Report to the

Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
NAUGATUCK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Waterbury, Connecticut
by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools & Colleges

Prepared after a review of the
Institution's Self Study Report
and an
Evaluation Visit
To the Campus from October 20-23, 2002

Submitted by:
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COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

PREFACE PAGE: **Naugatuck Valley Community College**

1. *HISTORY:*   Year chartered or authorized __1967__   Year first degrees awarded __1969__

2. *TYPE OF CONTROL* (CHECK OR FILL-IN):

PUBLIC		PRIVATE	
State	__X__	Nonprofit	_____
City	_____	Religious group (name)	_____
Other Specify	_____	Other (specify)	_____

3. *DEGREE LEVEL* (CHECK ALL APPROPRIATE CATEGORIES):

Associate __X__   Baccalaureate _____   Master's _____   Professional _____   Doctoral _____

4. *ENROLLMENT IN DEGREE PROGRAMS* (FOR FALL SEMESTER OF THE MOST CURRENT YEAR): __2002__

	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	FTE
Associate	1904	3411	2938
Baccalaureate			
Graduate			

5. *CURRENT FACULTY:*

Full-time __102__   Part-time __228__   FTE _____

6. *CURRENT FUND DATA FOR MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED FISCAL YEAR*
    (SPECIFY YEAR) __2001__

EXPENDITURES		REVENUES	
Instruction	$ 13,096,964	Tuition and fees	$ 8,429,735
General	$ 21,844,187	Gov't Appropriations	$20,223,951
Auxiliary Enterprises		Gifts/Grants/Endowment	$ 3,206,492
		Auxiliary Enterprises	
Other		Other	$ 1,947,781
TOTAL:	$34,941,151		$ 33,807,959

7. *OFF-CAMPUS LOCATIONS:*

Total __3__   In-state __3__   Out-of-state __N/A__

8. *ACCREDITATION HISTORY:*
    Candidacy: May, *1969*   Initial Accreditation: May, *1973*   Last Comprehensive Eval: Fall, *1992*
    Last Commission Action: Default rate reduction plan accepted.
    Last Action Taken on: September *24, 1999*

9. *OTHER CHARACTERISTICS:*

* **The Connecticut Legislature mandated merger in 1992 between Mattatuck Community College and Waterbury State Technical College. Dates here reflect the Community College's history prior to merger.**

INTRODUCTION

Almost immediately following its 1992 reaccreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Mattatuck Community College was merged, by legislative mandate, with Waterbury State Technical Institute. For as traumatic an institutional event as that was the resulting institution, Naugatuck Valley Community College, stands today as a comprehensive community college meeting the needs of its region by offering technical, general, and liberal education to its many communities. The visiting team commends NVCC for its work in preparing its self study and for using the self study process as a means of engaging in meaningful self assessment. In advance of the team's arrival, the self study document pointed up, in advance of the team's arrival, many of the reflections ultimately shared through our report. The college has conducted an honest appraisal of its progress and has articulated a pathway to guide it into its next decennial accreditation period.

As a college, NVCC has many strengths, justly noted throughout this report. It has, as well, several critical issues with which it must grapple as it frames its action agenda for the next several years. We applaud the college for mastering the enormous challenge presented to it through the 1992 directive to merge two separate sets of institutional cultures, climates, curricula, staffs and facilities into one effective whole and recognize that doing so was no easy task. While still experiencing a few lingering vestiges of the trauma that marked the merger, ten years later it is clear that Naugatuck Valley Community College is a strong and vibrant institution, well connected with and well respected within its region as a comprehensive community college.

We also wish to note the team's appreciation of the college's good will and hospitality. Each of us felt personally welcomed and accommodated by both the college and the external community. There is no doubt that NVCC plays a strong role as an important economic engine uniquely positioned to meet the workforce development needs of its region. No matter the challenges - and there are of course several - fiscal constriction, resource development and distribution, research capacity, strategic planning, staffing shortages, etc.--we encourage the college to savor this moment. NVCC is blessed with dedicated and stable leadership, a talented faculty and staff, an impressive instructional menu, great students, a strong and fundamental sense of student centeredness, broad based constituency involvement and support, a fine facility with a new building on the near horizon, and a tradition as an institution that is well respected in its community. With a healthy dose of Connecticut Yankee prudence and ingenuity, NVCC's future is in good hands. The hardest part of the college's evolution is over; the rest seems like the proverbial "piece of cake."

We salute Naugatuck Valley Community College as it begins the next phase of a long life as the comprehensive community college of choice of its region. In the best spirit of peer review, we offer the following commentary and recommendations to our colleagues at NVCC.

STANDARD ONE: MISSION AND PURPOSES

Naugatuck Valley Community College has triumphed over perhaps one of the most strenuous mission challenges a college might encounter—the merging of two disparate institutions under an umbrella mission, alien to one institution and expanded for the other. While the actual event occurred nearly a decade ago, the blending of two not quite willing entities with different cultures, curricula, staffs, contracts, facilities, etc. was no mean feat and has taken years to effect. While still experiencing some lingering vestiges of that trauma ten years later, NVCC has accomplished the task of creating one viable institution out of two. Naugatuck Valley Community College is a strong and vibrant institution, well connected with and well respected within its region as a comprehensive community college.

In brief, NVCC has a viable statement of mission, vision and values statements crafted in concert with the state mission directives in the early 1990's to focus the merging of two institutions into one. That mission statement has directed the work of the college since that time, and the strenuous work of bringing two institutions under one banner has now been, by and large, concluded. The college presents as a single unit with only minor manifestations of its once bifurcated mission. As importantly, the trauma of the last decade has been translated now into mere minor differences of contract implementation, which are out of local control and must be addressed at the state level, an action the team wishes heartily to endorse.

As the college moves into its next decade, it may well be time for it to substantively review its ten year old mission statement, especially as prelude to the revitalized strategic planning process now taking shape. Giving prominence to the mission in both public places and publications will help integrate it into the hearts and minds of those who must actually live it through their action and work. Real mission prominence, however, will be the result of conscious institutional positioning of the mission as the prism through which all major institutional decisions are made: strategic planning, program development, resource distribution, organizational restructuring, etc.

STRENGTHS

1. NVCC has a viable set of mission, vision, and values statements nested within the system mission for a comprehensive community college.

2. For the most part, the mindset of the once separate institutions seems, after a decade, to have melded into an integrated unit.

3. In developing a blueprint for future action, the college intended to use its mission as the central pivot point of its revitalized strategic planning process.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As the present mission statement has been in place since the merger, the team suggests that the college engage in a mission review process as a prelude to revising and developing a new strategic plan and as a prism through which all major institutional wayfinding will take place: strategic planning, program development, resource distribution, organizational restructuring, etc.

2. Ideally this revised mission statement will be prominently displayed in all College publications and materials as well as in public campus spaces.

STANDARD TWO: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Planning and evaluation are broad based and systematic, involving the participation of individuals and groups responsible for the achievement of institutional purposes. However, in spite of many planning documents from various institutional units, integration with the College's Strategic Plan and inter-unit collaboration is not always evident.

The College undertakes both short- and long-term planning, including candid and realistic analyses of internal and external opportunities and constraints. The College, generally through individual units, collects and uses data necessary to support its planning efforts and to enhance institutional effectiveness. This data based planning evidently happens as a result of very substantial efforts on the part of many faculty and staff. However, institutional allocation of resources is not always integrated into the planning priorities identified in the mission and appraisal areas.

The College's Five-year Strategic Plan was approved in 1997 and includes the years 1997 through 2002. The plan is a ten-page document including a mission statement, several appraisal areas, a three-tier planning paradigm (mission, strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats diagnostic model, and goal priorities) and a system planning timeline for 1997 – 1999. The plan does not include strategies for achieving the mission. Nor was the plan updated as part of the self-study. However, during the site visit the plan was supported by more than fifty planning and assessment documents. Some of these documents referenced the Strategic Plan while others did not.

Decentralized data collection, although it results in ample information, results in fragmented coordination and application of data to systemic planning and evaluation. Much of the available information that could otherwise contribute to improved strategic planning and coordination often has to be found in isolated pockets rather than through centralized databases.

Program review and evaluation does not seem to address adequately the cost-effectiveness of individual programs and services.

Perhaps the most significant opportunity and challenge pertaining to planning and evaluation lies in the College's forward thinking step of creating a Strategic Planning Task Force. As a new strategic planning cycle evolves, some academic goals and priorities might have to be restructured rather than automatically expanded as financial resources continue to be limited. The College has identified a Strategic Planning Task Force to reassess its strategic planning process for a new planning cycle. This step is generally seen by faculty and staff as a positive approach to looking forward to the future.

STRENGTHS

1. A concise and easily understandable mission statement sets the tone for strategic planning. Eleven appraisal areas support the mission.

2. A valid strategic planning paradigm is an important component of the Strategic Plan.

3. Faculty and staff devote considerable time and energy to program planning and evaluation.

4. Unit planning and evaluation produces ample information for annual planning.

5. Unit planning and evaluation, often but not always, results in annual connections to the goals and priorities included in legislative goal setting and the College's Strategic Plan.

6. A Strategic Planning Taskforce has been established to develop a new strategic plan. This is generally seen as a positive step enabling the College to reposition itself for the future.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Within the context of a new strategic planning cycle, the Visiting Team suggests consideration of:

   a) a concise revised mission based on a preliminary diagnosis of market needs and supported by key result areas pertaining to regional demographics, student achievement and student placement,

   b) a detailed environmental scan consisting of internal strengths and weaknesses plus external opportunities and threats resulting in readily available centralized planning information available to all units within the College,

   c) multi-year strategies (not included in the current strategic plan) with systemic approaches to marketing, program review, professional and staff development, facilities and operations, and organizational structure, and

   d) annual operating plans and budget development processes for each unit within the context of College-wide key result areas and priorities.

2. A major challenge is to strengthen the connections among data collection, planning and evaluation through institutional research processes resulting in more readily available information in centralized databases. Relevant information will be most helpful during the new strategic planning cycle when the College has centralized its own information and when it takes full advantage of the searchable databases already available at the Connecticut Department of Higher Education.

3. An additional challenge and opportunity lies in the development of a new strategic plan coupled with annual adjustments. External factors often change more frequently than every five years. Annual adjustments ensure a continuous five-year projection tied to shorter-term organizational responsiveness.

As a state institution in Connecticut, NVCC has two layers of governance external to the college: the Board of Governors, staffed by the Department of Higher Education, and the Board of Trustees for the Community-Technical Colleges, staffed by the office of the Chancellor. Governance within the college is accomplished through the College Advisory System established in 1982 and restructured in 1995 to accommodate the merger with the technical college. This system of governance enables the college to meet its mission and goals and provides adequate support to the teaching and learning enterprise. The authority, responsibilities and relationships among the constituencies are described in several different documents that appear to be understood by the administration, staff and faculty.

The Board of Governors (BOG), appointed by the governor and members of the legislature, has coordinating responsibility for accountability, planning, tuition and fees, mission and program review for all of public higher education. The Department of Education, led by the Commissioner, is the Administrative unit for the BOG. The BOG has a standing advisory committee made up of broad representation from the all segments of public and private higher education, including two faculty and two administrative staff from NVCC.

The Board of Trustees of the Community-Technical Colleges (BOT), the Chancellor and his staff have direct authority over NVCC and the other eleven community colleges. Trustees, appointed by the governor and members of the legislature, provide a broad representation of the public interest. Budget and facilities planning, personnel actions, and system policies are coordinated through the Chancellor's office and implemented in coordination with the Community-Technical College presidents. The BOT delegates appropriate authority and autonomy to the President to manage the institution effectively. The division of responsibility and authority between the BOT and Chancellor's office and the institution is clear, and there appears to be a good working relationship with the campus.

The President fulfills his duties as chief executive officer with the assistance of his cabinet comprised of three full deans: Administration, Learning and Student Development; Continuing Education, Community and Economic Development; and one associate dean, Resource Development. The President meets approximately bimonthly with his cabinet and has recently reinstituted meetings with his "expanded cabinet" which includes the above cabinet members and the directors from each of the deans' units. This action was taken in response to a need (identified during the self-study process) for broader inclusion in cabinet level decision-making especially around budget and staffing. Also during the self-study process the need for the separation of the student services function from instruction and learning, a continuing issue since the units were joined several years ago and the Dean of Student Services position eliminated, was identified as needing immediate attention. A Director for Student Services who reports to the Dean of Learning and Student Development was recently appointed.

The continuing education programs are coordinated, if not fully integrated, into the policy formation and management system of the institution. Some issues of integration persist in the Continuing Education, Community and Economic Development Unit efforts to evolve the non-credit area into a "one college concept". Enhanced communication regarding resource allocation and marketing efforts may improve faculty acceptance of the non-credit initiatives as part of the college. As one of the two the largest providers of online courses in the community college system, NVCC appears to manage the online offerings in concert with college management and policy.

Campus governance is accomplished through the College Advisory System, made up of three standing committees that make recommendations on curriculum, academic standards and student affairs. Recommendations are discussed at announced public forums prior to a meeting of the full professional staff where a vote is taken. These recommendations are forwarded to the president who requests further input on his approval/disapproval intent through the Weekly Bulletin. This system of governance involves participation of faculty, staff and students. NVCC evaluates the effectiveness of the Campus Advisory system through yearly surveys of participants, and survey results provided indicate sufficient satisfaction with the systems . Concerns voiced during this visit include: that no further debate is allowed at the time of vote at the Professional Staff meetings; that the response time to recommendations made in the Weekly Bulletin is too short; and that students do not have adequate information and participation in the decision making process. It has been suggested that the college's excellent technology resources can assist in improving this process by:

- distributing the Weekly Bulletin on the web and/or by email including the ability for electronic responses
- providing expanded opportunity for public debate by utilizing technology, i.e. email and/or threaded discussions
- informing students of campus issues through campus newspapers, web sites, college T.V station and email and by providing the opportunity for electronic responses.

The self-study process highlighted the need for a more coordinated system of data collection and analysis for institutional studies. Organizationally the responsibility for institutional research resides with the Resource Development Unit that is also responsible for the Foundation Board, grants and alumni affairs. During the self-study process, a professor assisted with data analysis. The college recognizes the need to improve its institutional research capability including better utilization of data available through the Department of Education and the Office of the Chancellor.

The governance and organization of Naugatuck Valley Community College provides an adequate structure for the successful accomplishments of its mission and purpose. Ongoing evaluation of the College Advisory System, using the results for improvement, will strengthen this system as the college continues to evolve its mission and strategic plan.

STRENGTHS

1. The relationship to the Board of Trustees and Chancellor's office is well defined and provides coordination on system-wide issues such as transferability, core curriculum, facilities and budget.

2. The President and his cabinet provide an atmosphere of stability to college constituencies through long term service and consistent leadership.

3. College governance through the College Advisory System provides the opportunity for faculty, staff and students to participate fully in assuring the integrity of academic programs and policy.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Faculty, staff and students have identified the need for an improved system of communications on campus governance issues. The team encourages the college to consider more fully utilizing its excellent technological resources to disseminate information and receive input on all campus issues, policies and governance.

2. As students have requested more involvement in institutional decision making, the team recommends reinstituting regular meetings of the Student Government Association and the President and expanding efforts to include students in the College Advisory System through improved communications and scheduling.

3. To bolster the "one college" concept, the team suggests a review of ways in which the Continuing Education, Community and Economic Development Unit can be more fully integrated into the campus culture, curriculum and services. In addition, the team recommends that the college reevaluate the organizational placement of the Offices of Marketing and Facilities Management to better support the broad based needs of the college as a whole.

STANDARD FOUR: PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTION

NVCC offers sixty-five degree programs and forty-five certificate programs, including two in Liberal Arts and Science and one in General Studies. It has added thirty-eight new degrees and certificates since 1996. Its effectiveness in developing new programs that respond to the ever-changing needs of its area of service supports to the college mission to offer marketable job skills and transfer options to its students. The college catalog publishes general education and program requirements and outcomes that detail required knowledge, intellectual skills, and methods of inquiry.

Resources are sufficient to maintain most programs, but current fiscal exigencies are causing the college to assess its policy of encouraging the frequent addition of new programs and its fiscal priorities. One challenge the college is experiencing is the management of resource allocation with respect to programs with low enrollments and graduation rates. A strategic planning process that has full college buy-in, that encourages the sharing of information about the budget process, and that links college goals to the budget should guide the college as it makes the difficult decisions that lie ahead with respect to these programs. Educational assistants have been particularly hit by the current budget difficulties, which has led many staff members to raise concerns about the loss of support for learners in their efforts to master the curriculum.

The Board of Trustees mandates the evaluation of program outcomes, needs and strengths through Program Reviews. Among the concerns expressed in the self study were the lack of quantifiable data in the reports and the absence of a formal mechanism to ensure that program goals identified in one Program Review are met before the next scheduled review. The college now asserts that the Program Review process has recently been strengthened through a plan to revisit recommendations annually in order to assess progress in making recommended changes. A greater commitment to a planning process that ties program review priorities to budget and more thorough institutional research throughout the college will also strengthen the ability of faculty and directors to prepare high quality Program Reviews. In addition to Program Reviews, external accreditors review certain programs.

The faculty clearly initiates and shapes the development of new courses and programs. Changes or revisions in curriculum go before the Curriculum and Educational Affairs Committee (CEAC) and then to full faculty and professional staff and the president for approval. Faculty and staff have several opportunities to discuss curriculum proposals during this process. In addition, the Academic Standards Committee studies how the college can best develop clear policies with regard to academic standards in such areas as ESL credits and placement of in-coming students.

Courses offered in non-traditional ways meet the same standards as traditional courses. Faculty are active in developing distance learning courses that, no matter the time frame, location, or modality, have explicit outcomes, student assessments and faculty evaluations. On-line advising guidelines for distance learning are being currently addressed through a FIPSE grant. By fall 2001, over 50 courses in the curriculum were web enhanced. Other real world experiences such

as the Cooperative Education program (a component in twenty-one programs) and clinical experiences in the allied health areas also meet academic standards and use direct and indirect methods of assessment.

Credit free programs are organized into three centers that actively support workforce development and are testimony to the college's commitment to lifelong learning and to the community. Continuing Education has developed "Quality Standards for the Continuing Education Model," a document that has been distributed to institutions statewide. Additionally, Continuing Education creates professional development workshops for part-time faculty. A total of twenty credit-free certificates are offered, and the course offerings have grown 270% since 92-93. Many courses provide links to credit courses and programs, and the centers regularly assess their offerings and instructional methodologies. Some concerns have been raised about how the college develops budget and marketing priorities with respect to the non-credit versus the credit areas. Constant dialogue and integration between credit and non-credit units will ultimately serve the students more effectively and will create more opportunities for students to move from non-credit to credit courses, as appropriate to their career and personal goals.

Undergraduate Degree Programs

The Common Core of General Education, consisting of 24 to 25 credit hours, is well distributed over four areas: Communication Skills; Mathematics and Science; Behavioral and Social Science; and Arts and Humanities. The Common Core seeks to build student competencies in writing, critical thinking, basic research and the technology to conduct the research, as well as scientific and mathematical methodologies. Not all programs meet this hourly requirement, but all exceed 20 hours and have courses from all four groups. Some programs struggle with the conflict of training their students in a specialized area versus meeting core distribution requirements. A statewide effort to have uniform core requirements will cause the college to adjust its common core in the near future. While criteria for evaluation are detailed in the General Education outcomes, no formal assessment of these general education outcomes is pursued. At one time the college used a national test (CBASE), but this test was expensive to administer, and the college has not found a way to assess the effectiveness of its general education core. Therefore there is little data to support whether graduates demonstrate the competence that the Common Core seeks to develop.

The college catalog publishes requirements for all programs and certificates and outcomes for all majors except for Liberal Arts and General Studies (which lists common core outcomes). In these two programs, the catalog suggests that individual course outcomes should serve as substitutes for program outcomes. The college might consider studying whether the large numbers of students enrolled in these programs have clear objectives for learning and well-focused goals. Clear program outcomes that highlight the need for students to shape with care their individual academic goals might be a fruitful exercise. In addition, a process that can assess the degree to which students have achieved Common Core skills is particularly valuable to these students.

The requirements for the major, sequencing of course requirements, and attention to the necessary knowledge and skills needed in specific disciplines, are clearly presented to students. The self study traces the direct and indirect measures each division employs to assess student learning. These assessments address student achievement in written and oral English, tests, and portfolios, etc. as well as graduate follow-up and surveys. Such evidence of student exposure to a wide variety of assessment tools, accompanied by evidence of success in licensure, graduate performance surveys, and in employment, are strong measures of graduates' in-depth understanding of their particular areas of specialization.

Scholarship

Faculty are committed to ongoing application, utilization, and dissemination of their expertise within and beyond the college community; in addition, by engaging in faculty development activities, they have increased their knowledge of innovative teaching techniques and technological applications. With the encouragement of a culture that is engaged in institutional research, such studies as the one engaged in by the Biology Department to assess the efficacy of multimedia technology will be replicated elsewhere in the college. In addition, such support will encourage the faculty to research the success of their graduates, the accuracy of course sequencing, and especially to what degree their students are demonstrating the learning outcomes in each course and program.

Instruction

With the assistance of the Library, the Multimedia Department and the WebCT Administrator, the college has been active in using technology to enhance student ability to master Twenty-First Century skills. In 1999 NVCC was the largest provider of distance learning in the system. NVCC is especially proud of its hands-on learning style. The incorporation of multimedia technology in courses gives evidence of improved student learning.

Faculty have an evaluation process aimed at enhancing their effectiveness that includes an individual professional development plan, as well as student evaluations and department chair evaluations. These processes are time-consuming enterprises for all involved, and the college needs to find ways to make them more fruitful with regard to professional growth. Opportunities for faculty development include discussion sessions, computer-related training and program and web offerings through the system wide Center for Teaching. Although the president has recently reassigned the Director of Academic Assessment and Professional Development to other pressing duties; despite the loss of a specific person who is responsible for professional development, the dissemination of conference information and opportunities to enhance teaching and technology skills needs to continue through standing committees and division directors. The college should commit itself to assigning personnel to oversee professional development programming in any administrative reorganization it contemplates.

Most students are assigned an advisor, but not all faculty are advisors. The impact of on-line registration on advising needs to be assessed to assure that those students who need more intense advising intervention have their needs met.

Admission and Retention

NVCC is an open admission institution with selective placement into programs and courses. The Accuplacer test enrolls students in appropriate level courses so they can be placed according to their level of competence. The college provides developmental academic preparation when students need it and tutorial support services. However, the reduction in the hours of Educational Assistants over the past two years has seriously impacted the tutoring available in the tutoring centers and the disability services area.

The college accepts transfer credit, credit for prior learning, tech prep affiliations and maintains transfer articulations. Academic progress is reported to each student at the end of each academic term. Approximately 70% of student body is retained from semester to semester.

STRENGTHS

1. The college is committed to establishing measurable and regularly updated learning outcomes for degree and certificate programs as well as for non-credit programs and services.

2. In response to community needs, the college has established new and innovative programs, certificates, and non-credit courses and training modules.

3. The various programs in the college integrate technology and multimedia teaching strategies into developmental, core, career, transfer, and non-credit courses.

4. Program reviews are conducted regularly, and the college has a plan in place to ensure that program review recommendations are reviewed and implemented on a regular basis.

5. The college is a leader in the state system in providing distance learning opportunities.

6. There is equity in program quality and access to instructional resources across the campus.

7. Continuing Education and credit faculty and staff generally see the ongoing benefits of collaboration in order to maximize educational opportunities in the service area.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The college has not resolved the problems evident in low enrollment in several programs and/or courses. Therefore, it needs to develop a fair, data-driven strategic plan for establishing academic division budgets and for consolidating programs with low enrollments, thus maximizing the use of scant resources.

2. Program reviews and classroom research on effective teaching strategies have been hindered by the college's lack of commitment to institutional research.

3. Despite a commitment to identifying outcomes in programs and courses, the college has not found a satisfactory way to assess the degree to which students have achieved its general education outcomes.

4. The reduction of educational assistants in many academic areas has challenged the college's need to support learners in their efforts to master the curriculum.

5. Despite the benefits of collaboration between the credit and non-credit faculty and staff, these groups articulate differences of opinion about resources, programs, and mission. Better communication and planning among the faculty and staff in these two groups will strengthen their programs and enhance the "one college" concept.

STANDARD FIVE: FACULTY

During the last academic year, 104 full-time faculty and 232 part-time faculty delivered the instruction and administered the academic programs for the 5,262 students enrolled in credit-courses at the college. That the full-time faculty taught approximately two-thirds of course credits during the last six semesters, suggests that there are enough of them to shoulder the instructional and non-instructional workload of the college, avoiding an overdependence on part-time faculty.

All faculty, full- and part-time, meet the qualifications or equivalencies established by the Board of Trustees. In fall 2002, degrees held by full-time faculty include 20 doctorates, 79 masters, and 5 bachelors; part-time faculty held 24 doctorates, 177 masters, 30 bachelors, 3 associates, and 3 with no post secondary degree. Exceptions to minimum Board standards appear to occur only in highly specialized performance and technical fields: dance, automotive repair, EMT, etc. The scholarship and creativity of the faculty are well documented in each full-time faculty's individual professional development plan, required as one of the components in the contractually-mandated evaluation process.

The college hires faculty through a genuinely open and fair process, adhering closely to external laws and internal guidelines. The college Affirmative Action Policy states, "Recruitment and hiring of protected group members reflect their availability in the job market." Each year the college conducts a goal analysis on each faculty rank to assess advancement in this area. "The Affirmative Action Officer will continue to improve affirmative action goal achievement through increased outreach efforts" (69). The community college system-sponsored Minority's Fellows Program has succeeded in attracting to the college minority faculty who have become permanent employees.

At the time of hire, faculty receive either of two collective bargaining agreements, depending upon to which unit they are assigned: the contract for the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges (4C's) or the one for the American Federation of Technical College Teachers (AFT). Faculty also receive the Employees' Policies and Procedures Manual, which includes the Code of Ethics for Connecticut Community Colleges and the Code of Ethics for Public Officials and State Employees. This manual intends to ensure that faculty act responsibly and ethically, and observe the established conditions of their employment.

In recent years the college has hired 25 new full-time faculty, backfilling all but one of the faculty vacancies caused by early retirement in 1998. These 25 new faculty represent nearly one quarter of the total full-time faculty. The strong enthusiasms and diverse interests of these new faculty have been embraced by the majority of the faculty and, consequently, invigorated the college. To respond adequately to this large turnover, the college should consider developing ways to sustain these recently hired faculty; for example, a faculty mentoring program could orient them to the academic culture of the college and, perhaps, increase the likelihood of extending their longevity and protecting their good morale.

The 1996 interim self-study visiting team reported, "The inconsistent policy on workload and compensation, owing to two separate collective bargaining agreements is a major problem. This situation consumes an inordinate amount of faculty and institutional time and energy and causes conflict and morale problems." Since then the college has made significant progress toward establishing harmony between the two collective bargaining units that represent the faculty, librarians and counselors.

Workload, as measured in credit hours, has been equalized for lecture courses and is being aligned for clinicals, labs and studios. Individual "Additional Responsibilities" beyond instructional workload for each faculty are reviewed every academic year and collectively during contract negotiations. Salaries have been equalized for the two faculty units, except for those few at the very top step of the salary schedule. Promotion guidelines appear to displease equally both units. With no distinctions made between bargaining unit, the self study reports, "The effect of promotion policies and procedures on morale was viewed as negative by an overwhelming 68 % of respondents" (66).

While the college has progressed steadily toward harmonizing the two collective bargaining units, disparities still exist in several contractual areas. For example, the agreements contain few but significant differences in promotion criteria and the semester calendars. More importantly is the discrepancy in availability and distribution of professional development funds.

Funds for professional development travel and other activities--provided solely through collective bargaining--appear to be both insufficient and inequitably distributed. "Among faculty and staff of the 4C's Union, it is strongly held that professional development funds are unsatisfactory and that the method of reimbursement is confusing and inequitable." On the other hand, "The AFT Union reports no difficulties with its Professional Development committee processes, with most of its members receiving ample notification and reimbursement for activities" (68).

To offset the inadequate and inequitable distribution of contractual professional development funds, the college offers a substantial array of in-house professional development opportunities to full- and part-time faculty. In addition to system-sponsored activities, the college provides tuition and fee waivers for credit and credit–free courses on a space-available basis. Plus Learning Enterprises (in the office of Continuing Education, Community and Economic Development), the Information Technology Department, and the Human Resource Office, offer a regular assortment of free trainings to faculty.

The college uniformly implements contractually-stipulated procedures for the regular evaluation of full-time faculty, including classroom observation, self assessment, professional development plan, and goals and objectives. Furthermore, the college evaluates part-time faculty with increasing regularity and consistency among the academic divisions. Through these evaluations the college sees that the faculty effectively carry out their assigned duties.

The college protects and fosters the academic freedom of all faculty. According to the survey conducted by the college for the purpose of this self study, "no substantial problems appear to exist in the area of academic freedom" (68-69); in fact, "81 % of faculty, staff and administration agree that NVCC assures faculty the freedom to teach and assures students the freedom to study" (142).

The college employs Educational Assistants to augment academic support staff. The college attempts to hire qualified and trained EA's who are supervised by appropriate faculty or professional staff. "The College has increasingly used Educational Assistants (EA's) to staff learning centers, such as computer labs, auto-tutorial biology, self-paced mathematics, nursing, hospitality labs, writing centers, and the Learning Resource Center, among others...However, budget cuts have diminished the amount of EA support...curtailing the length of time the various learning and resource centers are open for student use...this trend has severely threatened the ability of programs to provide ongoing quality service to NVCC students" (64-65).

STRENGTHS

1. The college's dedicated faculty responds conscientiously to community and student needs. The care, expertise and professionalism which the faculty invests in curriculum development and student learning inspire the community's high regard for the college.

2. The faculty and staff continue to make significant progress toward establishing harmony between the two collective bargaining units that represent the faculty, librarians and counselors.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. While the college has progressed steadily toward harmonizing the two collective bargaining units, disparities still exist in several contractual areas (the amount of professional development funds, promotion guidelines, academic calendar, high-end salaries, and compensation for program chairs). In order to equalize the working conditions and compensation for these units, the college should continue resolving locally-controlled issues on campus and advocating for contractually-mandated changes off campus.

2. The 25 full-time faculty who were hired during the last five years represent nearly one quarter of the total full-time faculty. To respond adequately to this large faculty turnover, the team suggests that the college consider developing ways to sustain these recently hired faculty; for example, a faculty mentoring program could orient them to the academic culture of the college.

Overall, NVCC has a vast array of services that positively impact the psycho-social lives of its students; the academic counseling services, health services, student activities all are making significant contributions to the educational experience of students. Higher levels of efficiency in delivery of services have been gained as a result of the college's successful implementation of its Banner student information system. In particular, Banner has made the Financial Aid Office and the Registrar's area more effective and far more accessible to students. The fact that students can now access most of their records online gives students and their faculty advisors the information they need to make critical and timely decisions. Staff who implemented this system should be applauded.

The hallmark of student services at NVCC is the talented professional staff and faculty who have a commitment to deliver the highest quality of service to their student clientele. The dedication to students by those who deliver ESL, advising, and other student and academic support services is well evidenced by the comments and observations of many students and faculty. There is high regard for the student and academic support service personnel who foster the intellectual and personal development of students.

Nonetheless, with due respect for fiscal reality, one of the challenges for NVCC lies in the reduced staffing levels in key support areas: for example, staffing in ESL, the tutorial labs, and Cooperative Education seems insufficient and appears to be impacting the college's efforts to deliver quality services. It appears that there are also not enough professional tutors in the writing and math centers to meet the needs of a college that is placing over two thirds of its entering students in remedial/developmental courses. There is, furthermore, a heavy dependency on adjuncts who teach the basic skills courses.

The one full time faculty member who teaches English as a Second Language must teach, create, coordinate, enhance curriculum, and supervise and hire adjuncts. The lack of an ESL support center further exacerbates the learning support problems for students who need additional language and grammar. Not all minority students are second language learners, but they all would benefit from the college placing more emphasis on services that can provide the unique support services that students from diverse cultures require in order to be motivated, accepted and ultimately successful.

An overview observation is that the lack of resources dedicated to student and academic support services might be, in part, due to the need for greater leadership and advocacy. Student Services and Academic Support Services need strong and separate voices at the table when institutional budget priorities are being discussed. The recent addition of a Director of Student Development/Services may help to provide some of this leadership and advocacy. Still, the organizational structure of the academic support services area and student services may bear further review in order to minimize accountability issues and optimize leveraging of resources. The college needs to assure students that these important elements, which play a significant role in the college's mission, are delivered at the highest level of quality.

While Counseling and Academic Advising exist within the same organizational framework, the psycho-social development of students seems to be overly emphasized. The staff is very well trained and seems to be empathetic to student needs. However, the large population of non-matriculating students combined with the vast numbers of developmental students suggests that with a change in focus, the academic advising unit could become the unit that provides new retention strategies which target high risk populations. Furthermore, transfer students could benefit from the additional attention provided through a cohort-based advising system. The success with implementing Banner provides the college with a key resource necessary to implementing these initiatives.

Fiscal constraints are a pressing reality and clear challenge to addressing the support of NVCC's students. Nonetheless, creative leadership, strong commitment, and reliance upon the strategic planning process to ensure redeployment of resources will lead to greater retention success.

STRENGTHS

1. Banner implementation, where it impacts students, has significantly improved efficiency and quality of services.

2. Professional and clerical staff and faculty are truly dedicated to providing quality support services and increased educational opportunity for all students.

3. There are a wide variety of services and student activities which significantly enhance the educational experience of students.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The team encourages a comprehensive review of the staffing limitations in academic support, cooperative education, minority services, and ESL which appear to be negatively impacting student success.

2. Organizational leadership/advocacy needs to be strengthened for areas that are responsible for providing academic support services (academic advising, assessment, developmental education, ESL and tutorial support, etc.) and student services (Student Activities, Student Government, co-curricula activity, Admissions, Financial Aid and Registrar, etc.)

3. The college may wish to explore different models and strategies that will help to improve retention of minority, developmental education, E.S.L and transfer students.

4. The large number of non-matriculating students is frustrating the college's attempts to coordinate services and programs which could enhance student success. The team encourages the college to consider moving to a more pro-active, intrusive, cohort-based academic advising system versus the current emphasis on counseling.

STANDARD SEVEN: LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Max R. Traurig Learning Resources Center and the Department of Information Technology each have clearly defined mission statements that support teaching and learning at NVCC. The LRC is made up of the Library, the Media Department and Distance Learning. There is also an Electronic Classroom. The Library is open 52 hours per week, a reduction in service hours due to a staffing shortage.

At the time of the self study, the library meets the ACRL minimum standards for print materials, audiovisuals and serials. In addition to these resources, the library provides an impressive array of electronic resources. These web-based resources are accessible on campus and also, through authentication, from any Internet accessible computer. They include databases provided through IConn, the Connecticut Digital Library as well as titles purchased by the library.

In addition to 13 computers available in the Reference Department, the library has an electronic classroom equipped with 20 computers. The Information Technology Department supports administrative and academic computing including the Banner System, 38 computer labs and one mobile laptop lab running an array of up-to-date software. Additionally, 3 computer labs are located off-campus. The Department supports approximately 1,100 computers in classrooms, labs and faculty/staff offices and an online Help Desk. There is also a project underway to equip each classroom with a permanent inventory of media equipment.

The library has a well-developed web page that provides access to all online resources as well as the online catalog. It also has useful handouts to assist students in their research. Of particular note is a section especially for distance learning students. The IT Department also has a well-developed web page that has links to informational pages for faculty and students, including WebCT. The IT Department also has a very informative on line newsletter.

Library funding has fluctuated between $200,000 and $350,000. Categories, when measured against ACRL standards for community colleges show dollars spent per FTE. Although most categories show adequate or excellent funding per FTE, print materials are funded at markedly lower dollars than the minimum ACRL standard. The increasing development of electronic resources without an increase in funding has resulted in the neglect of the print collection. This neglect was noted as a concern in the self study.

Funding for IT has been adequate because of the availability of bond funding. Without this funding the operating budget for IT would not adequately support the technology needs of the campus.

Staffing at the library includes a Director, currently filled in acting capacity by the public services librarian, and four librarians. There is a production director in the Media Center and the Distance Learning Coordinator. Educational Assistants work in the Electronic Classroom and at the Circulation Desk. The reduction of the Educational Assistants has resulted in a reduction of library hours. The IT Department is staffed by 6 full-time staff

including the Director of IT, Administrative Computing Manager, Network Manager , IT technicians and user support personnel. Compared to comparable community colleges in Connecticut, the department is understaffed.

There is an active library instruction program that focuses on workshops and training sessions for faculty as well as students. Formal instruction is provided to all. It is noted that the Common Core addresses the need for Information Literacy as it is designed to ensure that students have "basic research skills necessary to investigate any subject." NVCC emphasizes educating the faculty in library resources and in important issues such as plagiarism on the Internet. The Electronic Classroom has enhanced the instruction program by adding a hands on dimension to the class.

Resource sharing is an integral part of the library as evidenced by the library's participation in OCLC/NELINET, the Connecticut Library Network, Western Connecticut Library Consortium, and Libris, the consortium of the seven Connecticut community technical colleges. Libris links the libraries together through Voyager, a full-service library management system. In addition, NVCC belongs to ReQuest the Connect Library Network which facilitates resource sharing among 256 Connecticut libraries.

STRENGTHS

1. The Library and Media Departments within the LRC and the Information Technology Department all have departmental mission statements that flow from the college mission statement.

2. Staff members in both the LRC and the Information Technology Department are dedicated professionals who are committed to service to students and faculty and to the college's educational mission.

3. Library research is well integrated into the curriculum through the emphasis on research in the Common Core and the growing number of library instruction classes.

4. The library web page is well developed, informative, and frequently updated. Of particular note is the section devoted to the needs of distance learning students.

5. Assessment of library instruction, collections, and services is taken seriously, and results of surveys are used to refine library services and the library instruction program.

6. The Information Technology Department provides strong faculty and staff support as evidenced by their array of training opportunities. The Information Technology Online Newsletter is very informative and a good vehicle for communication.

7. The college technology infrastructure is very well developed.

8. The Information Technology Department effectively uses student workers to the mutual benefit of the students who get valuable job experience and to the IT Department that gets extra help.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As the LRC's print collection has slipped below the ACRL's minimum threshold for dollars spent per FTE, the team recommends that the college should review its commitment to maintain the print collection while also maintaining its on-line resources.

2. Although the LRC does a commendable job of assessment of library services, multi-year strategic planning would help facilitate the integration of continuously evolving technology into the LRC.

3. Both the LRC and the Information Technology Department have experienced recent personnel vacancies that have not been filled. The team recommends that the college consider a comprehensive review of staffing limitations in the LRC and in the Information Technology Department to assess the need for replacement of personnel.

STANDARD EIGHT: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Located in Waterbury, CT, Naugatuck Valley Community College maintains a single campus on 110 acres with seven permanent buildings, six temporary buildings (although they are 20+ years old) and a parking facility consisting of 803,299 square feet. In addition, the college leases a space for its automotive technician program. The college's physical plant accommodates an FY02 student enrollment of 5,222 and a faculty, staff and administration of 260 (101 faculty). The college has sufficient and appropriate physical resources necessary to serve the needs defined by its mission and purpose.

The majority of space is allocated to classroom and program instruction with adequate space assigned for academic support, library, plant and administration. The initial impressive appearance of the facility is somewhat diminished by a significant deferred maintenance issue, as noted in both the self study and in the 1992 NEASC report. A June 2002 study identified $17.7M of required work ($10.9 for deferred maintenance and $6.8 for improvements). The college's ability to address these concerns is extremely constrained due to the lack of adequate local resources; it is totally dependent upon state capital appropriations. And while the state has provided the college with funds over the years to address a number of projects, it has not been enough. This underfunding jeopardizes the continued safe and effective use of the campus and has created issues in the college such as the air quality and health and safety issue in Ekstrom building. OSHA has sampled the air quality and found no problem, but the issue is a lingering source of anxiety which likely needs revisiting.

Of great significance is the construction of a $30M, 100,000 square-foot technology building scheduled to commence next summer. This new Terrace building will allow the college to vacate and consolidate programs currently housed in inadequate temporary buildings as well as in the leased automotive technician facility. This new construction will reduce the need for $5.7M in required deferred maintenance and improvements while creating operational efficiencies. However, it will create a temporary swing space issue for the programs currently housed in the Terrace building since they will need to be relocated for demolition and during construction. To address this purpose, the college might consider discussion with UCONN regarding the space on the third floor of the Ekstrom building which is underutilized.

The self study identified, and the faculty and staff confirmed, that housekeeping and regular maintenance throughout the facility is inadequate although there appears to be sufficient staff to do the job. This concern may be due in part to the vacant position of Director of Campus Support.

With capital funds from the state, the college has upgraded the network infrastructure, installed MIS software (Banner) and maintains over 1,100 computers in 38 student labs.

All facilities are constructed and maintained in accordance with legal requirements. The DPW on behalf of the college has conducted an asbestos analysis plan, has agreed to self-audit for EPA compliance, and maintains adequate environmental and health safety plans. College officials meet regularly with the local officials, fire department and other appropriate agencies to review and assess compliance. Also, the college conducts annual training for all employees in numerous areas including ADA, hazardous materials, emergency procedures and infectious materials.

The college conducts physical resource planning that is consistent with the mission and purpose of the college. The college has a facilities master plan that was developed during 1996-97 and a 2000 report for the new technology building. All those with a sharehold in these were included in the development.

STRENGTHS

1. The college has an impressive facility with beautiful grounds ideally situated for easy access for their commuter student body.

2. The college has implemented a new upgraded and integrated IT network infrastructure with over 1,100 computers for faculty, staff and students. The college has also installed a new management information system (Banner) integrating finance, student and human resources.

3. The college has received approval for the expenditure of a capital appropriation from the state for a new 100,000 square foot technology building that will allow for the consolidation of programs currently in inadequate, insufficient and leased space.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The lack of resources to address the deferred maintenance projects jeopardizes the continued effective and safe use of the campus for faculty, staff and students. This concern was cited in the 1992 report and remains a significant outstanding issue. The Team advises that the college, through the Board of Trustees, to aggressively advocate for the funding necessary to address this problem.

2. Whether actual or perceived, the college has an air quality problem. The Team advises the college to consider re-addressing this issue by re-testing the air with clear and unambiguous information regarding the method and means used for such test. Such information, together with the results, should be clearly and accurately communicated to the college community.

3. The college has a housekeeping and regular maintenance problem. While staffing appears to be adequate, the scheduling of daily tasks with the appropriate follow-up and accountability is

lacking. This issue is impacting the attitude of various faculty, staff and students. The Team advises the college to review the current managerial staffing in this area and future resource allocation as it relates to this issue as well as deferred maintenance in the context of the strategic plan priorities.

4. The allocation of shared space in the college is determined by the Office of Facilities Management within the Division of Continuing Education. While the initial priority of all such space is given to credit programs, beyond that, it is a first come first served basis. The Team advises the college to review this structure to determine if it is the most effective to accomplish the mission and purpose of the college.

STANDARD NINE: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

NVCC is a state assisted public agency. The System's Board of Trustees sets the tuition and fee rates. The college remits tuition and fees, along with all other funds generated locally, to the system office where they are reauthorized for expenditure. From 1998 to 2002, the revenues increased 25%; during the same period, expenditures increased over 28%, while enrollments increased about 12%. The FY02 student FTE was 2,522.

In three of the past 5 years the college has posted losses and maintains a minimal fund balance in current unrestricted funds of $50,000. The Board of Trustees Operating Fund Policy requires system colleges to maintain reserve funds at a specified level. In response to the present fiscal crisis which has reduced resources by 3% for FY '03, NVCC has depleted its reserves and is under a directive to re-establish the reserve with additions of approximately $500,000 over the next three years. To address the funding shortfall, the college has instituted a hiring freeze, reduced the number of educational assistants, supplies and travel.

Notwithstanding this problem, the institution is financially viable. The projection of state appropriations and tuition and fee revenue, at some level, is certain. However, the level of funding and the current deferred maintenance liability may significantly impact the college's ability to apply its limited resources to daily operations. The college allocates the budget consistent with its mission and purpose. From unrestricted revenues the college has spent approximately 50% on instruction and academic support over the last four years.

The college has an internal budget distribution process which it acknowledges as being inadequate. Plans have been laid to revise both process and content. The state budget distribution process is based upon a complicated formula. The state's internal controls are the primary procedures followed by the college. All funds flow through the system office, both state and local.

The college understands its financial situation. It has an integrated MIS system that provides timely and accurate data for financial accounting and business decisions together with adequate safeguards to monitor and control the budget. The college fundraising efforts through the foundation have been made a priority with the recent hiring of the Associate Dean of Resource Development who coordinates and maintains the Grants Office.

The college is audited as part of the college system. Every other year the auditors come on campus to validate financial figures and review internal controls. The college's administration appropriately reviews the audit and presents it to the advisory council. The college has in place appropriate internal mechanisms to evaluate its financial management. Monthly budget to actual reports are produced by the finance office and presented to the college divisions after review and analysis changes are made as necessary. The college has also engaged the services of Price Waterhouse Coppers to conduct their first independent external audit.

STRENGTHS

1. The college has a knowledgeable and experienced finance staff.

2. The new Banner computer system provides timely and accurate data for financial accounting and business decisions together with adequate safeguards to monitor and control the budget.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Over the last several years expenditures have outpaced revenues resulting in the depletion of college reserve funds. The primary reason for this is that over the last few years state budget support has not kept pace with significant fixed cost increases (e.g., collective bargaining and inflation). As a result, greater local fund support was required. The Team suggests that the college take steps to restore these reserve funds.

2. The Team advises that the college revise its present budget process, both procedurally and substantively, to reflect a clear process for budget decision and analysis that is distributed to and inclusive of the college community with final budget decisions and allocations published and conveniently accessible.

3. The Team further advises the college to consider a comprehensive college-wide resource allocation review to identify and maximize efficiencies and effectiveness including but not limited to the review of low enrolled programs, class size and the establishment and analysis of cost centers to determine productivity and profitability. All such reviews should be done in the context of and in full recognition of mission objectives of the college and strategic plan priorities.

STANDARD TEN: PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

The Office of College Marketing coordinates most of the major publications and the information disseminated to the public via printed materials and through the college web site. OCM staff work closely with key individuals across the campus to ensure the accuracy of information and that NVCC's image is portrayed consistently. A uniform look and theme is achieved by the use of the college logo and consistent statements such as "It's Your Choice!" on all publications.

The college catalog and the web site are the primary vehicles for the dissemination of information related to the institution including obligations and responsibilities to students and the community. The NVCC catalog is published every other year. The catalog, as well as other college publications, is posted on the college Web site. The rights and responsibilities of the students are clearly identified in the college catalog and in more detail in the student handbook. Institutional responsibility is clearly defined in the Statutory Mandate included in the catalog.

The college has made extensive use of the web page to disseminate information. Colorful and easy to navigate, the staff involved in the development and maintenance can be justifiably proud of it. The Director of Marketing is responsible for all of the marketing aspects of the web, including the NVCC catalogs, course schedules and informational pages geared towards outreach to the public. The academic web, comprised of department and division pages is the domain of the Director of Instructional Technology who assists faculty and professional staff with the development of web pages for academic programs including the LRC. The publications appear to represent fairly the conditions and opportunities available at NVCC. Brochures for individual programs are also available and have a uniform look and layout. They are very attractive and effectively market their programs.

The college catalog includes the NVCC mission. Additionally, educational outcomes are listed for the majority of the programs. The Catalog and Student Handbook also detail relevant information regarding student rights and responsibilities. The Faculty and Administrative Information Manual details the policies and procedures at NVCC on behalf of the faculty. Both of these publications are available on the web as well as in print.

The college catalog has a listing of Professional Staff that includes current faculty, professional staff and administrators including position or departmental affiliation, degrees earned along with schools attended. There is no indication of part or full-time status.

The college prepares credit course schedule books each semester including the summer program, containing up to date information on for-credit course offerings including tuition, times/ dates and course descriptions. There are also schedule books for non-credit courses which are also available on the web. The catalog is reviewed regularly to ensure that courses not offered for two consecutive semesters are no longer listed.

The Student Handbook provides information about resources for students. The Fact Book provides data on the size and characteristics of the student body and campus setting. Information on student success is taken from a variety of sources including the President's Weekly Bulletin and surveys of graduates.

The college makes available to the public all of its publications, including the catalog, course schedules and program brochures. Requests for financial information are handled through the office of the Dean of Administration.

The institution's accreditation status is clearly identified in the catalog as well as in brochures that are used to market programs. There is a continuous review process that ensures that publications and the web page remain current.

STRENGTHS

1. Marketing has been made a priority at the system level as well as at the NVCC. The Marketing Department developed an extensive marketing plan that has helped to focus the marketing initiatives of the college.

2. The college web page is attractive, easy to use, up to date and informative. Major college publications are available on the web.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The college catalog includes an alphabetical list of faculty and administrators, including position or departmental affiliation, degrees earned, and schools attended; however, there is no indication of full or part-time status.

NVCC has an excellent record of proving to all of its constituencies that it has a strong commitment to integrity in all of its practices. The team observed and gathered plenty of evidence that students, faculty, staff and the external community all believe the college operates explicitly and implicitly with a strict adherences to the principles of institutional integrity.

There are two areas where the college needs to review existing practice to ensure that its current stellar reputation will be maintained. When the college communicates with students, particularly around controversial issues, such as elimination of athletics or reduction of student services, it should speak with one voice and candidly address concerns in a timely manner. Strategies of this nature will improve student perceptions of the college's commitment to integrity. With respect to the allocation of resources, the team strongly believes that distribution of resources should emanate from well defined and stated institutional priorities. This statement of priorities will help the college to have an informed consensus when it comes to the appropriation of resources.

The team was very impressed with the community's understanding of the college mission. Faculty, staff and the external community have a common view of the college's comprehensive mission. This view was further evidenced by the widespread commitment to and involvement with the self study process. Finally, with respect to institutional integrity, the college is applauded for successfully communicating and disseminating its policies and procedures.

STRENGTHS:

1. The college's mission statement is well articulated and generally understood and accepted.

2. The widespread commitment to and involvement with the self study process demonstrates a willingness to assess and act with an openness to change.

3. The college's policies, procedures, and processes are developed in the open and are widely disseminated.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a need to improve communication relating to decisions that impact students; e.g. athletics and tutorial budget cuts.

2. The team strongly advises that the college work to ensure that there is a direct connection between stated institutional priorities and appropriation of resources.