

## **HLC Team 4 July 1 Report**

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***Preparing for the Future-University Planning & Continued Effectiveness-The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.***

### **Core Component 2a: The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.**

**The organization's planning documents reflect a sound understanding of the organization's current capacity.**

Northeastern State University is engaged in a dynamic period of strategic planning which is realistically looking at future opportunities in light of the its current environment. NSU's strategic plan is wholly driven by the mission of the university. The current period of planning is also informed by several earlier planning efforts on the part of the university. The most recent earlier effort was the 2007 Strategic Plan. This plan offered the following Mission Statement:

Founded on the rich educational heritage of the Cherokee Nation, the campuses of Northeastern State University provide our diverse communities a broad array of lifelong learning, undergraduate, graduate and professional doctoral degree programs. Through quality teaching, research and scholarly activities, service to local and professional communities, and high expectations, our dedicated faculty and staff provide a friendly learning environment where students are prepared to achieve socially responsible career and personal goals for success in a challenging global society.

The 2007 Strategic Plan also articulated the following Vision Statement:

As Oklahoma's premier regional university, Northeastern State University endeavors to prepare students to succeed as global citizens by providing exceptional undergraduate, graduate, and selected doctoral degree programs.

The 2007 Strategic Plan also put forth the core values of Academic Quality and Veracity, Community, Ethics and Academic Integrity, Leadership, People, Teaching and Learning, and University Advancement.

The Mission, Vision and Core Values were used as the foundation to articulate the following five goals in the 2007 Strategic Plan:

- I. Provide a quality curricular and co-curricular education in a flexible student-centered environment.
- II. Attract, develop, and retain highly-qualified people who will best serve the University community.
- III. Develop and expand mutually beneficial relationships with all University stakeholders including cross-university interactions, collaborative educational ventures, economic development initiatives and cultural enrichment.
- IV. Create and provide quality and effective programs, services, facilities and technological resources to advance the mission of the University.
- V. Increase available resources through coordinated, campus-wide advancement activities.

The current strategic planning effort, *Charting the Second Century: 2010-2014*, is operating under the auspices of the University Planning Group (UPG). This group has taken the excellent work of the earlier Strategic Planning Committee and has fashioned it to even better position the University to focus on its realistic opportunities to impact its students and off campus communities and constituencies. Working from the same Mission Statement as the earlier group, the UPG has produced a focused Mission Statement:

We empower individuals to become socially responsible global citizens by creating and sustaining a culture of learning and discovery.

The UPG has also created a new Vision Statement:

We will be the educational partner of choice in eastern Oklahoma, embracing the challenges and opportunities of a global society.

The newly stated core values of the University in the current strategic planning effort are Integrity, Collaboration, Creativity, Leadership and Excellence.

The Working Draft Strategic Goals of *Charting the Second Century: 2011/2014* are derived directly from the Mission, Vision and Values of Northeastern State University and are as follows:

Strategic Goal 1: Develop a culture of learning and discovery throughout the university.

Strategic Goal 2: Develop sustainable communities, encompassing environmental responsibility and community capacity-building.

Strategic Goal 3: Build and reinforce an environment that values full inclusion, collaboration and shared leadership in the life of the university and in all external relationships.

Strategic Goal 4: Encourage and nourish a commitment to civic engagement by our students, our faculty and our staff.

Strategic Goal 5: Develop an environment which encourages global knowledge and cultural sensitivity.

Strategic Goal 6: Improve quality of life by serving as a cultural and entertainment destination on our campuses and throughout the region we serve.

Strategic Goal 7: Develop and manage the resources of the university to support a vibrant and viable community.

NSU's strategic planning under the Charting the Second Century: 2010-2014 banner reflect a good understanding of both the organization's current capacity and its long term responsibilities. The Mission, Vision, Values and Goals demonstrate a recognition that the University's most valuable commodity is not economic in nature but is in a vast resource of human capital. The particulars of the strategic planning documents consistently emphasize not only the importance of serving its students but also of intellectual, cultural and economic development of the geographic region that it serves. Much of the population of this geographic region is underprivileged in terms of education and economics. The main campus in Tahlequah is in many ways a literal "light on a hill" for an area extending far beyond its boundaries. The University's planning documents are in excellent alignment with the Making Place Matter initiative supported by the Oklahoma regents and reflect a fundamentally sound understanding that the University's greatest opportunities for positive impact are in the fairly immediate geographic region.

**The organization's planning documents demonstrate that attention is being paid to emerging factors such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.**

The logic underlying the strategic plan is to position the University to respond to the various types of emerging cultural, societal and economic trends. The 2006/2007 Strategic Plan specifically targeted *promoting/supporting regional economic development, and enriching the cultural opportunities in the communities*. The evolution of the strategic plan, Charting the Second Century: 2010/2014 increases the focus on these objectives. One of Northeastern State Universities two imperatives is "Building Sustainable Communities", a concept that embraces cultural, economic and conservation. This imperative is clearly articulated in Strategic Goal 2 (Develop sustainable communities, encompassing environmental responsibility and community capacity building.) and supported in Strategic Goal 7 (Develop and manage the resources of the university to support a vibrant and viable community.) A practical example of NSU's work in this area happened in November 2009, when the university partnered with the Cherokee Nation and SACC-EZ (regional economic zone organization) by sponsoring

a regional summit at the university. This represented the beginning of a major commitment to Making Place Matter, a nationally recognized, locally driven initiative. Recognition of the importance of globalization is seen throughout the planning documents in the Focused Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Strategic Goal 5.

**The organization's planning documents show careful attention to the organization's function in a multicultural society.**

The increased emphasis on global interaction, awareness and cultural sensitivity had received little attention in the earlier strategic plan. This change in the environment has been recognized and is driving action at the university as Strategic Goal 5 (Develop an environment which encourages global knowledge and cultural sensitivity.) More detailed information under this goal further states:

In order to prepare our students to experience success in an increasingly globalized world, we must provide opportunities that promote an understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence of human and environmental processes around the world. Global literacy will provide our students with an international perspective that enables them to respond more effectively to challenges and engage in opportunities. Cultural sensitivity not only requires global knowledge but also the ability to view a situation from diverse perspectives and to communicate and interact appropriately and effectively with people from different cultures.

Strategic Goal 3 is related to multiculturalism as it addresses the need to build and reinforce an environment that values full inclusion, collaboration and shared leadership in the life of the university and in all external relationships.

While progress is being made in the recognition of the importance of multiculturalism, it is clear that our efforts in this area are uncoordinated and lack university level leadership. Recognizing the need for additional focus on this subject, President Betz is commissioning a Global Task Group to evaluate the opportunities and provide leadership.

**The organization's planning processes include effective environmental scanning.**

It is critical that *all plans recognize the need to address changes in the external and internal environments*, all units were linked to the strategic planning process in the fall and summer of 2009. Reframing the strategic plan as Charting the Second Century: 2010/2014, is a comprehensive process that engages individual stakeholders, university organizations, and external partners. Changes in the environment are being incorporated into the refocused strategic plan at the university and unit levels. Following SCUP guidelines, progress to plan will be will be evaluated and environment changes incorporated into updates at the university and unit level.

*Two major economic factors* have been identified in the planning process and in the actions. The first is declining state support over the past 5 years. The second is the

current severe economic recession. The university has taken action in increasing its voice in the state and national stage, increasing focus on resource acquisition, and reducing expenditures. Recognizing the potential for future resource problems, the University Planning Group worked with university leadership to develop a comprehensive Academic Prioritization Process that will guide the application and restructuring of resources. This process is scheduled to be initiated in the fall 2010 semester in an inclusive, collaborative effort. Additional efficiency and resource acquisition plans are identified in the 2006/2007 Strategic Plan. Charting the Second Century: 2010/2014 increases this focus with Strategic Goal 7:

Develop and manage the resources of the university to support a vibrant and viable community.

Further information under this goal states that the effective management of resources will be accomplished by committing to the development of faculty and staff, combining efficiency and environmental responsibilities, developing physical and technical infrastructure, significantly increasing the resource base, and committing to a university-wide environment which promotes customer-driven, quality programs.

**The organizational environment is supportive of innovation and change.**

Relative to innovation and creativity, Strategic Goal 1: Develop a Culture of Learning and Discovery throughout the university, specifically embraces these concepts, and Creativity is one of the universities stated values. The plan states the importance of encouraging creativity and innovation in solving real world problems. While Strategic Goal 1 most directly addresses innovation and change, there is a heavy implication in the wording of Strategic Goals 2, 3, 4, and 5 as to the importance of these concepts.

**The organization incorporates in its planning those aspects of its history and heritage that it wishes to preserve and continue.**

The Mission Statement clearly states the university's commitment to its history and heritage in its opening phrase, "Founded on the rich educational heritage of the Cherokee Nation..." The importance of history and heritage is inherent in Strategic Goal 2: Develop sustainable communities, encompassing environmental responsibility and community capacity building; and Strategic Goal 4: Encourage and nourish a commitment to civic engagement by our students, our faculty and out staff. Strategic Goal 6 calls for the university to serve as a cultural and entertainment destination and notes the importance of nurturing and supporting indigenous arts and cultural activities linked to NSU's heritage.

**The organization clearly identifies authority for decision making about organizational goals.**

The university has created a fairly reliable structure for decision making concerning organizational goals. The process has been conducted by a formal University Planning

Group, made up of faculty, staff and students, that has provided consistent feedback to larger constituencies such as faculty. Through face to face forums and digital means, the entire University population has had the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way in the creation of the strategic plan. This is in support of the University's commitment to a culture of shared governance.

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

**The organization's resources are adequate for achievement of the educational quality it claims to provide.**

The organization's resources are adequate for achievement of the educational quality it claims to provide, but there are several financial difficulties. State allocations of resources have been in a steady decline. For example, state appropriations as a percentage of the total university budget dropped 3.82% from FY 2009 to FY 2010. This amounted to a state appropriation dollar reduction of \$1,764,750. Furthermore, the percentage of the total budget accounted for by state appropriations was 53.01% in FY 2010. This continues a trend in which more of the organization's resources must be found from sources other than state appropriations. As is the case across much of the higher education landscape, there have been necessary increases in student costs (tuition) implemented to maintain adequate resource levels. Obviously, the importance of funding apart from state appropriations and student tuition has only been heightened in this environment. There has been significant long-term improvement in the generation of private monies through the NSU Foundation. In the decade from 2000-2009 the number of donors to the Foundation increased from 1028 to 2219. During that same time frame the endowment market value has essentially doubled from \$5,772,271 to \$10,570,925; as have total assets (2000-\$6,807,331/2009-\$13,192,542). These increases have had a direct positive impact on students as the number of scholarships has increased from 254 in 2000 to 689 in 2009. The value of the scholarships and programs supported by the Foundation has gone from \$227,361 in 2000 to \$1,113,706 in 2009.

Deferred maintenance on the physical plant of the Tahlequah campus is still an issue but there have been significant renovations. These include completed work on buildings directly supporting academic instruction such as Haskell Hall, Bagley Hall (College of Education), Business and Technology Building (College of Business), and the Fine Arts Building (College of Liberal Arts). Recent work has also included construction of a new Science Building and renovation of part of the old Science building. This work represents improvements to the physical plants of all four of the university's undergraduate colleges.

**Plans for resource development and allocation document an organizational commitment to supporting and strengthening the quality of the education it provides.**

Strategic Goal 7 of Charting the Second Century 2011/2014 calls for the university to develop and manage resources to support a vibrant and viable community. Specific information under this goal stresses the need to establish processes to achieve internal efficiencies for targeted reallocation of existing resources and optimal use of new resources which will allow adaptation to changing economic and market conditions, while maintaining commitment to environmental responsibility. While there is not a direct link between the strategic plan and the annual budgeting process, there is a heavy implication in the wording of the plan that budgeting will have to be informed by the requirements of the strategic goals.

A university wide academic prioritization process is also currently underway. This process involves program level self-studies intended to give programs the opportunity to explain their value to the university as a whole. The overall purpose of this process is to determine where programs fit relative to the goals of the university and how they can best position themselves to be positive contributors to the accomplishment of those goals. Clearly, the academic prioritization process will produce information better allowing the university to develop and allocate resources.

**The organization uses its human resources effectively.**

The organization is fairly effective at utilizing its human resources and the Human Resources Department serves as a good base of support for human resource related decisions. The goal of the University's Human Resources Department is to serve the entire University faculty and staff on all three campuses as a resource for employee training, supervisor training, policy training (i.e. sexual harassment and drug free training), education on university policies (i.e. days off, benefits, appeals), and hiring recommendations. The Human Resources Department is also a useful source of information on Federal and State regulations concerning pay, medical benefits, and equal opportunity employment. It is worth noting that budgetary expenditures support the idea that human resources are used effectively and are fairly well supported by the university. In FY 2010 51.32% of the budget was used for instructional purposes. Salaries and benefits accounted for approximately 69% of budgetary spending with 28.77% spent on teaching salaries.

**The organization intentionally develops its human resources to meet future changes.**

The Human Resource department provides various types of training to employees, some required and some optional. While still providing multiple in person training sessions and information, in the past several years HR has developed online delivery of training materials. These include training for managers and any faculty/staff who has to process paperwork. There are required training materials associated with the university's sexual harassment policy and drug free workplace initiatives. New faculty and staff receive face to face training but also have access to online materials.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) specifically supports the development of faculty resources. The CTL provides teaching resources available for checkout including

books, journals, videos, how-to software CDs and equipment. The CTL also distributes grants and awards related to teaching and the specific area of service learning, as well as providing compensation for faculty to develop online courses. In addition the CTL hosts and online survey system for NSU faculty.

Human resource assessment is an ongoing activity. SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is utilized to determine effective use of financial expenditure. The number of employees and turnover rates for both faculty and staff is monitored as well as external issues such as Federal and State mandates affecting human resource decisions. The area labor market as regards hourly wage earnings is also monitored. There is constant review of the strategic plan in making recommendations that effect all employees.

**The organization's history of financial resource development and investment documents a forward-looking concern for ensuring educational quality (e.g., investments in faculty development, technology, learning support services, new or renovated facilities).**

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) exists primarily to support faculty development. The CTL provides teaching resources available for checkout including books, journals, videos, how-to software CDs and equipment. The CTL also distributes grants and awards related to teaching and the specific area of service learning, as well as providing compensation for faculty to develop online courses. In addition the CTL hosts and online survey system for NSU faculty. The university is making an even bigger commitment to faculty development as it is searching to fill the new position of Assistant Vice President for Teaching and Learning who will be housed under the Provost and direct the CTL.

Technology monies from student fees are disbursed to the respective colleges on a per semester basis. While these monies are never enough to meet every technological need, disbursing them at the college level helps ensure that administrators and faculty closest to the program level are involved in determining technological priorities. However, it is the case that the university is often behind in the adoption of new technologies due to money constraints.

While deferred maintenance is an ongoing issue, the university has done a reasonable job historically of upgrading facilities when possible. The recent past has seen major renovations to building touching all four of the undergraduate colleges. These include work on Haskell Hall, Bagley Hall, Business and Technology Building, the old Science Building and the Fine Arts Building. A much needed new Science Building was also constructed.

**The organization's planning processes are flexible enough to respond to unanticipated needs for program reallocation, downsizing, or growth.**

It is unclear whether any formal planning processes are related to greater flexibility. It would seem more likely that response to unanticipated needs has been positive because of



the efforts of individual faculty, staff, and administration. The previous Vice President for Administration seems to have done an excellent job of retaining resources for just the sort of unanticipated need related to the current economic climate. This has resulted in financial reserves that have put the university in a much stronger position than many other educational institutions to deal with economic challenges. Upper administration from the president down have created a greater a greater climate of transparency. The new provost has indicated a willingness to push back things to at least the college level that allows for moving of monies as changes happen especially in faculty area. Technology monies are sent to the colleges and distributed by need, not necessarily just an even split.

**The organization has a history of achieving its planning goals.**

The university has a fairly long tradition of strategic planning but planning in general seems to be an ongoing process that is never quite "settled." One of the areas the university needs to strengthen is the assessment of whether it has achieved goals. It is unclear whether any such assessment has taken place.

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

NSU appears to be on track with its current planning processes. Some lingering concerns exist across campus about other planning initiatives that generate a lot of effort, but few results. The current planning process is nearing completion and as long as resources follow priorities, we will clearly meet the standard.

**Coordinated planning processes center on the mission documents that define vision, values, goals, and strategic priorities for the organization.**

Strategic Planning is well organized through processes designed to be inclusive of all constituencies at NSU. The University Planning Group (UPG) carries the responsibility for the development and implementation of strategic plans. The current strategic plan being developed, Charting the Second Century: 2011-2014, is greatly informed by the strategic plan developed in 2007. At the request of President Don Betz, Charting the Second Century retained the existing mission but with the added a briefer, more focused mission statement:

We empower individuals to become socially responsible global citizens by creating and sustaining a culture of learning and discovery.

The current plan also features a new vision statement and core values relative to earlier work:

Vision Statement

We will be the educational partner of choice in eastern Oklahoma, embracing the challenges and opportunities of a global society.

Core Values: Integrity, Collaboration, Creativity, Leadership and Excellence.

All units provided a report in Spring Semester 2009 on their progress towards achieving the goals of the 2006/2007 Strategic Plan and by Fall Semester 2009 a set of unit goals tied to the university's goals. It is anticipated that the revision of the university goals will trigger a revision of these unit goals. Since all unit goals were tied directly to the strategic plan, NSU would appear to be in compliance with the standard. In addition, the current strategic plan under development states that its goals are derived directly from the Mission, Vision, and Values of the Northeastern State University.

**Planning processes link with budgeting processes.**

The strategic plan under development heavily implies a needed link between planning and budgeting processes. Currently there is no link between the budget of the units and its role in fulfilling the mission, vision, and goals of NSU. The academic prioritization process currently underway would appear to address the role of the five colleges as it relates to NSU's mission. Non-college units in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and the Business Division are currently not subject to review and their budgets are not directly linked to the 2007 strategic plan.

**Implementation of the organization's planning is evident in its operations.**

The use of a strategic planning process is new enough at NSU that the implementation of the Strategic Plan is not evident in university operations. Individual units have been following Unit Plans and goals in consultation with the appropriate Vice President. With the work on academic prioritization process and the revised of unit strategic plans, the link between the implementation of the strategic plan and university operations should become evident within the next few years.

**Long-range strategic planning processes allow for reprioritization of goals when necessary because of changing environments.**

This is occurring now as units have revised their mission, vision, and core values in line with the new focused mission statement. This will continue with the ongoing development of the new strategic plan and the completion of the academic prioritization process. New emphasis on Sustainable Economic Development, "Making Place Matter," Transformational Learning, global literacy and other priorities will both drive and inform both of these processes. At a recent "Regional Summit" a large amount of research on the region was collected and will be used to drive future plans.

The need to adapt and respond to changing environments is inherent in much of the language of Charting the Second Century is especially evident in Strategic Goal 2: Develop sustainable communities, encompassing environmental responsibility and community capacity-building; Strategic Goal 3: Build and reinforce an environment that values full inclusion, collaboration and shared leadership in the life of the university and in all external relationships; and Strategic Goal 7: Develop and manage the resources of the university to support a vibrant and viable community.

**Planning documents give evidence of the organization's awareness of the relationships among educational quality, student learning, and the diverse, complex, global, and technological world in which the organization and its students exist.**

Charting the Second Century places much emphasis on the importance of the relationship between students, technology and the various communities and environments they will encounter. Strategic Goal 1 calls for the development of learning and discovery throughout the university, specifically stressing the need to recruit, retain and graduate students from diverse settings and providing a learning environment that supports technology. Strategic Goal 5 calls for developing an environment that encourages global knowledge and cultural sensitivity. This includes providing opportunities for international learning and travel and developing awareness of the interconnectedness of global systems and the importance of developing sustainable solutions to human and environmental problems.

**Planning processes involve internal constituents and, where appropriate, external constituents.**

Representatives from every unit on campus have been involved in the University Planning Group. Community and other external constituencies have been involved as needed. The 2007 Joint Strategic Planning Committee had 30 members from across campus. The Charting the Second Century effort has approximately 60 team members and has involved the solicitation of much input from the university and external communities. The UPG website answers the question of "Who can participate?" with, "Anyone who cares deeply about the future success of Northeastern State University, our students, our colleagues, our stakeholders and our communities is encouraged to join in the conversation."

**Core Component 3b: The organization values and supports effective teaching.**

The organization has adequately demonstrated that it values and supports effective teaching.

**Qualified faculty determine curricular content and strategies for instruction.**

Curriculum change and development processes generally originate with the faculty. Faculty generally provide the detail in curriculum proposals which is then approved at the department, college, university, and in some cases regent level. Departmental faculty also engage in internal curricular content/strategy discussions. For example, these might include discussion/decision making concerning multi-section courses taught by multiple instructors. Collaborative processes involving faculty input are also used in determining curricular issues relative to general education courses. The university recently completed a revision of its general education core that involved a university wide committee chaired by an untenured faculty member. All faculty across the university were given various opportunities to provide input into the revision process, including filling out a convenient, online survey.

**The organization supports professional development designed to facilitate teaching suited to varied learning environments.**

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides teaching resources including books, journals, videos, how-to software CDs and equipment. The CTL also supports teaching through grants and awards that include foci on teaching, service learning and the development of faculty to teach in distance delivery formats. Support is also increasingly given to teaching through such activities as webinars. Faculty can apply for Faculty Development funds that are often related to travel to conferences. These funds are provided at both the university and college levels. The level of professional development is good given economic constraints, but there is room for improvement.

**The organization evaluates teaching and recognizes effective teaching.**

NSU utilizes the Boyer Model for promotion and tenure, with effective teaching the foundation of the model. While the Boyer Model has been in place for some time, there has been concern about the consistency with which it has been applied in evaluating faculty. The use of the model is currently being evaluated. Fairly traditional student evaluations are used in face to face, online and blended courses. Student evaluations are taken seriously by administrators and included in decisions relative to retaining faculty and in the promotion and tenure process. Outstanding performance in teaching is recognized university wide with the annual Circle of Excellence award for teaching. Awards for teaching are also sponsored by individual student groups such as fraternities and sororities.

**The organization provides services to support improved pedagogies.**

The Center for Teaching and Learning offers workshops, seminars and other services relative to pedagogies. The CTL provides teaching resources including books, journals, videos, how-to software CDs and equipment. The CTL also supports teaching through grants and awards that include foci on teaching, service learning and the development of faculty to teach in distance delivery formats. There are stipends available as incentives for faculty who will develop online courses. The CTL provides access to a Faculty Focus Newsletter, MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching), and TALON (a database of K-12 Resources and Internet Sites). Through the CTL faculty have access to a computer mini-lab which features machines set up for graphic design and web design.

**The organization demonstrates openness to innovative practices that enhance learning.**

The university appears open to individual faculty engaging in creative teaching practices such as team teaching across disciplines as well as different delivery and scheduling formats. However, more work needs to be done at the administrative level to make innovative practices more faculty friendly. This would include clarification on such issues as how team teaching affects teaching load and how innovative practices are

assessed in terms of tenure and promotion. The Provost is encouraging development of general education online courses and has worked with individual departments to create degree completion programs in partnership with area two-year schools. These programs are structured such that if departments develop them they are able to keep some of the revenues generated. The CTL assists faculty in developing online courses, which includes stipends.

**The organization supports faculty in keeping abreast of the research on teaching and learning, and of technological advances that can positively affect student learning and the delivery of instruction.**

The CTL provides this information through its Faculty Focus Newsletter and MERLOT and TALON databases. The CTL website also lists links to teaching relevant websites. The CTL has for several years hosted the Oklahoma Higher Education Teaching and Learning Conference, which provided educators the opportunity to discuss teaching and learning trends and advances.

**Faculty members actively participate in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines they teach.**

No quantitative data gathered, but anecdotal evidence indicates many if not most faculty members are active in professional organizations. For example, in the College of Liberal Arts faculty members are active in attending professional conferences, presenting at these conferences and publishing in refereed journals associated with professional organizations. The college has hosted the state convention of the Oklahoma Speech, Theatre and Communication Association due to the efforts of a university faculty member who worked to bring the meeting to our campus.

**Core Component 3c: The organization creates effective learning environments.**

The university is doing a good job of creating effective learning environments. There are many resources for the student to use but they need to be more publicized so that students are aware of them.

**Assessment results inform improvement in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources and student services.**

The university has some forms of assessment that do result in improvement. Students evaluations of teachers in all class formats provide students with the opportunity to weigh in on the quality of instruction they are receiving and results are used by administrators when deciding to retain faculty and also as an alert to teaching issues that need to be resolved. Other formal methods include Counseling Exit Forms and Satisfaction Surveys. Student Affairs utilizes a complaint form available for students with a grievance. Along with formal assessments, there is a general culture at the university of taking any student concerns very seriously. It is true that some types of formal program assessment have probably been completed because it is a required task and has not been

linked to positive change. The new Provost has had meetings with the various colleges to hear faculty concerns about assessment and work to make assessment a more meaningful, useful internal process and not something engaged in just to meet an external requirement.

**The organization provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring.**

The university has done a good job of providing a supportive environment for all learners. Of course, because of its geographic location the university has deep ties to indigenous peoples and has reached out to these students through such entities as the Center for Tribal Studies. The International Programs office serves the needs of a growing international student population and also serves as a clearinghouse for opportunities for native students to participate in study abroad opportunities. For example, the university has a vibrant community of Japanese student who have greatly added to the cultural richness of the university. There are many student organizations serving diverse groups of learners such as the Northeastern Veterans Association. The Office of Student Affairs has reliable policies in place for students with disabilities and a full time staff person dedicated to coordinating these efforts.

**Advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success.**

Many advising systems at the university are very helpful to students. First Year Experience provides a good support network for new students that includes academic advising and services geared toward improving student academic success. The Writing and Reading Centers located in Seminary Hall are specifically designed for the mastery of these basic skills and are also open to more advanced students needing help on writing projects. The university's Career Center not only helps students toward the end of their academic experience in securing employment, but also offers diagnostic assistance to students who are trying to decide what careers to pursue.

While these types of advisement are useful, the quality of academic advisement for declared majors is uneven based on anecdotal evidence. Advising loads vary a great deal and the system of faculty advising students can result in good advisors having too many advisees, poor advisors having few, and some students dissatisfied with advising. One possible solution is being used by the College of Business and Technology, which has a full time advisor for students.

**Student development programs support learning throughout the students experience regardless of the location of the student.**

This is an area in which improvement is needed. The university needs to work to get more aspects of student development programs in distance formats such as online. Diligence needs to be employed to develop student services on the branch campuses in Broken Arrow and Muskogee as resources allow. While students can get some help in distance formats, the current student development programs are somewhat place bound.

**The organization employs, when appropriate, new technologies that enhance effective learning environments for students.**

The university is making good strides in increasing online classes where appropriate, utilizing ITV technology to deliver content to branch campuses and non-NSU sites, and developing online/face-to-face blended formats that seem particularly suitable to the populations the university serves. The university is utilizing more social media techniques such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube video as a way to maintain connections with ongoing students and recruit new students.

**The organizations systems of quality assurance include regular review of whether its educational strategies, activities, processes, and technologies enhance student learning.**

The university appears to be doing a good to fair job in this area. Student evaluations of faculty and other student inputs are the most regular form of quality assurance but often go more to assessment of individual faculty members than program level academic and academic support issues. All programs also complete a required annual assessment report with some being utilized to check the level of student learning. Required five year program reviews provide an opportunity to deeply assess the educational quality of a program. At NSU, these reviews include a visit by an outside consultant who produces an assessment of the program requiring a response. The next program review requires the department to discuss what changes occurred because of the previous consultant's findings. While all of the assessment is being used, the tie between assessment and improvement needs to be stronger across the university.

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

**The organization ensures access to the resources necessary to support learning and teaching.**

University students and faculty have excellent access to resources. The university library system provides a total collection of almost 500,000 books, journals, audio-visual items, and electronic books. In addition, students and faculty have access to multiple databases and other electronic resources. Access to many of these resources is available off-site. The library is a federal and state depository of materials and houses unique collections such as the University Archives and Special Collections, which contain material related to the Cherokee Indian and other Oklahoma tribes. Interlibrary services are also available.

Across all three campuses are computer labs that provide students access to these general materials, with some 24-hour access available. There are also spaces with specialized resources such as the Writing and Reading Labs, Graphic Design Lab and Piano Lab.

**The organization evaluates the use of its learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching.**

Many if not most of the computer labs keep records on the amount of usage they have. The library makes a yearly review of subscriptions including usage statistics. In the program review process, the library also provides each academic program information concerning number of materials, expenditures, and usage unique to the program.

**The organization regularly assesses the effectiveness of its learning resources to support learning and teaching.**

Some regular assessment of learning resource effectiveness is happening but probably needs to be more systematic. Some recent examples include the SAILS Information Literacy results, College Strategies Library Component survey and Learning Commons survey.

**The organization supports students, staff, and faculty in using technology effectively.**

Support is good but as in most areas, could use improvement. Library staffing to help students is available and there is even an online chat option for students to make contact with a librarian. Computer labs often have assistants to help students and some are always staffed because of their specialized services, such as the Writing Center. Faculty are encouraged to utilize technologies such as Blackboard which in turn gives students an incentive to become more familiar with services.



**The organization provides effective staffing and support for its learning resources.**

Staffing and support of learning resources could be described as adequate at this point. There is always a concern that in difficult economic times, money for both staffing and materials relative to learning resources could be seen as a potential reduction point. While standard resources such as Microsoft Office software are readily available, there are also potential difficulties at the program level as regards learning resources. For example, Adobe Creative Suites software for graphic design students is very expensive and upgrades have to be deferred. In the digital age, this is an ongoing issue for specialized materials. One possible solution is greater cooperation across the university in the purchasing of materials to get the best financial packages available.

**The organization's systems and structures enable partnerships and innovations that enhance student learning and strengthen teaching effectiveness.**

The university's systems and structures seem to be open enough that academic units and individual faculty members who are interested in developing partnerships are allowed to do so. There have been partnerships in developing online tutorials and Learning Commons is being developed to enhance student learning. Partnerships are also being formed with external entities. There are many ties with the Cherokee Nation. For example the Nation was a partner in the development of the Cherokee Language program, one of the few indigenous language programs in the country.

**Budgeting priorities reflect that improvement in teaching and learning is a core value of the organization.**

Budgeting priorities do reflect an overall university commitment to teaching and learning. In FY 2010 51.32% of the budget was spent on instruction with another 10.04% spent on academic support. 28.77% of the budget was spent on teaching salaries. While overall support of teaching and learning is good, it is worth noting that only 1.14% of the budget was spent on library books and media in FY 2010.

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

**Regular academic program reviews include attention to currency and relevance of courses and programs.**

Required five year program reviews provide the opportunity to assess the currency and relevance of courses and programs. Along with an in-depth program self-study, the review process includes a visit from a content expert consultant. This consultant also produces a written report detailing the strengths and weaknesses of the program. While not a part of regular review, the university is currently engaging in much programmatic assessment in the form of Unit Growth Plans and Academic Prioritization. Both of these

exercises require faculty, chairs, and deans to consider the currency and relevancy of programs.

**In keeping with its mission, learning goals and outcomes include skills and professional competence essential to a diverse workforce.**

Not surprisingly, learning goals and outcomes are often developed at the program level and address skills and professional competencies. For example, graduates of the theatre program are expected to "understand and function competently in any area of theatre production including performance, design, technical, theoretical and managerial." In mass communication, students have specific objectives based on their chosen specialty area of advertising, public relations, or journalism/broadcasting. For example, mass communication advertising students are expected to "demonstrate an advanced understanding and skill level in advertising techniques used by the newspaper and magazine industries; the radio and television industries; and such alternative means of advertising as websites, cable TV, billboards and directories." Mass communication journalism/broadcasting students are expected to demonstrate "an advanced understanding and ability in writing, reporting, editing and production for radio and television."

**Learning outcomes document that graduates have gained the skills and knowledge they need to function in diverse local, national, and global societies.**

Evidence exists that some link is made between learning outcomes and functioning in diverse societies, though it is not clear whether these outcome document the gaining of relevant skills and knowledge. Documentation on the communication program states that "Students completing the program will have the ability to demonstrate a sensitivity to the influence of culture on communication" and broadly argues that the program is an "exemplar in emphasizing leadership, decision making and awareness of other cultures." Art program documentation argues that "because of the ties between art, technology, culture, and the global marketplace, the program is vital in preparing students for leadership and decision making roles in a technologically and globally oriented society." Documentation from the mass communication program states, "The faculty work to instill leadership qualities in their students and also to foster an awareness that as mass communication professionals, they must learn to communicate to publics from the local to international levels."

**Curricular evaluation involves alumni, employers, and other external constituents who understand the relationships among the courses of study, the currency of the curriculum, and the utility of the knowledge and skills gained.**

It is unknown at what level university wide this is happening. The mass communication program has at times had an advisory board of industry professionals who provide input into curricular evaluation and development as well as serve as contact points for external program support in terms of money and materials.

**The organization supports creation and use of scholarship by students in keeping with its mission.**

The university has been fairly active in this area. Two university wide events have been especially relevant in encouraging student scholarship. One is the university's annual Research Day that showcases student scholarship through poster and panel presentations. Research Day has participation from all colleges and is competitive in nature, with recognition for the best work in each college. The event is structured in a way that students from all disciplines have the opportunity to participate, even if their scholarship does not fall under a traditional heading of "research" (i.e., literary analysis). The other event is Oklahoma Research Day that provides a state wide presentation forum for scholarship by faculty and students. This often involves collaborative work between faculty and students. The university has hosted this event twice on the Broken Arrow campus. The university has also provided transportation to and from the event for faculty and students and assisted in the creation of posters for presentation. In addition to these university wide efforts, departments and academic programs have supported student scholarship by encouraging students to submit work to and attend academic meetings. The Provost/VPAA office has been supportive in helping fund travel costs related to student scholarship.

**Faculty expect students to master the knowledge and skills necessary for independent learning in programs of applied practice.**

Many of the academic programs at the university are of an applied nature in an effort to serve our student population's post graduation needs. The nature of many programs is such that much work within the program is applied and must be completed outside of class, requiring students to engage in independent learning and problem solving. For example, in the theatre program students must spend many hours in "work call" designing and building sets as well as many hours in rehearsal. This is training for post graduation when they are expected to "operate ethically and responsibly in any artistic, community, or business setting." The Fine Art program is "designed to evolve from instructor-developed problems in the foundation courses to gradually increased responsibility on the part of students to set and solve problems in their own way. Students are encouraged to

take independent study courses in studio arts during their junior and senior years."

There is some monitoring of students even post graduation. The College of Education assesses its teacher education candidates during their first year on the job (Residency Year) by electronically delivering a survey to the teacher, the administrator and mentor teacher. This survey assesses how well the candidate exhibits the characteristics of the conceptual framework under which they were prepared. This data is compiled, analyzed and used to monitor trends and recommend program changes. Other programs across campus follow and survey their candidates as to their performance and satisfaction with their preparation.

**The organization provides curricular and cocurricular opportunities that promote social responsibility.**

There appears to be a reasonable amount of activity at the university related to the promotion of social responsibility. This is occurring at the university, college and departmental levels. Some examples of curricular opportunities include both required and optional internships embedded in many programs. Another common curricular opportunity are service learning requirements attached to particular courses which require students to apply the knowledge they have learned in a course to solving of a real world situation. Cocurricular opportunities include The Big Event, a university-wide activity in which on one day students conduct various service projects for individuals and groups in the surrounding communities. Student organizations also conduct such service events throughout the year.

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

NSU currently meets this criterion and no major gaps exist.

**The organization's structures and processes enable effective connections with its communities.**

The university's rich history with the Cherokees and the region drives its commitment to be engaged with its constituencies and surrounding communities. Colleges, departments, faculty and student groups have the flexibility to build connections to relevant communities. Under the leadership of President Betz, two positions have been created which help strengthen and formalize the efforts of making community connections. They are the Director of Community Relations and the Assistant to the President for Special Projects.

**The organization's co-curricular activities engage students, staff, administrators, and faculty with external communities.**

This happens in a variety of ways. Student theatre and music performances as well as art gallery exhibitions bring university and external communities together. Offerings such as Galaxy of Stars performances, Downtown Country and River City Players also help these connections. Along with actual athletic events, the Athletic Department also engages in radio shows, luncheons and the sponsoring of summer camps. Alumni relations hosts events which bring alumni together with current members of the NSU community. There are many co-curricular recruitment events such as the university-wide Riverhawk Rally and departmental efforts such as Media Day and History Day. The Optometry College offers the Bedlam Clinic and there are many community service oriented events such as The Big Event and similar efforts by individual student organizations through the year.

**The organization's educational programs connect students with external communities.**

One of the primary connecting points between students and external communities are the many internships associated with academic programs, both required and optional. These are present in virtually every college and are often a gateway to post graduation employment for students. Students are also connected through service learning projects, which involve applying specific academic information to the resolution of a real world situation in external communities. Opportunities also exist for students to engage with faculty in unique community projects as part of their academic work. Examples would include art students working on murals in downtown Tahlequah.

**The organization's resources – physical, financial, and human – support effective programs of engagement and service.**

The university has done a good job of utilizing its resources for the good of not only the NSU community proper, but the surrounding communities that it serves. Venues such as the University Center, Performing Arts Center, NSU Foundation, Jazz Lab, Shawnee Street Theatre, NSU Playhouse, NSU Art Gallery, and the Stadium regular host events adding positively to the climate and culture of the area. In addition, in many cases these facilities can be utilized by individuals and groups for non-university events. In a similar fashion there are conference facilities available on the Tahlequah, Broken Arrow and Muskogee campuses. The willingness of the university to share resources with external communities helps develop strong bonds with them. Many individual faculty, staff, and students are actively involved in community activities such as Habitat for Humanity.

### **The organization's planning processes project ongoing engagement and service.**

Two of the strategic goals in Charting the Second Century: 2011/2014 are directly related to engagement and service. Strategic Goal 4 calls for the university to encourage and nourish a commitment to civic engagement by our students, our faculty and our staff. Strategic Goal 2 challenges the university to develop sustainable communities, encompassing environmental responsibility and community capacity-building.

### **Core Component 5c: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.**

The university currently meets this criterion and no major gaps exist.

### **Collaborative ventures exist with other higher learning organizations and education sectors (e.g., K-12 partnerships, articulation arrangements, 2+2 programs).**

The university has many such collaborative ventures. Smart Choice 2+2 programs have been developed with community/junior colleges that specify articulation agreements and guide students to graduation in four years. Under the direction of Provost Tadlock, degree completion programs are being instituted in which NSU partners with particular junior/community colleges by providing NSU courses at two-year schools, allowing those students to stay close to home and complete a baccalaureate degree. The College of Education is involved with the formal Gear Up and No Child Left Behind collaborative programs. Individual faculty are also conducting service learning projects which involves their students working for the benefit of local public schools.

### **The organizations's transfer policies and practices create an environment supportive of the mobility of learners.**

Particular in the recent past, the university has done a good job developing transfer policies and practices that support learner mobility. The university has instituted the full time position of Director of Transfer Student Services that has provided a clear contact point for potential transfer students. Transfer students can conveniently get their first enrollment at NSU taken care of by attending one of the Transfer Clinics held throughout the calendar year. The university has also been an active participant in the Oklahoma Regents' efforts at making transferring courses a more student friendly process. This has resulted in a state-wide transfer matrix website where students can easily see course equivalencies for institutions across the state. The university has also been a leader in the development of two particular programs that benefit transfer students. One is the Smart Choice 2+2 Programs that provide program specific articulation agreements with state

junior/community colleges, letting students know what courses to take at both schools in order to finish a baccalaureate degree in four years. The second are degree completion programs for specific programs at specific junior/community colleges. In these programs, the university provides courses on-site at junior/community colleges. This combined with online courses and course students take at the junior/community college results in students located near these two-year schools having the opportunity to complete a baccalaureate degree close to home.

**Community leaders testify to the usefulness of the organization's programs of engagement.**

Community leaders have been generally supportive of the university's programs of engagements. "Testimony" has come from Tahlequah city leaders such as the Mayor, Chief of Police, Superintendent of Tahlequah Public Schools, and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce. Cherokee Nation leaders such as Chief Chad Smith have also been supportive. Broken Arrow and Muskogee civic leaders have been supportive of those campuses.

**The organization's programs of engagement give evidence of building effective bridges among diverse communities.**

The university engages in a good number of bridge building activities with various communities. Several of these efforts seek to strengthen ties with the Cherokee Nation and other indigenous tribes. The Center for Tribal Studies exist in part for this purpose and along with its daily efforts hosts an annual signature event, the Symposium on the American Indian, that consistently brings many interested in tribal affairs to the university. The Office of International Programs operates to help international students transition to American life and also works with domestic students to provide study abroad opportunities.

**The organization participates in partnerships focused on shared educational, economic, and social goals.**

The university is engaged in several partnerships, both directly and indirectly academic. The Smart Choice 2+2 and degree completion programs with junior/community colleges represent important academic partnerships. In a similar fashion, degree programs in Cherokee language and Cherokee Cultural Studies involve partnering with the Cherokee Nation. The university also partners with area public schools through the concurrent enrollment process. The university campus police and the Tahlequah Police Department have a working partnership to provide for security needs. One of the more meaningful

recent partnering events was the regional economic summit held at the university in November 2009, that was sponsored with the Cherokee Nation and SACC-EZ (regional economic zone organization).

**The organization's partnerships and contractual arrangements uphold the organization's integrity.**

The university's partnerships are structured in such a way as to position the university to be a contributing member along with its partners to the betterment of relative external communities. As such, the partnerships uphold the organization's integrity.

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

NSU is engaged in its communities and constituencies in a variety of ways. Through the use of facilities, continuing and professional education, and volunteer efforts and service learning projects NSU is improving this dimension. An effort to assess the perception of the key stakeholder groups needs to be completed to insure that they are as satisfied as we believe them to be.

**The organization's evaluation of services involves the constituencies served.**

It is unclear whether the university has engaged in a systematic effort to collect feedback from external audiences as a whole. Individual events do collect feedback.

**Service programs and student, faculty, and staff volunteer activities are well-received by the communities served.**

The activities of the College of Optometry in providing eye care at Special Olympics and at Camp Gruber after Hurricane Katrina, the College of Education's Reading Clinic in BA, the many free performances by the NSU Jazz Ensemble, and the project-based learning free consulting done by the College of Business & Technology along with the Volunteer programs run by Student Affairs' Volunteer Center are all widely used by the various communities NSU serves. The VISTA Tax service provided by the Accounting students served over 1,000 low income and elderly people in 2009.

**The organization's economic and workforce development activities are sought after and valued by civic and business leaders.**

NSU has participated in the economic development area for some time. The Oklahoma Center for Rural Development has been the primary information source for economic developers, especially in rural areas, in the state. The College of Business & Technology has supported economic development through a subsidized consulting service called the Economic Development Initiative. Each year the university, through the CBT, recognizes an industry leader who has partnered with NSU in economic development.



The CBT has partnered with the Cherokee Nation to promote entrepreneurship through a high school competition in Cherokee County. Recently NSU hosted a Regional Summit which focused heavily on economic development issues. Under the leadership of President Betz, NSU is a leader in the Making Place Matter initiative of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The university would appear to meet this standard.

**External constituents participate in the organization's activities and co-curricular programs open to the public.**

The events provided through the College of Liberal Arts, the Sequoyah Institute, including the student shows are well attended. The CBT Teach In annually attracts 40-50 alumni who take over the College of Business & Technology for the day. The College of Education's Hooray for Teachers , and The Department of Information Systems and Technology's annual Technology Student Association leadership conference are just a few of the events that bring the public to campus.

**The organization's facilities are available to and used by the community.**

According to Michelle Farris, the Muskogee campus hosted 167 events with 6727 attendees during the 2008/2009 academic year. Jamie Battaglia reported that the Broken Arrow campus hosted 153 events with 14,342 attendees during the first six month of 2009. Karen Ross from Tahlequah has not yet reported on events and attendees. It would appear that NSU meets this standard, and the communities of Broken Arrow and Muskogee use NSU's facilities freely.

**The organization provides programs to meet the continuing education needs of licensed professionals in its community.**

The Office of Professional and Continuing Education offers a regular catalog of non-credit professional development classes in Broken Arrow. The CBT has hosted and its faculty have taught continuing education for Certified Financial Planners in Broken Arrow.