REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

Northwestern Oklahoma State University
Alva, Oklahoma

April 7-9, 2014

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Joyce Phillips Hardy, Professor of Science, Chadron State College, Chadron, NE 69337

Dr. Sherilyn W. Poole, Associate Vice President Student Affairs (Retired), Park Forest, IL 60466 (Chair)

Dr. Kay K. Schallenkamp, President, Black Hills State University, Spearfish, SD 57799

Dr. Dwayne Smith Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer, Harris-Stowe State University, St. Louis, MO 63103

Contents

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The team conducted a comprehensive evaluation visit for the purpose of determining continuing accreditation for Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

B. Institutional Context

Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NWOSU) is a regional, public university serving residents in the northwest section of the state. The main campus is in Alva, Oklahoma: there are additional locations in Enid and Woodward, Oklahoma. Courses are offered at additional sites at the University Center in Ponca City, OK, Oklahoma Panhandle State University in Goodwell, OK, and Crabtree Correctional Facility in Helena, OK. Established as a normal school in 1897, the NWOSU classes were held in the Congregational Church until 1899 when the first campus buildings were opened. In 1919, the institution became a four-year institution, Northwestern State Teachers' College. The name was changed again in 1939 to Northwestern State College to reflect an expanded curriculum including liberal arts and education. The final name change to Northwestern Oklahoma State University occurred in 1974. The university currently offers bachelor's and master's degrees in more than 35 areas.

Northwestern Oklahoma State University is one of six state-assisted universities which are governed by the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). Northwestern Oklahoma State University was originally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission in 1922. University programs have specialized accreditations from the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP), the Council for Social Work Education (CSWE), the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), and the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). Northwestern Oklahoma State University is guided in its planning and operations by its Mission Statement, Vision, Core Values, and the Strategic Plan, Rising Again 2011-2015. Decisions about budgeting, personnel, goals, and academic programs are made using these documents.

C. Unique Aspects or Additions to the Visit

There were no unique aspects or additions to the visit.

D. Additional Locations or Branch Campuses Visited (if applicable)

NONE

E. Distance Delivery Reviewed

Northwestern Oklahoma State University is approved to offer 100% of its total degree programs through distance delivery. Students may earn their degrees in fully online programs in Business Administration, Accounting and Technical Management, and in the RN-to-BSN Nursing program. Courses are also offered through the university's ITV program. The team reviewed the university's distance delivery programs (capacity, accessibility, and enrollment) as part of the visit. During the fall 2013 semester, 75% of

students enrolled in at least one online course and during the spring 2014 semester, 131 classes were offered through ITV. Findings related to Distance Education are indicated under the appropriate Criterion section of this report.

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

A review of the membership of the Self-Study committees demonstrated the inclusiveness of the Self-Study activities and process. The ten Self-Study committees included more than 100 administrators, faculty, staff, and students. All university departments/units and students had representatives on the various Self-Study committees to ensure extensive input and communication across the campus. The committees on the five criteria for accreditation focused on gathering evidence to demonstrate the university meets the Core Components and the Sub-components as appropriate. In addition to a committee for each of the five criteria for accreditation, the self-study process included a Steering Committee, a Design & Resources Committee, a Campaign & Promotions Committee, Federal Compliance Committees, and a Student Review Committee.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Coordinator was appointed in fall 2009. During 2010 the university developed a strategic plan, Rising Again 2011-2015, which was aligned with the goals of the Self-Study. The design of the Self-Study committees and the format of the Self-Study document focused on the five criteria for accreditation and the federal compliance requirements. Each chapter included descriptions of the activities implemented to meet the criterion core component and subcomponents and provided data to support the university's efforts.

The team found the Self-Study to be an accurate and comprehensive representation of the University. Information included in the Self-Study was consistent with comments made by individuals during the team's visit. Data supplied by the university in the Electronic Resource Room and in the resource room on-site documented the university's actions to address the five criteria for accreditation and the federal compliance requirements. The Self-Study identified strengths under each criterion and stated future directions the university will take to continue to move the institution forward.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The team which conducted the Comprehensive Review in 2004 identified three areas that required institution follow-up: assessment, diversity, and enrollment management. The university was required to submit a progress report including an Assessment Plan and implementation activities; a Diversity Plan and implementation activities; and an Enrollment Management Plan and implementation activities. The progress report was submitted and demonstrated that all of the university's academic and co-curricular programs had assessment plans and activities in place. Assessment of the general education program was also conducted. Assessment reports for each academic and student support areas are submitted and reviewed annually. The university placed

emphasis on diversity and reported those efforts in the progress report. The university formed a Diversity Committee that planned and implemented activities focused on expanding the diversity representation among faculty, staff members, and students. Data submitted in the progress report demonstrated a significant increase in the numbers of minority employees and students at the university since the 2004 comprehensive visit. The HLC staff commended the university personnel for their efforts to improve the diversity among its students and employees. The progress report included a comprehensive enrollment management plan focused on increasing the numbers of first year, transfer, graduate, international, and minority students. The university contracted with Noel Levitz for guidance setting enrollment goals and developing enrollment activities. HLC staff reviewed and accepted the progress report submitted 02/01/2007.

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

The university announced the upcoming visit for continuing HLC accreditation visit in campus and local media and on the university website. The visit was also announced at several large campus events. Each announcement of the visit included information for submitting third-party comments about the university to the Higher Learning Commission. One third-party comment was received by the Commission. The comment was unsigned and was not submitted to the team for follow-up.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Team members reviewed the items required to determine if the institution meets the federal compliance requirements. The findings are indicated on the federal compliance worksheet attached to the end of this report.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

CRITERION ONE: MISSION. The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Core Component 1A: The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

> **Subcomponent 1.** The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

> **Subcomponent 2.** The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

> **Subcomponent 3.** The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

Team Determination: _X_ Core Component is met
                                  __ Core Component is met with concerns
                                  __ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- NWOSU has a mission statement which is clear and articulated publicly. The mission guides the institution's operations, strategic planning, and budgeting. The faculty, staff, students, and community members embrace the mission and are able to identify how the university meets the mission's commitments and key elements in programs, activities, and operations. The institution's strategic plan, diversity plan, and enrollment management plan flow from key components in the mission statement and accompanying core values. A Vision Statement and a set of Core Values expand the Mission Statement.
- The university's mission statement was revised in 2011 to reflect changes that had occurred at NWOSU and to position the University to respond to future expectations and needs. Broad based input was solicited from campus constituencies as well as from leadership in the communities of Alva, Enid, and Woodward. The proposed mission changes were reviewed and approved by the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO). The mission statement captures key elements that appear in planning documents and are integrated in day to day decisions and operations. These elements include quality educational experiences, cultural opportunities, diversity, critical thinking, ethical leadership, and fiscal responsibility.
- An example of the way the mission guides university activities is the open and transparent budgeting process that involves all aspects of the campus. Another example that the mission statement guides the institution's operations are the numerous cultural experiences available for faculty, staff members, and students that embrace broad aspects of ethnicity, gender, global, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic issues. These experiences are captured in an annual diversity report.

Core Component 1B: The mission is articulated publicly.

Subcomponent 1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

Subcomponent 2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

Subcomponent 3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Team Determination: _X Core Component is met
                               __ Core Component is met with concerns
                               __ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- The mission statement appears in numerous institutional documents, on the web site, and on posters displayed across the campus including life sized displays in the Student Center, Library, and classroom buildings. Discussions with faculty, staff members, and students during the visit demonstrated a broad understanding

of the mission and identified examples of how it guides the institution's operations. Additionally, members of the RUSO board and representatives of the community demonstrated during their meetings with the team that they clearly understand the mission of NWOSU and how it guides the strategic plan and daily operations.

- The Division of Business has adopted a Mission statement, Vision statement, and a Statement of Business Values to guide programs and courses. These statements expand the university's mission, vision, and values statements and focus specifically on the ways the Division of Business offerings will implement the guiding documents.

Core Component 1C: The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

    Subcomponent 1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

    Subcomponent 2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Team Determination: _X_ Core Component is met
    _ Core Component is met with concerns
    _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- NWOSU has expended significant effort to integrate diversity into the activities and operations of the institution. The mission has been revised to specifically note that the University will provide "quality educational and cultural opportunities to learners with diverse needs." Concerted efforts to recruit a diverse student body resulted in a 6% increase in ethnic minority student enrollment to 21.8% which exceeds the number of ethnic minorities within the university's 10 county service area (14.7%). The diversity of instructional staff members has increased from 8% in 2009 to 13.8% in 2012.
- Faculty expressed appreciation for the broad definition of diversity at NWOSU which includes ethnic minorities, international students, differently-abled individuals, age, experiential background, and the numerous programs to increase awareness and appreciation for diversity. The campus has created a Diversity Committee and developed a diversity plan that complements the mission statement. The Diversity Committee's annual report includes evidence of diversity programs that were offered as well as individual reports from faculty and staff that document their involvement in diversity programming and integration of diversity into the curriculum.

Core Component 1D: The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

    Subcomponent 1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

    Subcomponent 2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

    Subcomponent 3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and

communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Team Determination: _X_ Core Component is met
                            __ Core Component is met with concerns
                            __ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- Conversations with over 30 community members demonstrated to the team that NWOSU is integrally connected with the communities of Alva, Enid, Woodward and the surrounding region. During the meeting, the attendees described the ways NWOSU administrators, faculty, staff, and students contribute to their communities often through service learning projects required by many academic programs and courses. Community members appreciate the opportunities to attend theatrical productions, musical presentations, and sports events on campus. Membership and usage of the Wellness Center include a significant number of community members.
- The community representatives expressed their appreciation for the numerous initiatives that have been implemented to provide educational, cultural, and workforce opportunities. Specific examples include a partnership with the city of Alva to establish an art gallery in the downtown area, numerous initiatives to address needs of the region's PK-12 schools, addition of an agriculture education program at the request of the region, and an agreement with the Department of Corrections where students provide counseling and intervention programs to inmates. The cities of Alva, Enid, and Woodward have reciprocated by providing funding to support scholarships for the nursing program (Woodward), a Bridge Program between Northern Oklahoma College and NWOSU (Enid), and an increase in sales tax for new students enrolled at NWOSU (Alva). The University has received a Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award every year since 2006 from OSRHE. This award recognizes successful partnerships with communities.

Team Determination on Criterion One:
       _X_Criterion is met
       __ Criterion is met with concerns
       __ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:

Northwestern has a mission statement which is clear and articulated publicly. This mission guides the institution's operations, strategic planning and budgeting. The faculty, staff, students and community members embrace the mission and are able to identify how the NWOSU meets its commitments and actualizes the mission's key elements in its programs and operations.

CRITERION TWO: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct. The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Core Component 2A: The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met
                            _ Core Component is met with concerns
                            _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NWOSU) is one of six state universities which are governed by the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). The University adheres to the policies and procedures included in the RUSO Policy Manual and the OSRHE Policy and Procedures Manual. Supplementing these manuals, NWOSU publishes a Faculty Handbook, a Supplemental Faculty Handbook, an Employee Handbook, and a Student Handbook. These publications identify how RUSO and OSRHE policies and procedures are implemented at NWOSU.
- One of the university's Core Values states "Northwestern will maintain the highest levels of ethical standards and accountability." Conversations with NWOSU administrators, faculty, staff, and students and reviews of the university's handbooks verified that the university conducts its business ethically and with integrity. External audits of the university's finances and resources are conducted annually and there have been no findings from these audits for the past 10 years. The annual budget development process is open and transparent. Members of the campus community are encouraged to attend the open hearings where the budget requests for the subsequent year are presented and discussed and to ask questions and make suggestions about allocations.
- As the governing bodies of NWOSU, the RUSO and the OSRHE have policies and procedures in place to guide the ethical administration of the university. Faculty, supplemental faculty, employee, and student handbooks were reviewed to identify the policies and procedures in place to ensure faculty members, employees, and students behave and conduct the university's business ethically and with integrity. The policies and procedures in the handbooks also describe how the university will treat members of the campus and greater communities with respect. University policies to ensure respectful behaviors and treatment include Equal Employment and Affirmative Action, Sexual Harassment, Social Media, Drug-Free and Tobacco-Free policies.
- EthicsPoint is an online program implemented by RUSO that allows individuals to report behaviors they believe to be illegal, unethical, or inappropriate. Reports made on the EthicsPoint website go directly to the RUSO Board office for investigation by legal counsel and follow-up. Reports to the EthicsPoint website can be made anonymously and the program allows for the Board staff members to communicate with these individuals while maintaining the individual's anonymity. During a conversation with the NWOSU Vice President for Administration, information was shared that there have been three filings made to EthicsPoint focused on NWOSU. The Vice President for Administration conducted investigations and reported findings to the RUSO Board.

- Policies are in place to allow faculty members, staff members, and students to file grievances if they feel they have been treated unfairly. Procedures for filing grievances are included in the faculty and the supplemental faculty handbooks. Procedures for filing complaints are published in the employee and the student handbooks. Students may file formal complaints using a form on the university's website. Students may also submit informal complaints to the appropriate administrator for resolution.
- Students who wish to file a formal complaint are directed to the university complaint process which requires students to complete a complaint form published in the Student Handbook. These written complaints are submitted to the Dean, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management for investigation and resolution. A review of the Student Complaint file demonstrated that there were very few formal complaints submitted between 2008 and 2013. Materials in the file verified the written complaints were addressed and resolved promptly. During a conversation with the Dean, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, he stated that informal concerns presented verbally are addressed and resolved quickly. However, these informal concerns are not currently logged or tracked.

Core Component 2B: The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Team Determination: _X_ Core Component is met
                             _ Core Component is met with concerns
                             _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- The team reviewed a variety of university publications to determine if the information presented is clear and complete (undergraduate and graduate catalogs; the Viewbook, and handbooks). Published academic program information includes admission requirements, courses of study, and graduation requirements. Published costs for attendance include tuition (in-state and out-of-state, international), additional fees for specific courses and for special services. Costs are included for housing and meal plans. A cost calculator is available on the university website to help prospective students and their families determine projected costs of attendance. Listings of NWOSU administration, faculty, and staff are included in the catalogs. Specialized program accreditation relationships are identified. The Higher Learning Commission Hallmark is displayed appropriately on the university website.
- Publications and the university website identify the two governing bodies for the university: the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) and the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO). The university's website includes links to the OSRHE and RUSO websites which list the members of each group, policies and procedures, and allow access to meeting agenda and minutes.
- The NWOSU financial aid website describes the sources of aid, scholarships, and loans available to help students finance their attendance at the institution. Contact information for financial aid staff members is listed. The financial aid website

includes the online entrance counseling program required for all first-time borrowers before loans are received. Student borrowers must also complete an online exit process when they leave the university.

- NWOSU has implemented an examination policy for its online courses which requires that in each online course at least one examination each semester must be in a proctored environment. Faculty members may require more examinations to be proctored. Students are able to take proctored exams at one of the university's campuses or additional locations at no charge. Students may also choose to use the online program Remote Proctor Now to meet this requirement. There is a fee for this service which students pay with a credit card when they take an exam. Information about this online proctor option is included in the online Business program descriptions in the catalogs, but it is not included on the posted online Nursing program (RN-to-BSN) description. The fee information was included in some of the course syllabi reviewed but was missing from other syllabi. The information about this fee does not appear in the description of fees in the cost sections of the catalogs.

Core Component 2C: The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

Subcomponent 1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

Subcomponent 2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Subcomponent 3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

Subcomponent 4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met
                               _ Core Component is met with concerns
                               _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) is the state's coordinating body for all institutions of higher education. OSRHE prescribes academic standards, grants degrees, and recommends to the state legislature budget allocations for each institution.
- The Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) is the NWOSU governing board. RUSO governs the six regional universities in the state and has responsibility for the management and operations of the institutions. RUSO hires and evaluates the presidents of the six regional universities. Eight of the nine members of the RUSO Board members are appointed by the Governor to nine-year staggered terms. The elected state superintendent of public education is the ninth member of RUSO.

- RUSO meets seven times a year at various locations across the state. Minutes of three RUSO Board meetings were reviewed (November 8, 2013, January 10, 2014, and February 21, 2014). The meeting agenda and minutes demonstrate that the RUSO Board members attend to the business of the six regional universities using information provided by the university presidents and the RUSO staff members. Typically, each university president makes a presentation and responds to questions from the board members at each meeting.
- By RUSO policy, the university presidents are the chief executive officers and are responsible for the administration of their institutions. The presidents or their designees are "solely responsible" for the employment, discipline, and termination of all faculty, administrators, and staff at their institutions.
- During the visit, the team met with two members of the RUSO board. The conversation demonstrated the board members' knowledge of NWOSU including the resource challenges facing the institution and the contributions the members of the campus community make to the greater community and to the region. The conversation also demonstrated the board members' commitment and passion for NWOSU. The RUSO board members are aware of the financial challenges facing NWOSU due to reduced state funding of higher education and described their advocacy on behalf of increased funding for all the state universities. RUSO members are active participants in NWOSU activities and programs.

Core Component 2D: The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met

_ Core Component is met with concerns

_ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- Faculty are accorded academic freedom regarding their research and in the publication of the results as stated in the policies published in the NWOSU faculty handbook and in the RUSO policy manual. Academic freedom for faculty extends to discussing controversial subjects in classes and encouraging conversations on such subjects among students. Faculty members are cautioned to be objective in presenting and discussing controversial subjects.
- Students are introduced to the requirements of academic writing and research regarding appropriate attribution of sources used in writing in various general education courses (ENGL 1113 – Composition I and ENG 1213 – Composition II) and in courses specific to their majors. Students are also cautioned against behaviors that represent copyright infringement and unauthorized file sharing (music, movies, and other copyrighted materials). Library staff members are available to help students understand proper citation and attribution methods in academic writing and research.

Core Component 2E: The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Subcomponent 1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

Subcomponent 2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Subcomponent 3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met
                                        __ Core Component is met with concerns
                                        __ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- Northwestern Oklahoma State University has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research. The Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, academic and campus deans and staff members, an external agent, and faculty serve on the board. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee oversees animal welfare during research projects. This committee includes faculty (both science and non-science), staff, a veterinarian and other community members.
- The academic dishonesty policy published in the Student Handbook describes unacceptable student behaviors relating to academic writing and conduct of research. These behaviors include cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized possession of exams or other materials. The student conduct code describes how violations of the academic dishonesty policy will be adjudicated and possible sanctions to be imposed.
- NWOSU students are encouraged to submit poster or research presentation entries to the annual NWOSU Ranger Research Day competition. Fifty-nine students and faculty members submitted entries to the NWOSU eighth annual Ranger Research Day held on November 22, 2013. The number of entries has increased each year since the beginning of the program. Ranger Research Day is preliminary to the annual Oklahoma Research day with participants from throughout the state.

Team Determination on Criterion Two:
            _X_Criterion is met
            __ Criterion is met with concerns
            __ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:
            Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that NWOSU conducts its business ethically and responsibly. The university's attention to ethics in its financial management and operations has resulted in 10 years of external audits with no findings. Faculty members, employees, and students are able to file grievances and submit complaints if they feel they have not been treated fairly or with respect. Individuals may report anonymously suspected incidents of illegal, unethical, or inappropriate behaviors or incidents using an online program supervised by RUSO. University committees are in place to provide oversight of research using human subjects and to ensure the ethical treatment of animals used in research.

Consultation from the Team: The informal student concerns, which are typically reported verbally, are not currently logged nor placed in the formal student complaint log. The university might consider maintaining a log of the informal concerns and the resolutions to help identify trends in these types of complaints which may require changes in policies or procedures.

Consultation from the Team: Ensure that the information about the cost of the Remote Proctor Now service is posted in all appropriate publications and in online course syllabi.

Consultation from the Team: Ensure that the information about the cost of the Technology Fee is published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

CRITERION THREE: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support. The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Core Component 3A: The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

   Subcomponent 1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

   Subcomponent 2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

   Subcomponent 3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Team Determination: _X Core Component is met
                              _ Core Component is met with concerns
                              _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- NWOSU offers 35 undergraduate majors; with options available in several programs, there are 46 majors available in addition to minors and three graduate programs. The undergraduate majors range from Agriculture (and the new agriculture BSEd), Business, Education, Music, Liberal Arts, and Sciences. Four undergraduate certificate programs are offered (accounting, entrepreneurial studies, human resources management, and personal finance), in combination with the undergraduate business degree. Additional programs added since the last HLC visit in 2004 include minors in art and in writing. Graduate programs include Master-level degrees in American Studies, Counseling Psychology, and Education (with focuses in adult education management and administration, curriculum and instruction, educational leadership, elementary education, reading specialist, school counseling, and secondary education). Academic Programs undergo 5-year reviews for objectives, duplication, quality and efficiency, faculty qualifications, and cost in accordance with the Oklahoma State Regents for

Higher Education Policy 3.7.4.
- Faculty members have developed student learning objectives for each program and each class within the programs as described during conversations with the Assessment Committee and with various faculty members. Although program learning objectives are not listed within the undergraduate catalog, all reviewed syllabi list objectives as either performance (students will be able to…) in most cases, with some course syllabi listing descriptions (this course will….). The graduate catalog lists program objectives with student learning expectations.
- NWOSU has HLC approval to offer up to 100% of its programs through distance education. Currently, the Division of Business offers two fully online programs; a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting or in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Technical Management. The Division of Nursing offers the RN-to-BSN degree program fully online. The university ITV (instructional television) offerings included 131 classes during the spring 2014 semester at 11 sites. Professors teach ITV courses from the three campuses. ITV courses are typically in history, criminal justice, upper level Business courses, and Education.
- The planning and oversight responsibilities of the distance education offerings are shared by several university staff members. The team meeting to discuss distance education included the Online Learning Coordinator/Webmaster/Coordinator of Distance Learning; the Director, Information Technology; the Library Services Director; the Dean, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management; the ITV Coordinator; the Director, Academic Success Center; the Chair, Division of Business; and the Chair, Division of Nursing.
- A review of the 2013-2014 course syllabi for courses offered through various modalities (ITV, online, or face-to-face) reveal strong similarities in student learning objectives. Syllabi for different sections of the course are the same or similar. The 2013-2014 graduate catalog and course schedule indicate that courses offered at both the undergraduate and graduate level will have different learning expectations for students. Syllabi for dual numbered courses (4000/5000) articulated the addition of a required research paper for graduate students. Courses dual numbered 3000/5000 appear to have two additional differentiations – additional questions on exams and a research paper. Students cannot take a 4000 level course within their undergraduate program and then enroll in the same course at the 5000 level in a graduate program as stated in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs.
- The Assessment Committee indicated that the general education program was re-articulated in 2007, resulting in a common general education program for all programs. Program requirements were also refined to include embedding of leadership development courses within the disciplines. Faculty members are heavily engaged in determining general education, program, and course student learning outcomes, and in assessing student performance against those outcomes.
- A review of course and program descriptions and syllabi demonstrated that the requirements, student learning objectives, and syllabi are the same for courses offered in all modalities; on-campus, online, ITV. Student retention rates for distance education courses are comparable for each of the modalities.
- The institution has a procedure in place for the approval of new online degree programs. A department or division wishing to offer a new online degree program

completes a form to describe the program; explains how it meets the university's mission; describes the curriculum; a projection of the enrollment; and assurance that the program will be sustained on-campus as well as online. There is a lengthy on-campus approval process before the proposal is sent to the RUSO board for approval before its submission to the OSRHE board for approval.

Core Component 3B: The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

Subcomponent 1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

Subcomponent 2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

Subcomponent 3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Subcomponent 4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

Subcomponent 5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Team Determination: _x_Core Component is met
                        __ Core Component is met with concerns
                        __ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- NWOSU's general education program offers a broad survey of courses to align with the mission for students to develop competencies in critical thinking, leadership, and literacy. The NWOSU Task Force on General Education was convened in 2005 to review the mission and curriculum of the general education programs to ensure alignment with the new college mission. The Task Force report in 2007 formed the basis for the revised general education requirements. This effort consolidated five different general education requirements into a common standardized core of general education, with some disciplines defining which courses should be taken to meet program accreditation standards.
- General education requirements have a well-articulated mission statement that is aligned with the NWOSU's strategic plan, Rising Above, 2011-2015, and with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Policy 3.14. Conversations with faculty members and with the academic deans demonstrated that they embrace the critical thinking, leadership, and literacy competencies and recognize the value of that focus in supporting program learning outcomes. Examples of the implementation of these competencies include:
    o The Task Force recommended core themes of critical thinking (including

cognitive skills and scientific inquiry), leadership (including global awareness, domestic awareness, self-understanding, and effective citizenship), and literacy (in communication, technology, information, and aesthetic capacities).

- o Ranger Connection (a 1-credit course) is required of all students entering NWOSU with fewer than 24 credits. This course introduces students to college life and success strategies
- All students complete a course in leadership and in personal finance in the general education program and faculty members indicate that leadership is also embedded within program requirements (such as judging science fairs for biology students).
- The 2007 Report on General Education articulated the importance of data collection and analysis, clear communication, and understanding modes of inquiry across multiple disciplines. The current general education program requirements within the 2013-2014 catalog articulate required courses that would provide appropriate development of these skills. In addition, the graduate program has embedded within each of the three objectives data analysis and interpretation. All students complete general studies mathematics, writing and oral communication courses, and degrees have designated specific courses within their programs to build these skills.
- NWOSU offers a general education program that addresses global and domestic awareness, as revealed in the requirement of 7 hours of human heritage and culture and 3 more hours in the area of values and beliefs. A review of 2013-2014 syllabi revealed inclusion of diversity appreciation and awareness. The annual diversity report identifies efforts of faculty to participate and embed diversity awareness and appreciation within and outside of the academic curriculum.
- Faculty oversee student research in Honors projects, as shown in display of student posters within the Science Building and other areas, as well as performances of music, art, and theater. Science collaborates with other Oklahoma institutions to direct academic and outreach programming at the regional astronomical observatory. Additionally, students in Mass Communications oversee NWTV Channel 7, the local public access television station, and produce news, information, video, and music to the college and surrounding areas. Ranger research Day showcases student research projects, with participants eligible to participate in Oklahoma Research Day. NWOSU will host Oklahoma Research Day in Enid, in 2017.

Core Component 3C: The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

Subcomponent 2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

Subcomponent 3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Subcomponent 4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Subcomponent 5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Subcomponent 6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Team Determination: _X Core Component is met
                            _ Core Component is met with concerns
                            _ Core Component is not met

Evidence: Throughout all campus meetings and informal interactions, NWOSU faculty and staff members consistently demonstrated their strong focus on students and their success. Personnel have the qualifications to provide effective and high quality academic programs and student services. Evidence that supports this analysis includes the following:

- NWOSU faculty members are highly engaged in curriculum development, student advising, and institutional issues, directing programs, serving on curriculum and leadership teams, and assessing student learning. Full-time faculty numbers have increased in the recent past, partly with the state initiative to match private funding for endowed faculty positions. Adjunct faculty members teach about 29% of the total credit hours.
- Faculty regularly teach 27 credits per academic year (fall and spring semesters), with additional load available over the summer. Faculty members also teach overloads during the fall-spring terms when requested or needed. Faculty are also assigned non-instructional equivalent load to bring their total load assignment to 36 credits per academic year, as described in the Faculty Handbook.
- A review of faculty credentials as presented in the college catalogs and personnel records show doctoral or masters credentialed faculty for most courses, with some baccalaureate trained individuals teaching within the skills areas. Faculty are provided training for online and video teaching, funds are available to support professional development including travel and conference attendance, and support is provided to help faculty implement assessment activities.
- Faculty evaluations include student ratings and a portfolio. Faculty can allocate percentages of their effort to five components: Teaching (40-75%, with five subsections), professional development (5-25%, with two subsections), scholarly activity/creative endeavors (5-25%), institutional involvement (5-25%), and community service (0-15%), as detailed in the Faculty Handbook. Evaluations are completed annually for non-tenured faculty members and for each individual going for promotion or for initial tenure, and every three years for tenured faculty. Peer reviewers are involved in the evaluation process.
- Faculty members are provided with resources for travel, scholarly activity, and professional development. A Faculty Development Advisory Board coordinates professional development and continuing educational opportunities for faculty. Summer Academies were funded with Title III funds for 2012 and 2013, with topics covering student engagement and support, teaching and technology, classroom/online engagement and active learning, and motivational strategies for students.
- Faculty members are accessible to students and schedule 10 office hours per week that they are available to students. In addition, faculty members work closely with students in laboratories, private lessons, service learning projects, clubs, and undergraduate research. Faculty members advise students with greater than 23 ACT's during the students' first year, and all students from sophomore year and

beyond. Faculty members described how they oversee many student interest clubs, as listed in the catalog and the student handbook. Small class sizes (generally 8 or more, with an average of just over 15 per faculty member) support high student-faculty interaction. During the group meeting, students gave examples of their close connections to faculty. Online and distant faculty members are also perceived as highly engaged for the majority of courses, and those full time faculty members respond to student questions promptly. Student support staff members' qualifications are appropriate to their positions. NWOSU offers orientation for new staff members and continued training through RUSO in workplace legal issues and safety. Professional development funds are available for additional training, with the institution holding membership in many student affairs associations to gain professional development materials.

Core Component 3D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

Subcomponent 1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Subcomponent 2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Subcomponent 3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Subcomponent 4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Subcomponent 5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Team Determination: _X Core Component is met
                             _ Core Component is met with concerns
                             _ Core Component is not met

Evidence: Student services are well-suited to the students NWOSU serves, with a strong focus on career advising, academic success, and personal well-being.
- Student services provide assistance in career counseling, tutoring, and supplemental instruction for some gateway courses. The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides on-line scheduling of one-on-one peer tutoring sessions. Tutoring facilities are spacious and conducive to tutoring activities. Computer facilities for testing and for student use are accessible and usable, both in the ASC and in the library. Library hours were expanded to midnight, at the request of the Student Government Association.
- Academic support and alignment of student skills with appropriate learning occurs through a variety of testing mechanisms. ACT scores and/or testing through WritePlacer and Elementary Algebra tests are used to determine placement in beginning courses.

- - Students with ACT scores of 18 or lower in English, mathematics, science, or reading must remove the deficiencies by retaking the ACT and achieving a score of 19 or higher on the appropriate subtest; achieving an appropriate score on the Accuplacer test; or successfully completing a remedial course with a passing grade.
    - NWOSU revised the prior Remedial Reading and Remedial English courses to one 5-credit course titled ENG 0125 Writing and Literacy to better serve their underprepared students. Students who score near 19 on the ACT in English and/or in Reading are required to take a Composition Lab with the Composition I course. Faculty members within the program and academic administrators indicate that the success rate of the students has been higher in the new course, and faculty members indicated that greater effectiveness in learning has occurred.
    - The remedial mathematics courses of Intermediate Algebra or Pre-Intermediate Algebra are scheduled for redesign to complement the English remedial pathway. Students with lower science ACT scores are required to show proficiency in algebra prior to enrolling in science courses.
- Applicants who do not meet the NWOSU admissions requirements (have not completed the high school curriculum requirements set by the State Regents policy, or did not earn the minimum ACT score, or did not earn the required high school grade point average) may be admitted to NWOSU on appeal and are considered at risk. These students are required to complete the university course Peak Performance. Students whose college performance indicates that they are at risk complete the Academic Enhancement course. Both courses are designed to foster development of student attitudes, behaviors, and skills to achieve academic success.
- Honors Special Topics courses are offered for students in the Honors program. Faculty members mentor honors projects, which may include research that is then presented at Ranger Research Days.
- The Academic Success Center provides free tutoring to students. Students make appointments via an online system, and then meet with upper division students for individualized tutoring. Distance students may request online tutoring sessions using Skype. These tutoring services are also provided by peer tutors.
- Teaching infrastructure is supportive of academic programs. Many classrooms have Smartboards and projection systems, with tables to support group activities in the learning process. The Science Building has been completely remodeled, with new dedicated laboratory spaces to support team inquiry learning experiences. Private funding and institutional funding supported the purchase of updated chemistry equipment. The Fine Arts building has remodeled music and art facilities that have been supported through the Academic Enhancement Fees on a room-by-room basis. These fees have also provided upgraded microscopes; practice and electronic pianos, and studio and practice facilities; retrofitted the band room with acoustic ceiling and wall tiles; and enhanced teaching technology with classroom Smartboards and projection units.

- The Blackboard Learning Management System meets the needs of the university's online course offerings. The Online Learning Coordinator hosts Blackboard in-house and is able to upgrade the system as needed. The Online Learning Coordinator stated that the Blackboard system could handle many more online courses than are currently being offered.
- The Helpdesk is available to assist students, faculty, and staff members who are having problems with technology and/or navigating the Blackboard program. The Helpdesk is available to take calls from 8:00 am to midnight, Monday through Friday; 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm on Saturday; and 5:00 pm to midnight on Sunday. Information technology staff members respond to calls coming into the Helpdesk during business hours. The Online Learning Coordinator trains students to respond to questions and problems on the Helpdesk after hours. Tutorials and answers to frequently asked questions can be accessed online when the Helpdesk staff members are not available.

Core Component 3E: The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

 Subcomponent 1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

 Subcomponent 2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met
                            _ Core Component is met with concerns
                            _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- Co-curricular activities are plentiful and students affirm that if they want to be engaged there are numerous opportunities to participate in organizations and groups. During the group meeting, students stated that if their family and job responsibilities limit their available time to participate in activities they are able to select a lower level of interaction yet they still feel a part of the institution.
- The President's Leadership Class recognizes approximately 13 incoming students each year with high leadership potential. During the summer of 2013, these students travelled to Boston with President Cunningham prior to the start of their first semester. During this experience, the students formed team connections, and were mentored by Dr. Cunningham. Students in the Leadership Class complete Leadership Training and Education in the fall taught by President Cunningham. These students often proceed to leadership roles in the institution, in recruitment and advancement activities.
- The Student Government Association (SGA) is an active association in which students can participate. Theatrical productions, musical performances, broadcasting, local access TV management, clubs and sororities, are available for student engagement. A variety of organizations (13 honor associations, plus 52 departmental and professional organizations) are available for students. Residence

hall programming is responsive to student demand, with many of the residential halls offering substantial extracurricular engagement opportunities.

- Conversation during the Criteria III Self Study committee meeting demonstrated that faculty members believe the athletics program supports academic success through coach expectations, grade checks, study tables, and other support for student-athletes. Nineteen percent of the NWOSU students participate in intercollegiate athletics. Committee members indicated that an "academics first" culture is evident among the athletic staff. Students are required to write a letter to their professors at the beginning of the semester detailing their probable absence dates due to off-campus competitions, and follow through with personal conversations to ensure timely completion for missed class activities and assignments.
- The institution is currently in the process of gaining NCAA II status for all intercollegiate athletics except for the rodeo team which is affiliated with the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA). The Student-Athlete Handbook details the obligations of student-first, as well as obligations of being an NWOSU athlete and a member of the community of Alva. The academic achievement expectations are evident throughout the handbook.

Team Determination on Criterion Three:

_X_Criterion is met
_ Criterion is met with concerns
_ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:
NWOSU has strategically developed the academic offerings to meet student and regional demand, including the additional offerings in online nursing (completion), agricultural education, the new graduate program in American Studies, and the arts minor. The degree programs are current and appropriate, and the discipline offerings complement and supplement the required general education coursework. The institution reviewed its general education requirements and updated those in 2007 to be more coherent across academic programs and degrees and to be in alignment with institutional values, governing expectations, and regional needs. Faculty and staff members understand the Mission and their conversations describing their activities align with the institution's core values and mission. Faculty and staff members are current in their fields and are provided appropriate professional development support to ensure that this continues. Updated classrooms and technology support student engagement in the learning process, and student support of career counseling, tutoring, co-curricular engagement, and athletics provide opportunities for students to gain a well-rounded educational experience at the university. NWOSU has revised the strategic planning document, general education, assessment activities, and fund raising as it strives to remain current to its multiple constituencies and to its region. The institution has started to address the findings of the CAEP review of the graduate education program in preparation for the site visit.

 Consultation from the Team: Consider publishing student learning objectives in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs to inform current and potential students of the course expectations.

CRITERION FOUR: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Core Component 4A: The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

   Subcomponent 1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

   Subcomponent 2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

   Subcomponent 3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

   Subcomponent 4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

   Subcomponent 5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

   Subcomponent 6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Team Determination: _X_ Core Component is met
                                  _ Core Component is met with concerns
                                  _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- NWOSU conducts program reviews every five years as required by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). Staff members in the OSRHE Office review the reports and provide informational reports to the Regents. NWOSU provided the program review schedule and the approval dates of NWOSU program reviews for 2007-2012. Additionally, the institution conducts internal program reviews by department faculty members to ensure the vitality of the programs and the alignment of the programs to NWOSU's mission.
- The undergraduate catalog describes the process for the evaluation of transfer course credits to ensure integrity. NWOSU accepts military credit and utilizes the Commission on Accreditation of Services Experiences that is affiliated with the American Council of Education as a guide for assessing military credits. NWOSU also accepts CLEP and AP credit if a student scores a 50 or higher on the CLEP and a 3 or higher on the AP exam.
- NWOSU's Nursing program has articulation agreements with the High Plains Technology Center, the Northwest Technology Center, the Autry Technology Center and the Pioneer Technology Center. The nursing program accepts these

institutions' credits after the chair of the Nursing Program evaluates the applicants' transcripts. To ensure the integrity of the credits, students must have earned national certification as a Licensed Practical Nurse.

- Students in their senior and junior year may request a degree audit through the Registry Office to determine their progress towards their degree. Initially, this process was completed utilizing an online software program, but the institution found the program did not meet performance expectations.

- The number of full-time faculty members increased from 80 in 2009-2010 to 90 during the 2013-2014 academic year. The percentage of faculty members with terminal degrees increased slightly from 53.75 percent during the 2009-2010 academic year to 56.67 during the 2013-2014 academic year. Faculty members carry a 27 credit hour yearly load as substantiated in meetings with faculty, deans, chairs, and the Executive Vice President. In addition, according to faculty members, they are expected to serve as academic advisors to students and serve on at least three committees. Faculty members who responded in the group meeting stated that they were able to effectively teach and complete their other faculty obligations. In a subsequent meeting with deans and chairs there were concerns expressed about the level of responsibilities for faculty. New faculty members are not required to serve on committees during their first year of teaching. First year faculty members are also mentored by department chairs about how to effectively handle the academic expectations.

- Faculty members are responsible for developing courses in academic programs. Student learning outcomes have been developed and implemented for each academic program. The institution's undergraduate catalog describes programs of study and lists prerequisites for courses. The Registry Office ensures that students are not enrolled in courses without taking the prerequisite course through RangerNet, a software program. The Online Learning Coordinator/Webmaster/Coordinator of Distance Learning provides support to faculty members in the design of online courses.

- To enhance teaching and learning, faculty members are allocated $500 annually for the purchase of library materials. The library also provides 10 laptop computers and other computer technology for student use to enhance student learning.

- To help ensure student success, the institution has an Academic Success Center which provides tutoring by peer tutors in the areas of mathematics and English. Other subject areas and workshops in academic skills are provided by peer tutors as well. The institution provided data on the increased use of the Academic Success Center which showed an increase in appointments from 8,113 during the 2009-2010 academic year to 14,013 during the 2011-2012 academic year.

- The Registry Office collects data relating to employment after graduation as part of the application for graduation. The Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness reviews and maintains the data. The NWOSU Foundation also collects employment data through alumni surveys. Survey data from 2009 indicate that 83% of those alumni who responded to the survey stated that they were employed. Additionally, 89.4% of respondents stated that the institution prepared them for work in their chosen field and all respondents stated that they were employed in at least one job following graduation. Though the percentages are high, there was a low return rate of 45 respondents to the survey.

- As part of the institution's strategic plan, the NWOSU academic units promote internship opportunities as described during a meeting of all the department chairs

and deans. Student internship opportunities are highest in nursing, social work, psychology, and education. Not all program areas require an internship for graduation.

Core Component 4B: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Subcomponent 2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met
                             _ Core Component is met with concerns
                             _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- The general education task force, which includes faculty members from all academic departments, has provided leadership over general education assessment since 2005. All courses were aligned to meet the three competencies of critical thinking, leadership and literacy. In meetings with faculty members, deans and department chairs, they were able to articulate how these three competencies are included within their programs and courses. Additionally, staff members were asked in a meeting about the three competencies and how they articulated the three competencies. Participants were able to articulate their role in assisting students in achieving the competencies.
- Northwestern administers the NSSE every three years to first-year and senior students as an indirect measure of student learning. The General Education Committee examines responses to selected questions from first-year students as indicative of student learning. A meeting of the institutional leadership team consisting of academic deans and student affairs personnel substantiated this process through examples of how the data are used in their departments to enhance student learning and engagement.
- Northwestern engages in continuous assessment of student learning in academic programs. At the program level, faculty members oversee student learning assessments. Faculty developed student learning outcomes utilizing Bloom's Taxonomy. The Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness provided leadership in this area through a retreat in 2011 and by providing an academic assessment template to assist faculty in mapping assessment cycles. The completed templates provide the documentation to ensure assessment processes across academic disciplines.
- All academic programs submit annual assessment plans and data which are reviewed by the Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. This review ensures the integrity of the units' assessment efforts.
- The institution developed and implemented a co-curricular assessment program

with the goal of assessing administrative areas. A template was provided to university offices to ensure continuous improvement of student services. The institution shifted its assessment from reviewing administrative areas to a more student driven focus. Areas of assessment include: athletics, intramurals, Greek Life, student leadership opportunities, clubs and organizations, Ranger Research Day, study abroad, and student employment. These areas are assessed based on the three competencies of critical thinking, leadership and literacy. A meeting with the Dean, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management included review of other survey instruments utilized to assess student growth and development in the three competency areas.

- NWOSU began course redesign in 2010 to identify specific gateway courses that align with the three competencies. Faculty members provided the leadership in the course redesign project. Data provided by the institution indicated that students were receiving F and W grades at an increasing rate since the fall, 2006.The first phase of course redesign was English courses and the second phase was in mathematics. According to the data provided, students moving successfully from Math 0013 to Math 1513 increased from 4.7 percent in fall 2008 to 12.5 percent during the fall 2012.

- The institution utilizes various methods of program level assessments with the goal of program improvement. Examples provided included embedded course level evaluations and national exams. Some examples of program change provided include: adding seminars, creating new curriculum, adding developmental coursework, and adding specific program courses to strengthen the curriculum.

- The institution has an Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Committee as well as an Assessment Day Committee. The latter committee includes faculty, staff and students with the focus of implementing a day in which the university community participates in various assessment activities. In a meeting with faculty members, they spoke highly of the effectiveness of this event.

Core Component 4C: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

Subcomponent 2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met

_ Core Component is met with concerns

_ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- NWOSU hired a national consulting firm to assist with its efforts in developing an enrollment management plan for the university. The Enrollment Management Plan (12/19/2013) was developed to align with the institution's mission. NWOSU established an annual return rate goal of 65% for its first-year students. Data provided indicated uneven return rates from 2005 until 2013. The specific years this goal was met were 2007 and 2008. However, data indicate that the goal is attainable. With the exception of 2011 and 2013, when the retention rates were less than 60% the first-year retention rate has exceeded 60%. The institution has implemented intrusive advising as well as course redesign in gateway first-year courses to meet the 65% retention goal.

- The institution has a six-year cohort graduation rate of 37%. The fall 2007 cohort had a six year graduation rate that slightly exceed 39%. Thus, this goal is attainable.

- The institution has a goal of 87 percent fall to spring first-year persistence rate. Since 2007, the institution achieved this goal once—in fall 2008 with well over a 90 percent fall to spring persistence rate. The average rate hovers around 84 percent. Based on the data, 87 percent is achievable.

- The institution has a goal of retaining 75 percent of its sophomores. The last time Northwestern achieved this goal was in 2008. The institution has responded to the inability to achieve this goal by collecting data to analyze causes. Data suggest that students did not return because of financial reasons, academic problems and transferring/moved. As a result of this data, the institution has implemented retention strategies which include intrusive advising and outreach to students who do not return.

- The institution has a goal for the persistence rate for undecided majors at 78 percent from fall to spring. NWOSU has found it difficult to meet this goal. Based on data reviewed, the institution was close to meeting this goal in 2008, 2010, and 2011. According to provided data, this institution has not ever met this goal.

- To aid in its retention efforts the institution has a Retention Coordinator who collects data from an early alert system. The Coordinator responds to early alerts and follows up with students who have academic progress issues and with students who do not return for subsequent semesters. This process was substantiated during meetings with the retention coordinator, faculty members and the executive vice president. During 2013, 406 early alerts were submitted by 60 faculty members. There was no evidence provided to support the effectiveness of the early alert system.

- NWOSU collects data on student attrition and the reasons that students leave the institution. These data are gathered during Enrollment Management Committee meetings. At various meetings with campus units, including representatives from the community, many cited the energy boom as a prime reason for students leaving the institution. It was cited in these meetings that students can make a considerable amount of money working in this area.

- In 2011, the institution received a $1.5 million Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education to improve student retention and graduation rates. The institution utilized these funds to create a center for academic advising, Ranger Proud, which has a cadre of professional advisors. The responsibilities of the two advisors include implementing intrusive advising strategies.

- The institution has a first-year orientation program, Ranger Connection, to provide

students with strategies for success. Various campus units provide presentations during the program including campus police, career services, the academic success center, the retention office, and the financial aid office. Students who are provisionally admitted by appeal are required to enroll in and complete a Peak Performance Class. Based on the data provided, first-year students categorized as "at risk" are being retained at a higher rate from 75 percent in fall 2009 to 80 percent in fall 2012.

Team Determination on Criterion Four:
　_X Criterion is met
　_ Criterion is met with concerns
　_ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:
Assessment is pervasive throughout the academic and student support units of the institution. A template has been developed to guide assessment activities for the co-curricular areas which is guiding assessment in these areas. NWOSU has an ambitious plan to increase retention and graduation rates which has been uneven in its success. The last year that it met its first-year return rate was in 2008. Regarding NWOSU's six-year graduation rate, NWOSU exceeded its 37% goal with its fall 2008 cohort, but fell short with its 2006 cohort. However, NWOSU is moving in a positive direction with this goal using funding from the Title III grant which has enabled NWOSU to strengthen its retention and graduation efforts. Faculty and staff members value and implement the three competencies that drive not only the general education curriculum both also non-academic areas. Staff members were able to articulate how the three competencies, critical thinking, leadership and literacy, are embedded in their daily interaction with students. Faculty members provide leadership over curriculum and program review. Faculty spoke highly of the administrative leadership when questioned regarding course load and other university obligations. Faculty members stated they believe adminstrators listen to and consider their concerns in their planning and decision-making. Faculty members stated that their teaching requirements and non-teaching expectations did not present challenges in effective teaching in the classroom. However, in speaking with the deans and department chairs, they stated that faculty members do voice concerns of the level of work load and expectations. The institution has increased its faculty numbers from 80 to 90 and the number of faculty who possess terminal degrees has slightly increased as well.

CRITERION FIVE: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. The institution's resources, structures and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Core Component 5A: The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Subcomponent 2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

Subcomponent 3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

Subcomponent 4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

Subcomponent 5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met
_ Core Component is met with concerns
_ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- Despite a decreasing resource base, the NWOSU administrators effectively manage resources to support its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening quality in the near future. A review of several years' budgets demonstrated that the majority of the university's budgets are allocated to the Educational and General (E&G) components even though the state appropriations as a percent of the E&G allocations have been decreasing. Through effective management NWOSU has implemented a new BSEd program in agriculture, a new graduate program in American Studies, and minors in art and in writing. The priority of academics is demonstrated by the university's commitment of a majority of its resources to instructional activities.

- The university's annual budget development process is open and transparent. Department chairs and supervisors solicit budget requests for the subsequent year from faculty and staff members. Deans review the budget requests and meet with their respective vice president for discussion and to finalize the unit request. The senior staff members review the requests and develop a proposed budget. Budget hearings are held during which members of the campus community are able to ask questions and/or comment on items in the proposed budget. Faculty and staff members stated that budget requests for new allocations which do not support the strategic plan are unlikely to receive funding.

- During the fiscal year, expenditures are monitored by the University Controller and

the Vice President for Administration. Budget administrators receive monthly expense reports and are responsible for monitoring spending to ensure expenditures stay within allocations. The budget development process and oversight of expenditures are well developed and understood by members of the campus community.

- Northwestern has experienced significant fiscal challenges since the recession of 2008. ARRA funds supplemented the budget in 2010 and 2011. However, FY 2014 state appropriations ($10,283,000) were less than the funds available in 2010 ($11,283,000). State appropriations for E&G fell from 55% in FY05 to 42% in FY14. The University's CFI fell to .8 during FY 12 but corrective actions resulted in a CFI of 1.2 in FY13. The University has successfully balanced revenues and expenditures by reducing staffing and operating funds as well as by increasing other revenue sources through increased grants and donor support.

- As the team met with faculty members, staff members, and administrators evidence was presented regarding the challenges presented by Northwestern's decreasing resource base and its ability to support its plans for maintaining and strengthening educational quality in the near future. Specific issues relate to low salaries when compared with other RUSO universities, heavy teaching loads (27 hours plus overloads for many faculty members), the increasing use of adjuncts, multiple responsibilities carried by staff members, and deferred maintenance. Comments such as "feeling overwhelmed", "need TIME", "feel guilty for not providing high quality service" were expressed on several occasions by faculty and staff members.

  - Campus improvements have been made through an academic enhancement fee instituted in FY 2012 for classroom and equipment upgrades and a bond issuance to remodel the science building and provide classroom upgrades for Fine Arts. Recent fund raising efforts have been successful and the University is in the initial stages of its first capital campaign. Faculty members, staff members, and administrators are deeply committed to meeting the needs of students and the region. However, new initiatives and innovations which are necessary to address a rapidly changing environment in higher education may not be realized due to limited resources.

  - Students are assessed a technology fee of $9.25 per semester hour of enrollment. The proceeds from this fee flow into the technology budget and are used to upgrade and replace technology hardware in the computer labs on campus. Computer labs are available in academic departments and usage data show an average of 250 student sign-ins per week during the spring semester with higher usage during the fall semester. A virtual lab was opened in the Nursing department. A review of the university catalogs showed the technology fee is not listed in the cost/fees section.

  - NWOSU's mission statement and values reflect the tradition of the institution and the region while addressing future needs of Oklahoma and the surrounding region. Ethical leadership and service, critical thinking and fiscal responsibility girded with values of academic excellence, accessibility, community, diversity, and responsibility provide the baseline for the general education program, the discipline programs, and the allocation of resources through the budgeting process.

  - Conversations with constituents, including community leaders, faculty and students, indicate strong support for the institution's mission and values. The recent opening of the downtown Alva Art Center, hosting the public broadcasting

channel, distance education programs, and the addition of the Agricultural Education Program provide visible evidence of the institution's commitment to its mission and values.

- Faculty members have the appropriate credentials to teach within their assigned discipline. Most faculty members have master's or doctoral degrees. Those with baccalaureate degrees are within the skills and trades programs as is appropriate for the professional training required. New faculty members participate in a three-day orientation program focused on university policies and procedures and expectations for faculty members. A review of staff members' credentials verify they are appropriately qualified by education and/or experience for the positions they hold in student support units (e.g. financial aid, housing, counseling, advising). New staff members participate in a one-day orientation focused on university policies, procedures, and expectations for their performance.

Core Component 5B: The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

Subcomponent 2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

Subcomponent 3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met
                                      _ Core Component is met with concerns
                                      _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- Northwestern is governed by the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) with oversight by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). The administrative structure for the University includes the senior management team, student government association, faculty senate, professional staff council, and staff council. These formal organizations are complemented by a number of standing committees and task forces convened as needed. Faculty members, staff members, and students indicated they have ready access to the President and other administrators, are involved in decision making, and informed of campus issues. Campus representatives repeatedly noted the positive, collegial, supportive campus environment as a highly valued asset that supports collaboration across all groups.
- Meetings and informal conversations with faculty and staff members demonstrated that the NWOSU administrators are committed to shared governance. Faculty and staff members described their participation in open and transparent decision-making processes. A spirit of collegiality was observed during group meetings and discussions.

- During the visit, the team met with two members of the RUSO board. The conversation demonstrated the board members' knowledge of NWOSU including the resource challenges facing the institution and the contributions the members of the campus community make to the greater community and to the region. The conversation also demonstrated the board members' commitment and passion for NWOSU. The RUSO board members are aware of the financial challenges facing NWOSU due to reduced funding of higher education and described their advocacy on behalf of increased funding for all the state universities. RUSO members are active participants in NWOSU activities and programs.

Core Component 5C: The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

  Subcomponent 1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

  Subcomponent 2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

  Subcomponent 3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

  Subcomponent 4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

  Subcomponent 5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Team Determination: X Core Component is met
                            _ Core Component is met with concerns
                            _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- Northwestern has developed a strategic plan, Rising Above 2011-2015, with widespread input from campus constituencies and community partners. The Core Values flow from the plan which also drives the budgeting process. Development of budget priorities is transparent and inclusive with budget hearings open to the campus. Group meetings and informal conversations with individuals indicated appreciation for the process and often stated that if a request was not related to the strategic plan, it would not receive favorable consideration for funding.
- One specific example of the use of data and mission to drive budgetary expenditures was presented in faculty discussions regarding how the decision for allocation of increased faculty lines was made. The Criterion III subcommittee stated that faculty workload issues were analyzed, departments and academic deans brought forth needs and in budget meetings these were discussed as they aligned with the institutional priorities. The President was recognized as making the final decision, but the consensus in the discussion was that voices were heard, data were considered, and the decision was reasoned and logical. Two new faculty lines were added after program assessment activities showed a need for more general education courses. The new faculty members teach sections of MATH 1513 (College Algebra) and PHSC 1114 (General Physical Science) to meet enrollment demands.

- The strategic plan guides other planning initiatives such as the enrollment management plan, campus master plan, diversity plan, and athletic strategic plan. The university strategic plan is evaluated annually and goals for the next year are developed to ensure the plan remains current and responsive to emerging directions.
- Evidence of the strategic plan's coordination of activities on the campus is evident in that the core values articulated within the strategic plan (critical thinking; cultural, social, and academic literacy; and leadership) are mirrored within general education and assessment documents, as well as in conversations across the various stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, community members, and governing board). The catalog clearly indicates the importance of these values, and all students participate in leadership, critical thinking development, and cultural/social literacy components of the general education program and in disciplinary program assessments.
- Although the current economy is quite robust due to the oil mining boom, the administration and governing board recognize that this may not be a long term condition for the region. Strategic enrollment management has increased the enrollment to the largest since the early 1970s. Additionally, transfer students' assimilation into the institution is quite strong, with more transfer students graduating with degrees than the size of the freshman cohort. Specific and deliberate activities are in place and in planning to increase student persistence and success, which will also help stabilize funding for the institution.
- The Enrollment Management Plan (12-19-13) includes a goal of increasing international student enrollment by 10 percent for fall 2014 and to increase the growing minority enrollment by 5 percent for fall 2014. Each of these goals includes action plans which identify the individuals/offices responsible for the activities developed to meet each goal. The Enrollment Management Committee reviews the progress towards each goal and updates the plan annually.

Core Component 5D: The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

Subcomponent 1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

Subcomponent 2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Team Determination: _X_Core Component is met
                          _ Core Component is met with concerns
                          _ Core Component is not met

Evidence:
- Northwestern has developed an Institutional Assessment template to guide the review of administrative areas' performance. The goal of the review process is to ensure continuous improvement of the units by identifying goals, seeking feedback from constituents, reporting results and implementing changes. Discussion with staff members from administrative units provided specific examples of changes that have occurred as a result of assessment activities including improvement in financial aid services to students, upgrades in residence halls, and installation of

safety features such as cameras in parking lots and increased outdoor lighting.

- The Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness guides assessment and evaluation activities to move the university towards excellence. The Director, Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness is supported in her planning and work by an Assessment Committee and an Assessment Day Committee. The Director and the Committees review assessment reports and data and make recommendations to the President and Senior Staff about program, policy, and procedures revisions/modifications needed.

- During the group meeting, students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input through surveys administered during Assessment Day as well as the opportunity to offer suggestions directly to campus administrators or through student government. While all suggestions have not been implemented, often due to budgetary constraints, evidence was provided to demonstrate the campus continuously strives to improve performance.

- To help offset the decreasing allocations from the state and to expand programs and student support services, the university hired a Coordinator of Sponsored Programs in 2008 to increase grant funding. Resources from grants increased from $637,000 in FY2007 to $2,208,000 in FY2013. Funded grants included Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math and Science, Title III, the Oklahoma Small Business Development Center, and the Child Welfare Professional Enhancement Program.

- The university has a system of standing committees and task forces to assist with governance. The committees provide oversight of various functions including assessment and effectiveness, academic affairs, student affairs, diversity, and general education. The 12 members of the Senior Staff meet monthly to oversee university operations and implementation of the strategic plan.

- The faculty members in each Department/Division are responsible for their programs and participate in program modifications and program reviews. For programs with specialized accreditations, faculty members are actively involved in setting admission requirements, student retention and graduation policies to ensure continued compliance with the accreditation agencies. Several departments (e.g. Nursing and Business) have student advisory committees to provide advice and guidance regarding the quality of the programs.

- The members of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) are members of the university's athletic teams. The SAAC works to provide community among athletes of all the teams, encourages and fosters the athletes' commitment to service on campus and in the greater community, and represents the athletic program locally and at conferences.

Team Determination on Criterion Five:

    _X_ Criterion is met

    __ Criterion is met with concerns

    __ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion: Northwestern State Oklahoma State University offers a highly collegial supportive environment that was often described as a "family". Efforts to be inclusive through a broad based committee structure, including an open and transparent budgeting process, are evident throughout the campus. Planning documents which drive

decision making are continually updated to reflect emerging needs and priorities. The faculty and staff members are committed to student learning and to the University as a whole. Salaries for both faculty and staff are among the lowest of the RUSO institutions, workloads are described as heavy leading to feelings of being overwhelmed and concern that student needs are not adequately met, and deferred maintenance was evident in many of the buildings and grounds. NWOSU's decreasing funding level may negatively impact the University's ability to maintain and strengthen its quality in the future.

Consultation from the Team: During conversations with administrators, faculty members, staff members, and students it was repeatedly acknowledged that NWOSU faces challenges as a result of reduced state support for higher education. Based on these conversations, the team offers the following consultation to the institution:

> Continue to work with the Faculty Senate, the Staff Council, the Professional Staff Council, and the Student Government Association to identify ways to conserve and re-direct resources. These considerations might include the following:
> - Review the class size data to determine if a small increase in students per class will allow for fewer adjunct faculty usage;
> - Significantly increasing student enrollment and retention could positively impact NWOSU's revenue. The team encourages NWOSU to consider applying for admission to the HLC Academy on Student Persistence and Completion for support in these activities.
> - Consider posting the catalogs and course schedules only online to reduce printing costs. Conversations during the student meeting indicate that many students only access these documents online.
> - Consider publishing documents (course schedule) in a web-based format rather than text-driven where cross-links would allow for easier navigation to specific information.
> - Review faculty members' out-of-class assignments and responsibilities (academic advising, sponsorship of student organizations) and staff members' dual position responsibilities to determine which are essential and which could be revised or minimized to reduce workload.
> - The results of deferred maintenance are evident on campus. Areas needing attention include building exteriors, walkways, and sidewalks. As plans move forward for the upcoming capital campaign, ensure that these areas are high on the priority list for use of the proceeds of the campaign.

V. TEAM RECOMMENDATION

A. Affiliation Status

1. **Recommendation:** Continue HLC accreditation of Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

2. **Timing for Next Reaffirmation Evaluation: 2023-2024**

3. **Rationale:** Northwestern Oklahoma State University meets the five criteria for accreditation and the federal compliance requirements. Ample evidence was presented to the team to support the programs and planning activities designed to ensure the university adheres to the criteria for accreditation and the federal compliance requirements. Although the university's resource base is decreasing and salaries are among the lowest in the state university system, administrators and faculty members work together to make adjustments to expenditures and to increase funding through grants and fundraising. The university is ready to implement its first capital campaign to address deferred maintenance items across campus. Students confirmed their academic programs are rigorous, that faculty and staff members are accessible and supportive, and that many opportunities exist for them to participate in co-curricular activities through academic and non-academic student organizations and groups, athletics, and theatrical and musical productions.

4. **Criterion-related Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):**

   Monitoring: **None**

   Rationale:

5. **Federal Compliance Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):**

   Monitoring: **None**

   Rationale:

B. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

VI. EMBEDDED CHANGES IN AFFILIATION STATUS

Did the team review any of the following types of change in the course of its evaluation? Check Yes or No for each type of change.

( ) Yes (X) No Legal Status

( ) Yes (X) No Degree Level

( ) Yes (X) No Program Change

( ) Yes (X) No Distance or Correspondence Education

( ) Yes (X) No Contractual or Consortial Arrangements

( ) Yes (X) No Mission or Student Body

( ) Yes (X) No Clock or Credit Hour

( ) Yes (X) No Additional Locations or Campuses

( ) Yes (X) No Access to Notification

( ) Yes   (X) No   Access to Expedited Desk Review

( ) Yes   (X) No   Teach-out Arrangement

( ) Yes   (X) No   Other Change

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

NONE

Appendix A
Interactions with Constituencies

University President
Vice President for Administration
Executive Vice President
Associate Vice President for University Relations
Dean, School of Arts & Sciences
Dean, School of Professional Studies
Dean, NWOSU Enid Campus
Dean, NWOSU Woodward Campus
Dean, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
RUSO Board Members (2)
Faculty Group Session (38)
Faculty members of Self-Study Committees
Staff Group Session (47)
Student Group Session (23)
Community Representative Group Session (13)
Strategic Planning Committee (19)
Assessment Committee (11)
Criterion 1 Self-Study Committee (10)
Criterion 3 Self-Study Committee (13)
Criterion 5 Self-Study Committee (11)
Diversity Committee (9)
Director, NWOSU Libraries
Director, Academic Success Center
Director Student Life & Counseling
Director, Financial Aid/Scholarships
Director of Recruitment
Director Information Technology
Director of Athletics
Director Assessment & Institutional Effectiveness
Former Director Assessment & Institutional Effectiveness
Chief of Police
ITV Coordinator
Registrar
International Student Advisor
Human Resources Director

Appendix B
Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

Northwestern Oklahoma State University Self-Study Document
Rising Again – Northwestern Oklahoma State University Strategic Plan 2011-2015
Northwestern Oklahoma State University Enrollment Management Plan 12/19/2013
Diversity Plan for Northwestern Oklahoma State University 2011-2015
NWOSU Academic Plan 2013-2014
Faculty and Staff Personnel files (20)
Undergraduate Catalog 2013-2014
Graduate Catalog 2013-2014
Faculty Handbook 2013-2014
Employee Handbook 2013-2014
Student Handbook 2013-2014
Student-Athlete Handbook 2013-2014
Student Complaint File
Report of the Task Force on General Education, February 1, 2007
Regional State University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) meeting agenda and minutes
(November 8, 2013; January 10, 2014, February 21, 2014)
Northwestern Oklahoma State University websites
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education website and Policy Manual
Regional University System of Oklahoma website and Policy Manual
Online usage data for the NWOSU Library
Summer Academy Schedule 2012
Summer Academy Schedule 2013

Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

Effective September 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014

Evaluation of Federal Compliance Components

The team reviews each item identified in the Federal Compliance Guide and documents its findings in the appropriate spaces below. Teams should expect institutions to address these requirements with brief narrative responses and provide supporting documentation, where necessary. Generally, if the team finds in the course of this review that there are substantive issues related to the institution's ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised in appropriate sections of the Assurance Section of the Team Report or highlighted as such in the appropriate AQIP Quality Checkup Report.

This worksheet outlines the information the team should review in relation to the federal requirements and provides spaces for the team's conclusions in relation to each requirement. The team should refer to the Federal Compliance Guide for Institutions and Evaluation Teams in completing this worksheet. The Guide identifies applicable Commission policies and an explanation of each requirement. **The worksheet becomes an appendix to the team's report. If the team recommends monitoring on a Federal Compliance requirement in the form of a report or focused visit, it should be included in the Federal Compliance monitoring sections below and added to the appropriate section in the team report template.**

Institution under review: Northwestern Oklahoma State University

_____

Assignment of Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Address this requirement by completing the "Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours" in the Appendix at the end of this document.

Institutional Records of 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 since the last comprehensive evaluation.

1. Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints as well as the history of complaints received and processed with a particular focus in that history on the past three or four years.

2. Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.

3. Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into its review and planning processes.

4. Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.

5. Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.

6. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

_X__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

___　The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

___　The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

___　The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: NWOSU has policies and procedures for receiving and addressing student complaints which are published in the Student Handbook 2013-2014. The university differentiates between formal complaints, those that are written and submitted to a university administrator, and informal concerns, that are reported verbally to an administrator, usually the Dean, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, and are resolved appropriately. A form is available on the university website for submitting formal complaints. The team reviewed the Student Complaint file in the Resource Room on campus which contained nine formal complaints that had been submitted between 10/20/2008 and 10/19/2013. Each submission included the original complaint and described the resolutions reached. The file verified that formal student complaints are addressed promptly and resolved appropriately.

Additional monitoring, if any: **NONE**

Publication of 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.

1. Review the institution's transfer policies.

2. Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and program-specific articulation agreements.

3. Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its web site) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.

Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions and any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. Note whether the institution appropriately lists its articulation agreements with other institutions on its website or elsewhere. The information the institution provides should include any program-specific articulation agreements in place and should clearly identify program-specific articulation agreements as such. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution under Commission review: 1) accepts credit from the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; 2) sends credits to the other institution(s) in the articulation agreements that it accepts; or 3) both offers and accepts credits with the other institution(s).

4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

__X_ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

___ The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: The NWOSU policy on transfer policies and requirements are published in the 2013-2014 undergraduate and graduate catalogs and are listed on the University website. The policies state the definitions of transfer students and include the admission requirements these applicants must meet. The transfer policy includes a description of the articulation agreements between the NWOSU nursing program and selected career technology centers in the region. Students are advised of when transcripts need to be received and the process to follow to petition for validation of transfer credits.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Practices for Verification of Student Identity

The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education and appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students and to protect their privacy.

1. Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams, and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.

2. Check that any fees related to verification and not included in tuition are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance courses (e.g., a proctoring fee paid by students on the day of the proctored exam).

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

   __X_ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___ The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: NWOSU uses the Blackboard Learning Management System for all online courses. Blackboard requires users to enter a unique username and password to gain access to the course site. NWOSU policy requires that at least one exam each semester in each online course is proctored. Students may arrange to take the proctored test at one of the three university campuses or at one of the educational centers throughout the region. Beginning in fall 2013, the university implemented the Remote Proctor Now Program. Students using Remote Proctor Now must show a photo identification using a webcam before gaining access to the exam. Additionally, students' activities during the exam are monitored and videotaped by Remote Proctor Now staff using the webcam. If suspicious activity is noted, the videotapes are submitted to university staff members for review and potential follow-up.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Title IV Program Responsibilities

The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program.

This requirement has several components the institution and team must address:

- *General Program Requirements. The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*

- *Financial Responsibility Requirements. The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion Five if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)*

- *Default Rates. The institution has provided the Commission with information about its three year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note for 2012 and thereafter institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact Commission staff.*

- *Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures. The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*

- *Student Right to Know. The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion One if the team determines that disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)*

- *Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance. The institution has provided the Commission with information about policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically in the course catalog or student handbook. Note that the Commission does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance but does anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.*

- *Contractual Relationships. The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon*

as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Contractual Change Application on the Commission's web site for more information.)

▪ ***Consortial Relationships.*** *The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Consortial Change Application on the Commission's web site for more information.)*

1. Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.

2. Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution's compliance or whether the institution's auditor in the A-133 has raised any issues about the institution's compliance as well as look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.

3. If an institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the federal compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.

4. If issues have been raised with the institution's compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution's ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity (*Core Component 2.A and 2.B*).

5. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

   _X__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___ The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

   Comments: NWOSU is in compliance with all Title IV program requirements and responsibilities. There have been no findings or DOE reviews in ten years. A review of the university's financial indicator ratios showed that the university meets the standards. The external audits have not resulted in findings for 10 years. The University's student default rates are published on the institution's website and shows acceptable rates for the most recent reporting periods. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) has implemented a program to help students handle their student loan debt and not fall into default. The team reviewed the most recent Clery report. Data demonstrates a very low crime rate on campus and the surrounding areas. A meeting with the Chief of Police confirmed the accuracy of the crime rate data. NWOSU is in the third year of candidacy to move from the NAIA to the NCAA Division II athletic conference. A team recently visited campus to review the implementation of the NCAA requirements and standards. Financial aid availability and default data are available on the university's website. The information and data for each component of the Students Right to Know requirements are available in a variety of university publications. The requirements for students to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress are published in the university's catalogs and in the student handbook. Staff members in the Registrar's office calculate the SAP and notify students who do not meet the standards. An appeals process is in place for students who do not meet the SAP. NWOSU has no contractual relationships with third party entities. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) established the adult completion

program, Reach Higher. The program is administered by a consortium of nine Oklahoma universities all of which are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Required Information for Students and the Public

1. Verify that the institution publishes fair, accurate, and complete information on the following topics: the calendar, grading, admissions, academic program requirements, tuition and fees, and refund policies.

2. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

    _X__The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

    ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

    ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

    ___ The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

    Comments: NWOSU publications (catalogs, handbooks, website) were reviewed. All information, policies, and procedures required under this requirement were found to be appropriately published and explained.

    Additional monitoring, if any:

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

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.

1. Review the institution's disclosure about its accreditation status with the Commission to determine whether the information it provides is accurate and complete, appropriately formatted and contains the Commission's web address.

2. Review institutional disclosures about its relationship with other accrediting agencies for accuracy and for appropriate consumer information, particularly regarding the link between specialized/professional accreditation and the licensure necessary for employment in many professional or specialized areas.

3. Review the institution's catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, and information provided by the institution's advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate information to current and prospective students about its accreditation, placement or licensure, program requirements, etc.

4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

    _X__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

___   The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

___   The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

___   The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: The NWOSU publications were reviewed. All of the relationships between the university and accrediting agencies (HLC) and specialized program organizations are identified. The HLC Hallmark is displayed appropriately on the institution's website.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Review of Student Outcome Data

1. Review the student outcome data the institution collects to determine whether it is appropriate and sufficient based on the kinds of academic programs it offers and the students it serves.

2. Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about academic programs and requirements and to determine its effectiveness in achieving its educational objectives.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

   _X_   The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

   ___   The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___   The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___   The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

NWOSU staff members collect data regarding student retention and persistence, and also average class sizes and specific course enrollments. Conversations with the executive vice president, academic deans and department chairs revealed that these data are used to drive decisions regarding allocation of resources and personnel. Campus conversations also revealed a strong understanding of program assessment and student outcomes in learning, skills, and attitudes. Evidence of this can be seen in the revision of the remedial/transitional English courses that has occurred and the mathematics revision which is in progress.

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any:

Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies

The institution has documented that it discloses accurately to the public and the Commission its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

The team has considered any potential implications for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of sanction or loss of status by the institution with any other accrediting agency or loss of authorization in any state.

Important note: If the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial, or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of the other agency in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report and provide its rationale for recommending Commission status in light of this action. In addition, the team must contact the staff liaison immediately if it learns that the institution is at risk of losing its degree authorization or lacks such authorization in any state in which the institution meets state presence requirements.

1. Review the information, particularly any information that indicates the institution is under sanction or show-cause or has had its status with any agency suspended, revoked, or terminated, as well as the reasons for such actions.

2. Determine whether this information provides any indication about the institution's capacity to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. Should the team learn that the institution is at risk of losing, or has lost, its degree or program authorization in any state in which it meets state presence requirements, it should contact the Commission staff liaison immediately.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

   _X__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___ The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

   Comments: NWOSU has specialized program accreditations from the American Council on Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP); Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN); Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP); and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The university is in good standing with these agencies although the university will have a focus visit from a team from CAEP in 2015 in response to concerns about Standard 1 and Standard 2 identified in October 2013.

   Additional monitoring, if any:

Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment

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

1. Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including sample announcements, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public and seek comments.

2. Evaluate the comments to determine whether the team needs to follow-up on any issues through its interviews and review of documentation during the visit process.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

    _X__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

    ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

    ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

    ___ The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

    Comments: NWOSU used a variety of media sources to announce the continuing accreditation visit by the HLC team. Notices of the visit were posted in campus and local media and on the university website. Additionally, announcement of the visit was made at a variety of campus events. Large posters focused on accreditation and the upcoming visit were posted in numerous places around campus. One third party comment was received by the HLC. The comment was unsigned and was not given to the team for follow-up.

    Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list materials reviewed here:

> Undergraduate catalog 2013-2014
> Graduate catalog 2013-2014
> NWOSU Viewbook
> Course syllabi (selected)
> Program descriptions (selected)
> Faculty Handbook 2013-2014
> Student Handbook 2013-2014
> NWOSU Spring 2014 Course Schedule
> NWOSU Fall 2013 Course Schedule
> NWOSU website
> NWOSU Financial Aid website
> Student Complaint file
> Annual Report on Campus Crime and Emergency Procedures

Appendix

Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Program Length and Tuition, Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours

Institution under review: Northwestern Oklahoma State University

_____

Part 1: Program Length and Tuition

Instructions

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).

Review the *"Worksheet for Use by Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours"* as well as the course catalog and other attachments required for the institutional worksheet.

Worksheet on Program Length and Tuition

A. Answer the Following Questions

Are the institution's degree program requirements within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

__X__ Yes   ____ No

Comments: NWOSU adheres to the policies established by the Oklahoma State Regents on Higher Education (OSRHE) related to assignment of credits and program length.

Are the institution's tuition costs across programs within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

_X___ Yes   ____ No

Comments:

B. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's program length and tuition practices?

____ Yes   _X_ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

Part 2: Assignment of Credit Hours

Instructions

In assessing the appropriateness of the credit allocations provided by the institution the team should complete the following steps:

1. Review the Worksheet completed by the institution, which provides information about an institution's academic calendar and an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats, and the institution's policy and procedures for awarding credit hours. Note that such policies may be at the institution or department level and may be differentiated by such distinctions as undergraduate or graduate, by delivery format, etc.

2. Identify the institution's principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level. The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:

    -   Associate's degrees = 60 hours

    -   Bachelor's degrees = 120 hours

    -   Master's or other degrees beyond the Bachelor's = at least 30 hours beyond the Bachelor's degree

    -   Note that one quarter hour = .67 semester hour

    -   Any exceptions to this requirement must be explained and justified.

3. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution.

    -   At semester-based institutions courses will be typically be from two to four credit hours (or approximately five quarter hours) and extend approximately 14-16 weeks (or approximately 10 weeks for a quarter). The description in the catalog should indicate a course that is appropriately rigorous and has collegiate expectations for objectives and workload. Identify courses/disciplines that seem to depart markedly from these expectations.

    -   Institutions may have courses that are in compressed format, self-paced, or otherwise alternatively structured. Credit assignments should be reasonable. (For example, as a full-time load for a traditional semester is typically 15 credits, it might be expected that the norm for a full-time load in a five-week term is 5 credits; therefore, a single five-week course awarding 10 credits would be subject to inquiry and justification.)

    -   Teams should be sure to scan across disciplines, delivery mode, and types of academic activities.

    -   Federal regulations allow for an institution to have two credit-hour awards: one award for Title IV purposes and following the above federal definition and one for the purpose of defining progression in and completion of an academic program at that institution. Commission procedure also permits this approach.

4. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course. Pay particular attention to alternatively-structured or other courses with particularly high credit hours for a course completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor.

5. **Sampling.** Teams will need to sample some number of degree programs based on the headcount at the institution and the range of programs it offers.

- At a minimum, teams should anticipate sampling at least a few programs at each degree level.

- For institutions with several different academic calendars or terms or with a wide range of academic programs, the team should expand the sample size appropriately to ensure that it is paying careful attention to alternative format and compressed and accelerated courses.

- Where the institution offers the same course in more than one format, the team is advised to sample across the various formats to test for consistency.

- For the programs the team sampled, the team should review syllabi and intended learning outcomes for several of the courses in the program, identify the contact hours for each course, and expectations for homework or work outside of instructional time.

- The team should pay particular attention to alternatively-structured and other courses that have high credit hours and less frequently scheduled interaction between the students and the instructor.

- Provide information on the samples in the appropriate space on the worksheet.

6. Consider the following questions:

- Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?

- Does that policy address the amount of instructional or contact time assigned and homework typically expected of a student with regard to credit hours earned?

- For institutions with courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy also equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe allotted for the course?

- Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

- If so, is the institution's assignment of credit to courses reflective of its policy on the award of credit?

7. If the answers to the above questions lead the team to conclude that there may be a problem with the credit hours awarded the team should recommend the following:

- If the problem involves a poor or insufficiently-detailed institutional policy, the team should call for a revised policy as soon as possible by requiring a monitoring report within no more than one year that demonstrates the institution has a revised policy and evidence of implementation.

- If the team identifies an application problem and that problem is isolated to a few courses or single department or division or learning format, the team should call for follow-up activities (monitoring report or focused evaluation) to ensure that the problems are corrected within no more than one year.

- If the team identifies systematic non-compliance across the institution with regard to the award of credit, the team should notify Commission staff immediately and work with staff to

design appropriate follow-up activities. The Commission shall understand systematic noncompliance to mean that the institution lacks any policies to determine the award of academic credit or that there is an inappropriate award of institutional credit not in conformity with the policies established by the institution or with commonly accepted practices in higher education across multiple programs or divisions or affecting significant numbers of students.

Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours

A. **Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team** (see #5 of instructions in completing this section)

Course Syllabi Reviewed

- ENGL 1213
- ENGL 0123
- AGRI 1124
- AGRI 3112
- BIOL 1124
- BIOL 3115
- BUS 2033
- BUS 3953
- ACCT 2123
- MATH 2215
- SPAN 1114
- NURS 3037
- HED 2303
- PSYC 5822
- PSYC 4222
- ACCT 2003 – online
- CJUS 2213 – online
- EDUC 5103 – online
- HIST 1213 – online
- MATH 1513 – online
- SPAN 1114
- NURS 3037
- HED 2303
- PSYC 5822
- PSYC 4222
- ACCT 2003 – online
- CJUS 2213 – online
- EDUC 5103 – online
- HIST 1213 – online MGMT 4343 – online
- NURS 4206 – online
- SOC 3523 – online
- EDUC 5943 – online

Program Descriptions Reviewed

- Certificate in Accounting
- Certificate in Entrepreneurial Studies

- Certificate in Personal Finance
- Certificate in Human Resources Management
- BS Agriculture
- BS Agriculture Education
- BS Biology
- BS Biology: Health Science and Natural History option
- BS Chemistry
- BBA Accounting
- BS Computer Science
- BS Criminal Justice – Law Enforcement
- BS Elementary Education
- BSEd Natural Science
- BS Organizational Leadership
- BA English
- BA English Education
- BA Spanish
- BS Mass Communication
- BS Mathematics
- BA Music
- BME Music Education
- BA Speech & Theatre
- BAAS Technical Management

B. Answer the Following Questions

1) **Institutional Policies on Credit Hours**

Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution? (Note that for this question and the questions that follow an institution may have a single comprehensive policy or multiple policies.)

__X__ Yes   ____ No

   Comments:

Does that policy relate the amount of instructional or contact time provided and homework typically expected of a student to the credit hours awarded for the classes offered in the delivery formats offered by the institution? (Note that an institution's policy must go beyond simply stating that it awards credit solely based on assessment of student learning and should also reference instructional time.)

__X__ Yes   ____ No

   Comments:

For institutions with non-traditional courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe and utilizing the activities allotted for the course?

__X__ Yes   ____ No

   Comments:

Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

__X__ Yes   ____ No

   Comments:

2) **Application of Policies**

Are the course descriptions and syllabi in the sample academic programs reviewed by the team appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

_X_ Yes   ____ No

Comments: A review of the 2013-2014 course syllabi for courses offered through various modalities (ITV, online, or face-to-face) reveal strong similarities in student learning objectives. Syllabi for different sections of the course are the same or similar. The 2013-2014 graduate catalog and course schedule indicate that courses offered at both the undergraduate and graduate level will have different learning expectations for students. Syllabi for dual numbered courses (400/500) articulated the addition of a required research paper for graduate students. Courses dual numbered 300/500 appear to have two additional differentiations – additional questions on exams and a research paper. Students cannot take the 400 level course within their undergraduate program and then enroll in the same course at the 500 level in graduate program as stated in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs.

Are the learning outcomes in the sample reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit?

_X___ Yes   ____ No

    Comments:

If the institution offers any alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, were the course descriptions and syllabi for those courses appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of academic credit?

__X_ Yes   ____ No

    Comments:

If the institution offers alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonably capable of being fulfilled by students in the time allocated to justify the allocation of credit?

_X__ Yes   ____ No

     Comments:

Is the institution's actual assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution reflective of its policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

__X_ Yes   ____ No

    Comments:

C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Review the responses provided in this section. If the team has responded "no" to any of the questions above, the team will need to assign Commission follow-up to assure that the institution comes into compliance with expectations regarding the assignment of credit hours.

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's credit hour policies and practices?

____ Yes   __X_ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

D. Identify and Explain Any Findings of Systematic Non-Compliance in One or More Educational Programs with Commission Policies Regarding the Credit Hour

Part 3: Clock Hours

Does the institution offer any degree or certificate programs in clock hours?

_____ Yes   __X__ No

Does the institution offer any degree or certificate programs that must be reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs?

_____ Yes   __X__ No

If the answer to either question is "Yes," complete this part of the form.

Instructions

This worksheet is <u>not</u> intended for teams to evaluate whether an institution has assigned credit hours relative to contact hours in accordance with the Carnegie definition of the credit hour. This worksheet solely addresses those programs reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes.

Complete this worksheet **only if** the institution offers any degree or certificate programs in clock hours OR that must be reported to the U.S. Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs. Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definitions per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. Clock-hour programs might include teacher education, nursing, or other programs in licensed fields.

For these programs Federal regulations require that they follow the federal formula listed below. If there are no deficiencies identified by the accrediting agency in the institution's overall policy for awarding semester or quarter credit, accrediting agency may provide permission for the institution to provide less instruction provided that the student's work outside class in addition to direct instruction meets the applicable quantitative clock hour requirements noted below.

Federal Formula for Minimum Number of Clock Hours of Instruction (34 CFR §668.8)

1 semester or trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction
1 quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction

Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution's requirement for student work outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour include at least 20 semester hours.

Worksheet on Clock Hours

A. Answer the Following Questions

Does the institution's credit to clock hour formula match the federal formula?

_____ Yes   _____ No

     Comments:

If the credit to clock hour conversion numbers are less than the federal formula, indicate what specific requirements there are, if any, for student work outside of class?

Did the team determine that the institution's credit hour policies are reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that if the team answers "No" to this question, it should recommend follow-up monitoring in section C below.)

_____ Yes   _____ No

      Comments:

Did the team determine in reviewing the assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution that it was reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

_____ Yes   _____ No

      Comments:

B. Does the team approve variations, if any, from the federal formula in the institution's credit to clock hour conversion?

_____ Yes   _____ No

(Note that the team may approve a lower conversion rate than the federal rate as noted above provided the team found no issues with the institution's policies or practices related to the credit hour and there is sufficient student work outside of class as noted in the instructions.)

C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's clock hour policies and practices?

_____ Yes   _____ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS WORKSHEET

INSTITUTION and STATE: Northwestern Oklahoma State University OK

TYPE OF REVIEW*:* Comprehensive Evaluation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:

DATES OF REVIEW: 04/07/2014 - 04/09/2014

☐ No Change in Statement of Affiliation Status

Nature of Organization

CONTROL: Public

RECOMMENDATION: nc

DEGREES AWARDED: Bachelors, Masters

RECOMMENDATION: nc

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS:
Accreditation at the Master's level is limited to the programs offered at the time of the most recent comprehensive visit.

RECOMMENDATION: nc

APPROVAL OF NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS:
Prior Commission approval required.

RECOMMENDATION: nc

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES:
Approved for distance education courses and programs.

RECOMMENDATION: nc

ACCREDITATION ACTIVITIES:

Multi Campus Visits, Multi Campus Visit:

RECOMMENDATION: None

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION: 2004 - 2005

YEAR FOR NEXT REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION: 2013 - 2014

RECOMMENDATION: 2023-24

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE WORKSHEET

INSTITUTION and STATE: 1627 Northwestern Oklahoma State University OK

TYPE OF REVIEW: PEAQ: Comprehensive Evaluation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:

☒   No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

Programs leading to Undergraduate	Program Distribution
Associates	0
Bachelors	37

Programs leading to Graduate	
Masters	3
Specialist	0
Doctors	0

Certificate programs	
Certificate	0

Recommended Change:

Off-Campus Activities:
In State - Present Activity
Campuses: None.

Additional Locations:
Northwestern Oklahoma State University - Enid, OK
Oklahoma Panhandle State University - Goodwell, OK
James Crabtree Correctional Center - Helena, OK
University Center of Ponca City - Ponca City, OK
Northwestern Oklahoma State University - Woodward, OK

Recommended Change:

Out Of State - Present Activity
Campuses: None.

Additional Locations: None.

Recommended Change:

Out of USA - <u>Present Activity</u>
Campuses: None.

Additional Locations: None.

Recommended Change:

Distance Education Programs:
<u>Present Offerings:</u>
Bachelor 13.12 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods
Bachelor of Science in Education - Elementary Education Internet

Bachelor 13.12 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods
Bachelor of Science in Education - Elementary Education One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 13.1210 Early Childhood Education and Teaching Bachelor of Science in Education - Early Childhood Education Internet

Bachelor 13.1210 Early Childhood Education and Teaching Bachelor of Science in Education - Early Childhood Education One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 51.3801 Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse Bachelor of Science in Nursing Internet

Bachelor 51.3801 Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse Bachelor of Science in Nursing One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 11.0101 Computer and Information Sciences, General Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Internet

Bachelor 11.0101 Computer and Information Sciences, General Bachelor of Science in Computer Science One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General Bachelor of Business Administration Internet

Bachelor 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General Bachelor of Business Administration One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 52.0301 Accounting Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting Internet

Bachelor 52.0301 Accounting Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 54.01 History Bachelor of Arts in History Internet

Bachelor 54.01 History Bachelor of Arts in History One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 43.0107 Criminal Justice/Police Science Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Internet

Bachelor 43.0107 Criminal Justice/Police Science Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 30.99 Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other Barchelor of Arts in General Studies Internet

Bachelor 30.99 Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other Barchelor of Arts in General Studies One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 42.0101 Psychology, General Bachelor of Science in Psychology Internet

Bachelor 42.0101 Psychology, General Bachelor of Science in Psychology One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 44.07 Social Work Bachelor of Social Work Internet

Bachelor 44.07 Social Work Bachelor of Social Work One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 45.11 Sociology Bachelor of Arts in Sociology Internet

Bachelor 45.11 Sociology Bachelor of Arts in Sociology One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership Internet

Bachelor 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership One-way or Two Way Transmission

Master 42.2803 Counseling Psychology Master of Counseling Psychology Internet

Master 42.2803 Counseling Psychology Master of Counseling Psychology One-way or Two Way Transmission

Master 13.12 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods Master of Education Internet

Master 13.12 Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods Master of Education One-way or Two Way Transmission

Bachelor 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Technical Management. Internet

Bachelor 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Technical Management. One-way or Two Way Transmission

Recommended Change:

Correspondence Education Programs:
Present Offerings:

None.

Recommended Change:

Contractual Relationships:
<u>Present Offerings:</u>
None.

Recommended Change:

Consortial Relationships:
<u>Present Offerings:</u>
Bachelor 30.9999 Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other Bachelor - 30.9999 Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other (Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership)

Recommended Change: