

NORTHLAND

COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Medical Office Programs Advisory Board Meeting May 14, 2025

Attendees: Alison Duell, Alexa Schurman, Sherry Wolff, Lori Anderson

Absent: Rhonda Resner

Place: Blue Moose in East Grand Forks, 5 p.m.

Meeting Minutes:

1. At the last Advisory Board Meeting, the topic of 8-week courses were initiated, and this topic was reintroduced for today's meeting. Lori explained that Northland has started offering 8-week courses and the feedback from students has been good so far. Discussion took place regarding how 8-week courses offer the potential for quicker degree completion and focused study; however, at the same time, they come with a higher pace and workload. The group agreed that they can be beneficial for students wanting to graduate faster or who find it difficult to manage a traditional 16-week semester, but also noting that the compressed timeframe can lead to possibly more challenges. Lori also explained that it would not be feasible to offer an 8-week course and a 16-week course at the same time. For example, we would not be able to offer an Introduction to Health Information in an 8-week format and also a 16-week course. It would have to be one or the other. Pros and cons were reviewed:

The pros were mentioned as follows:

- A. Faster Degree Completion. Students can potentially complete more courses within a shorter period, accelerating their progress towards graduation.
- B. Focused Learning. The concentrated nature of 8-week courses allows students to focus on fewer classes at a time, potentially improving academic performance.
- C. Better Time Management. Some students find it easier to manage their workload and balance school with other commitments when taking fewer classes simultaneously.
- D. Reduced Risk of Setbacks. The shorter timeframe can minimize the impact of unexpected events that might disrupt a traditional 16-week semester.

The cons reviewed were as follows:

- A. Increased intensity. The workload is typically the same as a 16-week course, but crammed into half the time, leading to a faster pace and potentially more challenging assignments.
- B. Potential for burnout. The workload can lead to feelings of burnout and stress, especially for students who struggle with time management.
- C. Missed Learning Opportunities. Some students may feel that they don't have enough time to fully absorb the material or develop a deep understanding of the subject matter.
- D. May Not Suit All Learning Styles. Students who learn best through a more gradual approach might find the accelerated format challenging.

Overall, the committee agreed that it may be beneficial for the Medical Office Programs to try out a few courses to see if students would be interested. Lori suggested a few courses such as Intro to Health Information, Medical Office Procedures, Medical Office Simulation, Medical Coding Ethics, and Medical

Language Applications. CPT/HCPCS Coding and ICD Coding were not recommended for 8-week courses at this time due to the level of depth and intensity of knowledge required for those courses. Intermediate coding courses may be a possibility since students would already have the basic knowledge to satisfactorily complete those courses. This could be reviewed more at a later time.

Lori mentioned Northland faculty will be having meetings to discuss 8-week courses in more detail and she will provide more information to the committee once those meetings have taken place.

2. Program Suggestions/Ideas/Improvements: Lori asked the committee their thoughts on introducing an additional medical coding certificate or diploma. Lori explained that years ago, the trend was moving the Medical Coding degree as an associate's degree, and that Medicare would eventually require coders to have an associate's degree. To date, this still has not come to fruition. The AAPC continues to offer the CPC without an associate's degree. Members felt a diploma would be the direction to go over a certificate (as an additional alternative to the associate's degree), due to the number of courses essential to meeting the requirements for a successful degree.

Advisory Board members suggested to possibly remove Keyboarding and Intro to Computers as they felt those courses may no longer be necessary with many students already knowing much of this by the time they enter college. Lori explained that Intro to Computers includes not only Word, Outlook, and Power Points, but also Access and Excel.

The committee also suggested replacing A&P I and A&P II with a less intense course (and less credits) such as Intro to A&P. Some members felt that 8 credits of A&P are unnecessary/excessive and that a more generalized anatomy and physiology would be sufficient.

Lori informed the members that these suggestions will be taken into consideration and reviewed with the appropriate staff/instructors/dean. Further information will be brought to the Fall Advisory Board Meeting for final discussion and consideration at that time.

3. Lori thanked the members for their attendance, input, and feedback. She mentioned she will check on an all-campus advisory board meeting for the fall (as previously done) and get back to the committee members. If there will *not* be an all-campus meeting in the fall, it was suggested to have the next meeting on a Monday or a Friday due to a member travelling quite a distance for the meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lori Anderson
Medical Office Programs