

Weekly Update – Catching Up from the Summer

President Anne Temte

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

For those of you who were away for the summer, WELCOME BACK!! For those of you who worked throughout the summer, THANK YOU. There was a lot to do and you did it well!!

We've had a busy season. It looks as though enrollment for fall semester will be even larger than it was last year. Throughout the summer, steady streams of prospective students have been touring our campuses, participating in assessments and advising, and registering. Our student services staff has provided prompt and consistently excellent service to these students and their families

Our facilities are in great shape – ready to take on another year of student traffic. On the TRF campus, construction is underway on the New Media labs and classrooms. Other changes will occur throughout the next year and summer. The bonding money that is being used on these projects is intended for classroom renovation and HEAPR (Higher Education Asset Preservation and Renewal). At the EGF campus, planning work is being done for the 2012 bonding bill.

The ITS department is in the process of converting college networks from Novell to Microsoft. This conversion will allow consistency across the entire college and will, eventually, establish easier access to the wireless network, create a consistent computer experience between campuses, remotely and rapidly deploy new software to the desktop, rapidly deploy critical security updates, improve desktop support with remote control, simplify adding printers, and create roaming profiles so that items like “favorites” travel when you do.

Focus on the Positive

While we will continue to have budget concerns, Northland has much to celebrate! Among recent developments:

- Fall enrollment appears to be record-breaking. As of August 10, college enrollment is 24 FYE higher than last year.
- We slowed tuition growth and now have a tuition rate that is more consistent with other comprehensive mid-sized colleges in the state and more competitive in our region.
- The recommendation of the Higher Learning Commission evaluation team has been submitted and now awaits endorsement by the Commission in October. The recommendation is for reaccreditation for ten years with no interim reviews.
- Our strategic plan has been implemented through committee action plans. Significant progress is being made toward many of our goals.
- We have been awarded a nearly \$5 million grant for Unmanned Aerial systems; a Department of Defense appropriation for this program has passed the US House of Representatives and now awaits US Senate approval. We have enjoyed the strong support of Rep. Colin Peterson, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, and Sen. Al Franken as well as that of the North Dakota congressional delegation.

- The percentage of students of color attending Northland has grown from 6.8% in FY 2005 to 12.4% in FY 2010. Fall-to-spring retention of a cohort of 400 underrepresented students in FY 2010 was 90.36% - an outstanding achievement! The average GPA for this cohort was 2.57, exceeding the goal of 2.5 GPA.
- The NCTC Foundation exceeded its goals in donations to academic programs, grants, gifts, and sponsorships and hosted several events that brought positive attention to the campuses. The recent EGF Golf Tournament brought in \$23,000 in sponsorships, donations and registration fees.
- The NCTC Foundation established a \$100,000 fund to provide scholarships to dislocated workers. Eleven students were served in FY 2010; an Otto Bremer Foundation grant of \$50,000 has been received to supplement this fund.
- We ended FY2010 more than \$300,000 in the black; we developed a budget for FY2011 without utilizing reserves.
- Northland remained one of the MnSCU colleges with the highest percentage of STEM enrollment at approximately 62% of students enrolled in STEM courses; in FY2010, 50 more students took STEM courses than in the previous year.
- Growth in FTE enrolled in online courses and programs through the Distance MN consortium grew by 12.1% for FY 2010.
- Last year, the Office of Legislative Auditor cited NCTC in 15 of its findings in its audit of eight MnSCU colleges. As of August 1, we have been cleared of thirteen of these findings. One of the remaining findings relates to a system-wide issue and is not something that Northland can resolve independently.
- Through scheduling efficiencies, the student/faculty ratio has been increased; overall, NCTC is improving its standing relative to the MnSCU Instructional Cost Study.
- The new Continuous Improvement Committee facilitated ten projects to improve services and reduce costs.
- All academic programs have developed assessment plans for learning outcomes.
- NCTC has made energy conservation and utility cost reduction a priority with the installation of occupancy sensors and climate control programming and by mothballing underused space.
- In the past week, NCTC was notified that it has been awarded a \$7,500 OSHA grant to assist with the purchase of a front end alignment hoist for the automotive services technology program in TRF.
- An active farmer who could also write well was sought to provide an Op-Ed piece for the New York Times regarding the new Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. NCTC's own Betsy Jensen, FBM instructor, stepped up. Her piece was in the NYT on August 11.

Changes

Some changes to duties, responsibilities and organizational structure were implemented at the end of the last academic year. Here I will explain some changes that have generated questions:

- Because of budgetary reductions, the position of Dean of Academic Affairs – EGF was eliminated. Kent Hanson has assumed direct supervisory responsibilities for all faculty and staff formerly reporting to the dean.

- When a Dean of Nursing is appointed, nursing faculty members throughout the college will report to that individual.
- The supervision of Jim Retka, Dean of Workforce and Economic Development, was shifted to me. In part, this was done to reduce the supervisory load carried by Kent Hanson. Additionally, the legislative, business and industry, and partnership relations associated with the Center for Outreach and Innovation and the development of the Unmanned Aerial Systems program closely aligns with the work I do at the regional, state, and national levels. Jim will continue to work closely with academic programs, particularly technical programs. All academic offerings will continue to proceed through normal academic approval channels.
- The Marketing and Development areas of the college have been pulled together under the supervision of Dan Klug. This staff includes Jason Trainer, the new Marketing Director, Chad Sperling and Paulo Perez, in web design and development, and Mark Johnson and Ben Kosharek, KSRQ Radio. The position of Director of Public Relations was lost due to budget reductions. This group will be working closely with Enrollment Management to further “revolutionize growth strategies” for the college.
- Several positions have been or will be hired through the ARRA grant to work on development of the Unmanned Aerial Systems program. Scott Fletcher was appointed as Chief Operating Officer of Aviation and UAS programs. This title may seem strange in an academic setting. It is, however, very appropriate and understood by the corporate partners Scott is cultivating. Scott will spend most of his time on research and development, developing partnerships and contracts, and legislative relations. Birgir (Biggie) Haraldsson was recently hired as the Director of the Aviation Maintenance Training program. Jennifer Killmer was appointed as grants project manager and is located in the business office. Additional positions are being posted.

As the year proceeds, I will continue to keep the college community informed. We certainly are in a constantly changing environment – one that challenges our knowledge, creativity, and commitment. Please ask questions and be involved. I have set the expectation for our administrators and managers that they will communicate openly, listen thoughtfully to input, and work steadily to move Northland toward its goals. I hope that you are committed to these same behaviors. We need all of us working together to overcome the fiscal challenges of the next couple of years.

This week, my schedule is:

Monday, August 16 – TRF - MEC Joint Powers Board, TRF Community Advisory Committee

Tuesday, August 17 – TRF - New Employee Orientation, Jobs, Inc. Board meets with DEED Commissioner Dan McElroy

Wednesday, August 18 - Airport Site – Faculty In-Service, UAS Program Meeting

Thursday, August 19 - EGF, meeting with low-enrollment technical programs

Friday, August 20 - TRF, meeting with low-enrollment technical programs

Have a wonderful week.