



**Year One Self-Evaluation Report  
North Seattle Community College  
March 1, 2011**

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## Introduction

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North Seattle Community College (NSCC) is one of three independently-accredited colleges that comprise the Seattle Community College District. The college and the district are part of a statewide system of 34 individual colleges within 30 community and technical college districts. Seattle Community College District Six was established in 1967 when the state legislature passed the Community College Act. The new college began operations at a single site in downtown Seattle (Seattle Central Community College) while campuses were being built for North and South Seattle Community Colleges. The first classes were offered at the new campus of NSCC in Fall 1970.

Washington Administrative Code 132F-01-010 empowers a five-member Board of Trustees, appointed by the governor, with authority to “operate all existing community and technical colleges in its district,” and invests it with “the appointing authority for employees of the district.” The code describes the delegation of authority from the Board to the District Chancellor and from the Chancellor to the President of each college. At North Seattle, three vice presidents report to the college President: the Vice President for Instruction, the Vice President for Student Development Services, and the Vice President for Administrative Services. Key committees share in college governance including the Budget Planning Team, the College Council, the Diversity Advisory Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the Sustainability Committee.

The college offers five associate-level transfer degrees, as well as degrees and certificates in nineteen professional-technical fields. It offers pre-college courses in English and mathematics, Adult Basic Education, and GED preparation, English-as-a-Second-Language and High School Completion. In the 2009-10 academic year, 5,313 state-funded student FTES were distributed among academic transfer courses (50%), professional-technical courses (27%) and basic education or developmental courses (23%). In addition, the college operates a large non-credit program of Continuing Education classes enrolling over 1,000 students each quarter. In recent years the college has seen significant growth in eLearning (11% of total FTES in 2005-06 to 16% in 2009-10) and international students (from 258 students in Fall 2005 to 601 students in Fall 2009). In 2009-10, the college employed 84 full-time faculty, 214 part-time faculty, 113 classified staff, and 56 “exempt” staff (managerial and/or technical personnel).

NSCC is located in the north end of Seattle in a mixed zone, urban neighborhood. It draws over 80% of its students from within the city limits of Seattle, 60% of them from the neighborhoods within a five-mile radius of campus. Of the nearly 7,000 individual students who attended in 2009-10, 42% were students of color<sup>1</sup>, 61% were female, 69% attended part-time, and 56% worked while going to school. Among students attending NSCC for the first time, 62% had attended another college prior to enrolling at North.

This report addresses Standard One—Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations. It was developed over a year’s time under the leadership of the Executive Team (President, Vice-Presidents, and the Executive Dean for Workforce Education) and the Strategic Planning Committee, with participation from hundreds of members of the campus community. The core themes discussed in the report reflect the collective insights and aspirations of this college community. They lay the groundwork for strategic planning that will derive from them and guide institutional priorities throughout the accreditation cycle.

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<sup>1</sup> Demographic percentages based only on those students who provide the requested information.

## Institutional Context

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New leadership: In January 2009, Dr. Jill Wakefield assumed the role of Seattle Community College District Chancellor. In July 2010, NSCC welcomed a new leader when Mr. Mark Mitsui was selected as the college's twelfth president. Soon thereafter Chancellor Wakefield named new presidents at the other two colleges in the district. In both word and action, the newly-formed leadership team is emphasizing the importance and advantage of district-wide collaboration to better serve the interests of students and the larger community.

State Budget Reductions: North Seattle, together with all community and technical colleges in the state, is operating in a context in which state resources for higher education are steadily decreasing. In 2001-02, state resources accounted for 62% of the college's operating budget; by 2010 that percentage had dropped to 58%. Over the last three years, the Seattle Community College District has experienced a \$15.7M reduction in state revenue. In the current year (2010-11), the college absorbed a 6.5% reduction (\$1.2 M), and is preparing for an additional ten percent reduction in state operating dollars for FY2011. Washington community and technical colleges, once accurately described as "state-funded," are now more realistically characterized as "state-assisted."

Fewer Full-Time Faculty: To implement necessary budget reductions, in 2006-07 and again in the current fiscal year, the college offered retirement incentives to its employees. A total of 23 faculty took advantage of the two different incentive offers, thereby reducing the current number of full-time faculty to 78. A decade ago that figure was 110. The reductions mean fewer full-time faculty to serve on committees (e.g. tenure committees, governance committees, professional development, curriculum and assessment committees, etc.), to mentor part-time faculty, to coordinate programs, to engage in innovations such as those described below—in short to participate in the many ongoing institution-building and sustaining activities that require their active participation. Although the college is committed to rebuilding the ranks of full-time faculty, in the current budgetary climate prospects for doing so in the near-term are unlikely.

Student Success: Another statewide trend—indeed a national trend—reflected on the campus is a shift from *educational access* to *educational success*. The Student Achievement Initiative developed by the WA State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) tracks student achievement of educational benchmarks or milestones such as progress through developmental coursework, completion of college-level math, earning 15, 30, and 45 college-level credits, and earning a certificate or degree. The college has adopted this framework as one of several metrics for assessing how effectively it is supporting student progression. The new President has commissioned an annual report on student success, the first edition of which is to be published in April 2011.

Innovation and change: Recognizing the need to better address barriers to student success, the college, is actively engaged in initiatives such as I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) and Rethinking Precollege Math (RPM) which are designed to address known troublesome educational milestones. As of March 2011, it is a finalist in the Gates Foundation's *Completion by Design* project to help increase the graduation rates of community college students. In May 2011 the college will open the Opportunity Center for Employment and Education (OCE&E), an innovative partnership involving the college, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Employment Security Department (ESD), and several community-based organizations (CBOs) that will integrate services across a number of

organizations in order to improve safety-net services, employment placement, and educational access and attainment for the 400 clients expected to access OCE&E services each day.

## Preface

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### Institutional Changes Since Last Report

North Seattle's last full-scale accreditation report was written in advance of an April 2007 evaluation visit. Significant institutional changes occurring since that time fall into three categories: (1) leadership changes, (2) enrollment fluctuations, and (3) alternative funding.

- **Leadership changes:** The changes in the chancellor and president positions have already been noted. Other changes since the April 2007 visit include the appointment (in July 2007) of Dr. Mary Ellen O'Keeffe as permanent Vice President for Instruction (she was interim at the time of the visit), the naming (in January 2010) of Ms. Marci Myer as interim Vice President for Student Development to replace Mr. Roy Flores who retired after serving in the position for over 30 years, and the naming (in February 2011) of Dr. Orestes Monterey as interim Vice President for Administrative Services to replace Mr. Alan Ward who assumed the position of Chief Finance and Information Officer for the district after serving at North for eleven years. Other leadership changes since 2007 include a new Executive Dean for Workforce Education (Mr. Steve Miller, hired in January 2008), and new deans in four instructional areas: the Library, Health and Human Services, Math, Science and Social Sciences, and in Business, Engineering, and Information Technologies. A new Director of Information Technology Services was hired in September 2008.
- **Enrollment fluctuations:** For over a decade prior to academic year 2006-07, the college had struggled to reach FTE targets set by the state. In 2006-07, the college was "right-sized" by shifting 312 FTEs to the other colleges within the district. Since that time, by employing thoughtful, systematic enrollment management procedures, the college has met or exceeded its enrollment targets, even as it has increased those targets. The current academic year (2010-11) has seen a leveling-off from the previous two years' of record-high enrollments. As the economy recovers, the projections for next year's enrollments are more conservative as we anticipate that many displaced workers, who pursued training when their previous jobs ended, will be returning to the workforce. Another factor that may adversely impact future enrollments is that the legislature is poised to enact a tuition increase of ten percent or higher in each year of the coming biennium order to address a projected \$4.7B statewide budget shortfall for 2011-13.
- **Alternative funding:** As state revenues have decreased, the college has intensified its efforts to secure alternative funding. A Grants Office was established in AY 2007-08. Since that time, the college has been awarded \$9.8M in competitive grants (representing over 40 proposals), \$7.5M of which are currently active and \$2.4M of which have been completed. The college currently has \$1.5M in pending grant requests, and as noted earlier, it is a finalist under the Gates Foundation's national community college initiative, *Completion By Design*. In addition, the college is leading a Puget Sound consortium proposal for Department of Labor/Trade Adjustment Act (DOL/TAA) funding. Also, by intentionally increasing its recruitment of international students (from 258 in Fall 2005 to 601 in Fall 2009), annual tuition revenue from those students grew from \$1.9M to \$4.5M. *Running Start*, a dual-enrollment program for college-ready high school juniors and seniors, enrolls

an average of 265 students each quarter, generating annual revenues of approximately \$665K. Additional revenues are being sought through increased off-hour rentals of college facilities.

### **Response to Commission Recommendations**

At the conclusion of the April 2007 comprehensive self-study and site visit, the Evaluation Team made six recommendations. Three recommendations had to do with institutional planning, one with assessment of student learning outcomes, one with evaluation of part-time and priority-hire faculty, and one with regular review of policies and procedures by the Board of Trustees. The commission required the college to address the recommendations and requested a report and focused visit in October 2008.

In response to the October 2008 focused report and visit, the commission determined that the college had met accreditation criteria with respect to five of the six recommendations, but needed further improvements in the area of assessing student learning outcomes. It requested a second focused interim report and visit in April 2010.

The college redoubled its assessment efforts in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 years, describing them in its Focused Interim Report of April 2010. It also hosted a site visit by Commission Evaluator Ms. Mary Blau from Lane Community College. In her post-visit report to the commission, Ms. Blau commended the college (1) “for its thoughtful approach to engaging faculty in assessment at the institutional level,” (2) “for developing a strong assessment culture and engaging faculty at the classroom level in assessment and improvement of teaching and learning,” and (3) “[for committing] financial resources and time to support faculty work in assessment.” At the same time, the evaluator made the following recommendation:

*While program review processes at North Seattle Community are being adapted from a 5-year to a 7-year cycle, the college has only recently reached a decision to define degrees and certificates as programs to be assessed. It is recommended that North Seattle Community College implement program assessment processes consistent with its Comprehensive Assessment Plan that encompass all of its offerings, specifically for each of its degree and certificate program.*

In direct response to this recommendation, in Summer and Fall Quarters 2010, the college began implementation of the Program Assessment component of the Comprehensive Assessment Plan it had developed in the previous year and described in its Interim Focused Report of April 2010. It identified three programs for this assessment: (1) the Associate of Science Degree, (2) Accounting, and (3) Nursing. Two faculty members from the Assessment Committee were asked to facilitate Faculty Inquiry Groups (FIGs) for each of these programs. One is facilitating work on the Associate of Science Degree, and the second facilitator is working with both the Nursing and Accounting faculty. That work began in Fall Quarter 2010 and will culminate in Spring Quarter 2011 with a list of findings and recommendations.

This work is based on the “guiding principles” of the Comprehensive Assessment Plan, especially the principle that “assessment . . . must be grounded in faculty’s ongoing and evolving curiosity about and commitment to student learning.” Based on this principle, the work began by asking faculty “What is it you want to know about student learning within your program?” “What are the questions that are important to you?” In other words, the inquiry is very much faculty-driven and its focus determined by what is important to the faculty within a given program at a given point in time. As a result, each of the inquiries is unique to the program and to the group of faculty involved. While the content of each inquiry varies, the basic structure is the same: Fall Quarter focuses on identifying the questions, Winter

Quarter focuses on gathering data, and Spring Quarter focuses on interpreting the data, drawing conclusions, and identifying action steps.

The unique character of the inquiry within each faculty group can be seen by the following comparisons:

- The Associate of Science Degree assessment involves faculty from five disciplines: nanotechnology, mathematics, computer science, biology, and chemistry. The inquiry is focused on the degree itself: Do faculty from the different disciplines have a common understanding of it? What do students understand it to be? How do advisers see it and how do they describe it to students? What pathways are possible within the degree? What pathways do students take through the degree? What do graduates do upon completion of the degree? In order to investigate these questions, the FIG is employing focus groups, surveys, video documentation and database extracts.
- The Nursing faculty is focusing its inquiry on one of the learning outcomes within its LPN Degree Program: “Demonstrate competency in data gathering, contributing to problem-identification, planning, implementing nursing care, and contributing to evaluation within a variety of settings utilizing appropriate technology.” Students are given a standardized (HESI) test upon entry into the program and a similar standardized test upon exit. Comparing their pre-test scores to end-of-program scores will provide data to the nursing faculty about how effective they are in teaching to this competency and whether changes to curriculum are suggested. Like the science faculty, the nursing FIG is using student interviews as another data source, asking students how they experience this outcome being applied in the classroom.
- The Accounting faculty is not as far along as the other two, having gotten started later in the fall. As a result, their inquiry will extend beyond spring quarter. Currently they are determining what question is most important for them to examine. Data collection will occur in Spring Quarter and data analysis and conclusion-drawing in either Summer or Fall Quarter.
- An unintended “bonus” of this work is that the Parent Education faculty has decided on its own to form a FIG to investigate an aspect of their program. In the words of the faculty member who will facilitate the process, herself a Parent Education faculty, “We will be assessing ‘making learning visible in the laboratory classroom.’ The plan is to take a preliminary evaluation of how well the students/parents feel the classroom is being used as a Parent Education Lab. Each faculty member will then come up with a plan to make the learning and application of learning more visible and approachable in the classroom from now until the end of Spring Quarter. We will then send out another evaluation at the end of the year and determine if the adjustments were successful or not.”

In addition to moving forward the work on *program assessment*<sup>2</sup>, during this current year (2010-11) the college is continuing work begun in 2009-10 (and described in our April 2010 Interim Progress Report) to revise the *program review* process that has been in place for many years. The newly-designed *program assessment* component of the Comprehensive Assessment Plan differs from the long-standing *program review* process in two important ways. First, *program review* lacked the faculty-driven inquiry nature of the new process. Secondly, within the college-transfer area, *program review* focused on disciplines (e.g. chemistry, biology, history, psychology) rather than degrees (e.g. Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, etc.). In direct response to our accreditation recommendation, the newly-design *program assessment* process occurs at the degree/certificate level.

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<sup>2</sup> The terms *program assessment* and *program review* are italicized within this section to aid the reader in distinguishing between the two similar yet distinct processes.

At the same time, it is important to retain the thorough examination of all aspects of a field of study—whether a discipline or clusters of disciplines within the college transfer area or a degree/certificate program within the professional-technical area—that characterized the traditional *program review* process. Furthermore, as described in our April 2010 Interim Focused Report, in revising the *program review* process, the intent is to align the process with the new accreditation standards. In the proposed revision of *program review*, all instructional “programs” would examine different aspects of themselves on a seven-year cycle that matched the content of accreditation reports due in Years 1, 3, 5 and 7. The ongoing reflection embedded in this model is seen as a significant strength.

The ideal that the college is striving for is to bring the two processes together. That is, to bring together (1) the newly-adopted *program assessment* model being field-tested this year and (2) the proposed revision of the more traditional *program review* process. We believe that the strengths of *program assessment* (faculty-driven inquiry and degree/certificate focus), if successfully coupled with the strengths of a revised *program review* process (ongoing, comprehensive self-examination sequenced to align with the new accreditation cycle) hold the greatest promise for deepening the culture and practice of ongoing assessment that the new accreditation standards are designed to foster and that the college is committed to achieving.

#### **Date of Most Recent Mission and Core Theme Review**

The college began the process of mission review and core theme development in March 2010. The Strategic Planning Committee was charged with leading this process. The committee was chosen for this work because its membership represents all constituents (faculty, classified staff, exempt employees, and students), because it had facilitated earlier mission reviews, and because it would lead the strategic planning that would emanate from the core themes once they were established.

As a first step, the committee reviewed the mission statement and recommended to the Executive Team that it be reaffirmed as it was adopted and approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2006. The committee based its recommendation on two factors:

- The process leading up to the Board’s March 2006 approval of a revised mission statement was highly participatory, occurred through a series of dialogues over a two-year period, involved all constituencies within the college community as well as members from the external communities served by the college, and resulted in a statement that the community embraced with a great deal of consensus.
- The college community identifies and resonates with the power and the call-to-action conveyed by the simplicity and clarity of the mission statement: “North Seattle Community College is committed to changing lives through education.”

In April 2010 the Executive Team concurred with the recommendation of the planning committee and reaffirmed the mission statement without change.

In May 2010 the Strategic Planning Committee began the process of articulating core themes that, as Standard 1.B.1 describes, “individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.” The committee drafted an initial set of themes and circulated them to the campus community for response and critique. The committee received scores of responses and used them to create a second draft of the themes. In early June the second draft was circulated to the campus community. Once again, another round of feedback was received and incorporated into Draft #3 of the core themes.

In July 2010 the committee met with newly-appointed President Mark Mitsui to discuss the core themes and the planning processes that would emanate from them. An outcome of that discussion was Draft #4 of the core themes, a draft that more clearly articulated the college's commitment to both civic engagement and sustainability. In a series of four planning retreats held throughout the summer, 45 employees and seven student leaders critiqued the draft themes and began to envision potential strategic initiatives that would support the core them. These discussions anticipated specific planning that necessarily would await the final version of the themes and their accompanying objectives and performance indicators, but it served the valuable purpose of encouraging the type of concrete planning that would be necessary to accomplish core theme objectives.

On September 23, 2010, over 300 members of the college community gathered for the annual President's Day convocation. The assembly was asked for written responses to Draft #4 of the core themes and for ideas about initiatives to support them. At meetings in October and November 2010, the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the 530 responses collected on President's Day, along with feedback collected during the summertime planning retreats, and used this information to develop a final draft of the core themes. It then forwarded its final draft to the Executive Team for their approval. In a December 7, 2010 planning retreat, the Executive Team approved the core themes. As a final step, in February 2011 the themes were presented to and approved by the Board of Trustees.

## Chapter One: Mission, Core Themes and Expectations

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### Eligibility Requirements

**ER#2—Authority:** As a member of the Seattle Community College District Six and as part of the Washington State Community and Technical College system, North Seattle Community College is authorized to operate by the Community College Act of 1967 (revised as the Community and Technical College Act of 1991), and is approved to grant associate degrees and certificates under the Revised Code of Washington (WAC 28.B.50). The college is one of three independently-accredited colleges within the Seattle Community College District.

**ER #3—Mission and Core Themes:** The college devotes its institutional resources to achieving its mission of “changing lives through education” by offering comprehensive educational programs in a highly supportive learning environment. The college has articulated the essential elements of its mission in three core themes—*Advancing Student Success*, *Excelling in Teaching and Learning*, and *Building Community*—which were developed through a year-long participatory process and approved by its governing board in February 2011.

### Section 1: Standard 1.A—Mission

**Institutional Mission:** The college’s mission, as approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2006 and reaffirmed by the Executive Team in April 2010 is a clarion call to make a difference for students: “North Seattle Community College is committed to changing lives through education.” This simple statement has profound implications as identified in the three core themes described in Standard 1.B below.

The college’s mission aligns with and complements the collective mission of the three Seattle Community Colleges to “provide excellent, accessible educational opportunities to prepare our students for a challenging future.”

**Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment:** NSCC defines mission fulfillment as meeting an acceptable level of performance within each of its three core themes of *Advancing Student Success*, *Excelling in Teaching and Learning*, and *Building Community*.

**Acceptable Threshold of Mission Fulfillment:** The college measures the extent of mission fulfillment through a comprehensive approach, taking into account performance on a diverse set of indicators related to each objective within each of its core themes. Baselines will be established for each indicator. In some cases, baseline data are already available; in other cases the first step will be to collect the data and establish the baseline. From the baselines, target or benchmark performance levels will be set. Performance data will be collected and compared to the benchmark levels. This comparison will be used to calculate the percent to which each indicator has been met. Percentages from each indicator will be “rolled up” to calculate the extent to which each objective has been met. Similarly, percentages from each objective will be “rolled up” to calculate a “performance percentage” for each core theme. Finally, the performance on each core theme will contribute to a calculation of the level of mission accomplishment. Minimum acceptable performance for each core theme is 70% and the targeted level is 90%. Minimum acceptable level of mission fulfillment is an overall mean performance level of 70% with a targeted level of 90%. See Figure 1 for a visual representation.

Figure 1

<b>Core Themes</b>	<b>Student Success</b>	Percent of achievement of each <b>indicator</b> rolls up to percent of <b>objective</b> achievement. 	Percent of achievement of each <b>objective</b> rolls up to percent of <b>core theme</b> achievement. 	Percent of achievement of each <b>core theme</b> rolls up to percent of <b>mission fulfillment</b> . 	<b>Mission Fulfillment</b>  <u>Minimal</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70% performance within each core theme</li> <li>• 70% mean performance across three core themes</li> </ul> <u>Target</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% performance within each core theme</li> <li>• 90% mean performance across three core themes.</li> </ul>
	<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	Percent of achievement of each <b>indicator</b> rolls up to percent of <b>objective</b> achievement. 	Percent of achievement of each <b>objective</b> rolls up to percent of <b>core theme</b> achievement. 	Percent of achievement of each <b>core theme</b> rolls up to percent of <b>mission fulfillment</b> . 	
	<b>Building Community</b>	Percent of achievement of each <b>indicator</b> rolls up to percent of <b>objective</b> achievement. 	Percent of achievement of each <b>objective</b> rolls up to percent of <b>core theme</b> achievement. 	Percent of achievement of each <b>core theme</b> rolls up to percent of <b>mission fulfillment</b> . 	

**Section 2: Standard 1.B—Core Themes**

The college has identified three core themes that manifest the essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass it. The numbers associated with themes in the following listing do not reflect hierarchy, but simply provide for ease of reference.

- Core Theme 1: Advancing Student Success
- Core Theme 2: Excelling in Teaching and Learning
- Core Theme 3: Building Community

Just as the college’s mission is consistent with the mission of the Seattle Community College District, so too do the college’s themes align with key components of district-wide Strategic Goals for 2010-15:

- Student Success—increase student learning and achievement
- Partnerships—build community, business and educational partnerships
- Innovation—increase innovation and improve organizational effectiveness

Each theme is described below, along with its objectives and indicators and a rationale for why the indicators were chosen. Our general approach has been to identify multiple indicators for each objective in the belief that multiple indices provide a more comprehensive assessment and hold greater promise for identifying both strengths and weaknesses than do single measures. Data collection on most of the indicators will occur on an annual basis. Survey data will be collected at three-year

intervals. During the college’s six-year planning cycle, judgments about the extent of mission fulfillment will be made at two junctures, at year three and again at year six.

<b>Core Theme 1: Advancing Student Success</b>	
<p><b>Advancing Student Success</b> means that we</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a culture that intentionally places student learning and growth at the center of what we do;</li> <li>• promote student engagement with coursework, faculty and staff, and co-curricular activities;</li> <li>• foster active, collaborative, self-directed learning;</li> <li>• support student perseverance and goal completion.</li> </ul>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>
1.1 Students are actively engaged in learning and co-curricular activities.	1.1.1 Students’ self-report on relevant scales from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and related surveys 1.1.2 Faculty/staff perceptions of student engagement 1.1.3 Numbers of students participating in co-curricular activities, and their assessments of those activities
1.2. Students use available support services.	1.2.1 Students’ self-report on relevant scales from the CCSSE and related surveys 1.2.2 Usage reports from support services’ offices
1.3. Students are successful in achieving their educational goals.	1.3.1 Student Achievement Initiative data 1.3.2 Overall and disaggregated student retention, progression, and completion rates 1.3.3 Students’ self-report of goal achievement on surveys and interviews
1.4. Upon leaving the college, students succeed at the “next step” on their chosen pathway.	1.4.1 For students wishing to continue their education, transfer rates to baccalaureate institutions and success upon transfer 1.4.2 For students wishing to enter the workforce, training-related job placement or advancement

**Rationale for Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures**

1.1.1 Student self-report on CCSSE scales. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement is the most-widely recognized national instrument for assessing the extent to which students are actively engaged with their education. The college administers it every three years and uses its results to target areas for improvement or increase strategies that students identify as effective. Student responses can be disaggregated by a number of demographic variables. The instrument has the added advantage of providing comparable data from peer institutions both nationally and locally. The “related surveys” portion of this indicator refers to the college’s intent, as outlined in its Comprehensive Assessment Plan, to administer locally-developed student surveys in the years in which the CCSSE is not administered. Locally-developed surveys have the advantage of being tailored to the needs of the college.

1.1.2 Faculty/staff perceptions of student engagement. Complementing student perceptions of their engagement with the perceptions of faculty and staff is a valuable triangulation of data to provide more reliable insights into the extent to which the college is successful in helping students take an active, involved role in their education. Research is clear that greater engagement leads to greater success.

1.1.3 Numbers of students participating in co-curricular activities: A simple tally of student participation for each activity provides an overall picture of which activities generate the most student interest. This, together with students' assessment of the activities, can help with planning future events. North shares with most community colleges the challenge of designing co-curricular activities that meet the needs of its commuter student population. It is further challenged by the median age of its students (at 30.5, the highest in the state), and the fact that nearly 70% of its students attend part-time.

1.2.1 Student self-report regarding use of support services. The CCSSE scales are an extremely valuable instrument for helping measure this objective. For a number of support services, the CCSSE measures (1) frequency of use, (2) satisfaction with the service, and (3) perceived importance of the service. If the CCSSE responses prompt concerns, or if additional student feedback is desired with respect to a given service, the local "related surveys" will be used to collect additional information.

1.2.2 Usage reports from student services offices. CCSSE data will provide feedback from a random cross-section of the student population, whereas usage reports from the offices themselves provide information from those who provide the services and from those known to have used them. CCSSE data will help the college know how widely known, used, and valued a service is. Usage report data are more qualitative, "fine grained," and based on actual users. Together the two sets of data will help the college know where it is "on track" and where it needs to make adjustments with respect to support services.

1.3.1 Student Achievement Initiative data. Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) data provide a "big picture" view of whether students are achieving their educational goals by monitoring the number of "momentum points" earned by all students and what types of points were earned. It can also disaggregate the data by student subgroup (race/ethnicity, full-time/part-time, male/female, etc.) Comparing data over multiple years gives the college information about which momentum points are proving most troublesome and for which groups of students. SAI data helps the college know where to focus additional, more refined data-gathering, both quantitative and qualitative. It is also important to track SAI data because it is a common measure across all of the community and technical colleges in the state.

1.3.2 Student retention, progression, and completion rates—overall and disaggregated. These measures are an important complement to and refinement of SAI data. Cohort studies of students' retention, progression, and completion patterns will be used to identify those students who are most at risk, the points in time when they are most vulnerable, and when intervention may have the greatest positive impact. For example, while SAI data can tell us that students are faltering somewhere in the developmental math sequence, cohort studies of developmental math students will pinpoint which specific levels are most troublesome and, when interventions are introduced, what impact they have on a student's success further on in the sequence.

1.3.3 Student self-report data. Students enroll in community colleges for a wide range of reasons. It has proven impossible for data systems to accurately capture and reflect that wide range. Furthermore, students' educational goals change over time, and those changes are not uniformly and consistently reflected in existing data systems. For these reasons, asking them directly is another important measure

of whether students have achieved their goals. In addition, the qualitative information collected in student surveys or interviews will provide insights impossible to draw from database reports alone.

1.4.1 Transfer rates and success. Each of these is an important measure of how effectively the college's transfer courses are preparing students whose intention is to earn a baccalaureate degree. The National Clearinghouse data provide a measure of transfer rates. Currently data about the performance of transfer students are available from some, but not all, of the receiving institutions. The college is actively engaged with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and with the four-year institutions within the state, to create a common database that would permit tracking of student performance across institutions.

1.4.2 Job placement and/or advancement. Both job placement and advancement are meaningful measures of how well the college's professional-technical programs are preparing students for the workplace. For most programs, SBCTC's process of data-matching between college records and unemployment insurance records, while far from ideal, is the best available method of collecting this information. However, with funding from Department of Labor grants, the college has developed a much more comprehensive process for tracking graduate placement. The participating programs are few and the process is extremely labor-intensive, and for these reasons the process may not be scalable on an institutional level. Nevertheless, within available resources, we are applying lessons learned from the process to gather similar information about graduates from other professional-technical programs, thereby supplementing data available from SBCTC.

<b>Core Theme 2: Excelling in Teaching And Learning</b>	
<p><b><i>Excelling in Teaching and Learning</i></b> means that we</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage in the work of teaching and learning with passion, vision, and creativity;</li> <li>adapt to the needs of our rapidly changing world by changing ourselves, our curriculum, our services, and our practices;</li> <li>ensure the effectiveness and quality of our work through ongoing assessment and professional development.</li> </ul>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>
<p>2.1. Faculty regularly assess student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels, and provide feedback to students on their performance.</p> <p>2.2. Faculty use assessment information to improve their own professional practice.</p> <p>2.3. Evidence-based best practice innovations are regularly introduced into curriculum and support services.</p> <p>2.4. Instructional programs are current.</p> <p>2.5. Employees pursue professional development to enhance knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>2.1.1 Annual records of faculty assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels</p> <p>2.1.2 Student reports of awareness of student learning outcomes, and of faculty feedback on their performance</p> <p>2.2.1 Annual records of changes faculty have introduced as a result of assessment activities, including their impact on student learning</p> <p>2.2.2 Student awareness of class or program changes made on the basis of faculty assessment practices</p> <p>2.3.1. Annual report of faculty and student participation in instructional innovations (e.g. eLearning technologies, integrated learning experiences, applied learning experiences, etc.)</p> <p>2.3.2 Annual report of innovations in support services (e.g. transitions fairs, orientations, embedded student services, etc.)</p> <p>2.4.1 For professional-technical programs: Industry-based assessments of program currency (e.g. Technical Advisory Committee assessment, external accreditations, industry certifications, etc.)</p> <p>2.4.2. For transfer programs: an inventory of courses transferable to baccalaureate institutions</p> <p>2.4.3 For basic skills programs: currency with state standards for basic skills programs</p> <p>2.4.4 Number of course/program changes approved by the Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee</p> <p>2.4.5 Educational scale ratings on STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment &amp; Rating System)</p> <p>2.5.1 Average number of annual professional development activities by employee group</p> <p>2.5.2 Percent of participation by employee group</p> <p>2.5.3 Distribution of activities across various areas of development: teaching &amp; learning, technology, diversity, leadership &amp; community, sustainability</p> <p>2.5.4 Annual compilation of publications, shows, presentations, awards, etc. by college employees</p>

## **Rationale for Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures**

2.1.1 Annual records of faculty assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels. Clear articulation of intended learning outcomes, their regular and systematic assessment, and feedback to students to assist with their learning are key components of the culture of assessment that we strive to create at the college. We will use existing methods to collect data about faculty assessment practices: (1) the annual Assessment Loop Form each faculty submits for course-level assessment activities, (2) program assessment and program review reports for program-level assessment activities, and (3) annual assessments of selected Essential Learning Outcomes that are initiated by the Assessment Committee as outlined in the Comprehensive Assessment Plan described in the April 2010 Focused Interim Report.

2.1.2 Student reports of awareness of student learning outcomes, and of faculty feedback on their performance. Research shows that learning is enhanced when students are aware of the outcomes they are to learn and when they get constructive feedback on how well they are learning those outcomes. We will use the “related surveys” described in indicator 1.1.1 to collect this information from students.

2.2.1 Annual records of changes faculty have introduced into their practices as a result of assessment activities. Faculty assessment of student learning is intended to “loop back” to the faculty’s own professional practice, providing guidance for how they might continually improve that practice. The records described in indicator 2.1.1 will collect this information.

2.2.2 Student reports of class or program changes made on the basis of faculty assessment practices. It is important—both for their learning and for enhancing the faculty-student relationship—that students experience an evident and explicit connection between the assessments that faculty conduct and the changes they introduce to enhance the teaching/learning experience. Therefore, student perceptions of this connection are an important measure to collect. Again, they will be collected through “related surveys” of students described in previous indicators.

2.3.1. Annual report of faculty and student participation in instructional innovations. Monitoring participation levels in various types of evidence-based instructional innovations—including but not limited to those listed within this indicator—help the institution gauge how well its faculty are keeping current, and how widely the innovations are spreading throughout the institution.

2.3.2 Annual report of innovations in support services. Student learning is supported, and employee learning is demonstrated, when innovations are introduced within the services that support student learning. Arguably, such innovations are as important as the innovations occurring within the classroom. This metric will provide the college a view of the extent to which all areas of the college are continually seeking to learn and implement more effective ways to support teaching and learning.

2.4.1 Industry-based assessments of program currency. Technical advisory committees (TACs) composed of industry representatives support each professional-technical program on campus. The perspective of those working in the field on whether the program is current with industry standards is a critical measure of program quality and an important guide for any required changes. Earning industry-specific accreditation or certification provides additional evidence of program currency.

2.4.2 Inventory of courses transferable to baccalaureate institutions. University articulation is critical if students’ courses at NSCC are to be accepted by receiving institutions. Through active participation in

the statewide Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC), the college ensures that its transfer degrees are in alignment with the requirements of four-year institutions. In addition, as faculty develop new courses, they work directly with their counterparts at receiving institutions (in particular with the University of Washington to which most NSCC graduates transfer) to ensure the transferability of the new courses.

2.4.3 Currency with state standards for basic skills programs. Through its office of Adult Basic Education (ABE), the State Board regularly monitors basic skills programs (Adult Basic Education, GED, and English as a Second Language) in Washington's Community and Technical Colleges. The monitoring tool ([www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/abepds/monitoring\\_tool\\_version3\\_10.19.10.doc](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/abepds/monitoring_tool_version3_10.19.10.doc)) effectively leads the program through a thorough self-study. Receiving a positive report from the monitoring team at the conclusion of the process is an important indicator that the program meets current requirements and is providing students with the life- and educational skills they need.

2.4.4 Course and/or program changes approved by the Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee (CAS). Substantive changes in courses or programs require the approval of CAS. One important, close-to-home measure of which programs are keeping up-to-date and whether any are not renewing themselves is to monitor the changes brought before CAS.

2.4.5 Educational scales ratings on STARS. With leadership from the campus Sustainability Coordinator and Sustainability Committee, North Seattle has developed a five-year Sustainability Plan and is using the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS), a nationwide voluntary self-reporting framework designed for colleges and universities, to track progress in three areas of sustainability: (1) education, (2) operations, and (3) planning/administration/engagement. The plan has established three objectives within the education area: (1) provide opportunities for co-curricular involvement in sustainability projects, (2) integrate sustainability competencies into all degree programs, and (3) integrate sustainability-related undergraduate research projects into curriculum. Monitoring progress on these three objectives will provide a gauge of whether curricula are being responsive to the need for and commitment to greater sustainability.

2.5.1 Average number of annual professional development activities by employee group. Newly-appointed President Mark Mitsui has identified professional development as a priority for all employee groups (faculty, classified, and exempt) and has created a strategic initiative to support that focus. By tracking each employee's professional development activities (through the annual evaluation process for classified and exempt staff, and through the professional development reports that faculty submit at the end of each year), we will have a centralized measure of whether employees are actively seeking to keep current in their areas of responsibility.

2.5.2 Percent of participation by employee group. While the previous measure will help us gauge the overall frequency with which employees avail themselves of professional development opportunities, this measure will provide critical information about the extent to which participation is wide-spread or restricted to a relatively small number of employees.

2.5.3 Distribution of activities across various areas of development. Several years ago, the college's Professional Development Coordinating Council (previously known as the Professional Development Advisory Committee) developed a "professional development framework" that identified four areas of employee professional growth: (1) teaching/learning, (2) technology, (3) diversity, and (4) leadership/community. In recent years sustainability has been suggested as a fifth area. In tracking

employee participation in professional development, it will be important to ensure that opportunities are offered and accessed within each area of the framework.

2.5.4 Annual compilation of publications, shows, presentations, awards, etc. by college employees. A final measure will assess the extent to which employees are advancing their own and others’ knowledge and skills in their respective fields by sharing their expertise through various public venues as listed above. The venues may be both on- and off-campus.

<b>Core Theme 3: Building Community</b>	
<p><b>Building Community</b> means that we</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a diverse, inclusive, and safe environment accessible to all;</li> <li>• strengthen our college community through open communication, civility, accountability, and mutual respect;</li> <li>• reach outside our institution to form local and global partnerships and pursue civic engagement;</li> <li>• work in ways that are environmentally, socially and fiscally sustainable.</li> </ul>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Indicators of Achievement</b>
<p>3.1. The college creates and sustains a culture that is welcoming and supportive of employees, students, and other patrons of college services.</p> <p>3.2. The college engages in community-based partnerships for mutual benefit.</p> <p>3.3. The college practices responsible stewardship of resources.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Student and employee diversity data 3.1.2 Student and employee satisfaction data 3.1.3 Patrons’ ratings on customer service surveys</p> <p>3.2.1 Number and nature of partnerships 3.2.2 Breadth of partnerships (number of areas and participants involved) 3.2.3 Participants’ satisfaction ratings 3.2.4 Annual revenue generated by partnerships</p> <p>3.3.1 Annual FTES 3.3.2 Cash reserves 3.3.3 Revenue/expense ratio 3.3.4 Operations scale ratings on STARS</p>

**Rationale for Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures**

3.1.1 Student and employee diversity data. Monitored annually, diversity information for students and staff will help the college determine whether it is providing sufficient access to subgroups of the population. Coupling this diversity data with other indicators (e.g. satisfaction ratings within this core theme and student progress indicators within the *Student Success* theme), will allow the college to assess whether it is providing sufficient support and creating a welcoming environment in which all can thrive.

3.1.2 Student and employee satisfaction data. Regularly-administered climate surveys of students and employees have been a part of the college’s assessment efforts for many years. That practice will be continued as a way to ensure a hospitable environment and to identify corrective actions when/as needed.

3.1.3 Patrons’ ratings on customer service surveys. In this context, “patrons” refer to community members who enroll in [Continuing Education classes](#), who attend art shows or theater productions or musical programs or lectures, who rent college facilities, who visit the library or the OCE&E, etc. A

major emphasis within our theme of Building Community is to expand the nature and number of ways in which the external community interacts with the campus community. Regular “customer service” surveys will be an important way to assess whether external patrons have a good experience during those interactions.

3.2.1 Number and nature of partnerships. Community-based partnerships are an important indicator of North’s involvement with and responsiveness to its communities. In its vision statement, the college describes its role as “a progressive education resource, actively engage with its community and known for innovation and responsiveness.” Annual tracking of the number and types of partnerships is an important factor that will help the college determine how strongly involved it is with its communities.

3.2.2 Breadth of partnerships (number of areas and participants involved). Beyond the number and nature of partnerships, it is also critical to measure which areas of the college are involved and which segments of the community are being reached through our partnerships. As a comprehensive community college, we strive to serve all segments of our community through our partnerships. Furthermore, tracking the number of participants in each partnership will help us know how many college personnel are personally involved with external partners. In general, the wider the base of employee involvement (e.g., the greater the number of employees actively involved), the more likely it is that active community partnerships will be woven into the fabric and culture of the institution, and the greater the likelihood that new partnerships will form that had not previously been envisioned.

3.2.3 Participants’ satisfaction ratings. This measure will help us know how well the partnerships are working—for both sides of the partnership—and what steps improvements might be needed. Feedback from one partnership may well suggest ideas for enhancing not only that partnership, but others as well.

3.2.3 Annual revenue generated by partnerships. Among the many advantages of community-based partnerships is that some of them can be revenue-generating. As noted above in the discussion of Institutional Context, alternative funding sources are increasingly vital to the financial health of the college. The amount of revenue that partnerships earn is an important indicator for the college to monitor.

3.3.1 Annual FTES. This is a fundamental measure of whether the college is operating in a fiscally sustainable manner. The amount of state funding is directly related to the college meeting its FTE targets.

3.3.2 Cash reserves. The college’s ability to maintain a healthy cash reserve over time is another important measure of financial health and sustainability.

3.3.3 Revenue/expense ratio. A companion to measure 3.3.2 above, this measure is a way to monitor whether revenue is keeping pace with—and ideally exceeding—expenses.

3.3.4 Operations scales ratings on STARS. The STARS ratings (referenced above in indicator 2.4.5) monitors sustainability practices in several areas of facility operations including buildings, climate, dining services, energy, grounds, purchasing, transportation, waste, and water. In the college’s sustainability plan, we have set targets for each of these operations. We will use the annual data collected through STARS to gauge and direct our efforts toward increasingly sustainable practices.

## Conclusion

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In this Year One Report, North Seattle Community College has identified three core themes that “individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission” (NWCCU Standard 1.B.1). Our core themes of *Advancing Student Success*, *Excelling in Teaching and Learning*, and *Building Community*, will serve as fundamental touchstones, guiding and assuring congruence among policy decisions, strategic planning, and operational planning and implementation.

To complement and support the core themes, the report identifies a total of 12 objectives and 36 indicators of achievement of those objectives. The constellation of core themes, objectives and indicators provides a solid framework to guide strategic planning throughout the multi-year accreditation cycle. The depth of thought and the breadth of participation involved in developing the framework assure that strategic planning and implementation will be well-grounded in the values and priorities most important to the college community and to the constituencies it serves in fulfilling its mission.

From this solid foundation, a six-year strategic plan will be developed over the next several months (March-June 2011), and will be implemented during the 2011-17 timeframe. The immediate next steps in our process will be to identify initiatives to address the objectives of the core themes. Some initiatives—ones we identify as “strategic initiatives”—will involve collaboration across the major units of the college (e.g. Instruction, Student Development Services, Administrative Services). Other initiatives will be more “locally” focused within a program, an office or a department. What they will have in common is that each will be aligned with the core themes, objectives, and indicators. In other words, the core theme-objective-indicator framework provides clear guidance to, and reflects the efforts of, all areas of the institution “pulling in the same direction.”

In this Year One Report we have also defined mission fulfillment in terms of achievement of core theme objectives. The number and variety of the objectives and indicators we have chosen reflect the rich complexity of fulfilling our mission—“changing lives through education”—for the thousands of students who attend our college for a wide range of educational goals and who bring an equally wide range of life and learning experiences with them. The comprehensive nature of the indicators will provide information to make reasonable and confident judgments about our performance and to guide decisions for program and service improvements. Many of the indicators are currently being monitored. In other cases, we will begin to monitor indicators using available data. In still other cases, new data collection and monitoring process will have to be established. In this way, the new accreditation standards’ emphasis on “meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement” (NWCCU, Standard 1.B.2) will serve to strengthen data-driven decision-making and an evidence-based culture across the institution.

The college has appreciated the opportunity for the thorough self-reflection required in addressing Standard One. In addition to the advantages just described, preparing Standard One has also established a firm foundation for addressing the requirements of subsequent standards. We enter into the new accreditation model, with its pattern of recurring and ever-widening self-evaluations, embracing and anticipating the promise it holds for continuous quality improvement in the service of our students and our communities.