

**REPORT OF A
COMMISSION-MANDATED FOCUSED VISIT**

Assurance Section

TO

**Turtle Mountain Community College
Belcourt, North Dakota**

October 20-21, 2008

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Richard G. Shrubb, President, Minnesota West Community and Technical College,
Worthington, MN, 56187

Dr. Jo Lynn Autry Digranes, Executive Vice President, Connors State College, Warner,
OK 74469 (Chairperson)

CONTENTS

I.	Context and Nature of Visit	03
II.	Area(s) of Focus	08
III.	Affiliation Status	21

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The visit was a mandated focus visit including the following areas:

- A system of shared governance
- Assessment of student learning
- Assessment of institutional effectiveness
- Implementation of a strategic planning process linked to assessment

B. Accreditation Status

Chartered in 1972 by the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe, Turtle Mountain Community College was first accredited in 1984, with the last comprehensive evaluation in 2003-2004. Turtle Mountain Community College was one of the original six (06) tribal colleges established in the early 1970's. The private, not for profit Tribal College has grown from less than 60 students to the most recent Higher Learning Commission reported count of 723 full-time and 144 part-time undergraduate students (listed on the Higher Learning Commission website page for TMCC: http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com_directory&Itemid=192&Action=ShowBasic&instid=1963).

A tribal resolution authorizes the College to operate on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation. In addition, the College has authority through a state charter to operate in North Dakota. Leadership for Turtle Mountain Community College is provided by a two-tiered board structure with a ten-member Board of Trustees and a five-member Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is the policy-making body of the institution and consists of members of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa.

The last comprehensive evaluation visit was in October 2003. Two (02) progress reports and a focus visit were required prior to the next comprehensive evaluation in 2013-2014. The reports focused upon assessing institutional effectiveness including assessment of student learning, submitted July 01, 2005, and upon development of an institution-wide strategic plan, submitted October 01, 2006. Both reports were accepted by the Higher Learning Commission indicating that the College had made progress in the two (02) areas.

The 2008 focus visit, that this report addresses, examined a system of shared governance, assessment of student learning, assessment of institutional effectiveness, and implementation of a strategic planning process linked to assessment.

C. Organizational Context

Turtle Mountain Community College is located on the Turtle Mountain Band of the Chippewa Indians Reservation in north central North Dakota. The campus sites are in and near Belcourt, a community of an estimated population of 2,440 in 2000, with over 95 percent Native American population. The population of Belcourt and of the Reservation has a high poverty and high unemployment rate, as well as a low educational attainment percentage according to the Tribe's website (<http://www.tmbci.net/>) and information from the Wikipedia website ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belcourt%2C North Dakota](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belcourt%2C_North_Dakota)).

The College moved to a new facility 2 ½ miles from Belcourt in 1999, while maintaining the former campus buildings in Belcourt to house a variety of programs. The new facility's architecture reflects the cultural heritage of the Turtle Mountain Band of the Chippewa Indians. It is a beautiful building containing 105,000 square feet. In addition, the College purchased the Anishinaube Culture and Wellness Center in 2001. The Center is located on 102 wooded acres and provides opportunities for cultural, recreational and wellness activities, as well as instructional facilities.

According to the HLC website (<http://www.ncahlc.org/>, last updated 04/25/08), the College reported undergraduate full-time enrollment of 723 and part-time of 144. Non-credit headcount was 42 and dual enrollment programs enrolled 26. There were 10 associate degree programs, 01 bachelor's degree, and 07 pre-associate certificate programs with 44 associate graduates and 25 pre-associate certificate graduates. The College's report stated that the student body is ninety-two percent are Native American, seventy percent female, and more than half single with dependents. The average age in 2007 was 33 years old. According to the National Center for Education Statistics website available on the Internet (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/Programs.asp>), first-time student retention for full-time students is 70 percent and 14 percent for part-time students. The graduation rate is 18 percent, with most graduates in the liberal arts area.

D. Unique Aspects of Visit

None noted.

E. Interactions with Organizational Constituencies

1. Turtle Mountain Community College Board of Directors (06) and Board of Trustees (01)
2. Turtle Mountain Community College President
3. Turtle Mountain Community College Administrative Council (15) – Includes:
 - a. President
 - b. Academic Dean

- c. Comptroller
- d. Financial Aid Director/Dean of Student Services
- e. Director of Human Resources
- f. Adult and Continuing Education Director
- g. Anishinaube Learning, Cultural and Wellness Center Director
- h. Facilities Manager
- i. Information Technology Director
- j. Institutional Effectiveness Director
- k. Tribal Enterprise Management Coordinator/Instructor
- l. Sponsored Programs Officer
- m. Vocational Education Director
- n. Faculty Representative
- o. Staff Representative
- 4. Turtle Mountain Community College Academic Dean
- 5. Turtle Mountain Community College Comptroller
- 6. Turtle Mountain Community College Director of Human Resources
- 7. Turtle Mountain Community College Institutional Effectiveness Director
- 8. Turtle Mountain Community College Strategic Planning Committee (12)
- 9. Turtle Mountain Community College Faculty Coordinator of Assessment and Student Assessment Committee (25)
- 10. Turtle Mountain Community College Faculty (24)
- 11. Turtle Mountain Community College Staff (51)

F. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

- 1. Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt, North Dakota, October 20-22, 2003
- 2. Letter: Response to Final Team Report, from TMCC President Gerald "Carty" Monette to Dr. Karen Solomon, HLC, 03/16/04
- 3. Letter: Response of Readers' Panel, from Dr. Karen Solomon, HLC, to TMCC President Gerald Monette, 06/07/04
- 4. Letter and Statement of Affiliation Status: Formal Notification of Action by IAC, from Dr. Steven D. Crow, Executive Director, HLC, 06/21/04
- 5. Turtle Mountain Community College Report to the Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Focus Visit, October 2008
- 6. Turtle Mountain Community College Board of Directors Minutes, January 2008-June 2008
- 7. Turtle Mountain Community College Administrative Council Minutes, 2007-2008
- 8. Turtle Mountain Community College Policy Manual
- 9. Turtle Mountain Community College 2008-2009 Student Handbook
- 10. Turtle Mountain Community College 2008-2010 Catalog
- 11. Turtle Mountain Community College Strategic Plan 2006-2007
- 12. Turtle Mountain Community College Technology Plan
- 13. Turtle Mountain Community College Peer Evaluation...TMCC Shared Governance Documentation on Department Chairs
- 14. Turtle Mountain Community College Proposed Committee Assignments (accessed at <http://www.tm.edu>)
- 15. Turtle Mountain Community College 2005-2007 Institutional Effectiveness Report

16. Turtle Mountain Community College January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2011-Draft Strategic Plan
17. Turtle Mountain Community College Meeting Minutes Addressing Institutional Effectiveness, 2008
18. Turtle Mountain Community College Title III Institutional Development Grant Information...Description of Institutional Effectiveness Director Position
19. Turtle Mountain Community College 2007-2008 Institutional Effectiveness Director's Data College Report
20. Turtle Mountain Community College 2007-2008 Institutional Effectiveness Consultant Evaluation Reports
21. Turtle Mountain Community College Staff/Faculty Meeting Agendas, 2008
22. Turtle Mountain Community College 2006 to Current Strategic Planning Information – Career and Technical Education, Fall 2007 and Arts and Humanities, Spring 2008
23. Turtle Mountain Community College Employee Evaluation Form
24. Turtle Mountain Community College Hiring Policy
25. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment Coordinator Spring 2008 Report
26. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment Coordinator Spring 2007 Report
27. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment Coordinator Spring 2006 Report
28. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment Coordinator Spring 2005 Report
29. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment Coordinator Spring 2004 Report
30. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment Coordinator Spring 2003 Report
31. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment of Academic Achievement 2003-2004 (accessed at <http://www.tm.edu>)
32. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment Committee Minutes, 2007 and 2008
33. Turtle Mountain Community College Draft Strategic Plan for Assessment of Student Learning
34. Turtle Mountain Community College Meeting Minutes on AA and AS Degree Assessment, 2006 and 2007
35. Turtle Mountain Community College 2004 CBASE Data Review – AA and AS
36. Turtle Mountain Community College 2007 Review of AA and AS Assessment
37. Turtle Mountain Community College CAAP Data – Review of AA and AS Assessment
38. Turtle Mountain Community College 2007 Peer Evaluation...Minutes of Revised Assessment Plan
39. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment Manual
40. Turtle Mountain Community College Syllabi for the following courses:
 - a. ACCT 105 Principles of Bookkeeping, Fall 2007
 - b. CHLD 120 Infant and Toddler Curriculum, Fall 2007
 - c. BOTE 102 Keyboarding I, Fall 2007

- d. ENGL 239 Native American Children's Literature, Spring 2008
- e. ASC 87 Basic Writing II, Spring 2008
- 41. Turtle Mountain Community College CHLD 120 Infant and Toddler Curriculum Rubric for Course Participation, Fall 2007
- 42. Turtle Mountain Community College BOTE 102 Keyboarding I Checklists for Assessment of Student Learning, Fall 2007
- 43. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment of Student Learning Faculty Form for Reporting
- 44. Turtle Mountain Community College Assessment of Student Learning Faculty Form for Reporting – Completed for the following courses:
 - a. ACCT 105 Principles of Bookkeeping, Fall 2007
 - b. CHLD 120 Infant and Toddler Curriculum, Fall 2007
 - c. BOTE 102 Keyboarding I, Fall 2007
 - d. ENGL 239 Native American Children's Literature, Spring 2008
 - e. ASC 87 Basic Writing II, Spring 2008
- 45. Turtle Mountain Community College Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Course Report Matrix
- 46. Turtle Mountain Community College Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Course Report Matrix – Completed for the following courses:
 - a. ACCT 105 Principles of Bookkeeping, Fall 2007
 - b. CHLD 120 Infant and Toddler Curriculum, Fall 2007
 - c. BOTE 102 Keyboarding I, Fall 2007
 - d. ENGL 239 Native American Children's Literature, Spring 2008
 - e. ASC 87 Basic Writing II, Spring 2008
- 47. Turtle Mountain Community College Teacher Education Manual
- 48. Turtle Mountain Community College Wiindamaagewin+an Itwaywuk, October 20, 2008 (weekly bulletin)
- 49. Turtle Mountain Community College website <http://www.tm.edu>
- 50. Turtle Mountain Community College Self Study for Comprehensive Evaluation Visit, 2003 (accessed at <http://www.tm.edu>)
- 51. National Center for Education Statistics website:
<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/Programs.asp>)
- 52. Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians website:
<http://www.tmbci.net/>
- 53. Wikipedia website for Belcourt, North Dakota:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belcourt%2C_North_Dakota

II. AREA(S) OF FOCUS

A-1. Statement of Focus

A system of shared governance

B-1. Statements of Evidence

- Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

- It was evident from discussions with the TMCC Trustees (Tribal Elders) and the TMCC Directors (Governance and Policy) that they understand their role of overseeing college affairs without managing the daily activities of college employees. The two-tiered structure and board policies also assist in enabling the College's administrative personnel to exercise effective leadership without board or tribal interference, an example of meeting the HLC Criterion 1, Core Component D.
- After the 2003 visit, a review of the administrative council structure was conducted. The review resulted in the addition of a staff member, chosen by the staff. Comments from staff indicated that the addition was a positive step and would contribute to staff issues being addressed at administrative council. The addition was also verified by reviewing Board agendas and minutes, as well as administrative council 2007-2008 minutes. This was another example of the College's actions to ensure shared governance.
- Prior to the 2003 visit, a faculty member had been added to the administrative council. The addition was to ensure "... faculty inclusion in the planning, policy development, and decision-making at TMCC ..." (Focus Visit Report, p. 12). The Council structure continues to include the faculty representative, verified through administrative council minutes and TMCC staff/faculty meeting agendas.
- As a result of reviewing the governance structure, the College reinstated the Dean of Student Services and Dean of Academic Programs positions to encourage collaboration and monitoring of activities, as well as more efficient distribution of responsibilities. The positions were filled with employees in place at the time of the visit. Both administrators had appropriate experience and education (masters level degrees), as well as cultural knowledge, being members of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe (TMCC Catalog 2008-2010, p128). Their qualifications are well suited to enhance leadership efforts in their areas. Statements from administration, faculty, and staff indicated that the positions were beneficial in the governance structure of the College.
- The Administrative Council regularly communicated during the 2008 focus visit that it has increased empowerment now over what it had at the time of the 2003 comprehensive visit. Although this was anecdotal in nature, the theme was repeated by other groups and individuals as well.
- According to the Focus Visit Report, review of policy documents, and statements from administration and faculty, the faculty developed a formal policy to address faculty salaries and evaluation. New faculty salary scales were developed. The team reviewed the policies and documents that had been developed. A process for individual faculty development was also implemented, but is currently under review.
- A new hiring policy was developed to ensure that at least one person from the department with the position to be filled would be on the hiring committee. The committee structure was a concern of the 2003 team. This was stated in the Focus Visit Report and

- confirmed through review of the TMCC Policy Manual, the TMCC Hiring Policy, and conversations with administrators, staff, and faculty.
- A proposal to adopt a formalized shared governance document is under review by TMCC personnel, according to the Focus Report (p. 13). The Board of Directors already approved the document, which would include, among other items, adding department heads and a staff committee. This was verified through review of Board meeting minutes, TMCC Peer Evaluation-TMCC Shared Governance documentation on Department Chairs, and discussions with administration, faculty, staff, and members of the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees.
 - Additional focus committees were developed and added to the already existing institutional committees. These committee structure changes were approved by the Board of Directors in 2008, as evidenced by Board meeting agendas and minutes. The proposed committee structure document was also made available to the Team and accessed on the College website.
 - Current administrative personnel have an "open door" policy, encouraging shared governance. Faculty report an increase in input from departments to academic deans, specifically an increase in input regarding students' academic placement. This was verified through discussions with staff and administrators.
 - New policies are presented to the entire TMCC community with a 30 day discussion period prior to official approval. This was verified by comments from administrators, faculty, and staff. Review of the College website verified that the website has a link titled "Proposed TMCC Policies open for 30-day comment period." Proposed policies are placed under this link, indicating that proposed policies are well publicized for comments.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**
 - Further improving communication was one area for potential improvement that was mentioned during conversations with faculty and staff. It was also listed as an "Opportunity for Growth" in the Focus Report (p. 23). Improvement of communication can enhance and facilitate governance processes and activities.
 - **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention and Commission follow-up are required.**

None noted.
 - **Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that Commission sanction is warranted.**

None noted.

C. Other Accreditation Issues [If applicable]

Evidence of other accreditation issues

None noted.

D. Recommendation of Team

- **Evidence sufficiently demonstrated. No Commission follow-up recommended.**

E. Rationale for the Team Recommendation

Turtle Mountain Community College has made considerable progress since the 2003 HLC comprehensive evaluation visit in shared governance. It was evident that the College was well-prepared for the focus visit. The organization of the resources and resource room was excellent. All participants in the visit were welcoming, well-informed, and very supportive of the efforts in the four (04) areas.

This progress meets the expectations of the 2003 team in shared governance. Some examples of evidence of the progress include the following:

Shared Governance

- The hiring policy was presented as an example of the lack of shared governance by the 2003 team. TMCC has changed the policy to include members of the academic or staff area on the committee. This policy was officially adopted by the Board of Directors, verified through board minutes, and implemented. A review of the hiring policy and discussions with faculty, staff, and administrators, indicated that the policy is being followed.
- Another issue identified by the 2003 team also related to assessment of student learning. At that time the vice president and a faculty member co-chaired the Assessment Committee. Since the visit, faculty has assumed ownership of the assessment of student learning process. This was verified through reports from faculty, as well as administrators. In addition, other evidence, such as minutes from Assessment Committee meetings, the Focus Report, and assessment of student learning documents, indicates that faculty "own" assessment of student learning at Turtle Mountain Community College.
- Current administrative personnel also have an "open door" policy, encouraging shared governance. This was verified through discussions with staff, faculty, and administrators.
- New policies are presented to the entire TMCC community with a 30 day discussion period prior to official approval.

A-2. Statement of Focus

Assessment of student learning

B-2. Statements of Evidence

- **Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.**
 - A Student Assessment Committee was formed. Most members are faculty. In discussions with faculty and the assessment committee, it was verified that faculty do "own" assessment of student learning. Minutes from the assessment committee for 2007-2008, as well as minutes focusing upon assessment in certain areas, such as the AA and AS degree assessment meetings, also provided evidence that the faculty comprised the committees and guided the meetings and decisions.
 - A part-time position for Faculty Coordinator of Assessment was created and funded so assessment of student learning was not directly administratively driven, one of the concerns listed in the team report. Team members met with the Coordinator.
 - There has been continuity to the Assessment Coordinator position, ensuring that data collection is systematic and regular. TMCC Assessment Coordinator Spring reports for 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, and 2003 provided evidence of the continuity of processes. Faculty stated that the Coordinator has been a positive factor in ensuring continuation of the process of assessing student learning.
 - Faculty report an increase in understanding of assessment since the 2003 comprehensive team visit, and ownership of assessment has been transferred from administration to faculty. Faculty-driven is also emphasized in the TMCC Assessment Manual with the statement "An Assessment Committee oversees the faculty-driven assessment of student learning at the institutional level."
 - Since the 2003 visit, the assessment of student learning has been a continuous process of improvement for the College, according to faculty and the Student Assessment Committee. Some examples reviewed include:
 - Resources focused upon assessment were purchased for a faculty library.
 - The assessment manual was revised (TMCC Assessment Manual).
 - A strategic plan for assessment of student learning was developed and implemented (TMCC Draft Strategic Plan for Assessment of Student Learning).
 - An electronic website was developed for assessment of student learning. Reports, the assessment manual, and other resources are available on the website.
 - An assessment process has been defined and implemented for course level and degree program assessment of general education objectives. According to the Focus Visit Report, reports generated by this assessment process provide data for developing the bi-annual strategic plans for institutional effectiveness. This

was also stated by the Institutional Effectiveness Director, who provided examples of utilizing assessment of student learning data in addressing institutional effectiveness. Review of the TMCC 2007-2008 Institutional Effectiveness Director's Data College Report indicated that the report did include the examples.

- The Assessment Coordinator and Committee communicate an understanding of the value of follow-up and loop-closing relating to measurement activities. Assessment now steers budgets, personnel, and curricular development, and the governance understands assessment of student learning and institutional assessment.
- TMCC's assessment approach uses indirect and direct measures of student learning, as well as both formative and summative data, to measure internal and external indicators. The approach was described in the TMCC Assessment Plan. This information is being used to make changes to curricula, syllabi, and professional development.
- Numerous examples of how assessment of student learning was linked to curriculum changes were presented and described in the Focus Visit Report, in examples of completed assessment reporting forms, and from statements by faculty, staff, administrators, and Board of Directors members (including a student member of the Board). One example was the redesign of the mathematics curriculum implementing the Hawkes System in fall 2008. An example was integrating additional reading skills across classes since the reading skills of the majority of entering students are below age appropriate reading levels.
- Some of the academic programs, such as Teacher Education and Building Construction Technology, have national benchmarks and external validation by examinations. For example the TMCC Teacher Education Manual states, "The North Dakota State Standards, Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards, and our commitment to Culturally Responsive Teaching serve as the foundation for the instructional outcomes . . ." (p. 4). One of the goals of the Building Construction Technology Program is to enroll students in the NCCER (The National Center for Construction Education and Research) National Registry in modules completed (TMCC 2008-2010 Catalog, p. 62). Administration and faculty indicated that these provided excellent guidance for the program level assessment of student learning and that the "standardized" guidelines were being implemented into the programs.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**
 - Although the College is working on a systematic process for collecting data in pre and post assessment of student learning, there have been several changes in pre and post assessment of general education student learning measures. According to the Focus Report and assessment reports, no measures are being

consistently utilized, thus making collection and analysis of data uneven and difficult to compare. Based upon the progress that has been made in the assessment of student learning since the 2003 visit, it is anticipated that the College will successfully address this issue during the next year.

- Data from assessment of student learning is being integrated into the planning and budgeting processes. Degree program level assessment of student learning is not fully defined for all programs so the budget is not completely driven by the assessment of student learning data. This is another area currently being addressed by the College, according to the Focus Report (p. 20) and the Assessment Coordinator and Assessment Committee. Continued institutional attention to defining program level objectives for all programs will resolve this area.

- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention and Commission follow-up are required.**

None noted.

- **Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that Commission sanction is warranted.**

None noted.

C. Other Accreditation Issues [If applicable]

Evidence of other accreditation issues

None noted.

D. Recommendation of Team

- **Evidence sufficiently demonstrated. No Commission follow-up recommended.**

E. Rationale for the Team Recommendation

Turtle Mountain Community College has made considerable progress since the 2003 HLC comprehensive evaluation visit in the assessment of student learning.

This progress meets the expectations of the 2003 team in the assessment of student learning. Some examples of evidence of the progress for the area include the following:

Assessment of Student Learning

- As mentioned previously, the faculty now "own" assessment of student learning. This move was supported by the administration and the Board of Directors.

- A comprehensive review of the assessment of student learning was conducted. One of the results was the development of a strategic plan for assessment of student learning in 2006.
- The Assessment Manual was also revised to reflect modifications in the assessment of student learning plan.
- There has been continuity to the Assessment Coordinator position, ensuring that data collection is systematic and regular. Faculty stated that the Coordinator has been a positive factor in the process of assessing student learning.
- Numerous examples of how assessment of student learning was linked to curriculum changes were presented and described in the Focus Report, examples of completed assessment reporting forms, and statements from faculty, staff, administrators, and Board of Directors members (including a student member of the Board). One example was the redesign of the mathematics curriculum implementing the Hawkes System in fall 2008.

A-3. Statement of Focus

Assessment of institutional effectiveness

B-3. Statements of Evidence

- **Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.**
 - A series of meetings at TMCC, evidenced by copies of agendas from the meetings and comments from employees, were held to review the institutional mission and goals. As a result of information gained and discussion, decisions from the meetings did not result in any revision of the mission and goals. Although there were no changes, the emphasis on the process indicated the commitment of the College to continual evaluation and revision, if necessary, of the mission and goals.
 - An Institutional Effectiveness Director position was added to coordinate and manage activities. This was included in a Title III grant application that was funded. Review of the Title III application indicated that the position description and the action plan for the institutional effectiveness focus were well developed and could assist the College with improving not only institutional effectiveness, but also the planning and implementation of strategies to address institutional effectiveness.
 - Even though the position had been included for full funding from Title III and the Title III application was funded, the College is funding half of the position. This indicates the commitment of the College to the position and will assist in ensuring that the position continues after grant funding ends. Comments from administration, faculty, and staff indicated that the position was a needed position and had improved the overall assessment of institutional effectiveness.

- A strategic plan was developed to provide a structure for measuring institutional effectiveness. The first plan developed covered two (02) years, and a draft strategic plan for 2008 to 2011 has also been developed. Both plans, as well as planning documents such as faculty/staff meeting minutes, were reviewed by team members. The development of the new plan, as well as reports of what has been accomplished, indicates that the College is continually working on strategic planning and implementing the plan's activities.
- Consultants were hired during 2008 to evaluate the institutional effectiveness of several of the major areas of the College to provide guidance for further implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan. This was stated in the Focus Report and verified by comments from the administration and review of the report documents made available in the Resource Room. Hiring consultants and providing funding for staffing are examples of administrative and board support. Hiring external consultants also assists the College to more effectively attend to and address emerging factors identified by the consultants. Areas evaluated, with formal reports by consultants, included:
 - Academic Programs
 - Anishinaube Learning Cultural and Wellness Center
 - Career and Technical Education
 - Human Resources
 - Sponsored Programs
 - Student Services
- An effective process had been designed and implemented to centralize data collection. Additional measures have been included in assessment to measure institutional effectiveness, including a student satisfaction survey, faculty development survey, withdrawing student survey, and an organizational excellence survey. Information from the Institutional Effectiveness Director, institutional effectiveness reports and data resources for institutional effectiveness (that were available in the Resource Room) indicate that there is a process and that the measures have been implemented.
- A cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) to provide continuous improvement to institutional effectiveness activities has been implemented, according to the Focus Visit Report (p. 22) and discussions with the Institutional Effectiveness Director and Strategic Planning Committee. The President also provided a description and a visual representation of the cycle to the team during the visit.
- Institutional effectiveness reports have been developed and sent to all administrators, faculty, and staff. This has been a continuous process, indicating the focus upon institutional effectiveness, as well as displaying commitment to communicating information. This was verified through review of the TMCC 2005-2007 Institutional Effectiveness, TMCC 2007-2008 Institutional Effectiveness Director's Data College and TMCC 2007-2008 Institutional

Effectiveness Consultant Evaluation reports and meetings with administrators, faculty, and staff.

- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**

- The Institutional Effectiveness cycle has been established, but is not yet systemic, according to the Focus Report (p. 23) and review by the team of the resources. The College is encouraged to continue and further refine the cycle so that more accurate comparisons to data and information from past cycles can be made.

- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention and Commission follow-up are required.**

None noted.

- **Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that Commission sanction is warranted.**

None noted.

C. Other Accreditation Issues [If applicable]

Evidence of other accreditation issues

None noted.

D. Recommendation of Team

- **Evidence sufficiently demonstrated. No Commission follow-up recommended**

E. Rationale for the Team Recommendation

Turtle Mountain Community College has met the expectations of the 2003 team in institutional effectiveness. Some examples of evidence of the progress for institutional effectiveness include the following:

Institutional Effectiveness

- A full-time Institutional Effectiveness Director was hired, funded through both institutional and grant funds. The Director has directed the implementation of the plan that was developed and has collected and analyzed data to direct planning and budgeting.
- An Institutional Effectiveness Plan was written and shared with all the College personnel and constituents.
- Consultants were hired during 2008 to evaluate the institutional effectiveness of several of the major areas of the College to provide guidance for further implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan.

Hiring consultants and providing funding for the director are examples of administrative and board support.

A-4. Statement of Focus

Implementation of a strategic planning process linked to assessment

B-4. Statements of Evidence

- **Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.**
 - As an initial step after the 2003 visit, according to the Focus Report and comments from administration, staff and faculty, consultants were employed to train administration in the area of strategic planning. This indicated the commitment of the College in improving the strategic planning process.
 - The new President, who was experienced in strategic planning, led the College in developing a strategic plan, utilizing a formal process that has continued to be utilized. The first result was the development of a new two-year strategic plan, the TMCC Strategic Plan 2006-2007, adopted by the Board of Directors in spring 2007 (verified by board minutes).
 - Many of the goals/objectives of the first two-year strategic plan were accomplished, indicating that the College set realistic, attainable goals in the process. This was also stated by administrators as they provided examples of objectives that were accomplished.
 - The strategic planning process has been continued, with the completion of a strategic plan for January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2011, the TMCC January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2011-Draft Strategic Plan. The completion of the draft plan indicates continuous work by the College on strategic planning.
 - The college's action plans are driven by the TMCC Strategic Plan, and the Strategic Plan is used to manage time as much as it manages money.
 - The Budget Committee that was established matches commonly shared goals with financial resources, and budgets are tied to the strategic plan departmentally as well as institutionally.
 - In addition to the strategic plans, a technology plan was developed to address multiple areas. The TMCC Technology Plan 2006-2009 includes such areas as the replacement cycle, professional development, academic achievement, and the technology infrastructure. According to the plan, the purpose is to:
 - Provide a strong set of priorities for the use and implementation of academic technology as a tool for learning.
 - Provide support to the institution in maintaining leadership in academic technology system wide, on-campus, and in the community (included in the Focus Report, p. 98).

The plan includes strategies, activities, responsibility, and target dates to provide clear guidance for the College.

- Formal policies for student and staff use of technology have been developed and implemented. These are published through a variety of modes, such as the TMCC 2008-2009 Student Handbook and the TMCC Community College Catalog 2008-2010, so that constituencies are aware of and knowledgeable of the policies.
 - Faculty report feeling comfortable expressing opinions to administrators, and faculty are given an opportunity to provide input into the Strategic Plan by Web Site and by e-mail.
 - According to meetings with administrators, faculty, and staff, the strategic planning process has been linked to grant applications, and grant management has been centralized. Only those grants that related to the College's mission and strategic plan are pursued, thus indicating the guidance provided by the strategic plan.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**
 - As evidenced by the fact that there was uneven accomplishment of stated goals by departments, there may need to be further training on defining realistic/achievable strategic objectives and activities that lead to attainment of objectives. Although this was not a major problem, it was mentioned by the College in the Focus Report (p. 25). Continued training and communication on strategic planning could improve the planning process as a whole.
 - **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention and Commission follow-up are required.**

None noted.
 - **Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that Commission sanction is warranted.**

None noted.

C. Other Accreditation Issues [If applicable]

Evidence of other accreditation issues

None noted.

D. Recommendation of Team

- Evidence sufficiently demonstrated. No Commission follow-up recommended.

E. Rationale for the Team Recommendation

Turtle Mountain Community College has made considerable progress in the area of strategic planning. Some examples of evidence of the progress for the area include the following:

Strategic Planning

- A series of meetings were held to review the mission and goals of the institution. A new two-year strategic plan was developed. The next strategic plan, for four (04) years, has also been developed.
- Many of the goals/objectives of the two-year strategic plan were accomplished, indicating that the College set realistic, attainable goals in the process.
- The strategic planning process has continued to be implemented and evaluated.

III. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

Affiliation: Status Accredited

No change

Nature of Organization

No change

Legal status: Private, NFP

No change

Degrees awarded: A, B

No change

Conditions of Affiliation: Accreditation at the Bachelor's degree level is limited to the Bachelor degree in Elementary Education and the Bachelor degree in Science Education.

No change

Stipulation on affiliation status

No change

Approval of degree sites: The Commission's Streamlined Approval Process is only available for offering existing degree programs at new sites within Rolette County, North Dakota.

No change

Approval of distance education degree: Prior Commission approval required.

No change

Reports required

None recommended

Other Visits Scheduled –

None recommended

Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

None recommended

Summary of Commission Review

Year for next comprehensive evaluation 2013-2014

No change

REPORT OF A COMMISSION-MANDATED FOCUSED VISIT

Advancement Section

TO

**Turtle Mountain Community College
Belcourt, North Dakota**

October 20, 2008 to October 21, 2008

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Jo Lynn Autry Digranes (Team Chair), Executive Vice President, Connors State College, Warner, Oklahoma, 74469

Dr. Richard G. Shrubb, President, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Worthington, Minnesota, 56187

CONTENTS

I.	Observations of Team Regarding Area(s) of Focus	24
II.	Consultations of Team	24

ADVANCEMENT SECTION**CONSULTATION OF TEAM****A. Observations of Team Regarding Area(s) of Focus**

The overall observation of the 2008 focus visit team is that Turtle Mountain Community College demonstrates responsiveness to the concerns of the 2003 visiting team in the areas of shared governance, institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, and assessment of student learning.

Observations also included identification of strengths and challenges... They are described in the following sections.

Strengths:

- The TMCC Trustees (Tribal Elders) and the TMCC Directors (Governance and Policy) understand their role of overseeing college affairs without managing the daily activities of college employees.
- The president has a clear and well articulated concept of systematic strategic vision, and his view of higher education is expansive. He is data centered and demonstrates the value of communication, both in his speech and actions. He has established monthly faculty and staff meetings, and administration meets every two weeks. The president is organized to the point of establishing ground rules for meetings that both encourage participants to speak and also protect the speaker. He uses an instructional approach to promoting strategic plans by "teaching" college constituents how to understand and use the plan. He also pushes for completion and follow-up stages and cycles.
- After reviewing the organizational structure, several positions were added to enhance organizational effectiveness. The college now has an Assessment Coordinator, an Academic Dean, a Dean of Student Services, and Institutional Effectiveness Director who understand their roles and communicate them to faculty, staff, and administration throughout the college.
- The 2008 team experienced frequent mention from all levels of constituents that the institution's culture is one of ongoing improvement and responsiveness to change.
- Changes in policies have been made and implemented to facilitate shared governance and organizational effectiveness. For example, faculty and staff now serve on hiring committee for their respective areas.
- Turtle Mountain Community College's new philosophy of linking grant writing to the strategic plan, as compared to its previous practice of chasing grants regardless of the expectations of the funding agency, places focus upon having a vision-focused and data-driven institution.

- The College has many internal resources including:
 - Extensive, well-kept grounds and facilities.
 - Dedicated administration, faculty, and staff.
 - TMCC is rated as a low-risk auditee regarding its financial stability.

Challenges:

- While there is good separation between TMCC and tribal governance, recent (fall 2008) tribal elections may change the makeup of the relationship between TMCC and its Trustees and its Directors.
- Considering the Turtle Mountain Chippewa value of humility and listening, the College might do well to consciously remind and encourage its internal constituents of their ongoing obligation to take initiative to participate in all four areas of focus surrounding this visit.
- The president's very clear understanding of strategic planning, data implementation, and measurement of accomplishment all need to be infused into the college's ongoing culture of improvement so that none of TMCC's achievements in these areas will be lost in the future whenever a new president comes to the college.

B. Consultations of Team

Consultations focus upon the areas of focus:

Shared Governance

- The team encourages Turtle Mountain Community College to advance its use of agendas at meetings and to continue to construct formal minutes to document the agreements at meetings for future generations of workers and constituents.
- Continuation of staff and faculty representatives on the Administrative Council meetings would continue to improve shared governance.
- Since the elections of 2008 may usher in new tribal leadership that does not understand the effective relationship that TMCC currently has with tribal leaders, the College may want to consider a type of advisory training to help newly elected leaders understand the college's accomplishments relating to shared governance, institutional effectiveness, and strategic planning. Tribal governance could be particularly instructed and educated about college policy so as to not violate its own policy when making decisions relating to the college.

Assessment of Student Learning

- Assessment results, as noted in the Focus Visit Report (p. 20) might be better stored in one central location for ease of access and use by multiple college constituents.
- Aggregate assessment data made available throughout the institution will continue to strengthen communications, planning, and budgeting.
- Ensuring the continuance of faculty ownership in the assessment of student learning will contribute to faculty empowerment and the overall efforts of the plan for assessment of student learning.
- The College may further review including pre- and post-tests to measure specific value added to student learning by TMCC. One possibility may be to consider a COMPASS/ CAAP pre- and post-test from ACT. There are comparisons to national results that could be utilized as benchmarks. In addition, linkage reports measuring the percentage of students make expected progress between entrance (and either the ACT or COMPASS entrance scores) and exit (CAAP scores). Another possibility would be institution developed tests or rubrics.
- Defining program level objectives can be another important step for the College. Utilizing well-defined, measurable objectives that have already been defined in other programs may provide one approach. Reviewing program level objectives that other institutions have developed would be another method.
- In programs where there are external measures of student learning, such as Teacher Education, the College may want to actually calculate the predictive validity of their own assessment tools against the validating outcome measure. This is statistically rather simple (Analysis of Covariance, repeated measures), and can reveal which course or courses can best benefit student outcomes by being changed. This type of least risk analysis often provides a sense of safety in the assessment experience.

Institutional Effectiveness

- The team encourages TMCC to keep student learning at the center of institutional effectiveness, and to continue to use discussions of student learning to bring college members together around a common goal.
- Continuing to Include multiple measures, such as include accountancy of money and budgets, use of college mentors, retention of students, retention of employees, planning of skill-based workshops, surveys of preference for change and satisfaction surveys among employees, and surveys of student substance abuse, will provide data need to measure institutional effectiveness.
- Addition of an Institutional Research Department/staff member (as stated in the Focus Visit Report, p. 23) could benefit both assessment of student learning and the measurement of institutional effectiveness. This office could function as a central repository for data, as well as the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information.

- TMCC works with a clientele that is experiencing 67% unemployment. Considering the role that the college plays in economic and workforce development, this may very well be the college's most dominant focus in institutional effectiveness in the next several years. TMCC's own Empowerment Zone and Talking Circle projects could assist in this endeavor.

Strategic Planning

- Before the 2003 visit, the college practiced a budget preparation procedure that did not include input from the college's internal constituents at all levels. The team believes, based upon evidence reviewed, that the college will continue its current practice of basing budgets on projections and requests from multiple internal levels.
- Ensuring that the current Strategic Planning process is systemic could be an important step for the College. With changes of personnel, a systemic process would not revert to the College's previous "Long Range Planning" days when only a few top levels of administration decided what the college's mission should be and how it should be accomplished.
- The college is encouraged to continuously communicate methods of encouraging outspoken input and action-centered behaviors from all levels of internal constituents.
- While TMCC made good use of consultants to get its strategic plans started, the team encourages the college to balance assistance from outside sources, as compared to internal sources and community constituencies, to achieve its ongoing management goals and visions.
- Development of a "Facilities Master Plan" could provide further guidance to the College in acquisition, construction, and renovation of facilities and grounds. With the amount of property currently owned, the "Plan" could facilitate future decisions and expenditures.

Summary

As articulated during the team's exit session and in the Assurance Section of this report, Turtle Mountain Community College has demonstrated responsiveness to the 2003 visiting team's concerns. However, this is not permission to stop working on these four very important areas of emphasis. Colleges function best in environments that first focus attention on a shared vision and then harvest a collective energy around that vision. The 2008 team would like to encourage the College to persist in its momentum relating to its accomplishments within the four areas of focus addressed.

Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

INSTITUTION and STATE: : Turtle Mountain Community College, ND

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Focused Visit-Mandated

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW (from ESS): A visit focused on a system of shared governance, assessment of student learning, assessment of institutional effectiveness, and implementation of a strategic planning process linked to assessment.

DATES OF REVIEW: 10/20/08 - 10/21/08

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Private NFP

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: nc

DEGREES AWARDED: A, B

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: nc

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: Accreditation at the Bachelor's degree level is limited to the Bachelor degree in Elementary Education and the Bachelor degree in Science Education.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: nc

APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE SITES: Prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: nc

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: Prior Commission Approval Required

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: nc

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: nc

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED: Focused Visit-Mandated: 2008 - 2009; A visit focused on a system of shared governance, assessment of student learning, assessment of institutional effectiveness, and implementation of a strategic planning process linked to assessment.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: None

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2003 - 2004

YEAR OF NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2013 - 2014

Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: nc

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: Turtle Mountain Community College, ND

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS):): Focused Visit-Mandated

 x No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

	Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate		
Associate	10	
Bachelors	1	
Programs leading to Graduate		
Masters	0	
Specialist	0	
First	0	
Professional		
Doctoral	0	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:	Present Activity:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	None	
Course	None	
Locations:		
Out-of-State:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	None	
Course	None	
Locations:		
Out-of-USA:	Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses:	None	
Sites:	None	
Course	None	
Locations:		

Distance Education Certificate and Degree Offerings:

Present Offerings:

None

Recommended Change:
(+ or -)

