regarding learner and program needs.

Important to note is that all adjunct faculty members have historically been mentored throughout the semester they teach for the SOE. Each adjunct faculty is assigned a mentor from within the SOE. The SOE mentor will train and provide support for adjunct faculty on a one-to-one basis. Mentoring and training includes but is not limited to awareness of administrative procedures, course content, course activity scheduling, course assessment, and in-class observations with feedback. Full-time faculty invest as much time possible in the mentorship.

Like the directorship, faculty rates have also wavered due to resignation or in-house transfers. Other possible reasons may be the need for the institution to review policy and procedures to distinguish salary scales between the Associate and Bachelor's degree programs as well as the state of the Northern Marianas Retirement Fund. The SOE has worked diligently with the Dean of Academic Programs and Services, Academic Council and the Human Resources Office to actualize additional instructional faculty members. The Dean of Academic Programs and Services is currently in the process of hiring much needed personnel.

The recent addition of two instructional faculty members provides support to the rapidly growing Rehabilitation and Human Service and the Early Childhood concentrations. In the Summer of 2012, an additional two full-time positions for RH and ECE concentration were approved once

again by the Academic Council. The SOE is moving forward in building its instructional faculty numbers to ensure a high-quality Teacher Preparation Program.

Full-time and adjunct personnel are required to undergo observations and evaluations by the director and the institution. Prior to all evaluations, a meeting is scheduled to finalize an observation date and time. A post-conference schedule is also made to discuss commendations and recommendations and to provide additional guidance.

SOE personnel are active participants in all aspects of the program such as the involvement in departmental meetings, accreditation, program curriculum review and development, course review and standing committee memberships. Participation allows for faculty to take part in professional dialogue and exchange of ideas. Faculty is required to submit a monthly report which highlights successes, concerns, professional development and other issues linked to meeting the NMC's PROA Strategic Plan 2008-2012 Fiscal Operational Plans, Goals and Priorities specifically the NMC Fiscal Year 2012. Data from these reports are compiled and used to create a summary of the reports (Attachment 3a) by the director of the SOE. Included in this Composite Report (Attachment 3b) is an action plan addressing any successes and concerns in the SOE. Short and long-term goals are planned with the use of the annual Form 2 document, a departmental program review which is submitted to PROAC.

In addition, NMC's Academic Programs and Services encourage faculty to participate in local and national workshops. These workshops are a means to stay current with research-based pedagogy and best practices regarding student learning. At the end of the Spring semester, learner data was presented at the end-of-the-semester workshop affording faculty time to review, analyze and dialogue and incorporate this data into future planning.

Professional growth is vital in the educational profession. Faculty remain current with instructional strategies and methodologies in their areas of expertise by way of workshops, memberships in professional journal, webinars, readings of research-based articles and professional development.

### **Governing Bodies**

The NMC governing bodies support the institutional leadership and hold them accountable by accepting recommendations, reviewing monthly staff and faculty reports, offering suggestions and including representation from the SOE in weekly Management Team and Academic Council meetings. The institution includes all stakeholders in its regular evaluation by providing open meetings and inviting internal and external reviews.

During these meetings stakeholders have opportunities to voice ideas and suggestions. The institution communicates the results of regular evaluations through the publication of reports. These evaluations are used for planning and implementation of improvements.

NMC policies are reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents. Procedures are reviewed internally at the department level. The President is responsible to ensure that procedures are developed to support policies. Policies are expected to be followed and are currently being reviewed and updated. These policies and procedures can be found on the N-drive, NMC website and in physical binders.

## **Facilities**

The SOE has moved into building J which offers the organizational infrastructure to support academic programs, activities, and events for student achievement of NMC and SOE's Program and Student Learning Outcomes. This newly renovated building has sufficient space for the increasing size of pre-service teacher and human service providers. Detailed information on the physical location of the SOE is found in the **Essay for Standard I**. The SOE has also included new technologies by improving the accessibility of internet services in classrooms.

With the relocation of the SOE to building J, pre-service students and human service providers are provided a clean and updated learning environment. The centralized location offers accessibility to the NMC community such as the library services, tutoring and counseling services, food court, restrooms, computer labs and reliable internet access. Pre-service teachers and human service providers are responding well to this location. Continual analysis of needs for improved or additional facilities that focus on student learning is done annually and can be found in Form 2.

## **Instructional Program**

The SOE uses collaborative and hands-on learning modules. Instructors develop differentiated teaching strategies to address learner needs. In addition, a percentage of courses currently held are hybrid, web-enhanced, accelerated, or on-line courses. Carefully identified courses which lend themselves to virtual classroom experiences are offered as hybrid, web-enhanced, or on-line courses. Of these courses, 32% are hybrid and 13.6% are fully online.

In preparation for these courses, faculty members are trained with the Moodle Program by the Director of Online and Distance Education.

## **Student Support Services**

The institution recruits and admits diverse learners who will benefit from its programs consistent with its mission. Student support services addresses the identified needs of learners and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire learner pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by learner access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses Student Support Services using Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUO), Student Learning Outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

NMC provides counseling and advising services to meet the varied needs of students. There is a vast array of counseling services available to learners to assist with educational planning in meeting career and transfer goals. Additional consideration is provided to meet cultural, disability and personal health needs. For example, Counseling Programs and Services offers Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, domestic and sexual violence, and eating disorders counseling.

The overall goal for all programs is to provide an avenue for learners to succeed. Counselors

meet regularly to keep up-to-date with the necessary information to successfully perform their duties.

Counseling programs provide individual and group counseling during the day and evening to assist students. Services are advertised in the general catalog, by a distribution of flyers, campus-wide activities, NMC's web site, and at student orientations.

Student orientations for new and returning learners provide information regarding various instructional programs and available learner services that allow the learner and academic advisor/counselor to work together in developing learner educational plans.

A critical component of the counseling and advising function is referral to resources both on and off-campus. Referral information is available to students through counseling appointments, workshops, student orientations, and campus publications, including the Northern Marianas College website, the College catalog, and various program publications. On-campus referrals are made to all student service areas in addition to academic departments and co-curricular programs.

Student support services such as Disability Support Services (DSS), International Student Services, English Language Institute (ELI) Lab, Career Services, College Access Challenge Grant, as well as programs offered through Counseling Programs & Services, provide support to learners to promote their success.

SOE pre-service teachers and human service providers are assigned an academic advisor based on chosen concentrations. All Teacher Candidates are assigned a separate academic advisor after matriculating in the Teacher Preparatory Program. The advisor assignment is program driven by learner needs. Advisors are easily accessible to pre-service teachers and human service providers. All academic advisors maintain regular office hours and are also available by appointment or via email. Learners meet with their academic advisors prior to and/or during the advising and registration periods.

Appointments are scheduled and a week is set aside for "green sheets" (academic advising for the following semester). A joint effort between advisor and advisee is made to plan the rest of the educational experience at the Teacher Candidacy level.

Other Student Support Services in place and readily available for learners are Early Admissions, Counseling, Early Intervention, Disability Support Services, Academic Advising (Attachment 3c), Transfer Admissions Plan and Student Success Series, a computer lab, accessibility of wireless internet, the Curriculum Resource Center and a computer lab.

The SOE has a Curriculum Resource Center (CRC) located in the Borja Library in the Saipan campus. The CRC was opened with the intention of providing materials and support for all pre-service teachers and human service providers. Additionally, faculty of the SOE can find teaching journals, texts curriculum materials and other research-based, scholarly texts that are supported by the main library.

The purpose behind the recent move of the CRC was to allow for a centralized area for all library services. Space is a concern of pre-service teachers and human service providers as it is quite limited at its present location. Learners find themselves searching for viable locations to meet in collaborative groups to complete projects or hold study sessions. The SOE is currently working collaboratively with the institution to find a more viable location to meet learner needs.

A learner receives a full academic evaluation on request or during the term immediately preceding their scheduled graduation date by the Registrar in consultation with academic advisors. The SOE and the Register work collaboratively to review learner program completion.

The SOE has access to PowerCampus, the Student Information Management System (SIMS) which records and manages student demographic and academic records such as program progression, program completion and degrees conferred, manages employee workloads, scheduling, course assignments and access rights to records for NMC counselors and advisors.

Pre-service teacher and human service provider files are being scanned to secure learner files. Hard copies of these files are placed in a separate room for security and confidentiality.

The SOE has also acquired flip cameras which may be checked out by learners, I-pads, new laptops and air cards for instructors to remain current with technological trends in education. In addition, the SOE has acquired three Smart Boards. Building J has dropped ceilings which do not provide adequate physical support for the projectors. Smart Boards cannot be connected at this time.

### **Resource Management**

Institutional funds are currently being used judiciously so that the facilities and support materials are sufficient for all the programs and courses offered. NMC SOE has moved into larger class sizes to ensure financial effectiveness. Long and short-term liabilities including but are not limited to building maintenance costs, supplies and materials, salaries, and professional development. These and other expenses continue to be mapped out and incorporated into the annual budget.

The NMC's planning process contains important methods and tools that help link plans to each other and the funds needed to execute such plans. Phase 1: Planning and Interlinking of Plans; Phase 2: Resource Allocation; Phase 3: Program and Service Delivery; and Phase 4: Assessment and Evaluation; the cycle is then repeated with modifications or improvements as needed.

The SOE director is responsible to plan and prepare a proposed budget for the academic year within the allocated funding. Faculty and staff of the SOE meet with the director to review learner and program needs; this input is considered in the budgetary planning process. Additionally, the SOE is working with the institution to channel course fees back into the program. The SOE effectively continues to operate with the financial restraints.

The process of procurement for needed supplies and materials is through purchase order and is monitored by the Office of Procurement. The SOE director and administrative manager monitor expenditure to ensure that all expenses remain within budget.

Two members of the SOE faculty attended workshops on grant proposal preparation and implementation/administration. The SOE is currently working with the institution to secure a grant writer.

The NMC has a Finance Office to provide assistance to pre-service teachers/human service providers. The Dean of Administration is interviewing candidates for a Chief Financial Officer who will be responsible for the management of the overall finances of the college.

NMC also has a Financial Aid Office to provide assistance for learners. The FAO is specifically designed to support learners by providing information scholarships and grants opportunities—both local and national. It also provides other information on acquiring financial assistance, such as federal organizations, minority scholarship organizations, personalized scholarship search engine accounts, and tips and advice on how to be more productive in this endeavor. Examples of financial assistance offered at the NMC are the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), CNMI Scholarship, Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance Scholarship, College Access Challenge Grant Scholarship and Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program which will be made available in Fall of 2013.

### **Community Connection**

In continuing professional dialogue, the SOE faculty attend department meetings and meetings with key personnel from PSS and other government agencies.

The SOE works diligently towards maintaining and building positive and constructive partnerships with the PSS to provide professional dialogue involving perspectives on best practices for preparing and supporting teachers and human service providers in the Northern Mariana Islands. The SOE has open communication with PSS Administration. Strategic individuals included in these dialogues are the president, the Dean of Academic Programs and Services and the Director of the SOE. Recognizing Board commitment, the NMC Board of Regents and the PSS Board of Education met recently and plan another meeting in September to address policies.

Partnerships provide viable placement opportunities in response to learners have reached senior levels in the RH and ECE concentrations. Senior status requires participation in observations, hands-on practicums and internships. Some practicum courses for the RH program are RH 330 - Human Services Fieldwork I, RH 440 – Human Services Fieldwork II and ED 493 Community Education Practicum (the capstone course for the RH concentration). The ECE practicum courses are ED451 – Integrated Science and Math for Young Children, ED 452 – Teaching Reading and Literacy in Early Childhood Education, ED 455 – Social Studies in ECE.

The Bachelor of Science Elementary Education (BSEE) observation and hands-on practicum courses are ED 211 – Introduction to Teaching, ED 321 – Literature and Language Arts for Elementary Teachers, ED 435 - Diagnostics and Prescriptive Reading, ED 471 – Integrated Lessons and Activities. In ED 492 – Student Teaching, the capstone, student teachers are placed in the PSS and private school sectors, BSEE pre-service teachers continue to be placed in local schools.

The SOE's Program Advisory Council (PAC) offers community perspective regarding needs and the connections with the Teacher Preparatory Program. PAC members include but are not

limited to members from the Public School System, retired educators and members of governmental agencies. PSS Administration and key community members have been invited to participate as PAC members. At this time, PAC is currently in the process of being revitalized.

### **Actionable Improvement Plan**

The institution is in the process of hiring a director and additional full-time instructors to ensure quality service in the four concentrations in the Teacher Preparation Program (Mid-progress Report, 2009). Policies and procedures should be reviewed to differentiate pay rates for instructors in the Associates and Bachelor's Degree programs.

The SOE is in the process of adding faculty transition time and an orientation process for new hires as well as the strengthening of the mentoring program which will provide a well-defined path for both mentor and mentee. The SOE will get approval from the Academic Council after the revision of its Learner and Faculty Handbooks. Handbooks will identify the expectations, processes, procedures and policies in an effective manner.

The SOE will promote and adhere to the program admissions requirements in collaboration with the Office of Admissions and Records and the Financial Aid Office.

The need for a sufficiently spaced CRC has become a priority. The SOE is working with the institution to identify a location that is feasible and will serve learner and program needs.

The SOE is working collaboratively with the program and institution in the successful acquisition in a grant for the program.

The SOE will study monitor the effectiveness of accelerated, web-enhanced, hybrid and on-line instruction.

The SOE values the contribution of PAC in program planning. The PAC revitalization will be finalized with identification of members and election of officers.

## **ESSAY ON STANDARD IV: CREATING AN ORGANIZATION COMMITTED TO LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT**

*The institution conducts sustained, evidence-based, and participatory discussions about how effectively it is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. These activities inform the institutional planning and systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness. The result of institutional inquiry, research and data collection are used to establish priorities at different levels of the institution, and to revise institutional purposes, structures and approaches to teaching, learning and scholarly work.*

The issues to be addressed in this essay have been clustered into 1 theme:

- Institutional reflection and planning processes (CFR 4.5, 4.8)

### **Descriptive Summary**

The institution has a Program Review Outcomes Assessment Committee in place. The overall purpose of this committee is to oversee programs' reviews and their success in meeting outcomes which are aligned with the NMC's PROA Strategic Plans 2008-2012. The SOE participates in strategic planning through Form 3. Through this process, the SOE aligns prioritized program outcomes with budgetary allocation.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness collects, analyzes and disseminates data and other information to support the program review.

The institution uses a standard syllabi format as approved by Academic Council on August 3, 2011. This format is used by all full-time and adjunct instructors.

### **Self-Evaluation**

Driving forces in the Teacher Preparatory Program are pre-service teacher and human service providers' learning, evidence from data analysis and attention to the institution and SOE mission statements. One source of data collection is the Annual Curriculum Mapping Retreat. This was discussed in detail in the **Essay on Chapter 2**.

The SOE administers course and instructor evaluations regularly.

The SOE continues to build and maintain positive and constructive relationships with the PSS, private schools, private daycare and childcare services as well as key government agencies on best perspectives for preparing and supporting teachers and service providers in the Northern Mariana Islands. The SOE continues to have open communication with public and private entities.

The SOE's Program Advisory Council (PAC) is being revitalized at this time. Participation for PAC members has been addressed and the SOE awaits responses to finalize membership.

### **Actionable Improvement Plan**

The Annual Curriculum Mapping Retreat will continue. The SOE faculty will facilitate the process and address the importance of and student learning outcomes. Surveys and forms will be disseminated and accessible to instructors.

Local and national professional development will be budgeted for and personnel will be identified for target workshops in their specialty fields. All information from these workshops will be shared with the SOE and the institution. The Dean of Academic Programs and Services will develop a strengthened procedure for sustainable structured procedure for professional development at the NMC.

The SOE will PSS and other government agencies will continue in an effort to strengthen partnerships within the community as it forges a brighter future for the CNMI community.

**CONCLUDING ESSAY:  
LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD**

**Looking Back**

The last six years have marked many changes at the SOE. In January of 2012, the SOE moved to a new location, the recently renovated building J, is now amidst the campus which allows for a better accessibility to the NMC community.

It is with great pride that the SOE shares its accomplishments. Professional development opportunities have made it possible to further streamline Program and Student Learning Outcomes which in turn have allowed for a clearly defined path in continual attempts to “close the loop”. The SOE is mindful of the importance of providing opportunities for involvement of all stakeholders including students, faculty and staff as demonstrated in this self-evaluation report.

Instructors are dedicated to quality educational experiences. Numerous support services for learners are available. The SOE has integrated differentiated instruction, hands-on and in class learning, as well as, accelerated, online, hybrid and web-enhanced learning. The SOE caters also to non-traditional learners and continues to offer courses which will meet these needs.

Updates to pre-requisite listing are found in IDPs, substitution list and suggested course sequencing which have been accomplished and continue to be reviewed and evaluated to meet institutional standards and national requirements as it relates to program review.

The PRAXIS I passing score has been changed to better meet the future professional needs the SOE’s learners.

The SOE continues to build positive partnerships with the Northern Marianas community and the PSS. Dialogue with stakeholders is a priority with the SOE. Student Teaching, observation and practicum placements continue in the PSS as well as private school classrooms. RH learners have begun internships with other governmental agencies such as the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Office, Workmen’s Investment Agency, United States District Court Probation Department, Community Guidance Center, Department of Public Health and the Nutritional Assistance Program, as well as, private non-profit agencies such as Karidat and the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI). The SOE also anticipates developing partnerships with private preschools and care centers to support the learner needs in the Early Childhood Education concentration.

SOE graduates continue to be gainfully employed both full-time and as substitutes in the PSS after graduation. Graduates have also been nominated and selected as school-level and state-level Teacher of the Year.

The SOE strives to employ a long-term director and additional full-time personnel. Financial restraints limit the hiring of adequate and highly qualified instructors. Utilization of NMC’s planning process, described in the **Essay in Chapter 3**.

The SOE has a mentoring program in place and continues to address changes update changes as needed.

The dedication of the SOE faculty is apparent as recipients of the Faculty Instructor of the Year Award for four consecutive years.

### **Looking Ahead**

The SOE continues to be conscientious of its belief in excellence in the preparation of teachers and the systematic improvement of program and student learning outcomes as it supports education and social services in the CNMI.

The SOE is at the forefront in meeting the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner and has identified important steps necessary in achieving the NMC PROA Strategic Plan 2012:

To fill the directorship position immediately,

To address high faculty turnover rate,

To identify a need for a transition process and a stronger mentoring program to clearly define paths for both mentor and mentees,

To establish professional development offered for and by the SOE personnel;

To continue working with the library in addressing the immediate needs of the learners as it relates to work space in the CRC,

To remain updated in research-based pedagogy and best practices in specialty areas that warrant quality instruction in the four concentrations, and

To maintain continuous review of program and student learning outcomes through the Programs Review Outcomes and Assessments process in its ongoing cyclical review and evaluation.

The SOE continues to recognize the importance of full compliance to the WASC Senior Commission standards remaining aware of the Junior Commission standards as it applies to the Northern Marianas College.

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