

Northland Pioneer College
Strategic Planning and Accreditation Steering Committee (SPASC)
February 17, 2012

Members in attendance: Peggy Belknap, Brian Burson, Paul Clark, Andrew Hassard, Blaine Hatch, Jeannie McCabe, Debra Myers, Ryan Rademacher, Mark Vest, Leslie Wasson

Advisory members in attendance: Trudy Bender, Eric Bishop, Eric Henderson, Ann Hess, Cindy Hildebrand, Jeanne Swarhout

Guests: Colleen Readel (recorder)

- I. Approval of Minutes from 2/3/12
 - a. Motion to approve by Blaine Hatch; second by Paul Clark
 - i. Unanimously approved
- II. Discuss SPASC annual calendar (sequencing)
 - a. We go through the process of approving the budget then we revise the strategic plan. The thought by several people is that we should do strategic planning before we do the budgeting. Right now we present the board with the budget and then a couple months later we present them with the revised strategic plan. When people go through the process of going through their budget requests, they are confused because they are looking at a strategic plan that is already a year old or into a cycle that is about to change and there is some disconnect.
 - b. Discussion of switching strategic planning to be done in Fall by Christmas before we do budgeting in the Spring.
 - i. Jeanne feels that it would be difficult to meet that right now but if we could change the schedule for Fall it would be ideal. Originally the sequencing was set up around accreditation and since accreditation is now a full-time activity and we've been through the process it makes sense to make the change.
 - ii. Mark stated this came up in both the Student Services Coordinators' and Deans meetings. We are in the middle of some significant changes to the way we do business. Both groups expressed concerns that they needed to put budgets in and they weren't sure what first steps we were going to take next year toward completion and retention and what the costs associated would be. They didn't know how to do their budgets.
 - iii. Jeanne feels it makes perfect sense to make the change.
 - iv. Eric – This would mean two semesters of planning. We would not to skip this cycle but we would want to jump back into it in the Fall and would want to let the board know our intentions and that we would be bringing back a plan

toward the end of this calendar year again. It would flow a lot better and it shouldn't disrupt the budget process, but should make it more enlightening or people would go into the budget process with clearer goals.

- v. Jeanne doesn't think the board should have any issues at all with it. But would expect Eric to brief them on it in his SPASC report this meeting. Jeanne asked if anyone one was opposed to making that change.
- vi. Blaine wasn't opposed but still doesn't see it as a huge issue. The strategic plan is a three year plan and the budget is looking one year out. If we're really planning strategically over a three year period he doesn't think it makes a lot of difference. He's not opposed to it.
- vii. Jeanne – Would it make the whole process flow smoother though?
- viii. Blaine – It certainly could. It is difficult to look out beyond the current year.
- ix. Peggy feels that when we were looking at the strategic plan at the very beginning of it is the president's focus, that's what we're missing for next year as we're budgeting, and yes it is supposed to be a 3-year plan, but we're missing some pieces that we're going to get soon but our budgets are due already on Tuesday. Peggy agrees with Blaine if we would have three years and we have it really where we want it at but we've just been rolling over from year to year and not been modifying it.
- x. Eric – But kind of what we're doing with that roll over it's kind of a pushing forward roll over versus a dropping off that first year and tacking on another year. So we're revisiting the whole thing every single time rather than just dropping off that year that completed and putting a year at the end.
- xi. Jeanne just thinks it will be smoother. The biggest switch is just getting the board to understand they are going to look at one in May and then again in December. For the SPASC it will be a little bit of a logistics issue as we make the switch.
- xii. Eric thinks if we are doing it in the Fall, we might get more engagement from the faculty as far as when we're doing strategic planning and asking for input in the Spring it's toward the second half of the Spring which is very close to Summer.
- xiii. Eric asked if there were any more comments.
 - 1. There were none.
 - a. Eric will report out to the board that we are looking at changing that process and we will still get them the strategic plan in the Summer but will also be changing the cycle.
- xiv. Motion to approve the start of strategic planning in the Fall by Peggy Belknap
 - 1. Mark Vest requested to amend Peggy's motion that the strategic plan will be ready to present to the board in December meeting; amendment approved by Peggy; second by Andrew Hassard
 - a. Unanimously approved

III. Review Convocation data analysis (Mark Vest, Eric Henderson, Leslie Wasson)

- a. Mark Vest went over the diagram that he, Eric H. and Leslie created based on the convocation data.

First thing done was to try and organize the information.

- i. Looking at a completion and retention agenda, this is something for SPASC to consider doing each step of the way as we go through this process – let's follow students through their tenure at NPC, as prospective students, as incoming students, as students who are in process and as students who have graduated and have moved out past the college. As we look at completion and retention, we're going to need to touch on the student in each of these areas.

1. Purposes of reporting, recruiting our next generation of students, for simply understanding what we are doing and not doing well, for having close contact with our alumni and understanding what they are doing or not doing after they leave the college is also critical.
2. Because of the focus of convocation as well as what we can do internally right away, we decided to set aside talking about prospective students. There was a whole group that sat down at convocation and looked at what can be done at the high school level, either by the college or the high schools.
3. We also set aside alumni for a couple reasons.
 - a. There wasn't a lot of discussion at convocation about alumni and what to do with them.
 - b. We're not set up right now to deal with alumni and don't have the software that we could potentially use for surveying. We don't have a position or positions identified. We don't have an alumni organization.
4. We identified three issues that we weren't sure fit into an individual category because they came up across groups over and over. So we listed them as general issues:
 - a. Data issues
 - i. External consultants have brought up lots of data issues.
 - ii. What do we address first and how?
 - iii. We felt this was critical and came out of almost every one of the convocation groups, whether they were talking about instructional technology or making contact with high school students or alumni.
 - b. Restructure or add to the college, how do we do that?
 - i. The convocation comments are: Is the college built to be a completion and retention college?
 - ii. This group started that conversation last meeting by saying do we build the completion and retention

agenda into the Pillars that we have or do we add a new Pillar. If we add a new Pillar, you're saying we're going to do all the things we're currently doing plus we're going to do something else. If you build it into the Pillars you have, then you're going with the restructure approach.

- c. Communication of changes to everyone involved
 - i. We need to communicate changes and why we're making changes to staff, students and community as a whole.
5. Incoming Students – Leslie Wasson
- a. It would help if we knew what students were like that were coming into the college. We had the luxury for a long time of building it and letting them come and that has worked out in the past. Now everyone wants to know what our students want to do when they get here and whether they complete that or not. That's at the federal level, state level and lot of the accrediting organizations and large studies. We're just going to do a much better job at defining our students, at enrollment or even before then and tracking what they do and how they behave as they go through their educational career. Research shows that students are not staying with their original intent when they come to us. What we need now is data to come back to the Department of Education to show this.
 - b. Orientation is another topic that is in the literature on retention. It is a good way to show that students connect with the institution and feel like they are a part of something larger than themselves and get knowledge about the process. Mandatory advising is very successful at other institutions to help students make smooth transitions that we can keep track of. We need to help them define some kind of intent at enrollment even if it's undecided. We need to keep track of who completes, who transfers, who doesn't complete and we need to be sure we have an orientation (which is already in process) and we need to beef up our advising a little bit. How to do that is a matter for strategic planning.
 - i. Mark – follow up on orientation – This may be coming from the next Instructional Council meeting, there is going to be a recommendation from the Dean of Students that we hold a pre-session, one-day orientation for all new students. Based on the

comments from convocation, there are still some unresolved questions such as: If we are going to make students do this, do they pay or do we absorb the cost of the program? Is this enough? Does this really respond to the needs of what people identified in the convocation groups? Would the next step be to look at a study skills class that would run the first semester for new students? Would it be only for at-risk students? If so, how do we identify them when they come into the institution and what do we do to try to help them?

6. First Steps – Mark Vest

- a. To respond to the comments that Leslie just made about swirling students, we won't know that they're swirling until we: Verify their intent at each registration
 - i. Initiate mandatory advising – who is doing the advising, when and how? What kind of impact do we put on students at different locations if we go to mandatory advising?
 - ii. How do we identify an at-risk student and how do we do risk assessment?
 1. Leslie – There are some identified factors we can track once we have intent. We can look at their course-taking behavior, their use of student services. We can help with the advising and do some more intrusive advising at least within the first year.
 - iii. One of the things we talked about that you see implicitly come up in a lot of the comments is: help students move through their degree efficiently. We're putting a lot of weight back on things like mandatory advising, but if the student has to go in and keep that regular contact with the advisor it doesn't guarantee that they will enroll in the classes they need to but it does guarantee that the college has regular conversations with that student about how they achieve their intent.
- b. Faculty mentoring came up in several groups, but it appeared that it came up in groups that were dominated by staff not faculty. We have some groups of faculty, especially in the CTE area, where they spend long days with students where there is a lot of career advising already going on. Those are direct

employment areas. We have other areas of the college where we don't. When we talk about advising, one of the things SPASC is going to have to be careful of, is there is a difference between program advising versus career advising.

- c. Ryan asked if there have been any benefits since we have implemented the students cannot register after 32 credit hours until they meet with an advisor.
 - i. Mark stated that we probably have a large enough student pool that we need to sit down and look at that.
 - ii. Debbie – There is a big jump in degree intent in the database.
 - iii. Mark – If we go back to the information or communication question, there is clearly some misinformation out there in the college about the impact of things that we've done already.
 - 1. People don't know that we've seen this big spike in degree intent, because we haven't communicated that very well.
 - 2. It was clear also that people didn't know that when we implemented late registration fee, that late registration dropped significantly. Because there was an assumption in one of the groups that there was no effect on enrollment patterns at all.
- d. So these are the things we see as first steps, because these are things we saw people talking about with "In Progress" students that seemed to fit or dove-tail very nicely with the things we thought that we needed to do with students when they come in the door.

7. Risk Assessment

- a. Do we try to identify the students that are the most at-risk and most likely to drop out? Do we try to define an "at risk" student profile? Then what do we try to do? Do we increase tutoring, do we increase financial support?
 - i. Do we try to create student groups? A lot of the literature shows that peer groups play a critical role. Many times those peer groups are formed out of orientations that are not pre-sessions but groups that get together as a cohort in their first semester and you could deliberately put this group together in one class that meets on a regular basis.

1. This requires us to impose more structure on students than we currently do. Somebody at the college has to do that work. It could be someone's job who already is employed at the college, but if we're asking them to do that work then they're not going to be doing the work that they're doing right now.
8. Philosophical Decisions for NPC
 - a. Customer Service
 - i. What does it mean? We need a shared definition institutionally of what it means to provide good customer service to a student. We saw this in the convocation comments.
 1. Some groups thought good customer service meant a dean letting a student into a class in the fifth or sixth week.
 2. Other groups said its good customer service not to do that because a student may have a bad outcome.
 - ii. Until we have a shared definition of what it means for the college to serve students well...
 1. Jeanne feels we need to broaden that to serve each other well, as well.

Mark continued... We're going to have a difficult time moving ahead on these other issues because we're going to spend a lot of time arguing about the efficacy, the need, whether or not this is the right thing to do.
 - b. Short term student needs vs. long term outcomes
 - i. Does the college do things that meet the immediate needs of students but potentially be deleterious to them in the long run? Or do we focus on things that we think might have long-term positive outcomes for students, but may hurt them or make them upset in the short term?
 - c. Academic integrity vs. student demands – this is something that came out of the more instructionally oriented groups at convocation.
 - i. What do we do that students may not like or some of the people that work at the college may not like but is done because it both preserves the academic integrity of the institution and we think will help students in the long run?

- d. Do we focus solely on learning outcomes and student stated need or take a holistic approach to student completion/retention?
 - e. Role of Centers vs. Campuses
 - i. When the college was founded there was a clear line drawn between the role of a campus and the role of a center in terms of what a student could expect to get at a campus versus a center. Those lines have been blurred over the last few years, partly because of the strides we've made in distance education. We can provide more at the centers than we used to.
 - 1. As that line gets blurred, students at centers want more. It has made it difficult for the college to try to do at the centers what it used to do only do at the campuses.
 - f. These are examples of the type of philosophical decisions we're going to try and have to make as we move through this. If we start to initiate a completion and retention agenda, and if it involves a lot of student support, do we roll that out at the centers just like we do at the campuses? And if so, how? And if so, does that further blur the line between campuses and centers?
 - i. Jeanne stated that accreditation may answer that.
9. Pragmatic Issues Affecting Completion
- a. A number of groups brought up student complaints about the online bookstore and student complaints about access to books.
 - i. Faculty concerns about students not having books at the beginning of the semester
 - b. Questions were raised about course availability as we have shrunk down course offerings. Questions were raised about class size – is it time to go back and re-evaluate 15 as the minimum number for a class to make if we're trying re-focus on student completion goals rather than enrollment?
 - c. There were questions raised about the time of registration, late registration, when we do cuts, Financial Aid deadlines and should we be tough on students to try and improve the process for everyone, should we be tough on students about different registration issues?
 - d. The group led by Ricky Jackson focused on barriers that the college creates for students, many times inadvertently. There are some good things to discuss like childcare.

- e. Finally, some things that came up and we'll circle back to these because they are implicit in everything else, if we start to adopt a lot of these things and if we adopt this kind of agenda, who carries the workload and who gets assigned what new tasks?
10. Brian asked if this plan included dual enrollment and the advisement at the local high schools.
- a. Mark said this is not really a plan; we were just looking at the comments from convocation. But if we go back to the prospective student question, yes the issue of better informing the high schools, giving the high schools more information about what NPC does and in a broader sense turning around at some high schools a negative perception of the college. Local community colleges always struggle a little bit with their reputation in the local high schools. That came up in the group that was chaired by Don Call on Prospective Students and what the high schools could do.
 - b. Debbie thinks we should look at both dual and NAVIT students in both of those categories – Prospective and Incoming – because she doesn't think we touch them when they are incoming when they are already in dual and NAVIT as far as getting enrollment information on their forms and we have anticipated high school graduation dates in a high school graduation field that they may not have ever met and their intent is not getting collected, unless they get financial aid.
 - i. Leslie – They are sort of a stealth population for us.
 - c. Mark asked Brian if that answered his question.
 - i. Brian – Yes, he was just curious because he liked all the ideas. He is concerned about dual enrollment.
 - ii. Mark looks at both dual and NAVIT as subcategories we need to look at when we were talking about in the subcategories of students that we want to look at In Process and Incoming and what their enrollment patterns are like and how they come to the college after they complete dual enrollment.
 - iii. Leslie – Their career may be a little different just because of having that nice foundation.
 - d. Blaine appreciates the framework, it's very helpful. He had a question about the group of things under the Philosophical Decisions.
 - i. Is it really a decision, is there really a question of academic integrity versus student demand, is there

really a question of short term need being the focus versus long term need? He feels it's pretty clear that there isn't a decision made, the issue isn't defining customer service it's defining and communicating what our services are and helping everyone understand the impact, as an example of enrolling someone five weeks late into a course.

- ii. Leslie feels we're talking about similar things but in a different language. We presented it as either/or when in fact it's probably more of where is our balance point in terms of optimal policy and practice regarding these issues. Does that help?
- iii. Blaine – It does but again he understands needing to balance it, but he doesn't understand that it's a decision.
- iv. Mark thinks that part of the reason that it was phrased as a decision is that we're operating from the assumption of what we saw in the convocation discussions that there is not a shared consensus at the college about what these terms mean and there is not a shared consensus that decisions made by administrators are the right decisions when comes to things like student registration and enrollment and sections, class size and cuts. It seemed to us the reason there is not a consensus on the decisions, is there may not be a consensus on *why* we're making those decisions.
 1. Leslie – Where that balance point is.
 2. Eric – So it may not be a decision but communicating that decision.
 3. Jeanne – Philosophical dialogue rather than decision.
 4. Leslie – We could change it to dialogue rather than decision.
 5. Mark – We're not whetted to any language on this diagram.
- e. Blaine had a comment under the General Issues area. The idea that flowing things through the existing Pillars is comparable to restructuring and adding another Pillar is comparable to adding to the college – he would agree if he thought the Pillars were comprehensive view of everything we did at the college. If the

Pillar's aren't comprehensive then adding another Pillar would not necessarily mean that we're having to add to the college.

- i. Mark was thinking of it more of it as a mental exercise. We have these six Pillars that are the foundational parts of the Strategic Plan. When we talked about a completion and retention agenda, are we adding another Pillar to the mental foundation for the college or do we say instead that completion and retention should be part of all of the things that we currently do?
 - ii. Blaine would agree with that if we're saying that the Pillar structure is a comprehensive view of everything.
 - iii. Leslie sees his point but stated that we're not settled on any of this and we're still tossing the ideas around to make sure we captured them adequately.
- f. Ryan asked if we are placing more emphasis on intent, would NPC take any stance on what that intent is for example for the grandmother who just wants to take quilting, is there pressure to upsell her to take some other courses?
- i. Mark – There is a risk to that, if the feds start to measure and pay based on a certain kind of definition. A lot of Jeanne's time has been spent trying to convince the legislature to let community colleges' define for themselves what our completers are.
 - ii. Jeanne stated that it is absolutely critical. If intent is set up correctly, there is no issue with grandma wanting quilting; it's how we set those categories. We don't exclude that person; we set those categories to include the number of people that do those kinds of things.
 - iii. Mark stated that you can see some of this play itself out with the decision that Pima made last year about adult basic education. The state cut funding for adult basic education and Pima responded by cutting it.
 - iv. Andrew – Because they can't count it. You can capture everybody in some kind of reportable way.
 - v. Mark – It's one of those things that you always have to guard against when you go through this process, is you have to stay true to institutional mission at the same time as you are trying to meet a regulatory framework.
 - vi. Ryan – We take no stake in what they want to intend to do here.

- vii. Mark – We help them do what they want but there is a danger, if the state or the feds wind up defining the category for us, there is a danger of focusing all of the attention on the people who fit into the category.
 - viii. Leslie – We’re already running into that issue, we get a very strict definition of what a completer is from one of our report outs, so it looks like we have almost no completers in many categories because their definition completely doesn’t fit what we do.
 - ix. Mark – Now Deb and Leslie are spending a lot of time communicating with this regulatory group and trying to explain why we had nobody in their categories when they could be spending time doing other things that are more useful to our students.
11. Mark – This is what we’ve got, not sure if this is what SPASC was looking for. We don’t have a lot of detail from lists of individual items that people mentioned at convocation, but we tried to group those together and see what the big themes were.
- a. Leslie – If anyone sees anything that is missing or is miscast from what you experienced at convocation, we welcome your feedback at any point.
 - b. Eric was serious about this being a fun item. It was exciting to him and he feels that this document is going to prove to be very important.
 - c. Mark’s question as someone who waded through this is – now what?
 - d. Blaine feels one of the next steps is to get the Pillar leads together and see how this can be folded into the plan. This is the time for the discussion or are we just adding to the Pillars or are we finding enough things that would indicate that we need to have another Pillar focus?
 - i. Eric stated that we had that conversation at the last meeting and we needed someone to kick start sorting through to this model to where we could get a better grasp on it. Now that this has been done, we should certainly meet with the Pillar groups and maybe a couple other folks from SPASC to have another meeting before we meet next.
 - ii. Peggy asked what is the timeline for this round of the Pillar to have this done is.

- iii. Eric – This needs to go to the board for first read in May and approval in June.
 - 1. Typically we want to be done with it in April so that we can get it out to the college and the community in May to look at what we've done to present to the board. We need to have a lot of our activities done by the last meeting in March or first in April to give it time to get out to the college. We have about a month and a half to two months to go through this process. It does take some time as the Pillar teams have to work and present it to SPASC and we get input and go through revisions and there are a lot of different inputs coming in. Especially if we are looking at the Pillars and if we are going to insert completion into them or add a dedicated Pillar. The timeframe is going to close very quickly.
 - 2. Jeanne – Also in that timeframe we need to re-align with the new criteria. While that shouldn't take too much time, it tends to be a painful time...
 - 3. Eric – There is going to be some upfront time getting used to the new criteria and seeing how it fits. Two months is not a lot of time.
- iv. Mark asked if we are going to bring the Pillar leads in here and have a group conversation or are we just going to tell the Pillar leads to take their pieces and work with them.
- v. Jeanne – Would it be worthwhile to have a Pillar group retreat before they all launch off?
- vi. Mark thinks we need to build an initial retention and completion model and do that with the Pillar leads and Pillar groups.
- vii. Eric – that would need to happen next week or the following week at the latest. This would be for the Pillar Leads, Pillar members and all SPASC members that would like to attend.
- viii. Discussion of when and where the retreat could be held. It was decided on Friday, February 24th from 12:30-3:30 p.m. at SCC.

- ix. Jeanne would like to provide lunch since the group will be working very hard – Blaine said that would be OK.
 - 1. Celebrations could do boxed lunches. Peggy has ordered from them and they are reasonable.
 - 2. Peggy volunteered to take care of the water.
 - 3. Eric and Jeannie will get the invites out and ask for RSVP's.
 - 4. Jeanne will have Kristin order the lunches.
- e. Debbie is concerned about the results of this and how it gets into the Strategic Plan, it's going to have a big impact on our processes, especially in Records & Registration and how is that going to line up with the timing of them already redefining their processes with Jenzabar.
 - i. Eric stated that is something we're working on right away. We're looking at having a retreat on March 12th to work on these things.
 - ii. Mark – In Financial Aid and the Registrar's office, we're moving in this direction already and this may push us further to give us definition to things that need to be hammered out with Jenzabar.

IV. Pillar Teams

- a. Eric showed the current list of Pillar Teams to confirm the list.
 - i. Blaine asked if Ken Wilk could be moved to Pillar 6 – Facilities.
 - 1. Peggy will talk to Ken and ask if he is willing to move.
 - a. Eric asked that either Peggy or Blaine or both let him know if that change is made.
- b. Eric went over the list by Pillar.
 - i. Eric stated that Maderia has asked 6-8 faculty members to be on her Pillar Team and they have all turned her down.
 - 1. Eric will touch base with Brian Burson and ask him to work with faculty to see if someone is willing to join Pillar 5.
- c. Eric asked if there was anyone outside of SPASC that should be invited to the Pillar Retreat.
 - i. Should Jake be invited or an advisor?
 - 1. Jake is already on Pillar 2. Mark suggested that Eric ask Jake for a recommendation for an advisor.
 - ii. Blaine was asked if a Campus or Center Manager should be invited.
 - 1. Blaine will send a recommendation. He then decided that he may switch out David with a Campus or Center Manager on his Pillar Team.
 - iii. Mark asked if Jeanne would like the Apache County Coordinator.

1. Jeanne didn't think so or that NAVIT would be necessary.
 - d. Jeanne said that we will have an Apache County Strategic Plan that is linked to NPC's Strategic Plan very soon.
- V. Retention discussion – Leslie Wasson
- a. You can't talk about completion if you're not keeping your students. We decided we wanted to roll retention into our discussion of completion, because they seem to be mutually supportive processes. Leslie put together a handout based on the retention literature of the beginner level basic concepts if what we already know. There is a lot of academic literature on various aspects of retention.
 - i. There are attitudinal things we can work on to help students.
 - ii. The handout basically says, we have a variety of students with a variety of needs. We want to continue to celebrate that diversity and meet those needs within the resource base we have available.
 - iii. The handout shows some things we can expect from our students. There is a lot of room for us to get creative about doing some things that will facilitate retention for us. This is based on 2-year schools' research.
 - b. Mark – The thing that he felt was very affirming or make us optimistic about what happened at convocation, is how nicely the comments that a lot of folks made does go along with what the literature says.
 - c. Leslie asked if anyone wanted any of these references sent to them to let her know.
 - i. Mark feels in the MyNPC SPASC group we need to start a retention & completion library.
 - ii. Eric will be sure that Leslie has the correct access to post documents. In the meantime, Mark stated she can send anything to Colleen to post for her.
 - iii. Trudy stated there is also some information in the Libraries professional development collection.
 - d. Eric asked if anyone had anything else on this item.
 - i. There was nothing.
- VI. Moving Pillar Teams forward
- a. We have a very good way of moving the Pillar Teams forward with the retreat.
 - i. Eric and Jeannie can sit down and start planning out the timeline to make sure we are on time with this to give people some direction and targets to make sure we are on time. Does anyone have anything else that would be of use to the Pillar Teams or Leads?
 - b. Mark asked Eric if the Pillar Teams and Leads have access to the SPASC Group site.
 - i. Eric will check the list and start adding people who are not on it.
 - c. Last year we had a Strategic Planning Input Group that was open to the college community, it has been deleted. The new one has been added: Strategic Planning with Bert Burt.
 - d. Leslie stated that if anyone needs assistance with research, she would be happy to assist.

