

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

A REGULAR INTERIM REPORT

Great Basin College
Elko, Nevada

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A Confidential Report Prepared for the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
that Represents the Views of the Evaluators

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I. Introduction

This report summarizes a Regular Interim Evaluation visit conducted by Dr. Phil Backlund and Dr. Scott Bergstrom to Great Basin College located in Elko, NV, on April 29-30, 2008. Great Basin College underwent a full-scale evaluation on April 23-25, 2003. This evaluation resulted in four recommendations. An interim focused visit was conducted on April 27, 2005 to review actions taken regarding the four general recommendations. As a result of that visit, the Commission accepted the progress made on three of the general recommendations and requested a Progress Report addressing learning outcomes and their assessment. The Progress Report was submitted in October 2006. The Commission accepted the progress made in this area.

The purpose of this visit was threefold. First, it was to review the institution's ongoing compliance with the NWCCU eligibility requirements, standards, and policies. Second, it was to review institutional activity related to the four general recommendations from the April 2003 Full-Scale Evaluation with a particular focus on the new Bachelor of Social Work program (see p. 10). Finally, it was to review significant institutional changes since the last full-scale evaluation conducted in April 2003.

The evaluators were cordially received. The institution was well-prepared for the visit and accommodated all requests for information by the evaluators. Meetings were held on the first day with the senior leadership, various committees, a member of the State Board of Regents, members of the institutional advisory board, and other employees. Open meetings were held for faculty and students wishing to meet with the evaluators. A number of students, faculty, and staff took advantage of that opportunity. Several students and faculty from remote sites in Ely and Winnemucca joined the meeting via a two-way video conference. The second day was spent reviewing documents, conducting follow up meetings, and meeting with other staff members. A schedule and list of people interviewed during this visit are found in Appendix A.

The evaluation team acknowledges the administration, faculty, trustees, staff, and students for the hospitality extended to them on the visit. Support documentation and exhibits were well organized and provided to the evaluators in a timely manner. Documents were available on their web site prior to the visit and other documents were available onsite during the visit.

During this visit, the evaluators did not observe anything that would suggest non-compliance with the Commission's Eligibility Requirements. They appear to have a well-functioning campus which operates according to its mission and available resources. A number of new opportunities for growth and change have engendered a sense of optimism and excitement about the future of Great Basin College.

A few days before this visit, the current president, Dr. Paul Killpatrick announced that he will be leaving Great Basin College to serve as president of Lake Tahoe Community College in California. An interim president, Carl Diekhans, former Great Basin College Vice President of Administrative Services, will serve until a new president is selected.

The remainder of this report documents the evaluators' findings with respect to the institution's efforts to address recommendations received in its most recent full-scale evaluation visit and interim focused visit (Part A) and its general adherence to the Commission's standards (Part B).

II. Findings

The findings for this interim evaluation are organized in two sections. Part A addresses actions taken regarding recommendations in the last full-scale evaluation committee report and subsequent reports. Part B discusses compliance with Commission standards and policies as well as institutional changes.

Part A

Based on the review of the Regular Interim Report and the subsequent evaluation visit, the following evaluates the degree to which Great Basin College has addressed General Recommendation 1-4 from the April 2003 full-scale evaluation.

General Recommendation 1. *The Committee recommends that the College engage in systematic planning for and evaluation of its activities, including teaching, student services, the library, distance learning, and technology. While significant data gathering is occurring in some areas, there is little evidence to suggest that it is being utilized to determine specific actions that will result in improvement. Therefore, the committee also recommends that area plans be reviewed and integrated into a comprehensive, systematic, and operational plan of action that will influence resource allocation and improve instructional programs, institutional services, and activities.*

Great Basin College continues to meet this recommendation.

Following the 2003 full-scale evaluation, Great Basin College launched a year-long strategic planning effort with widespread participation and input from Great Basin College employees – both local and distant – and other key constituencies. The plan was designed to build upon its strengths and look for improvements in virtually every facet of what it does. The institution established overarching goals in four areas: serving students, acquiring resources, improving the culture, and contributing to the local community and its economy. A comprehensive list of objectives was developed for each of these four areas. These objectives were designed to drive activity in virtually every area of the college, not just those mentioned in the recommendation.

Administrators developed annual action plans to address assigned objectives. Notable examples are found in the Great Basin College Regular Interim Report. The evaluators reviewed similar action plans from other administrative areas of the college. Each year progress has been assessed against these action plans. As of April 2008, Great Basin College has completed or discarded most of the objectives established in this strategic plan. Great Basin College will begin development of a new five-year strategic plan for implementation in 2009.

The evidence is clear that data gathering at the institutional level at Great Basin College is systematic, comprehensive, and action-oriented. The annual action plans have provided a framework for focusing work on important strategic objectives and to some extent have provided a guide for allocating resources and support. These plans have led to a number of improvements throughout the institution.

General Recommendation 2. *The Committee recommends that the computation component in programs of an academic year or more in length for which certificates are granted be clearly identified. Content may be either embedded within the program curriculum or taught in blocks of specialized instruction. Either approach must have clearly identified content that is pertinent to the general program of study. (Policy 2.1)*

Great Basin College rectified this situation in 2004. An Interim Focused Visit reaffirmed this in 2006. The current visit confirmed that Great Basin College is adhering to this standard.

General Recommendation 3. *The Committee recommends that the educational **program review** process be clearly defined and systematically applied across all academic areas. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the educational program review process identify and publish expected **learning outcomes** for each degree and certificate program and that it provide **evidence that its assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching and learning.***

Great Basin College addressed this recommendation by describing progress in program review, assessment, assessment of general education, the syllabi project, faculty reflection on course evaluation, and a description of exemplary programs. Each will be briefly discussed below.

Program Review: Great Basin College has developed a set of guidelines for program review and has developed a schedule for such reviews. There was some ambiguity in the length between reviews that should be clarified. The guidelines are well developed and cover the necessary areas. The summaries and the full program reviews provided demonstrate detailed analysis of each program. While the program reviews appear to be a positive step in the evaluation of programs, the evaluators believe three areas need attention within the program reviews. 1) Program review guidelines include assessment, but little assessment data is reported in the examples provided. 2) There is no indication of college action based on the program review. Are the reviews analyzed by the administration? Are changes made based on the reviews? A system for review follow-up should be more evident. 3) The word “program” appears to have multiple meanings. It is used to identify an academic course of study, but it is also used to identify a department. Some attention should be given to the titles and foci of the review processes.

Given the rapidly changing character of Great Basin College, the school should make sure that the timing of program reviews is clear. Many colleges implement a five-year cycle so that they can be responsive to changes in the higher education environment.

Assessment: Student outcomes are published in the college catalog. This is a good beginning, and this project will need regular attention to maintain currency and completeness. Course syllabi generally do a very good job identifying student learning outcomes and the measures used to assess those outcomes. Continued work will be needed to bring all course syllabi in line with the guidelines.

There are, however some aspects of a complete assessment program missing from the information provided. An assessment program includes the following:

1. Student learning outcomes
2. Assessment methods designed to evaluate student learning related to the objectives.
3. Application of the assessment methods.
4. Summarizing the assessment data.
5. Demonstrating data is used to improve the course content and instruction.

The college has made progress on the first three steps, but more work is necessary on the gathering, synthesizing, and summarizing of assessment data. In addition, the college needs to show evidence of the application of assessment results to academic program improvement. The college's assessment plans (both the 2006-07 plan and the current plan) make a good start in describing how this will occur. However, this will need as much focused attention as was given to the initiative regarding course syllabi.

General Education: The response to the provided information regarding general education assessment mirrors the issues noted above. The student learning outcomes are well-developed and reflected very clearly in course syllabi, as are the measurement methods. However, no data was presented on student learning acquisition nor was any information provided as to how measurement data might have been used to improve the general education program.

The evaluators appreciate the questions related to self reflection and the general education program. Are these questions related asked of all faculty members for all programs? Does any data exist regarding faculty reflection on the questions? Does any data exist for student acquisition of knowledge and skill in the general goals such as communication, critical thinking, personal/cultural awareness, and personal wellness? The college's approach to including all five goals within all general education courses is somewhat unique. Data on the effectiveness of this approach would be helpful.

Syllabi Project: A great deal of faculty time and effort went into the ensuring that all courses have properly formatted syllabi and that all syllabi have clearly identifiable student outcomes and an indication of their measurement. This effort has lead to quite remarkable statistics on faculty compliance with the guidelines. This has resulted in many positive conversations between faculty about such matters as student learning outcomes, coordination of course instruction, sharing of measurement techniques, and other related ideas. This project has been

set of very positive first steps to developing a comprehensive program of educational outcome assessment.

Faculty reflection on student course evaluation: Asking faculty to reflect on student course evaluation is a positive step. In reviewing the reflections, the evaluators noted that many reflections were thoughtful and highly responsive to student feedback. This component of faculty assessment should prove to be valuable in the coming years. As noted in the self-study, the process does need to be fine-tuned with better guidelines given to faculty on a structure for the reflections, and a more convenient way of summarizing the actions taken by faculty to improve instruction based on these reflections.

Exemplary programs: Both programs identified have done a good job identifying student learning outcomes, measurement methods, and rubrics. However, as noted above, no assessment data were provided. How has that data been used to improve the teacher preparation program?

The tables provided in the self study for the Nursing program follow a similar pattern. Competencies are identified, measurement techniques described, and a timetable provided. Again, there are no data offered in the self study from the assessments. However, the narrative speaks to a course report that is completed by each nursing faculty member for the course or courses they have taught that summarizes course content related to overall program outcomes. After reviewing some of these course reports, the evaluators noted that these reports are quite complete and provide very useful information for program improvement. Including samples of these reports within the self study would have been useful. The Nursing program can serve as an exemplary model for other programs in the college in developing useful course reports.

In conclusion, the college has made progress, but has further steps to take. This leads the evaluators to express the following concern:

Concern

Standard Two, in its section on assessment, calls for evidence that assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching and learning. Progress has been made in three areas: implementation of program review, developing students learning outcomes and their measures, and articulation of general education outcomes and their inclusion in course syllabi. However, the college has yet to fully implement the final two stages of a full assessment program—data summarization and analysis, and evidence that the analysis is used for program improvement.

General Recommendation 4. *The committee recommends that the faculty evaluation process be reviewed to ensure that multiple indices are used as part of a substantive performance evaluation with the evaluation conducted of all faculty at least once within every five years of service. (Policy 4.1)*

The focused visit of 2005 followed-up on this recommendation and found that Great Basin College had met the requirements of this recommendation. A system was put in place that did include multiple indices (student, self, administrative) and that resulted in one of four levels of evaluation. The system included a detailed list of activities and criteria, and provided for the development of improvement goals.

However, many faculty and administrators were dissatisfied with this system, and a group of faculty decided to pursue their own fix to the perceived problem in the inadequacy of the current system. The school does meet the standard, but faculty chose to go beyond the recommendation and develop a more complete and informative system. The administration has been a willing and active participant in this process as well.

The basic student rating of instruction began using a new system patterned after a system developed at Kansas State University known as IDEA. This system was implemented in Fall 2007 and initial faculty responses are positive. This, however, is only part of a more fully developed system that analyzes faculty load, divides it into various workload areas, and allows faculty to assign percentages to these areas. It also includes sources of evaluative information for each area. Full system implementation is scheduled for Fall 2009. The goal is to link the evaluation process to faculty development and enrichment activities that will provide the faculty member with coaching and information necessary to continue to develop their role as an effective faculty member.

The evaluators talked with faculty who were excited about the new system. It is still in development, but the amount of faculty buy-in to the system as described is quite remarkable. Credit needs to be given to the faculty committee that has developed the system and generated the enthusiasm.

One other point regarding faculty evaluation is worthy of note. The college has made very good progress in evaluating adjunct faculty. The process has made the adjunct faculty feel more involved with the college, and has resulted in many positive conversations regarding student learning outcomes and mutual instructional support.

The evaluators compliment the faculty and administration for the progress made in this area.

Part B

Based on the review of the Regular Interim Report and the subsequent evaluation visit, the following evaluates the degree to which Great Basin College has addressed Commission standards and policies.

Standard One—Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning, and Effectiveness

Great Basin College is in compliance with all elements of this standard.

Great Basin College has a mission statement that has served them well for a number of years. It is currently being updated. The proposed revision does not substantially change the mission. It appears in the catalog and other key university publications. To better achieve this mission and to build upon existing strengths, Great Basin College developed a set of institutional objectives which have been the guiding force for Great Basin College initiatives and ongoing work since 2003.

Progress in accomplishing the heart of their mission, “to provide superior, student centered, post-secondary education” is being assessed in two different ways. First, a lengthy list of institutional objectives emerging from the 2003-2008 Strategic Plan and corresponding action plans are assessed and reviewed at least annually and usually each semester by key governing bodies. This work has been described in General Recommendation 1 earlier in this report. Second, Great Basin College conducts a number of studies to assess institutional effectiveness and generates reports that are reviewed by key governing bodies and made available to the Great Basin College community on the web. These studies include:

- Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey
- Graduating Student Survey
- Non-returning Student Survey
- Student performance reports
- Reviews of employer needs
- Reviews of employer satisfaction
- Institutional Priority Survey

Other elements of the Great Basin College mission and institutional effectiveness are assessed on a regular basis as well. The success of their transfer degree programs are assessed via the Graduating Student survey, course evaluations, NSHE follow-up reports, and departmental assessments. The success of their career and technical education programs are assessed via program reviews, advisory boards, employee and graduating student surveys, Perkins Reports, and when applicable, national certification tests. The success of development education is assessed via placement testing for reading, writing, and math along with in-house assessments developed for specific classes. The success of the continuing education program is assessed using course evaluations and from public feedback. The success of student services is measured via a variety of student surveys, NSHE reports, focus groups, workshop feedback, and on-site visits. The success of the baccalaureate programs is assessed through surveys of graduated students, and employers.

It is clear that much data is collected. An inspection of the IR web site shows that assessments are made available to the Great Basin College community. The evaluators reviewed a number of reports. Great Basin College is collecting data, but more importantly, reviewing and creating action based upon the data. Minutes from meetings of the President Council show that assessment reports are presented and considered. A number of administrative personnel and faculty described how they use assessment reports to change and improve what they do. Hiring a full-time Institutional Researcher has provided an excellent resource for ensuring that these efforts continue.

Concern

All of this institutional-level assessment and planning seems to have taken place in the absence of a clearly defined and well-integrated process. Faculty and administration acknowledge that recent growth has shown them the need to develop formal procedures and processes for many activities that were once simply common knowledge. This area is one of them. Great Basin College is in the midst of creating a comprehensive institutional assessment plan. The assessment committee is tasked to do this and they are making steady progress. However, the work is not done. Great Basin College should complete this plan so that all of its assessment and planning methods are clearly specified and made public.

Standard Two—Educational Program and Its Effectiveness

This section is divided into two parts. The first addresses educational programs. The second addresses assessment of program outcomes.

A. Educational Programs

Great Basin College is meeting all the elements of this standard that pertain to educational programs.

Great Basin College offers a number of well-established programs of study which result in certificates, two-year degrees and four-year degrees. The institution offers its coursework in face-to-face settings on their main campus in Elko and to remote students via a variety of distance learning technologies throughout the state of Nevada. In addition to serving students who are seeking a certificate or degree, they also serve a number of students who take classes primarily for professional or personal development consistent with their community college mission.

Great Basin College has demonstrated its resourcefulness by taking advantage of several opportunities to expand its reach in the state of Nevada. The first of these was an expansion into Nye County. The second was its efforts in facilitating a Bachelor's in Social Work with the University of Nevada. These new initiatives are discussed in the following sections.

1. Expansion into Nye County

Seeking expanded educational opportunities and better service, a contingent of local citizens from Nye County approached Great Basin College about offering selected programs in Pahrump, the largest community in the county. The Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) had been operating a center in Pahrump for a number of years, but apparently was not able to offer the service and programs that the community desired. Great Basin College officials saw expansion into Nye County as an opportunity to mutually benefit each other. For Great Basin College, it was consistent with their operations and mission as a deliverer of distance and rural education. Extending into this area would provide an economic counterbalance to the mining economies of the greater Elko region. They could take advantage of economies of scale and expand their distance education classes.

Minutes from the President's Council show that initial deliberations and planning for this expansion began in September 2005 and culminated in July 2006 when Great Basin College officially assumed control of the Nye County facility in Pahrump. A summary of this planning activity appears in the Great Basin College Regular Interim Report. During this time there were several on-site visits by Great Basin College administrators and faculty, and numerous discussions with the many parties involved in the transition. The Great Basin College faculty was consulted in the beginning stages and they raised a number of issues and questions. It is less clear to what extent the faculty was involved in the later stages of planning. Now that the Nye County operation is online and working well, most faculty members seem pleased with the addition. However, some faculty members expressed concern that the administration moved too quickly and that the faculty did not have sufficient opportunities for input nor did they have enough time to deliberate and discuss a matter that had such large ramifications.

Great Basin College appears to have adequate on-site staffing in Nye County. A full-time on site Director coordinates all the affairs of Great Basin College in Nye County. He is assisted by other administrative personnel, including an evening manager, two support staff, two facilities personnel, and one computer support technician. Great Basin College employs two full-time faculty members, one in English and the other in Biology. A third faculty member in Economics is voluntarily relocating from Elko to Pahrump, starting in the Fall 2008. There are 25 adjunct faculty members. They are approved and trained by the full-time faculty on the Elko campus. There appears to be an excellent spirit of cooperation between Nye County personnel and the personnel on the Elko campus. They communicate with each other via the same technology that they use to deliver classes. Faculty members from Elko visit the Nye County campus on a regular basis.

They will soon expand from their current facility co-located on a high school campus to a bigger and better facility in Pahrump. This has resulted in increased attention from the Pahrump community.

The community in Nye County seems very pleased with Great Basin College. Seventeen local citizens serve on an advisory committee. The community is in great need of higher education because of its growth and changing demographics. Great Basin College has brought their expertise in distance education to Nye County and the community is responding well. Under CCSN, there were no full-time faculty members, only adjuncts. Great Basin College has created a sense of community. Students no longer “take classes” but are part of an actual campus.

2. Bachelor of Social Work at University of Nevada at Reno

In 2006 Great Basin College entered into an arrangement with University of Nevada at Reno (UNR) regarding the delivery of a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program. This arrangement came about because of an extensive needs analysis conducted by state social work officials throughout Nevada to determine whether there was a need in rural communities to have more social workers. The need was established, interested students were identified and recruited, and the arrangement was finalized. The hope was that students who currently live in a Nevada rural area would be more likely to stay in their communities after completing the program.

Great Basin College students complete the first three years of the program at Great Basin College. For their final year, the Great Basin College social work students become UNR students. They must apply and be admitted to UNR. They must also apply and be formally admitted to the UNR Social Work program. To date, all Great Basin College social work students who have applied have gained admission to UNR and the UNR Social Work program. None have been denied. The degree is awarded by UNR, not Great Basin College.

It should be noted that most of the former Great Basin College students do not physically locate to Reno, but stay in their hometown and take courses via the statewide interactive video network. They do field work assignments at agencies in the community in which they reside. Frequently, UNR faculty members will travel to Great Basin College or to some of the remote sites to meet face-to-face with these students. UNR faculty members will occasionally teach a course for the Great Basin College students still at Great Basin College in the first three years. Similarly, the Great Basin College faculty member over the social work program has taught classes for those in the final year at UNR. Starting cohorts are generally 12 in number. They could admit as many as 18 without having to add more faculty.

This program appears to be working well and meeting the intentions of the program. The third group of former Great Basin College social work students will graduate in April 2008. At this point, 26 former Great Basin College students will have graduated from the program. Most of the students are older. For some, this is a second career. All former Great Basin College students who have graduated from the program and have taken the state license exam have passed. Seventeen of these students have indeed stayed in Nevada to work. All of those who pass the license exam can find work in Nevada, especially in rural communities. The Social

Work program at UNR was recently accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CWSE). In fact, the Great Basin College students were interviewed during the visit for this specialized accreditation.

This is a good example of Great Basin College's ability to take advantage of opportunities to provide important educational programs to the rural communities in its service area.

B. Assessment of Program Outcomes

Great Basin College appears to meeting the requirements for program outcomes assessment, although there is room for improvement. Great Basin College has initiated a program of educational planning and assessment. The school has done an admirable job in developing and publishing expected student learning outcomes. As noted in Recommendation Three, a concern still exists related to providing data that their students have achieved the outcomes and that the results of the school's assessment activities lead to the improvement of educational programs.

1. General Education

Each student of the college is required to participate in the general education program. Students are made aware of these requirements through numerous channels of communication, and academic advising appears to give the program appropriate support. The student learning outcomes for general education are well-developed and are reflected very clearly in course syllabi, as are the measurement methods. The college takes a somewhat unusual approach to how the basic core competencies (communication, critical thinking, personal/cultural awareness, personal wellness, and technological understanding) are addressed in each course. This strategy complicates the life of the individual general education instructor, but it also makes the entire program more cohesive. Students can more easily see connections between the different content areas of general education. Additional comments about this area have been made in General Recommendation 3 earlier in this report.

The current program was only recently developed. Thus far, no data were presented on student learning acquisition nor was any information provided as to how measurement data might have been used to improve the general education program. As noted in Recommendation Three, this is a step the college needs to take.

2. Educational Assessment

As noted, good progress has been made in the development of student learning outcomes and their measurement methods, but much progress needs to be made in gathering of assessment data, and using that data for program improvement. Refer to the analysis in Recommendation Three for a description of the progress Great Basin College has made in developing its educational assessment program.

Policy 2.2 refers to other possible sources of assessment data beyond direct assessment of educational programs. These include entering student information, program review and specialized accreditation, alumni surveys, drop-outs, and employer satisfaction measures. The college gathers information and makes use of that information in each of these areas. The college maintains a useful database of its entering students, and this data has been improved over the past three years. The data is more student-specific, thus allowing for more careful monitoring of student progress and intervention (by the retention advisor) when appropriate. The data also allows the school to adjust its offerings to best meet the needs of area students and industry. Specialized accreditations do not play a large role in the college. Program review, as noted in Recommendation Three, is a useful tool and provides good information for academic planning and program evaluation. The frequency issue should be addressed to make the system more responsive to changing conditions.

The school has excellent information on students who drop-out. Given the small size of the student population, the college believes it important to be aware of every student who leaves and their reasons for doing so. The college carefully tracks retention rates and acts aggressively to address potential problems. The recent hire of a retention coordinator has greatly facilitated that process. The college also makes frequent use of employer and alumni data in making adjustments to its programs. The local economy has seen rapidly changing market conditions, and the college works closely with area industry to help provide an educated workforce.

Policy 2.2 calls for the institution to use multiple means in evaluating its educational programs. Great Basin College meets the spirit of this policy in all areas except as noted in Recommendation Three. The area of concern identified there should be addressed with all reasonable speed.

Concern

Standard Two, in its section on assessment, calls for evidence that assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching and learning. Progress has been made in three areas: implementation of program review, developing students learning outcomes and their measures, and articulation of general education outcomes and their inclusion in course syllabi. However, the college has yet to fully implement the final two stages of a full assessment program—data summarization and analysis, and evidence that the analysis is used for program improvement.

Standard Three—Students

The 2003 Full-Scale Evaluation Report found that Great Basin College was generally in compliance with the requirements of Standard Three. Issues identified in that report included the inclusion of the student conduct code in publications, greater opportunity for students to be involved in student government, a program to assess the needs of students at the centers, differentiation of credit and non-credit courses in publications, and greater data gathering regarding students success. Based on the information provided in the self-study and through conversations with the student services staff, these issues have been successfully resolved.

Great Basin College has experienced a strong period of growth over the past five years and significantly increased its service area. During that period of growth, there were marked fluctuations in enrollment FTE and headcount, and these fluctuations challenged the college to be creative in maintaining enrollment. As noted in the self-study, the college implemented a number of initiatives that met these challenges and resulted in long-term growth.

Great Basin College has above average course completion rates and term retention rates. New student fall-to-spring retention rates, however, are low. The student services area has made a number of positive changes to strengthen academic advising including consolidation of student services in Berg Hall, the hiring of a retention coordinator, and tracking of students. While these changes have helped the retention issue, there are factors outside the control of the college that continue to impact retention.

These changes appear to have worked, and conversations with students indicate that they feel supported, encouraged, and that they get the information they need.

Of initial concern to the evaluators were the service needs of students at distance locations. With very widespread centers and varying student populations at the centers, it would be almost expected that student services would not be evenly applied to all locations. This, however, does not appear to be the case. Student services across the Great Basin College system appear to be generally even. The administration is sensitive to the needs of students at distant locations, and works diligently to provide equitable service. The students the evaluators spoke with in Ely and Winnemucca were uniformly positive about their experience. The college's goal is to provide the same course content and level of instructor interaction no matter where the course is taught. This seems to be working, and the college is to be complimented for these efforts. Students at the centers feel very connected to the college.

Students also compliment the college on advising, the physical buildings of the Elko campus, center directors, strong opportunities for employment after graduation, a good job fair, and programs that are oriented to professions and jobs. They believe the college offers highly employable degrees and is very career oriented. Positive marks were also given to financial support services for students. Students believe the college website to be very helpful. (One student, while complimenting the school overall, believes that the student government could be stronger and more inclusive.) Students also appreciate the extra work that teachers put into the IAV classes to make them more accessible to students. The extra work that faculty are willing to do for students allows students to make good progress toward their degrees.

The self-study details other changes to student services that also move the student experience in a positive direction. The 2003 accreditation report noted that no mental health counseling was available on campus. While not being able to hire a full-time counselor, the college has used other routes to provide this needed service.

In sum, Great Basic College and particularly the leadership and staff of student services took the recommendations from the 2003 report seriously, and has made excellent progress in meeting those recommendations an in providing strong student services. While some work remains to be done, the college is dedicated to meeting its mission statement of being a "student-centered" college.

Standard Four—Faculty

The faculty of Great Basin College has undergone a great deal of change in the past five years. The number of teaching faculty increased from 53 to 73 and the number with doctorates increased 40%. The table on “New and Departing Faculty by Department” was of interest to the evaluators as it succinctly summarized changes to the faculty over the past five years. The college appears to have done a good job integrating new faculty members into the social system and in providing them with the necessary support.

The most significant change to the life of a faculty member at Great Basin College is the new and developing evaluation system. It is addressed earlier in this report under General Recommendation #4.

One issue discussed in the interim report that bears comment here is faculty workload. The evaluators were surprised that over 80% of the faculty has overloads. Furthermore, a recent survey of faculty showed that approximately one-third of the faculty did not believe that their workload was equitable or reasonable. The reasons for these overloads are to meet the demands of online classes, independent studies, and other courses that need to be taught. Many faculty members who receive overload are receiving less than one credit of overload. This occurs because the load is rounded to the nearest tenth and faculty are paid for only a small amount. However, in general the degree of overload is excessive.

Couple the foregoing with an apparent confusion or lack of awareness among some faculty members about workload policy as stated in the Faculty Handbook, issues with faculty load is a likely result. The evaluators were surprised that some faculty members were unaware of the policies within the Handbook. Given the importance of these policies to faculty life—including overload pay—greater awareness of these policies might be of benefit to faculty.

Administrators believe that the reason that 80% of faculty have overload is because the workload policy is being applied now with absolute consistency. Every semester every faculty member signs a workload sheet that shows exactly how their workload was calculated and the situation is explained to individuals. The administration should seek better communication with faculty on workload issues and help them to better understand workload policies as contained in the Handbook.

The faculty evaluation process will increase the need for further faculty professional development and enrichment activities. The professional development area suffered a reduction in funds from \$50,000 to \$25,000. However, the faculty helped solve this problem by relying more on each other to provide in-service workshops. This “we can do it” attitude seems typical of the faculty at Great Basin College.

The faculty at Great Basin College is dedicated to student learning and as evidenced by student feedback, are very willing to go the extra mile in providing a superior educational service for their students.

Standard Five—Library and Information Resources

The 2003 Full-Scale Evaluation Report complimented Great Basin College for the quality of the library and its staff. The report commended the library for its commitment to the college and its students, its effective working relationship with faculty and staff, its vision regarding the digital environment, and their willingness to provide services to the region. The only concern noted regarding funding for replacement equipment. Both commendations and the concern appear to be applicable today.

The new director, David Ellefsen, has brought an increased focus on making the library user-friendlier and to provide more direct services to faculty. Four specific areas are worthy of note regarding the library.

1. In spite of the great distances between Elko and the centers, the library does a very good job providing quality service to both faculty and students at the centers. In conversations with students, the evaluators noted that the students were uniformly positive about their experience with the library and the ease of obtaining needed materials. The library uses on-line and IAV technology to provide these services and staff travel regularly to the centers.
2. The library is working closely with the English department to provide half-hour, one-on-one instruction in database use and library resources of each student in English 102. This is a time-intensive program, but worth the effort in assisting students in developing the necessary library research skills to support their academic work.
3. The library staff also provides “library in the classroom” services for faculty and their courses. The evaluators noted a strong positive working relationship between the library staff and the faculty.
4. The physical facility on the Elko campus is attractive, modern, reasonably well equipped, and provides a pleasant environment for research and study.

The library staff are to be recognized for their pro-active approach to library services and information technology. While issues exist still with acquisitions and equipment replacement, progress has been made in these areas. The library is an integral part of the academic team at Great Basin College, and takes its role in the education of students seriously.

Standard Six—Governance and Administration

Great Basin College is meeting this standard.

Great Basin College is governed by a state Board of Regents which oversees all public education in Nevada. They follow the policies and procedures outlined in the Board of Regents’ Handbook. A chancellor is appointed by the Board of Regents to serve as the chief executive officer. The chancellor works closely with the Regents and presidents to implement Board

policies and coordinate public education among the various institutions of higher learning. The Board and Chancellor appear to be acting in harmony with all Commission standards.

The President of Great Basin College, Paul Killpatrick, is operating in accordance with Commission standards. He oversees the work of the institution in an effective and acceptable manner. He has provided leadership to an institution which has undergone significant change during his tenure. Other administrative and academic leaders are also providing effective leadership to the institution.

Several key personnel and organizational changes have been made which have kept the college moving forward. The hiring of a full-time Director of Institutional Research and the creation of two Dean positions are notable examples.

Administrators at Great Basin College have been particularly effective in connecting with the communities in which they operate. They have set up advisory boards with whom they consult regularly and especially when there are important changes to be implemented. Leaders and employees have been particularly effective in communicating with the various outreach sites. This is no small accomplishment given that the Great Basin College service area is 62,000 square miles.

The campus community in general seems accepting of the amount and pace of changes at Great Basin College. However, a few faculty members expressed a mild but a very clear concern that in the midst of all this change, the faculty needs to be involved. Two examples were cited. In the hiring of a new dean and in the expansion into Nye County, faculty members felt that they were not consulted as extensively as they should have been and that communication with them came “after the fact.” In the case of the Nye County expansion, administrators believe that they did indeed adequately consult faculty by holding an open forum to discuss the issue and by taking several faculty members with them on visits. Moreover, the Faculty Senate did discuss and formally approve this action prior to the final decision. The fact remains that some faculty members feel that they are not as “in the loop” as they should be. Administrators must be cautious to support the faculty in their responsibilities in the governance of Great Basin College so that it follows guidelines and policies contained in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty members should also make an effort to consult and follow the Handbook. Faculty leaders should also take responsibility to inform and consult the faculty about their roles and responsibilities in shared governance.

Concern

In an environment of continual growth and change, and, in particular, in situations where opportunities with a “short fuse” present themselves, it is especially important that the faculty is not left out of key planning and decision-making activities. Faculty roles and responsibilities in institutional governance should be made clear. All administrative units at Great Basin College should ensure that there is appropriate faculty involvement and input so that the practice of shared governance at the institution is not in doubt. For their part, faculty leaders and faculty

members themselves should make sure that they are informed about their roles and responsibilities, and be proactive in the decision-making process.

Standard Seven—Finance

Great Basin College manages its financial resources well and appears to be in good financial health in spite of a recent budget cutback by the state. Great Basin College lost \$1.24 million in state funding. This comprised approximately 3.7% of their state appropriations. They were able to react in a timely and effective way to spread the loss across several different areas. The institution has a cash reserve that would be available for an extreme financial emergency.

The addition of a center in Nye County has not caused a financial strain on Great Basin College. State funding that was given to the Community College of Southern Nevada to operate in Nye County has now been given to Great Basin College. On July 2007 the state legislature formally approved funding, transfer of assets, and expansion of Great Basin College's service area. The added revenues from the additional 200 FTE students from Nye County are already helping the overall Great Basin College financial outlook. The growth projections for Nye County show an even greater financial benefit to Great Basin College.

The state conducts yearly audits. Both the state and GBC are audited annually by an external public accounting firm. Background checks are being proposed by the System for individuals working in the controller's office, but this policy has not yet been created.

The Great Basin College Foundation is an active contributor to the financial health of the institution. The Foundation has started a \$3.5 million campaign to fund programs and facilities that provide higher education to the rural population of Nevada. Specifically, this campaign hopes to provide \$1.5 million for new career programs, \$1.5 million to improve student life facilities for both resident and non-resident students, and \$500 thousand for the construction of a new building, the Electrical and Industrial Technology Building. The Foundation is well on its way to achieving its fund-raising goals.

Standard Eight—Physical Facilities

The facilities at Great Basin College are meeting the needs of their educational programs both in Elko and at the distant sites. The buildings and grounds at the Elko campus are well-maintained and attractive. The college is nearing completion of the 38,000 square foot Electrical & Industrial Technology Building which is being funded by the state of Nevada. The college is in the midst of a major renovation and expansion project to the Leonard Center. Completion is scheduled for the 2009-2010 school year. This renovation is being funded by a donation to the Foundation.

Several of the new facilities projects are for distant sites. They will install modular facilities in Winnemucca and possibly Battle Mountain. They will be acquiring a new site in Pahrump in the

near future. This activity along with similar actions demonstrate that Great Basin College does indeed take care of its students in the remote areas.

The Great Basin College administration is in the midst of updating the campus master plan.

Standard Nine—Institutional Integrity

Great Basin College continues to meet all of the requirements associated with this standard. Based on the support documentation included in the exhibits and interviews with representatives from the various campus groups, campus policies and procedures demonstrate that Great Basin College is ensuring that high ethical standards are present in its treatment of students, faculty, and staff in the college's maintenance of institutional integrity. Great Basin College has managed to create a sense of community among students and employees who reside in different sites. This positive climate is undoubtedly influenced by the good will generated from the institution's ability to deliver what they say they will, and by a mutual respect that is evident among employees and students, both local and distant.

III. Summary

The evaluation team verified that appropriate action has been taken and continues to be taken to address the recommendations issued in the April 2003 Full-Scale Evaluation. This assessment is based on the April 2008 Regular Interim Evaluation Report submitted by Great Basin College, support exhibits and materials, and campus interviews conducted with all segments of the college community. Great Basin College has learned how to do distance education in a way that not only achieves important educational objectives, but also fosters a sense of community among local and distant students. Great Basin College has taken advantage of opportunities to expand and grow which has benefitted their primary constituency, rural Nevada.

IV. Commendations

1. Great Basin College has one of the largest service areas in the United States. Given the vast distances and the sparsely populated region the college serves, one might expect that service to the various centers would be uneven. This appears not to be the case. The faculty and staff of Great Basin College are to be commended for their diligence in providing effective and equitable support to the students of the college—no matter where they might reside.
2. Great Basin College is commended for its exceptional approaches to the delivery of distance education. The institution has developed practices and methods that make distance education work very well. Of special note is how the institution has been able to foster a sense of belonging among students at remote sites.
3. Great Basin College has truly embraced its “calling” to provide educational opportunities in rural Nevada. Great Basin College is commended for taking on the responsibility to provide educational opportunities for residents of Nye County. While this has not been without significant hardships and difficulties, ultimately it will mutually benefit Great Basin College and Nye County in important ways. A less forward-thinking institution might have passed on this opportunity and stayed within its comfort zone.

V. Recommendations

None.

Appendix A
Schedule and List of People Interviewed

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

TIME	FORUM	PARTICIPANTS
8:30 a.m.	Kick-Off Meeting	Paul Killpatrick, President Lynn Mahlberg, Vice President for Student Services Bill Reinhard, Vice President for Administrative Services Mike McFarlane, Vice President for Academic Affairs Ed Nickel, Computer Office Technology Professor/Faculty Senate Chair Danny Gonzales, Political Sciences Instructor/Accreditation Support Marsha Holford, Administrative Assistant III/Classified Council Chair John Rice, Director of Institutional Advancement/Executive Director, Great Basin College Foundation Cliff Ferry, Accreditation Support Richie Lespade, Student Government Association Outgoing President Eron Sanchez, Student Government Association Incoming President
9:00 a.m.	Mission/Institutional Planning	Lijuan Zhai, Director of Institutional Research Bonnie Hofland, Elementary Education Professor/Program Supervisor Mike McFarlane, Vice President for Academic Affairs Cliff Ferry, Accreditation Support Susanne Bentley, English Professor/Faculty Senate Assessment Committee Chair Danny Gonzales, Political Sciences Instructor/Accreditation Support John Rice, Director of Institutional Advancement/Executive Director, Great Basin College Foundation Lynn Mahlberg, Vice President for Student Services
10:00 a.m.	Outcomes and Assessment	Margaret Puccinelli, Director, Bachelor of Science in Nursing Bret Murphy, Dean of Applied Science Jay Larson, Management Professor/Bachelor of Applied Science Program Supervisor, Business Department Chair Bonnie Hofland, Elementary Education Professor/Program Supervisor/Education Department Chair Wendy Charlebois, Social Work Instructor Marsha Holford, Administrative Assistant III/Classified Council Chair Cyd McMullen, Social Sciences Professor/Department Chair Susanne Bentley, English Professor/Faculty Senate Assessment

Tuesday, April 29, 2008
(continued)

TIME	FORUM	PARTICIPANTS
11:00 a.m.	Faculty Issues – Standard IV	Lynette Macfarlan, ECE Professor/Faculty Senate Evaluation Committee Co-chair Linda Uhlenkot, English Professor/Faculty Senate Evaluation Committee Co-chair Kathy Schwandt, Computer Office Technology Professor Ed Nickel, Computer Office Technology Professor/Faculty Senate Chair Cindy Hyslop, Computer Office Technology Professor/Faculty Senate Committee Personnel Chair Lynne Owens, Mathematics Professor Laurie Walsh, Anthropology Professor
12:00 pm (Lunch)	Governance	Dorothy Gallagher, Regent, Nevada System of Higher Education Don Miller, Great Basin College Advisory Board, Vice Chair Terry Hritz, Great Basin College Advisory Board, Incoming Chair Antoinette Cavanaugh, Great Basin College Advisory Board, Elko County School District Superintendent
1:00 p.m.	Nye County Expansion – Session I	Mike McFarlane, Vice President for Academic Affairs Garry Heberer, Dean for Extended Studies Linda Uhlenkott, English Professor/Faculty Senate Evaluation Committee Co-chair
1:30 p.m.	Nye County Expansion – Session II	Mike McFarlane, Vice President for Academic Affairs Garry Heberer, Dean for Extended Studies Linda Uhlenkott, English Professor/Faculty Senate Evaluation Committee Co-chair Bill Verbeck, Interim Director , Pahrump Valley Center Gregory Schmaltz, Biology Instructor Dale Griffith, English Instructor Mike Cosgrove, Great Basin College Pahrump Valley Center Advisory Board
2:00 p.m.	Distance Education	Lisa Fraser, Curriculum Developer Garry Heberer, Dean for Extended Studies John Newman, Math Instructor/Faculty Senate Distance Education Chair Danny Gonzales, Political Sciences Instructor/Accreditation Support Laurie Walsh, Anthropology Instructor Cindy Hyslop, Computer Office Technology Professor/Faculty Senate Personnel Committee Chair Glen Tenney, Accounting/Economics Professor
3:00 p.m.	Open Meeting	Students
3:30 p.m.	Open Meeting	Employees

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

TIME	FORUM	PARTICIPANTS
9:00 a.m.	Financial and Physical Plant – Standards VII and VIII	Bill Reinhard, Vice President for Administrative Services Star Thomson, Director of Budget and Finance Pat Anderson, Director of Health, Safety and Security John Rice, Director of Institutional Advancement/ Executive Director, Great Basin College Foundation Rich Barton, Welding Technology Professor/Faculty Senate Facilities Committee Chair Russ Hammons, Facilities Manager Mac Taylor, Controller
9:00 a.m.	Library	David Ellefsen, Library Director/Faculty Senate Library Committee Co-chair Eric Walsh, Reference Librarian Richard McNally, English Professor/Department Chair Stephen Baker, Criminal Justice Professor Bea Wallace, Accounting Professor/Faculty Senate Library Committee Co-chair
9:30 a.m.	Student Services	Lynn Mahlberg, Vice President for Student Services Jan King, Director, Admissions and Records Tammy Robinson, Director of Outreach and Recruitment Stacie Potter, Student Housing Coordinator Lora McCarty, SIS Operations Manager Julie Smith, Director of Student Life/Student Advocate Pat Collins, Director, Career Center Scott Nielsen, Director, Student Financial Services Amber Overholser, Retention Coordinator
12:00 p.m. (Lunch)	Bachelor of Social Work	Wendy Charlebois, Social Work Instructor Mary Ray, Human Services Instructor Margaret Puccinelli, Director, Bachelor of Science in Nursing Karen Martin, Social Sciences Professor
2:45 p.m.	Exit Interview	Paul Killpatrick, President
3:00 p.m.	Exit Interview	Students and Employees