



# **Board of Regents**

## *Planning Retreat*

October 21, 2011

**2011 A New Lens for Planning**  
*Strategic Directions for the Future of Higher  
Education in Nevada*

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEVADA

## *The Problem*

We have a serious problem in Nevada. The state ranks dead last among states in terms of the share of its young adults (ages 25 to 34) who are educated. While Nevada's older population is more likely to be educated, the state remains overall one of the least educated states in the country. Unless this changes, Nevada will never have the strong and diversified economy it desires.

In addition, Nevada is facing a host of additional challenges: declining and unpredictable state tax revenues and state support for higher education, changing demographics (majority minority), an unacceptably low high school graduation rate, and a similarly low college-going rate. Further, there appears to be no sense of urgency among the public about higher education as the citizens of the state by-and-large have higher than average income levels with lower than average educational levels, an anomaly unique to Nevada that places it at a distinct disadvantage when trying to prioritize a role for higher education in the state's future. In addition, the state is currently reviewing the formula for funding higher education which will be critical in determining incentives for specific goals that must align with our overall strategic direction. The state and higher education are at a critical crossroads as these challenges are more daunting than ever and the opportunity to address them is now.

Nevada's public colleges and universities have historically been successful in serving large numbers of Nevadans, but many students fail to graduate and those who do often take too long to do so. As a result, degree productivity across NSHE institutions is extremely low. In a state that needs more educated workers in the future, the NSHE faces the daunting challenge of producing more degrees in a shorter period of time using fewer resources and ensuring quality.

## *The Goal*

For Nevada to thrive in the future **we must increase the number of students graduating from NSHE institutions with meaningful degrees and certificates, positioning the state for a future that requires an educated citizenry.**

That over-arching goal carries with it a myriad of implications. Further, this goal cannot be accomplished without providing needed support to students from diverse backgrounds recognizing the unique challenges they face and ensuring that not only do they enroll, but also graduate. How do we help all students whom we recruit learn, persevere, and graduate to serve Nevada's needs? What are the strategies we must introduce which will change the current culture and attitudes among students who drop out and never return to higher education? In tough times, how do we ensure that a public education in Nevada is affordable for all Nevadans, but particularly for students from the poorest socio-economic backgrounds? How do we assist faculty in facing new expectations and challenges? How do we build a culture of support for higher education in Nevada?

## *Strategic Guidance: The Next Steps*

Specific steps must be taken to increase **student success** for Nevada. The following is a list of potential policies and institutional practices that may be priorities of the Board of Regents as NSHE seeks to graduate more students and improve learning outcomes.

## ❖ *Student Success = Alignment*

Ensure that recent high school graduates are college-ready and that all ready adults have access to certificates and degree programs

- Ensure that teacher education programs produce quality P-12 teachers prepared to meet the new challenges of the Common Core Standards
- Prevent remediation of recent high school graduates by working with school districts to improve college readiness through the adoption of the Common Core Standards, and appropriate diagnostic testing in the junior year and/or the senior year using ACT and/or Accuplacer assessments
- Redesign the delivery of remediation to support student success and reconsider how remedial education is funded (formula study)
- Increase opportunities for dual enrollment
- Align the community college remediation roles with Adult Basic Education
- Serve working adults in Nevada by encouraging them to enroll for the first time or return to college

Align NSHE career/technical and academic programs to support the economic development goals of the state.

- Create strong business advisory boards for fields of study and learning outcomes
- Create a cooperative work study programs across the System so that students may work (full or part-time) and earn a salary while going to school
- Where possible, strengthen degrees and certificates that link to identified future jobs sought by Nevada in its economic development plan
- Build certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and graduate degrees to form career ladders for Nevadans to serve the state
- Establish learning outcome measures for all programs that will assure Nevadans of quality degrees and certificates

**POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES:** number of students placed into a remedial course, completion rates for students requiring remediation, percent of remediated students who complete a college-level course; high school graduates with college credits, graduation rates, number of degrees awarded, number of paid internships, measure value-added contribution to student knowledge through learning assessments, and employment placement rates for recent graduates by particular field or industry sector

Increase the number of and revenue from external grants and contracts for research and workforce development

- Seek initial funding for the Knowledge Fund from sources other than state general fund
- Establish a source of matching funds for grants and contracts
- Establish goals for the universities and DRI to increase research grants each year
- Establish goals for the colleges and universities to increase grants and contracts that support workforce development each year
- Align research and workforce development priorities with the state plan for economic development established by the Board of Economic Development (created under AB449)

**POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES:** dollars from and numbers of grants and contracts awarded, number of patents awarded to NSHE faculty, technology transfer metrics

### ❖ *Student Success = Affordability*

Ensure that higher education in Nevada is accessible and affordable for all Nevadans

- Access and Affordability Committee – review tuition and fee policies in conjunction with financial aid policies to ensure student access to an affordable education
- Increase the college participation rate for students from low-income and first generation families through predictable and transparent financial aid programs
- Focus financial aid on students seeking degrees or certificates who engage in patterns that lead to success: full time enrollment, advisement, two or four year plans for graduation for undergraduates, timely plans for graduate degrees.

POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES: number of students from low socio-economic families enrolled and graduated, number of full-time students on Pell grants, rate of graduation for Pell grant recipients

### ❖ *Student Success = Innovative Instruction and Timely Graduation*

Increase the number of students from all backgrounds graduating with a degree or completing a certificate program each year in accordance with Nevada's Complete College America goals

- Limit student admission to ensure that all students admitted receive essential access to classes and support services, including supplemental instruction
- Establish incentives for students to complete courses and to graduate on time
- Require on line or in person advisement for all degree-seeking students
- For students who do not meet university admissions requirement, require NSHE students to complete a transferable associate's degree (AA, AS or AB) to transfer to UNR, UNLV or NSC
- Establish robust distance education program or a virtual college so that students have appropriate alternatives to stay on track for graduation
- Re-examine all courses for utilization of transformative teaching methods that benefit students, especially general education courses

POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES: number and percentage of entering undergraduates who graduate from a degree or certificate program, number and percentage of students who transfer from a community college to a 4-year institution or from a 4-year institution to another institution, average time to degree, and average number of credits to degree

### ❖ *Student Success = Accountability and Transparency*

Good governance demands data on performance and accountability and increasing degree productivity will depend in part on building a strong accountability system so that sound and reliable data can be used in decision-making processes.

- Use performance metrics to set parameters for budget requests and determine priorities for the System
- Use performance metrics to allocate a portion of funding to NSHE institutions for meeting specific performance goals (e.g. number of graduates in certain fields key to economic development)
- Use performance metrics to track progress toward accomplishing clearly defined institutional and System goals

**2005 Master Plan**  
*Building Nevada's Future*

# Building Nevada's Future:

## A Master Plan for Higher Education in Nevada



# Executive Summary

The University and Community College System of Nevada has created the following seven interrelated goals that establish a roadmap for the growth of higher education in Nevada:

- **Student-Focused System** – The higher education system in Nevada will create a welcoming, respectful, and friendly environment where all students have the opportunity to participate and succeed at every level of higher education.
- **Reputation for Excellence** – Nevada’s institutions of higher education will increase their national, regional, and statewide reputation based on targeted, outstanding, innovative programs and other accomplishments.
- **Quality Education** – Nevada’s system of higher education will provide consistently excellent learning experiences for its students through instruction, research, and service.
- **A Prosperous Economy** – Through instruction, research, and service, higher education in Nevada will be an essential element in developing and sustaining a strong, dynamic, knowledge-based economy for Nevada.
- **P-16 Education** – Higher education will increase partnerships with the K-12 system to ensure the cooperative delivery of education from pre-kindergarten through college degrees.
- **Building Quality of Life** – Higher education in Nevada will be instrumental in advancing society’s objectives and enriching the lives of Nevada’s citizens.
- **Opportunity and Accessible Education for All** – Nevada’s system of higher education will increase the overall participation and success of Nevadans enrolling at all levels of higher education and in all ethnic groups, and will address the unique educational needs of a highly diverse and non-traditional population.

Continuous progress toward these goals will be expected, measured, and demonstrated. The goals are not stated in priority order and no single goal stands alone. Each is inextricably linked with the others in a variety of ways, as seen through the targets and strategies developed for each goal. Clearly defined benchmarks will be established to measure progress toward each goal. Once benchmarks are established, they will be monitored regularly to make sure there is consistent improvement and steady advancement, both systemwide and by each institution.

The strategies are based on actions the System can take internally and with its partners to improve not only higher education but also P-16 education statewide. This plan incorporates key findings and recommendations from a study conducted by the RAND Corporation in 2001 as well as a report by the Battelle Memorial Institute issued in 2000. In addition, the original goals established in 2002 have been reviewed and discussed by both the Board of Regents and the UCCSN institutions. Based on this feedback, the Board approved modifications to the Master Plan goals in 2004.

Implementation of the plan will rely on the efficient use of existing structures and institutions. The UCCSN is committed to reexamining all operations so that the most effective and efficient use is made of every available human, financial, and physical resource. Nevertheless, over the next decade Nevada’s economy will require thousands more graduates of the universities, state colleges, and community colleges every year.

The current capacity and funding of the University and Community College System of Nevada is incapable of meeting the increased needs for college-educated workers in the long term. Without reform, the state will become even more dependent on individuals trained outside the state. All youth and adults in Nevada should have the opportunity to gain the postsecondary education they need for a bright economic future. A vibrant state economy in the future will also depend on improving the research capacity of the state’s universities and research institute, a

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capacity that builds new enterprises and attracts high-paying jobs to the state.

Nevada has a choice to make. It can continue funding its higher education system at the present level, thus constricting access even more in the face of intense growth and widening diversity. If Nevada can only fund higher education at roughly its current level, adjusted for inflation, its statewide college-going rate would be reduced from its already low 40 percent to 25 percent. This not only would place Nevada at less than one-half the college-going rate of other western states participating in the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE), it also would place Nevada below almost all developed countries in the world. In reality, participation would likely not decline to this level, because many students would likely look to attend colleges and universities in other states, but the resulting “brain drain” would create other long-term problems for the state. Thus, attention to increasing access to match population growth must necessarily remain a strong focus of any master plan for higher education in Nevada.

Without a significant growth in resources for higher education, the gap will widen between:

- The number of college graduates needed and the number produced will increase.
- The needs of the economy and the research capacity of the universities.
- The educational opportunities and accomplishments available for poor students and their wealthier counterparts.

However, through a shared responsibility model, Nevada can supply the resources necessary to meet the varied educational needs of an expanding and changing population. This Master Plan requires Nevada to pursue a compact between the regents, its colleges and universities, the state, and its students to step forward, support higher education, and build a bright future.

## Highlights of the Plan

The Master Plan is marked by several key proposals and concepts:

- There is a strong reliance on building a more comprehensive base of effective and collaborative partnerships with K-12, business and industry, and state and federal government.
- A focus is placed on inter-institutional collaboration rather than competition, with rewards and incentives proposed in order achieve this principle.
- There is an emphasis on continuous improvement over time according to established benchmarks.
- Strategies emphasize internal efficiencies that can be made for low-cost or no-cost to the state.
- A public accountability plan for student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness will be developed.
- Students will be required to have technology-mediated instruction by the time they graduate, thus being better prepared for the world of adult learning.
- All students will have opportunities for internships, cooperative education, international education, or community service experiences in their educational program, experiences that will link them to the community to which they will contribute throughout their life.

# Building Nevada's Future

## Introduction

Historically, Nevada's government has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing support for higher education. Nevada's citizens expect a quality system of higher education that is affordable and serves all segments of society. They expect colleges and universities to play an active role in helping non-traditional and disadvantaged students to succeed. They expect higher education to equip them to compete in the changing workforce. Government and industry leaders expect universities and research institutes to be partners in pursuing research areas that will benefit the state's economic development. Nevada students expect learning experiences that are relevant and rewarding to their lives and careers. Meeting these expectations will demand a comprehensive approach – an integrated network of strategically focused, high performance campuses, each achieving excellence in its own mission under standards of continuous improvement.

## Challenges to Nevada

This Master Plan recognizes that no other state faces a greater challenge to its higher education system than Nevada. At the time the Master Plan was developed in 2002, the following information played a vital role in creating and implementing the plan itself, and it remains important today.

- Nevada is the fastest growing state in terms of percentage growth. More than 600,000 new residents are expected in the state by 2010.
- The population growth will be marked by a 40 percent increase in the Hispanic/Latino population.
- Concurrently, the White/non-Hispanic population will increase by only 15 percent.
- One-third of Nevada's population will be from underrepresented groups by 2010.
- Nevada trails most other states in the percentage of its high school graduates who enroll in higher education and continue until they successfully earn a degree.
- The educational attainment of Nevada's overall population is below national averages at the associate's and bachelor's degree levels.
- Nevada has a compelling need for basic education and workforce training for its citizens.
- Nevada has very distinct regional differences, both economically and demographically, that affect the delivery of higher education as well as the academic programs offered.
- The distribution of population in Nevada makes it simultaneously one of the most urban states in the nation and one of the most rural.
- Characteristics of the state's demographics and economy as a whole sometimes work against the perceived need for higher education.

The State of Nevada will fail if it does not respond effectively to the inescapable necessity of providing quality educational opportunities to a growing and more diverse population – now and in the future.

Using the Master Plan as a framework, the UCCSN will reexamine and improve the way it conducts higher education in Nevada. With that process underway, the System will turn to students, their families, Nevada residents, K-12 educators, and others for additional resources. Ultimately, however, assuring access to quality education in the challenging era ahead will require more than just the commitment of the UCCSN. Achieving the ambitious agenda set out in this Master Plan will require shared responsibility between all of these stakeholders.

## Mission Differentiation

As Nevada grows, so will its system of higher education. Nevada's demographic upsurge compels the UCCSN to determine the most efficient and effective way to manage growth in the best interest of students. No single institution can provide all things to all students. Some students are better served in one educational setting than another. Needless duplication and competition among a relatively small number of institutions do not make the best use of limited resources.

Without clear mission parameters, the strain of explosive growth will compel haphazard, inefficient use of finite

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public and private resources. With them, reasonable criteria are possible to help the System meet the challenges of the next decade more effectively and efficiently. Consequently, these mission parameters:

- Define distinct missions for the primary components of Nevada's system of higher education.
- Envision a comprehensive role for the community colleges, including the potential for offering baccalaureate-level programs in some limited areas.
- Address a current gap in technical education.
- Call for different but complementary research missions for Nevada's three research institutions, with some common programs and emphases where advantageous and critical to the state's unique characteristics.

**Comprehensive Community Colleges** serve specific regional areas. With an open-door admissions policy, these institutions will emphasize opportunity for all Nevadans to gain access to a quality education. In fulfillment of the community college mission, these institutions offer remedial and developmental education, general education, workforce development, vocational and technical training, and associate degrees that provide seamless transfer to state colleges and universities. In some cases and under specified criteria, these institutions may offer selected niche baccalaureate degrees.

**High Tech Centers** are associated with the comprehensive community colleges and are located on high school or college campuses. These centers provide linkages with the K-12 educational system and promote economic diversity through workforce development and technology training. The centers may provide beginning-level general education courses and remedial course work to both students currently enrolled in high school and people who wish to continue their education.

**Institutes of Technology** are associated with existing institutions and may offer lower-division and upper-division course work leading to industry certifications as well as associate and baccalaureate degrees in specialized and applied career-technical fields. Through articulation agreements and transfer policies, these institutes serve as the hub for Tech Prep 2+2+2 programs.

**State Colleges** are regional institutions offering comprehensive education at the baccalaureate level in specific, regional niches with limited professional graduate degrees. Admissions policies define minimum levels of preparation that match the academic focus of the institution.

**Universities** are comprehensive research institutions offering education from the baccalaureate through the master's and doctoral levels. The universities provide selected graduate and professional programs, and doctoral programs correlate with defined research and academic strengths. The universities make significant contributions to new knowledge, economic development, and the culture of the state. Selective admission policies define specific preparation levels necessary for student success.

A **Research Institute** focuses on environmental sciences and engages in fundamental and problem-oriented research within an entrepreneurial and academic culture. The Institute fosters interdisciplinary approaches and scientific teaming, improve management of natural resources, and apply technologies to global issues while helping to meet the needs of Nevada. The Institute does not grant degrees but supports the educational programs at other UCCSN campuses by partnering in teaching and mentoring programs, student support, and internships.

These mission guidelines serve as templates to develop policies and criteria that:

- Guide new or expanded teaching and research.
- Provide educational access to Nevada citizens at various levels of instruction.
- Expand alternative delivery systems.
- Increase collaborations with the K-12 system.
- Provide efficient administrative structures.
- Allow the establishment of new institutions upon reaching established thresholds.

## **Collaborative vs. Competitive Model**

Many argue today for allowing market forces to address the future needs for higher education through competition for students, research dollars, buildings, and budgets. This method has worked in several states but generally requires a large number of statewide institutions and an overall high level of funding in order to be most effective. Due to Nevada's limited resources, its relatively small number of higher education institutions, and its unique demographic and geographic characteristics, a more collaborative model is viewed as the best response to the challenges of sustaining access and quality in the challenging years ahead.

In a collaborative model it is essential to distinguish the missions of the System's various segments so that resources are allocated and programs operated equitably, efficiently, and in a justifiable manner. Clearly defined missions provide the foundation for policies that help match educational supply to the demand for services brought on by growth. But these policies can also provide the stimulus for appropriate competition that improves individual institutions. In some cases – especially in terms of building research strengths – it will be advantageous to deliberately build strength through common programs and emphases.

## **Creation of New Institutions**

Another important component of mission differentiation is the establishment of minimum thresholds and other necessary policies that must be met prior to forming new public institutions, branch campuses, off-campus centers, or satellite centers. The emphasis always should be on providing the most efficient administrative structures for the delivery of education, locating institutions where best needed, and on cost-effectiveness to the state.

## GOALS, PRINCIPLES & TARGETS

### GOAL: Student-Focused System

The higher education system in Nevada will create a welcoming, respectful and friendly environment where all students have the opportunity to participate and succeed at every level of higher education.

#### Principles

Nevada students should see a clear path to their educational goals through the institutions of public higher education.

All students should be welcomed and individually assisted to plan their educational goals and to reach their aspirations.

It is vital that students feel a high level of satisfaction with all elements of their higher education experience.

#### Targets

- Increase the percentage of Nevada's general population who participate in some form of higher education, whether through coursework, workforce training, certificate programs, lifelong learning, or degree programs.
- Strive to continually increase the percentage of students that express a high level of satisfaction with teaching, advising, and overall educational experiences at UCCSN institutions.
- Work to increase the persistence rates of first-time students that return to UCCSN institutions with each advancing semester.
- Increase opportunities for students to co-enroll and transfer to institutions throughout the state of Nevada.

### GOAL: Reputation for Excellence

Nevada's institutions of higher education will increase their national, regional, and statewide reputation based on targeted, outstanding, innovative programs and other accomplishments.

#### Principle

Excellence in all we do is a guiding principle in the planning, development, and implementation of academic programs, research and scholarly activity, and contributions made to the state through public service.

#### Targets

- Continue to develop and maintain programs, centers, and institutes that elicit national, regional, or statewide recognition for excellence.
- Increase the number of degree and certificate programs that receive national, regional, or statewide accreditation.
- Continue to expand opportunities for UCCSN faculty to engage in innovative teaching and research.
- Contribute to Nevada's quality of life and the efficiency and productivity of the state's enterprises through public service rendered by Nevada's faculty, staff, and students.

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## GOALS, PRINCIPLES & TARGETS

### GOAL: Quality Education

Nevada's system of higher education will provide consistently excellent learning experiences for its students through instruction, research, and service.

#### Principles

High expectations and quality learning experiences help students develop to their fullest potential.

Accountability demands that we be measured by our success, not merely our efforts, in each of our endeavors.

#### Targets

- Develop and implement an assessment plan and effective measures of student learning outcomes at each institution and for each academic program. Assessment plans for educational programs will be congruent with the differentiated missions of the institutions. Each plan will be required to define student learning outcomes, assess student performance on those outcomes, and use results to improve teaching and learning.
- Develop effective measures of institutional performance, collect data on the institutional indicators, and demonstrate that the results are used in the planning and evaluation process. These indicators are to include the regular evaluation of programs and justification for program continuation.
- Differentiate the instructional and research missions of Nevada's institutions by creating a System academic master plan and System research plan to define future institutional activities, to guide effective decision-making, and to eliminate unnecessary redundancy.
- Increase the number of rich learning experiences available to students through creative performance, scholarly and research collaboration with faculty, and through community service learning.

### GOAL: A Prosperous Economy

Through instruction, research, and service, higher education in Nevada will be an essential element in developing and sustaining a strong, dynamic, knowledge-based economy for Nevada.

#### Principles

All Nevada students should have access to the courses, degrees, training, or credentials needed for entering the workforce of the 21st century and for adapting to changes in the workforce over time.

The future economic success of Nevada depends on an educated, trained workforce and an entrepreneurial environment supported by first-rate higher education.

#### Targets

- Develop and increase responsive educational programs that focus on state needs and critical shortages in identified fields.
- Increase the proportion of workers and the number of graduates in high-skill fields who come from Nevada's higher education institutions rather than from out of state.

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## GOALS, PRINCIPLES & TARGETS

- Increase the leverage of state dollars for research and development by attracting more federal and private support for each state dollar expended for these purposes.
- Increase institutional collaborations with the private sector and target significant research resources to achieve specific economic development objectives.
- Increase and focus workforce development to meet community needs in those sectors with the highest potential for growth.

### GOAL: P-16 Education

Higher education will increase partnerships with the K-12 system to ensure the cooperative delivery of education from pre-kindergarten through college degrees.

#### Principle

Success in higher education is a joint endeavor that begins at pre-kindergarten and continues to grade 16 and beyond, with seamless transitions and articulation throughout all levels of education.

#### Targets

- Increase P-16 programs that provide seamless transitions and result in student success in college.
- Through P-16 efforts, decrease the percent of recent Nevada high school graduates taking remedial/developmental courses.

### GOAL: Building Quality of Life

Higher education in Nevada will be instrumental in advancing society's objectives and enriching the lives of Nevada's citizens.

#### Principle

Higher education enriches the quality of life for Nevadans through benefits from research, the arts, the humanities, civic engagement, faculty service, and educated alumni.

#### Targets

- Increase public service and cultural opportunities that position higher education institutions as intellectual, cultural, and artistic centers and as the "marketplace for ideas."
- Ensure that all students have an opportunity to experience some form of internship, cooperative education, or community service in their educational programs.
- Improve Nevada's "educational benefits" measure on the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education's Report Card from a C minus to at least a B grade.
- Ensure that all students have an opportunity to increase their understanding of other cultures through their educational programs and activities.

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## GOALS, PRINCIPLES & TARGETS

- Increase support for student activities that may lead to national, regional, or statewide recognition for academic or leadership achievements.

### **GOAL: Opportunity and Accessible Education for All**

Nevada's system of higher education will increase the overall participation and success of Nevadans enrolling at all levels of higher education and in all ethnic groups, and will address the unique educational needs of a highly diverse and non-traditional population.

#### **Principles**

All students should be given the opportunity to be successful and to complete a degree or credential if that is their goal.

Lifelong learning is a noble endeavor, and providing multiple and varied opportunities is necessary for a citizenry that must continuously adapt to changing societal and economic conditions.

Higher education should provide flexible and innovative scheduling and delivery systems designed to meet the educational needs of Nevadans.

#### **Targets**

- Raise the percentage of Nevada's high school graduates who continue into postsecondary education within the UCCSN.
- Maintain minority enrollment distributions within the UCCSN that meet or exceed the minority population distributions within the state of Nevada. Minority graduation rates will meet or exceed rates of white, non-Hispanic students.
- Increase the percentage of students who successfully complete bachelor's degrees in six years and increase the percentage of community college students who complete associate degrees in three years.
- Increase programs and courses designed to meet the needs of working adults.
- Increase programs and courses designed to meet the needs of under-represented groups.
- Increase need-based financial aid for Nevada students.
- Expand the use of shared, new, and existing facilities on weekdays, evenings, weekends, and summers for the most cost-effective delivery of education.
- Expand distance education offerings so that, on average, all students will have participated in some technology-mediated instruction prior to graduation.

*(revised February 2005)*



**2011 Roadmap**  
*NSHE Plan for Nevada's Colleges and Universities*

# The State & the System:

## NSHE Plan for Nevada's Colleges and Universities

*Combining Excellence and Austerity to Attain Success*



# NSHE Leadership

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## Letter from the Chancellor

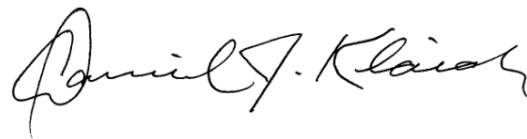
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I am a Native Nevadan. My father was born in McGill and grew up speaking English as a second language while working in the copper mines of northeast Nevada. Through public education, he changed the trajectory of our family history and gave me the opportunity to pursue a better future. Whatever I have is the result of hard work, determination, public education, and the opportunities afforded by this great State. We must work together to ensure that my story can be the story of all our children and grandchildren who represent nothing less than the future of our society.

We are at a cross-roads - one hammered home by the ugly recession in which we are mired. Nevada is changing. While tourism, hospitality, and gaming will remain a mainstay of our economy for the foreseeable future - possibly forever - we can no longer count on it as our sole and possibly even dominant economic engine. The world is changing from a service and manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based economy - an economy where the single most important asset of any business is the intellectual capital of its employees.

Now, more than ever, NSHE's role in the future of our State is clear. The greatest tools of economic development are currently being educated in the public schools, colleges, and universities across our State. Through a long-term partnership with the State, NSHE institutions are positioned to recruit, retain, and grow the industries and business necessary to recover from the recession and build a brighter future. The following plan was developed to promote greater efficiencies and enhanced performance which translate into producing more graduates to further develop and diversify our economy.

An active collaboration among the State, the higher education system, K-12, and private business is the best method to ensure a brighter future for Nevada.



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Daniel J. Klaich  
Chancellor  
Nevada System of Higher Education



## The State & The System

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As Nevada struggles in this difficult time of recession and high unemployment, it is time to acknowledge that only through a robust and adequately funded education infrastructure and, in particular, higher education will we ever achieve the diversification and growth all Nevadans need. Nevada must make a long term commitment to excellence in our colleges and universities and to the level of funding necessary to support that excellence. In the immediate circumstances, however, it is incumbent on the State's public colleges and universities, its primary economic engine, to examine carefully how they can perform within the limited resources available today, ensuring that the State is positioned as best as it can be to recruit, retain, and grow the industries and businesses needed for a brighter future. This calls for a greater number of Nevadans with degrees, certificates, and workforce skills, along with a strong research enterprise, to support the new economy. How can this be accomplished?

The steps that will need to be taken will not be easy or without risk. They will demand considerable change in the way higher education works, both in the administrative area and in the classroom. Just as the private sector is changing its business model, enduring cutbacks, and suffering the pain of seeing old dreams fade, so too will the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) have to reconfigure and redefine its vision for its future. Old patterns of action and thought will be replaced by a new vibrant vision with a focus on quality and access in everything Nevada higher education does. Improvements in quality must lead to both greater efficiencies and enhanced performance that will translate directly to more students graduating with degrees or certificates to build the State's economy.

To start this examination and change, NSHE proposes a series of key steps for consideration. While some may prove longer term, care must be taken to view these proposals as a whole. In other words, if only a few are implemented, the impact will be slight and the future will be just as predictable as the past. Change is never easy for organizations, especially when it translates into significant new ideas. Sacrifice will be called for on the part of every faculty and staff member. Yet the changed culture that will result will be stronger and more vibrant, building a justifiable pride for each employee in being part of this excellent system of higher education.

Let us be clear as well that this is not a one way street. In order to achieve the mutual goals of pulling Nevada out of the current recession and diversifying our economy, Nevada must make not only make a long term funding commitment, but also some substantial changes right now in the way it funds higher education in order to allow the institutions the freedom and flexibility, accompanied by accountability, to do their jobs.

# State and Student Support

Both State funding and student tuition and fees will need to be re-examined.

## Student Tuition and Fees

The NSHE agreement with the State provides that a large portion of student fees and all tuition (out-of-state student charge in addition to fees) “count” when determining the level of funding within the state-supported operating budget. Going forward, if state general fund support drops, depending on the level of decrease in state support, student fees and tuition are likely to rise to prevent unsustainable decreases in the overall budget. Students have historically supported actions needed to maintain excellence in their programs, even fee increases. Given that reality, changes in current policies and practices are called for. First, NSHE proposes that fees paid by in-state students and tuition for out-of-state students should remain at each institution and not be counted within the state-supported operating budget. This would require a revamped State budget agreement that stipulates that out-of state students will not count toward the generation of the NSHE budget request to the State and hence will not be part of the funding calculations. An agreement with the State that specifies a cap on the percentage of out-of-state students within any given institution may be wise under this model.

Secondly, the Board of Regents approved a policy that allows differential fees to support high cost or high demand programs to supplement what is currently generated by existing state support. These fees will be institution specific and include some set aside for financial aid to assist those students most impacted by the additional cost. All differential fees will be retained by the institution and will not be included within the state-supported operating budget.

Third and longer term, in partnership with the legislature, NSHE proposes that an examination of how our biennial budget request is built - specifically, whether a budget model where the State agrees to fund a specific portion of the agreed-upon formula with the remaining portion supported with student fees is a better model. That portion of State and student responsibility will vary by institutional mission. For example, it is likely that the community colleges and perhaps the state college would receive greater state support in terms of an overall percentage of the institution’s budget versus the universities. A model such as this may be included in the final recommendations of the formula study currently underway, and would need to be endorsed by the legislature.

*“Old patterns of action and thought will be replaced by a new vibrant vision with a focus on quality and access in everything we do.”*



# State and Student Support

## *Rainy Day Fund*

In the past three years, higher education has seen the negative impact of large decreases in state support for higher education. To assist if and when this happens in the future, NSHE recommends that the legislature create an NSHE Rainy Day Fund with a combination of State appropriations and unspent end-of-year funds within the NSHE state-supported operating budget. Rather than have unspent dollars revert to the general fund, such funds would be invested through a Rainy Day Fund. The future use of these funds could occur only within carefully defined emergency circumstances established in partnership with the Nevada Legislature.

## *The Funding Formula*

This is currently the foundation of higher education's state budget request and defines NSHE institutional fiscal needs, based on a number of drivers that define cost, primarily the number of students. NSHE has asked for a review of this formula and hired MGT of America to conduct this review. This report will take into account many interviews and comparisons with other state formulas, will result in recommendations for change to the current formula. Out of this study, we hope we can gain recommendations that set aside or correct misgivings about the equity of the current formula and create new incentives for institutional behavior that reward outcomes rather than just inputs.



*“We hope we can gain recommendations that create new incentives for institutional behavior that reward outcomes rather than just inputs.”*

## Goals

It is time for NSHE to set measurable goals and report the results to the citizens of Nevada. Such goals should be aligned with the broader strategic goals of the State and support the brighter future the Silver State needs.

### More Graduates

Nevada must produce more entry-level graduates if the State is to become competitive and more economically prosperous. The State's participation in *Complete College America* is evidence of the political will to accomplish this. The proposal before NSHE, in concert with private colleges and universities, will produce 1,064 more college completers each year through 2020, a total of 70,224 more graduates than our current practices would produce. College completers are defined as students who receive a workforce certificate of achievement, an associate's degree, or a baccalaureate degree. Make no mistake about it – this goal will require significant changes in how NSHE institutions do business, some of which are discussed in this plan. Unless NSHE institutions are strongly committed to efforts that improve recruiting, retaining and graduating students, NSHE will not meet this aggressive goal. Likewise, the State's partnership will be critical in assuring resources to enable students to receive the classes and support they need to graduate.

### More External Funding - Research

NSHE needs the State of Nevada to partner with the three research institutions to establish a model to coordinate and fund research initiatives designed to bring high tech, high wage businesses to Nevada in sectors which are consistent with the State goals for economic diversification. Obvious targets for research technology transfer areas that should be the focus for Nevada include green technologies and renewable energy, water and natural resources, and biotechnology and health care. NSHE stands ready to do its part in this endeavor, but Nevada is overdue in establishing a clear commitment to the importance of research. One excellent model would be the State of Utah which established the Utah Science, Technology, and Research (USTAR) economic development initiative to bolster Utah's research strengths and significantly increase technology commercialization to create many higher caliber jobs throughout the State. With strong commitment from the State, institutions can increase their external funding for research by 10 percent annually. This commitment by the State and the Nevada System of Higher Education can form the basis for a more vibrant, diversified and export economy.

**“Nevada must produce more entry-level graduates if Nevada is to become competitive and more economically prosperous.”**





### More External Funding - Workforce Grants

The colleges, as well as the research institutions, will be enabled and encouraged to seek entrepreneurial ways of doing business. Increasing the amount of external grants and contracts received to support workforce development initiatives is critical. Proposed as a goal is an increase in the amount of those contracts and grants, by each college, of no less than 10 percent per year going forward. NSHE also asks that the state support these efforts through the establishment of incentive and matching funds for external grants and contracts. Additionally, there are likely savings and advantages in turning the receipt, processing and program operation of a number of Federal funds that currently flow to the State Department of Education or to the Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation over to NSHE. One example to look at would be the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Grant funds.

## Effectiveness & Efficiency

In both academic and in administrative areas, change will be required to improve operations by careful review and the establishment of best practices. Within NSHE, self-examination and use of data to make decisions are expected. This is not a budget-cutting strategy, but an excellence strategy. Any savings will be redirected to build quality.

### Accelerated Degree Programs

Establish programs with financial incentives and academic support for cohorts of students to finish certificates and degrees quickly.

### Credit Limitations on Degrees

Set standards for degree requirements not to exceed 120 credits for a bachelor's degree, 60 credits for an associate degree, and 30 credits for a certificate of achievement except under certain circumstances. Numerous examples exist across the country of such degree limitations. Texas has placed in statute that without a "compelling academic reason," a degree may not exceed 120 credits (*Texas Education Code* § 61.0515). Among others, the university systems of Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana and Tennessee have all limited degree programs to 120 credits unless justification can be made for more. NSHE is confident that faculty will engage in examining all areas where quality student learning outcomes may be gained in fewer credits – which translates to less cost and time for students and more graduates for the State.

“Within NSHE, self-examination and use of data to make decisions are expected. This is not a budget-cutting strategy, but an excellence strategy.”



# Effectiveness and Efficiency

## Low-Yield Programs

Ensure that all academic programs have realistic parameters for a program's continuation if low numbers of graduates (and few service courses) exist. This is particularly critical for high cost graduate programs at the universities. This critical examination is already happening at NSHE institutions, but it must become a regular and expected review, and policy changes to put more teeth into the review are needed.

## Redesigned Courses

Redesign remedial and general education courses and use new models for instruction where research indicates that greater student learning and success at less cost or less time are achieved through alternate methods (i.e. using technology to focus attention on the skills students need for college-level courses that are self-paced). NSHE colleges and universities have already begun this process and will continue aggressively going forward. As NSHE reviews the adequacy of our funding formula, these new methods should be encouraged and funded appropriately.

## Incentives for Decreased Time to Degree

Target use of tuition and fees to build incentives for students to complete college sooner, such as guaranteed fee levels up to a certain number of credits or penalties for students who drop or repeat classes.

## Part-time Faculty

With any increased use of adjunct or part-time faculty for instruction, put in place the appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, such as prescribed course content, mandated end-of-course assessments, in-class observations of adjunct/part-time faculty instruction, and student evaluations.

“...use new models for instruction where research indicates that greater student learning and success at less cost or less time are achieved through alternate methods.”



### ***Articulation and Transfer***

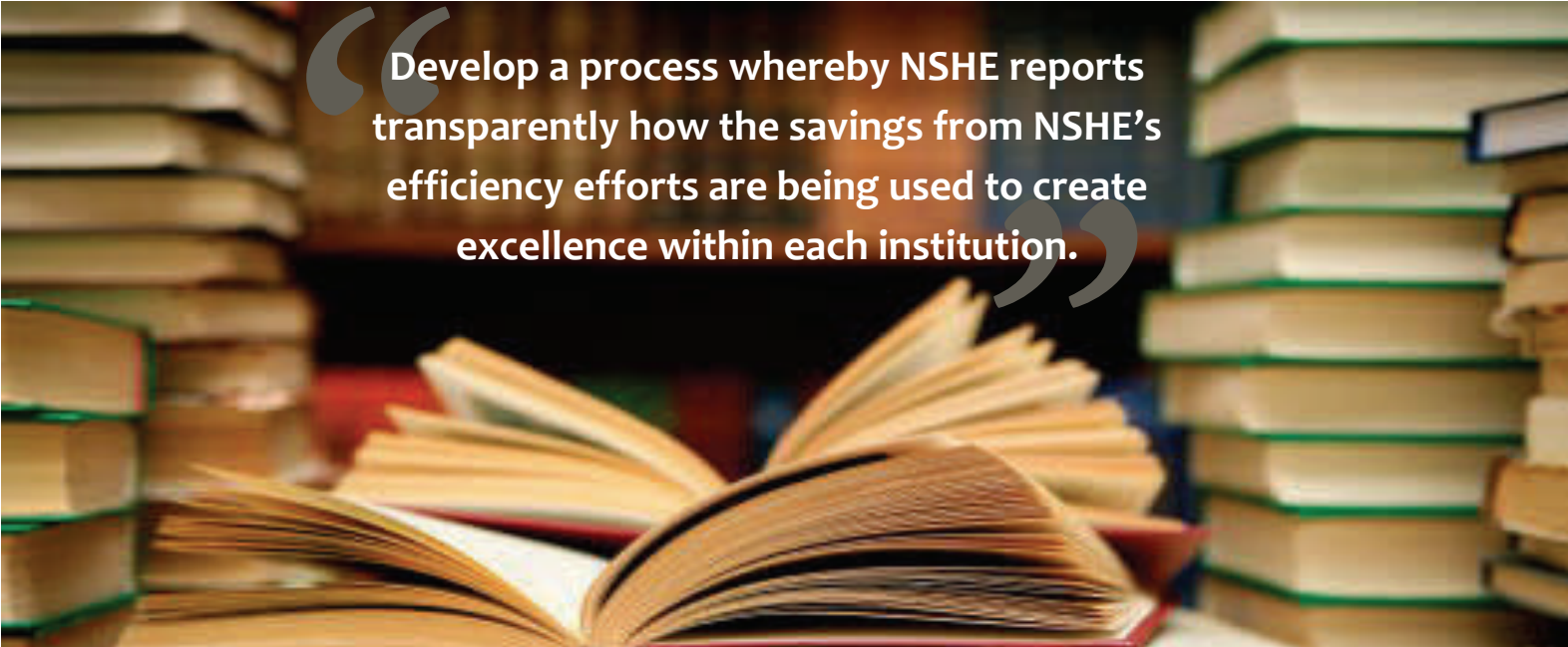
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In addition to the current work of the NSHE Articulation Board and Regents' policy, institutions need to work bilaterally, as needed, to ensure that credits transfer under 2+2 and 3+1 agreements, that students consider carefully the advantages of completing associate degrees prior to transfer, and that with these degrees, students are guaranteed admission at the junior or senior level, ready to move forward toward a baccalaureate degree. Community colleges will continuously monitor articulation agreements with NSHE institutions and other post-secondary institutions so students transfer efficiently to four-year institutions.

### ***Reinvestment of Efficiency Efforts***

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Develop a process whereby NSHE reports transparently how the savings from NSHE's efficiency efforts are being used to create excellence within each institution. As NSHE changes its culture and practices to operate more effectively and efficiently, these dollars should be reallocated to areas where high need and the possibility of enhanced success exists. Included in these efficiency efforts will be a major initiative to examine all business functions, including, but not limited to purchasing, human resources and payroll, that may result in the consolidation of certain functions across the State. These efforts must be underscored by setting a target to decrease the percentage of total expenditures for Operating/Maintenance and Administration. Likewise, the examination of all common support services for quality and efficiency will occur. Included in this will be System Computing Services, libraries, and security/campus police services.



**“Develop a process whereby NSHE reports transparently how the savings from NSHE's efficiency efforts are being used to create excellence within each institution.”**

# Financial Aid

Increasing financial assistance and scholarships for students is not just a matter of maintaining access for low income students and their families. The State can ill afford to keep growing the more expensive pathway of lifelong dependence on the State through social services and corrections, when, for a much lower cost, education provides a robust and positive outcome for both individuals and state budgets.

### ***Focus on Student Access and Success***

Quality institutions provide quality opportunities for all students who are making education a priority and have the clear goal of obtaining degrees and certificates that will make them well-educated and workforce ready. This requires that NSHE focus its services and limited financial assistance on students whose needs are well defined and who are on a track to success. An ongoing project with the University of Southern California Center for Urban Education and WICHE will help identify the key places and students who can succeed if institutional behavior supports them. Changes in institutional practice and targeted financial aid will be a high priority.

### ***Policy Strategies Related to Affordability***

Affordability is not just about tuition and fee costs; it is also about a student's ability to pay relative to their income and financial aid. Efforts must be made to increase the percent of total disbursed financial aid that is need-based, and goals must be set to hold us accountable to accomplish this.

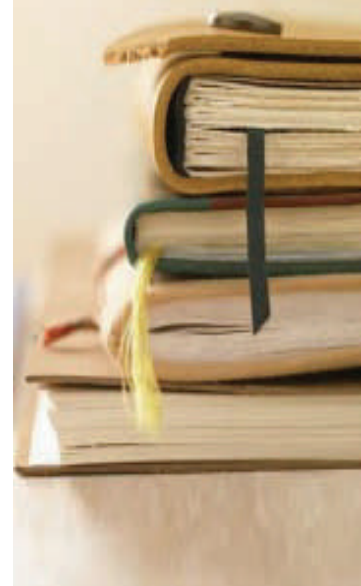
### ***Focus on Taking Full Advantage of Financial Aid Funds***

Currently, too many low income students, particularly at NSHE's community colleges, do not apply for federal financial assistance, thus leaving on the table needed support for their college aspirations. Within NSHE's efforts on college access and success, one focus must be encouraging these students and their families to apply for federal assistance and set goals to increase the participation rate among students from low-income families.

### ***Low Income Students and Tuition & Fee Increases***

NSHE will explore a variety of strategies to hold low-income students harmless to cost increases for a maximum of four years at the universities and state college and two years at the community colleges to encourage full-time enrollment.

“...education provides a robust and positive outcome for both individuals and state budgets.”



# Partnerships

All NSHE institutions must look to the efficiencies and economies that can be gained by moving beyond the campus and traditional ways of doing business and seeking new partnerships.

### State-NSHE Partnerships

Where quality and cost savings can be achieved through reworking our agreements with the State, NSHE will aggressively pursue executive and legislative conversations to implement change. NSHE will seek flexibility with responsibility for wise decisions for Nevada. For example, the relationship must be evaluated to ensure that there is value added at every point in the chain of decisions by which we design, fund, manage, and build public works.

### High School Students

Early involvement with higher education by high school students is generally associated with a strong college-going culture. In partnership with our Nevada high schools, NSHE will focus on more dual enrollment courses, early testing, and fast track programs modeled on the current 2+1 technical education agreement with school districts. In addition, NSHE must examine every place where public and higher education interface to make sure that the maximum consistency and efficiency exists between the two. Areas for examination include not only dual programs and facilities use, but close coordination to engage business and minority communities, Nevada's unacceptable dropout and remediation rates, and the sharing of data. Partnership with public education must stop being a catch phrase and become a way of doing business.

### Business and Non-profit Sector

NSHE will pursue such partnerships at every level within institutions where appropriate to build student opportunity, internships and employment, synergies for quality operations, and potential cost savings. Likewise, better pathways for technology transfer to assist business will be explored.

### Facilities

More intense use of existing buildings and classrooms will be required as the State's ability to fund new construction is limited in the immediate future. Distance education strategies alone will not be sufficient. After institutions have reviewed again their maximum and optimal use of classrooms, as enrollment grows, partnerships with school districts, hospitals, libraries, and businesses to acquire classroom space will be encouraged. For example, the new state-of art career and technical academies in Las Vegas might be available in late afternoons and evenings for our use.

“Partnership with public education must stop being a catch phrase and become a way of doing business.”

# Accountability

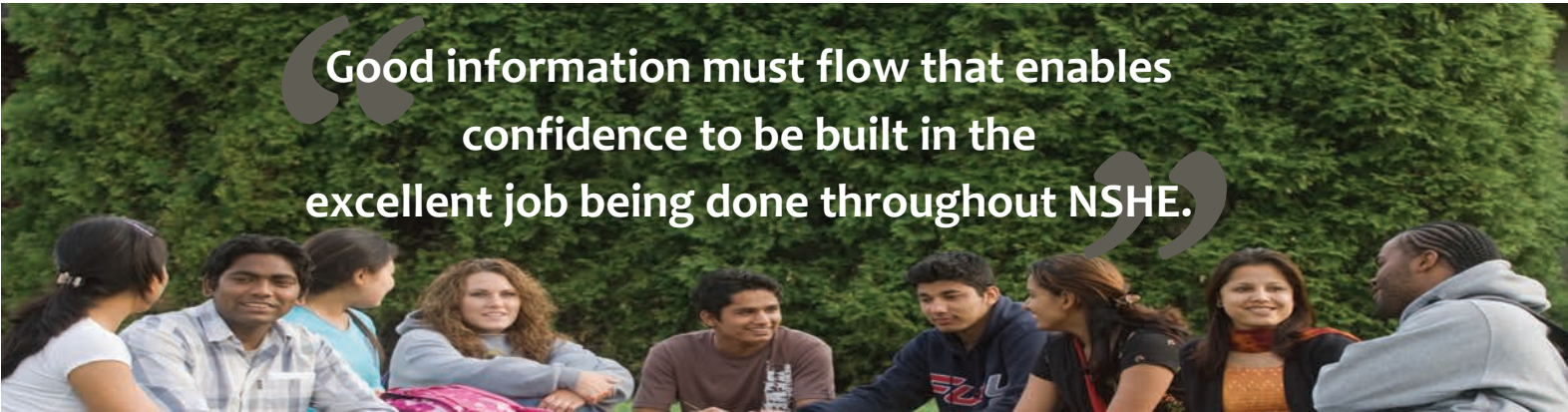
Whether to the citizens of Nevada, NSHE students and faculty, the Governor, or legislators, good information must flow that enables confidence to be built in the excellent job being done throughout NSHE.

## Student Success

The National Governor's Association (NGA) proposed several completion metrics that will measure outcomes and progress for all states to use in the national effort to increase the number of Americans with a college degree or certificate. The outcome metrics include degrees and certificates awarded, graduation rates, transfer rates, and time and credits to degree. For progress metrics, the NGA suggests: enrollment in remedial education, success beyond remedial education, success in first-year courses, credit accumulation, retention rates, and course completion. These reliable metrics are designed for all state leaders to use to gauge whether policies are successful and to help inform funding decisions. NSHE must wholeheartedly join efforts like this, such as the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), an initiative by public 4-year universities to supply basic, comparable information through a common report – the College Portrait, and a similar effort for community colleges developed under the direction of the American Association of Community Colleges - Voluntary Framework for Accountability (VFA). Both UNLV and UNR currently participate in the VSA project.

## Attention to Quality Improvement

Goals must be set for continuous monitoring of all business and service functions going forward. Such reporting and examination of the implications of good and reliable data must become a way of life for NSHE, building a culture that questions every operation about whether it is the best way to proceed. The iNtegrate project has allowed NSHE to begin that culture change in Student Services, and it will be the foundation for this change occurring in business and in personnel practices. Funding for these additional modules will be essential as NSHE move forward.



“Good information must flow that enables confidence to be built in the excellent job being done throughout NSHE.”

## The State & The System

This Plan will give institutions a margin of excellence and added flexibility in these difficult fiscal times. Both the State of Nevada and NSHE will receive significant value-added benefits. For the State, public higher education grows as a critical asset, invaluable to every citizen and inextricably woven into the fabric of each community. When a question or policy issue arises, people will turn first to NSHE institutions and have confidence that assistance is both available and excellent. Every faculty member and administrator will view themselves as servants for the broader good of Nevada – the true meaning of our “service” mission. Likewise for students, Nevada’s public colleges and universities will offer excellent and clearly defined educational pathways with state-of-art instruction and support. Students deserve to have full confidence in the value of any degree or certificate from our colleges or universities.

Finally, and importantly, for the taxpayers of Nevada, NSHE commits to a method of doing business that pledges value received for support given, with appropriate accountability and transparency. This Plan moves higher education in Nevada forward in difficult times to make the critical decisions necessary to ensure such success.



# Goals Recently Established



### Compounding increase of 1,064 completers per year

The purpose of Complete College America is to significantly increase the number of Americans with a college degree or credential of value and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations. The national goal is by 2020, six out of 10 young adults will have a college degree or credential of value. Currently in Nevada the percentage of adults 25-64 with a college degree is 30.1% and of adults 25-34 is 28.2%. Complete College America recommends an annual (compounding) increase of 1,064 additional completers of certificates, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees to help Nevada reach its goal.

	Annual Completers Goal	Minority Goal for Completers of Bachelor's Degrees*	Minority Goal for Completers of Associate's Degrees & Certificates*	Completion Goals by certificate/degree type and institution type				
				Certificate	Associate's	Bachelor's	NSHE	Private
				4.84%	34.63%	60.53%	83.50%	16.50%
2010	12,008			581	4,158	7,269	10,027	1,981
2011**	13,072	36.5%	47.5%	632	4,526	7,913	10,915	2,157
2012	14,136	40.5%	49.1%	684	4,895	8,557	11,804	2,332
2013	15,200	44.2%	53.6%	735	5,263	9,201	12,692	2,508
2014	16,264	47.5%	56.6%	787	5,632	9,845	13,580	2,684
2015	17,328	49.1%	59.0%	838	6,000	10,489	14,469	2,859
2016	18,392	53.6%	61.5%	890	6,369	11,134	15,357	3,035
2017	19,456	56.6%	63.6%	941	6,737	11,778	16,246	3,210
2018	20,520	59.0%	66.5%	993	7,105	12,422	17,134	3,386
2019	21,584	61.5%	69.1%	1,044	7,474	13,066	18,023	3,561
2020	22,648	63.6%	70.6%	1,096	7,842	13,710	18,911	3,737

Notes:

\*Annual minority completion goals based on WICHE projections of high school graduates six years prior to the goal year for bachelor's degree completers and three years prior to the goal year for associate's degree and certificate completers.

\*\*2011 Annual goal of 13,072 based on actual 2010 production plus the increase of 1,064 established by CCA.

## **Student Access/Financial Aid Goal**

Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 1.3

In order to improve the access of all students and to encourage participation in higher education, an amount equal to at least 10 percent of the total registration fee at the community colleges (lower division only) and at least 15 percent of the total registration fee for all other institutions including upper-division at the community colleges, net the amounts distributed to other fee categories, will be dedicated to student financial assistance. These percentages are target amounts that must be achieved by academic year 2022-23.

# Northwest Accreditation

## **Overview of the Seven-Year Accreditation Cycle**

The new accreditation cycle reduces the review process from ten years to seven years. Currently, an institution conducts a comprehensive self study in the last two years of the ten-year cycle. The purpose of the self study is to address all standards at one time. Under the seven-year accreditation cycle, the equivalent effort of the two years of intense self study is amortized over seven years and conducted in progressive stages of institutional self reflection and peer evaluation. Like a dissertation, the institution addresses all standards, but in a more continuous, cumulative manner that builds on its previous findings and regular feedback from peer evaluators and the Board of Commissioners.

In the first stage of the septennial process, the institution prepares a report to address Standard One. Two years later, the institution expands its report on Standard One to include a response to Standard Two. In doing so, it reviews and updates, as necessary, its previous response to Standard One. Two years thereafter the institution expands its report on Standards One and Two to include a response to Standards Three and Four. Once again it reviews and updates, as necessary, its previous response to Standards One and Two. Two years after that, the institution expands its report on Standards One, Two, Three, and Four to include a response to Standard Five. In preparing its report the institution reviews and updates, as necessary, its previous response to Standards One, Two, Three, and Four.

The self-study report, constructed throughout the seven-year cycle is the same as the self-study report produced at the end of the ten-year cycle—a current and comprehensive response to all accreditation standards. However, the seven-year process of cumulative self study ensures the institution's response to previously addressed standards remains current and relevant throughout the accreditation cycle. Moreover, the schedule of events at two-year intervals is intended to reduce substantially, if not eliminate, interim reports and visits which are commonly requested under the current review process.

### **Year One**

In the first year of the new cycle, the institution submits a Year One Report to address Standard One. This initial report establishes the foundation for all subsequent reports and evaluations. There is no visit associated with the Year One Report, but a panel of evaluators reviews the report and prepares a report of findings and a confidential recommendation. The Board of Commissioners considers the institution's report and the evaluator panel's report of findings and confidential recommendation. The Board's action and feedback are provided in writing following the meeting.

### **Year Three**

In the third year of the seven-year cycle, the institution expands its Year One Report to include a response to Standard Two. In doing so, it reviews and updates, as necessary, its response to Standard One to ensure the cumulative Year Three report is current and internally consistent with regard to Standards One and Two. A committee of evaluators conducts an onsite visit to evaluate the institution with regard to Standards One and Two and prepares a report of findings and a confidential recommendation. The Board of Commissioners considers the institution's and the evaluation committee's report of findings and confidential recommendation. Institutional representatives and the chair of the evaluation meet with the Board via audio conferencing when the matter is considered. The Board's action and feedback are provided in writing following the meeting.

### **Year Five**

In the fifth year of the septennial cycle, the institution expands its Year Three Report to include a response to Standards Three and Four. In doing so it reviews and updates, as necessary, its response to Standards One and Two to ensure the cumulative Year Five Report is current and internally consistent with regard to Standards One, Two, Three, and Four. There is no visit associated with the Year Five Report, but a panel of evaluators reviews the report with respect to Standards Three and Four and prepares a report of findings and a confidential recommendation. The Board of Commissioners considers the institution's report and the evaluator panel's report of findings and confidential recommendation. The Board's action and feedback are provided in writing following the meeting.

### **Year Seven**

In the seventh year of the oversight cycle, the institution expands its Year Five Report to include a response to Standard Five. In doing so it reviews and updates, as necessary, its response to Standards One, Two, Three, and Four to ensure the comprehensive Year Seven Report is current and internally consistent on all five standards. A committee of evaluators conducts an onsite visit to evaluate the institution with regard to Standards Three, Four, and Five and prepares a report of findings and a confidential recommendation. The Board of Commissioners considers the institution's report and the evaluation committee's report of findings and confidential recommendation. Institutional representatives and the evaluation committee chair meet with the Board when the matter is considered. The Board's action and feedback are provided in writing following the meeting.

### **Recursion**

In the first year following completion of the seven-year accreditation cycle, the institution begins the cycle anew with the submission of a Year One Report. That report builds upon its continuously updated response to Standard One throughout the previous cycle and its findings in monitoring its environments in response to Standard Five of the Year Seven Report from the prior year. Subsequent reports follow in a similar manner. Thus, the first cycle under the seven-year cycle sets the foundation for a recursive process of monitoring and maintenance designed to enhance continuous improvement and assure quality and effectiveness in a regular ongoing manner, rather than an intermittent episodic manner.

## NWCCU Standards for Accreditation

### Standard One – Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

The institution articulates its purpose in the form of a mission statement and identifies core themes that manifest essential elements of that mission. It defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it identifies an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

#### 1.A Mission

- 1.A.1 The institution has a widely-published mission statement—approved by its governing board—that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.
- 1.A.2 The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

#### 1.B Core Themes

- 1.B.1 The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.
- 1.B.2 The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.

### Standard Two – Resources and Capacity

By documenting the adequacy of its resources and capacity, the institution exhibits the potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered. Through its governance and decision-making structures, the institution establishes, reviews regularly, and revises, as necessary, policies and procedures which promote effective management and operation of the institution.

#### 2.A Governance

- 2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly-defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.
- 2.A.2 In a multi-unit governance system, the division of authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated. System policies, regulations, and procedures concerning the institution are clearly defined and equitably administered.
- 2.A.3 The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission's standards for accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates.

## **Governing Board**

- 2.A.4 The institution has a functioning governing board\* consisting of at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institution. If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board—as they relate to the institution—are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.
- 2.A.5 The board acts only as a committee of the whole; no member or subcommittee of the board acts on behalf of the board except by formal delegation of authority by the governing board as a whole.
- 2.A.6 The board establishes, reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.
- 2.A.7 The board selects and evaluates regularly a chief executive officer who is accountable for the operation of the institution. It delegates authority and responsibility to the CEO to implement and administer board-approved policies related to the operation of the institution.
- 2.A.8 The board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.

## **Leadership and Management**

- 2.A.9 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.
- 2.A.10 The institution employs an appropriately-qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive officer may serve as an *ex officio* member of the governing board, but may not serve as its chair.

\*The terms *board* and *governing board* refer to the institution's governing authority.

- 2.A.11 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### Academics

- 2.A.12 Academic policies—including those related to teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation—are clearly communicated to students and faculty and to administrators and staff with responsibilities related to these areas.
- 2.A.13 Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources—regardless of format, location, and delivery method—are documented, published, and enforced.

- 2.A.14 The institution develops, publishes widely, and follows an effective and clearly-stated transfer-of-credit policy that maintains the integrity of its programs while facilitating efficient mobility of students between institutions in completing their educational programs.

#### Students

- 2.A.15 Policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities—including academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities—are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner.
- 2.A.16 The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Its policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs—including its appeals process and readmission policy—are clearly defined, widely published, and administered in a fair and timely manner.
- 2.A.17 The institution maintains and publishes policies that clearly state its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities, including student publications and other student media, if offered.

#### Human Resources

- 2.A.18 The institution maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures and regularly reviews them to ensure they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to its employees and students.
- 2.A.19 Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.
- 2.A.20 The institution ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records.

#### Institutional Integrity

- 2.A.21 The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.
- 2.A.22 The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution, including its dealings with the public, the Commission, and external organizations, and in the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other constituencies. It ensures complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair and timely manner.



- 2.A.23 The institution adheres to a clearly-defined policy that prohibits conflict of interest on the part of members of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. Even when supported by or affiliated with social, political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. If it requires its constituencies to conform to specific codes of conduct or seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, it gives clear prior notice of such codes and/or policies in its publications.
- 2.A.24 The institution maintains clearly-defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.
- 2.A.25 The institution accurately represents its current accreditation status and avoids speculation on future accreditation actions or status. It uses the terms “accreditation” and “candidacy” (and related terms) only when such status is conferred by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- 2.A.26 If the institution enters into contractual agreements with external entities for products or services performed on its behalf, the scope of work for those products or services—with clearly-defined roles and responsibilities—is stipulated in a written and approved agreement that contains provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. In such cases, the institution ensures the scope of the agreement is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, adheres to institutional policies and procedures, and complies with the Commission’s standards for accreditation.

#### Academic Freedom

- 2.A.27 The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.
- 2.A.28 Within the context of its mission, core themes, and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to examine thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Moreover, they allow others the freedom to do the same.
- 2.A.29 Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs, and opinions are identified as such.

#### Finance

- 2.A.30 The institution has clearly-defined policies, approved by its governing board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.

## **2.B Human Resources**

- 2.B.1 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of the position.
- 2.B.2 Administrators and staff are evaluated regularly with regard to performance of work duties and responsibilities.
- 2.B.3 The institution provides faculty, staff, administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.
- 2.B.4 Consistent with its mission, core themes, programs, services, and characteristics, the institution employs appropriately-qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs, wherever offered and however delivered.
- 2.B.5 Faculty responsibilities and workloads are commensurate with the institution's expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation.
- 2.B.6 All faculty are evaluated in a regular, systematic, substantive, and collegial manner at least once within every five-year period of service. The evaluation process specifies the timeline and criteria by which faculty are evaluated; utilizes multiple indices of effectiveness, each of which is directly related to the faculty member's roles and responsibilities, including evidence of teaching effectiveness for faculty with teaching responsibilities; contains a provision to address concerns that may emerge between regularly scheduled evaluations; and provides for administrative access to all primary evaluation data. Where areas for improvement are identified, the institution works with the faculty member to develop and implement a plan to address identified areas of concern.

## **2.C Education Resources**

- 2.C.1 The institution provides programs, wherever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly-identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.
- 2.C.2 The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.
- 2.C.3 Credit and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, are based on documented student achievement and awarded in a manner consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally-accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education.

- 2.C.4 Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.
- 2.C.5 Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly-defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly-identified learning outcomes.
- 2.C.6 Faculty with teaching responsibilities, in partnership with library and information resources personnel, ensure that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process.
- 2.C.7 Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately-qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.
- 2.C.8 The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students' programs, and integrity of the receiving institution's degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.

### **Undergraduate Programs**

- 2.C.9 The general education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.

- 2.C.10 The institution demonstrates that the general education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.
- 2.C.11 The related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Related instruction components may be embedded within program curricula or taught in blocks of specialized instruction, but each approach must have clearly-identified content and be taught or monitored by teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified in those areas.

### **Graduate Programs**

- 2.C.12 Graduate programs are consistent with the institution's mission; are in keeping with the expectations of their respective disciplines and professions; and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. They differ from undergraduate programs by requiring greater depth of study and increased demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
- 2.C.13 Graduate admission and retention policies ensure that student qualifications and expectations are compatible with the institution's mission and the program's requirements. Transfer of credit is evaluated according to clearly-defined policies by faculty with a major commitment to graduate education or by a representative body of faculty responsible for the degree program at the receiving institution.
- 2.C.14 Graduate credit may be granted for internships, field experiences, and clinical practices that are an integral part of the graduate degree program. Credit toward graduate degrees may not be granted for experiential learning that occurred prior to matriculation into the graduate degree program. Unless the institution structures the graduate learning experience, monitors that learning, and assesses learning achievements, graduate credit is not granted for learning experiences external to the students' formal graduate programs.
- 2.C.15 Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research, professional practice, scholarship, or artistic creation are characterized by a high level of expertise, originality, and critical analysis. Programs intended to prepare students for artistic creation are directed toward developing personal expressions of original concepts, interpretations, imagination, thoughts, or feelings. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research or scholarship are directed toward advancing the frontiers of knowledge by constructing and/or revising theories and creating or applying knowledge. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for professional practice are directed toward developing high levels of knowledge and performance skills directly related to effective practice within the profession.

## **Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs**

- 2.C.16 Credit and non-credit continuing education programs and other special programs are compatible with the institution's mission and goals.
- 2.C.17 The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of its continuing education and special learning programs and courses. Continuing education and/or special learning activities, programs, or courses offered for academic credit are approved by the appropriate institutional body, monitored through established procedures with clearly-defined roles and responsibilities, and assessed with regard to student achievement. Faculty representing the disciplines and fields of work are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of the institution's continuing education and special learning activities.
- 2.C.18 The granting of credit or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for continuing education courses and special learning activities is: a) guided by generally-accepted norms; b) based on institutional mission and policy; c) consistent across the institution, wherever offered and however delivered; d) appropriate to the objectives of the course; and e) determined by student achievement of identified learning outcomes.
- 2.C.19 The institution maintains records which describe the number of courses and nature of learning provided through non-credit instruction.

## **2.D Student Support Resources**

- 2.D.1 Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, the institution creates effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning needs.
- 2.D.2 The institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property at all locations where it offers programs and services. Crime statistics, campus security policies, and other disclosures required under federal and state regulations are made available in accordance with those regulations.
- 2.D.3 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational offerings. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advising about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.
- 2.D.4 In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.

- 2.D.5 The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner reasonably available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes:
- a) Institutional mission and core themes;
  - b) Entrance requirements and procedures;
  - c) Grading policy;
  - d) Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings;
  - e) Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty;
  - f) Rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities;
  - g) Tuition, fees, and other program costs;
  - h) Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment;
  - i) Opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and
  - j) Academic calendar.
- 2.D.6 Publications describing educational programs include accurate information on:
- a) National and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered;
  - b) Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession.
- 2.D.7 The institution adopts and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records, including provision for reliable and retrievable backup of those records, regardless of their form. The institution publishes and follows established policies for confidentiality and release of student records.
- 2.D.8 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.
- 2.D.9 Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institution's loan default rate.
- 2.D.10 The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.
- 2.D.11 Co-curricular activities are consistent with the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services and are governed appropriately.

- 2.D.12 If the institution operates auxiliary services (such as student housing, food service, and bookstore), they support the institution's mission, contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus community, and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for input regarding these services.
- 2.D.13 Intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs (if offered) and related financial operations are consistent with the institution's mission and conducted with appropriate institutional oversight. Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-curricular programs are consistent with those for other students.
- 2.D.14 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

### **2.E Library and Information Resources**

- 2.E.1 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution holds or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered.
- 2.E.2 Planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate library and information resources faculty, staff, and administrators.
- 2.E.3 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others (as appropriate) to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.
- 2.E.4 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, including those provided through cooperative arrangements, wherever offered and however delivered.

### **2.F Financial Resources**

- 2.F.1 The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities.
- 2.F.2 Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations, and other non-tuition revenue sources.

- 2.F.3 The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation by its constituencies.
- 2.F.4 The institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally-accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.
- 2.F.5 Capital budgets reflect the institution's mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans support the institution's mission and goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled, and justified, so as not to create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.
- 2.F.6 The institution defines the financial relationship between its general operations and its auxiliary enterprises, including any use of general operations funds to support auxiliary enterprises or the use of funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.
- 2.F.7 For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit, in a reasonable timeframe, by professionally-qualified personnel in accordance with generally-accepted auditing standards. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered in a timely, appropriate, and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.
- 2.F.8 All institutional fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements. If the institution has a relationship with a fundraising organization that bears its name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission, the institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with that organization.

## **2.G Physical and Technological Infrastructure**

### **Physical Infrastructure**

- 2.G.1 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services.
- 2.G.2 The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.
- 2.G.3 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a master plan for its physical development that is consistent with its mission, core themes, and long-range educational and financial plans.



- 2.G.4 Equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality and managed appropriately to support institutional functions and fulfillment of the institution's mission, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and achievement of goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services.

### **Technological Infrastructure**

- 2.G.5 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.
- 2.G.6 The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.
- 2.G.7 Technological infrastructure planning provides opportunities for input from its technology support staff and constituencies who rely on technology for institutional operations, programs, and services.
- 2.G.8 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a technology update and replacement plan to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services.

### **Standard Three – Planning and Implementation**

The institution engages in ongoing participatory planning that provides direction for the institution and leads to fulfillment of its mission, accomplishment of its core theme objectives, and achievement of the identified goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services. The resulting plans reflect the interdependent nature of its operations, functions, and resources in achieving intended results. The institution demonstrates that its planning and implementation processes are sufficiently flexible to address unexpected circumstances with the potential to impact the institution's capacity to accomplish its core theme objectives and fulfill its mission. It demonstrates that its plans are implemented and influence practice, resource allocation, and application of institutional capacity.

### **3.A Institutional Planning**

- 3.A.1 The institution engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive planning that leads to fulfillment of its mission. Its plans are implemented and made available to appropriate constituencies.
- 3.A.2 The institution's comprehensive planning process is broad-based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies.
- 3.A.3 The institution's comprehensive planning process is informed by the collection of appropriately-defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate fulfillment of its mission.
- 3.A.4 The institution's comprehensive plan articulates priorities and guides decisions on resource allocation and application of institutional capacity.

- 3.A.5 The institution's planning includes emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations should catastrophic events significantly interrupt normal institutional operations.

### **3.B Core Theme Planning**

- 3.B.1 Planning for each core theme is consistent with the institution's comprehensive plan and guides the selection of programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme's objectives.
- 3.B.2 Planning for core theme programs and services guides the selection of contributing components of those programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the respective programs and services.
- 3.B.3 Core theme planning is informed by the collection of appropriately-defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives. Planning for programs and services is informed by the collection of appropriately-defined data that are used to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.

### **Standard Four – Effectiveness and Improvement**

The institution collects data related to clearly-defined indicators of achievement, analyzes those data, and forms evidence-based judgments of achievements of core theme objectives. It regularly and systematically applies clearly-defined evaluation procedures to appraise the relationship of institutional planning, resources, capacity, and practices to the objectives of its core themes; and assesses the extent to which it accomplishes those objectives and achieves the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services. It uses assessment results to effect improvement and disseminates its findings to its constituencies.

### **4.A Assessment**

- 4.A.1 The institution engages in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data—quantitative and/or qualitative, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement—as the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of its core theme objectives.
- 4.A.2 The institution engages in an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly-identified program goals or intended outcomes. Faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.
- 4.A.3 The institution documents, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly-identified learning outcomes.
- 4.A.4 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.

- 4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered.
- 4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.

#### **4.B Improvement**

- 4.B.1 Results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally-identified indicators of achievement; b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision-making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.
- 4.B.2 The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements. Results of student learning assessments are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

#### **Standard Five – Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability**

Based on its definition of mission fulfillment and informed by the results of its analysis of accomplishments of its core theme objectives, the institution develops and publishes evidence-based judgments regarding fulfillment of its mission. The institution regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact its mission and its ability to fulfill that mission. It demonstrates a capability to adapt as necessary its mission, core themes, programs, and services to accommodate changing and emerging needs, trends, and influences to ensure enduring institutional relevancy, productivity, viability, and sustainability.

#### **5.A Mission Fulfillment**

- 5.A.1 The institution engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.
- 5.A.2 Based on its definition of mission fulfillment, the institution uses assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicates its conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public.

#### **5.B Adaptation and Sustainability**

- 5.B.1 Within the context of its mission and characteristics, the institution evaluates regularly the adequacy of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations to document its ongoing potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.
- 5.B.2 The institution documents and evaluates regularly its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results to ensure their adequacy, alignment, and effectiveness. It uses the results of its evaluation to make changes, as necessary, for improvement.

- 5.B.3 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it uses those findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, core themes, core theme objectives, goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement.

# **Institutional Mission Statements**

## **Board Approved**

## UNLV

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas is a research institution committed to rigorous educational programs and the highest standards of a liberal education. We produce accomplished graduates who are well prepared to enter the work force or to continue their education in graduate and professional programs. Our faculty, students, and staff enthusiastically confront the challenges of economic and cultural diversification, urban growth, social justice, and sustainability. Our commitment to our dynamic region and State centrally influences our research and educational programs, which improves our local communities.

Our commitment to the national and international communities ensures that our research and educational programs engage both traditional and innovative areas of study and global concerns. UNLV's distinctive identity and values permeate a unique institution that brings the best of the world to our region and, in turn, produces knowledge to improve the region and world around us.

UNLV is committed to and driven by these shared values that will guide our decision making:

- High expectations for student learning and success;
- Discovery through research, scholarship, and creative activity;
- Nurturing equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment;
- Social, environmental, and economic sustainability;
- Strong, reciprocal, and interdependent relationships between UNLV and the region around us;
- An entrepreneurial, innovative, and unconventional spirit.

## INSTITUTIONAL VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS

**Preamble:** The University of Nevada, Reno was constitutionally established in 1874 as Nevada's land grant university. In that historical role, the University has emerged as a nationally and internationally recognized, comprehensive, doctoral-granting research institution of higher education.

**Vision:** The University of Nevada, Reno is an internationally-respected, high quality, accessible, arts and sciences university, fully engaged with Nevada's citizens, communities, and governments to improve economic and social progress.

**Mission:** The University of Nevada, Reno: a) prepares graduates to compete in a global environment through teaching and learning in high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees in the liberal arts, sciences, and selected professions in agriculture, medicine, engineering, health care, education, journalism, and business, b) creates new knowledge through basic and applied research, scholarship, and artistry, in strategically selected fields relevant to Nevada and the wider world, c) improves economic and social development by engaging Nevada's citizens, communities, and governments, and d) respects and seeks to reflect the gender, ethnic, cultural, and ability/disability diversity of the citizens of Nevada in its academic and support programs, and in the composition of its faculty, administration, staff, and student body.

### **Goals of the University of Nevada, Reno:**

**Goal 1:** Serve as an accessible, comprehensive, doctoral-granting, research university with characteristics of a high-quality liberal arts university and Nevada's land grant university, combining undergraduate and graduate education, fundamental and applied research, and engagement with Nevada's citizens, industry, and governments.

**Goal 2:** Serve Nevada's traditional mining, agricultural, gaming, manufacturing, news, and logistics industries, and the emerging renewable energy resource industries, with professional workforce preparation, modernizing research, and involvement in innovation.

**Goal 3:** Prepare Nevada and Nevadans for the diversified knowledge economy.

**Goal 4:** Cooperate to prepare Nevada youth to participate in the world economy through education.

**Goal 5:** Improve the physical and mental health of Nevadans.

**Goal 6:** Enhance sustainable environmental quality in Nevada.

**Goal 7:** Participate in Intercollegiate Athletics with success in sports competition and success in graduation and character-building of student athletes.

**Goal 8:** Build the University's infrastructure to provide facilities, operations, and policies which enhance the productivity of students and personnel in fulfillment of the University's missions.



NEVADA STATE  
COLLEGE

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 27, 2009  
TO: Board of Regents  
Nevada System of Higher Education  
FROM: President Fred Maryanski  
Nevada State College  
SUBJECT: Nevada State College Mission Statement

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Among the elements of the Nevada State College strategic planning process was a review of the College's mission statement. After substantial discussion of Nevada State's core values and future objectives, it was decided that NSC would be best served by not modifying the mission statement, but rather by focusing upon the full realization of the comprehensive four-year model and fulfilling its expectations as Nevada public baccalaureate institution.

### Nevada State College – Mission Statement

Nevada State College is a comprehensive baccalaureate institution of higher learning. A member college of the Nevada System of Higher Education, Nevada State College is dedicated to providing quality educational, social, cultural, economic, and civic advancement for the citizens of Nevada. Through student-centered learning, Nevada State College emphasizes and values: exceptional teaching, mentoring, and advisement; scholarship; career and personal advancement; continuing education; and service to the community. The College helps address Nevada's need for increased access to higher education for students entering the higher education system and for students transferring from the state's community colleges.

The College offers a wide range of baccalaureate programs and selected masters programs designed to meet the general needs of the State of Nevada and the specific needs of the southern region of the state. Special emphasis is placed on addressing the state's need for effective, highly educated, and skilled teachers and nurses, and commitment is made to developing and promoting partnerships with Nevada's public school system, the state's health care providers, and Nevada's colleges and universities. The curriculum of Nevada State College will be based upon the community's needs, the needs of business and industry, and the desires and demands of the students.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



## Mission Statement

The College of Southern Nevada creates opportunities and changes lives through access to quality teaching, services, and experiences that enrich our diverse community.

## Vision Statement

The College of Southern Nevada is a premier learning institution:

- Promoting student success through excellence in teaching and learning,
- Providing a highly educated, civically engaged, and skilled workforce,
- Using innovative technology and available resources effectively,
- Increasing alternative funding sources,
- Acting environmentally responsible, and
- Emphasizing fact-based decision-making and accountability to all stakeholders.

## Values Statement

The College of Southern Nevada strives for high quality in all endeavors. We value:

- Learning – quality teaching, flexible scheduling, and total access allowing opportunities for all ages and backgrounds for student success;
- Shared Governance – communication across multiple campus sites among our faculty, staff, and students, and with local partnerships and state communities;
- Students – a student focused environment where academic freedom is utilized to broaden student knowledge beyond the classroom; and
- Community – a diverse community, fostering integrity and honesty, professional development, and innovative learning for our students, faculty, and staff.

## GREAT BASIN COLLEGE MISSION

Treating everyone we encounter with dignity and respect, Great Basin College provides superior, student-centered, post-secondary education in rural Nevada.

### Commitment Statement

As an institution of the Nevada System of Higher Education, Great Basin College is committed to responding to the programmatic needs of our service area by providing opportunities in university transfer, applied science and technology, business and industry partnerships, developmental education, community service and student support service in associate and baccalaureate programs. We do so by:

- Effectively addressing the ever-evolving and often disparate needs of our students — career seeking/enhancing, degree seeking, and casual — by means of innovative practices, services, and technologies, resourcefulness, insight, and foresight, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Promoting the mutual enrichment, ongoing development, and collegiality of our faculty, staff, and administration toward the pursuit of excellence, while maintaining the personal, accessible presence of a real community college.
- Attuning with and anticipating the needs of business, industry, and government entities in our service area and tailoring our academic programs to serve them well both now and in the future by matriculating students who are competent and confident, able and willing to enter the workforce, step up in the workforce, or pursue a higher degree.
- Continually seeking improved methods and technologies for delivering education at a distance, across our rural 62,000 square mile service area.
- Celebrating the rich and unique history of our region and its indigenous peoples while also cultivating appreciation of the diversity among us, in the region and the world, during the present day, so that that after they complete their time with us, our students are prepared to actively participate as members of the global community.
- Fostering awareness of our physical, natural environment for the benefit, enrichment, and edification of future generations.
- Offering cultural enrichment opportunities — performances, lectures, concerts, exhibits, and the like — for communities in our service area.
- Making responsible, resourceful, and worthwhile use of our funding and honoring the objectives and intentions of its sources.

**Strategic Plan Steering Committee, November 24, 2008**

## **Truckee Meadows Community College**

### **Vision**

Truckee Meadows Community College creates the future by changing lives.

### **Mission**

Truckee Meadows Community College promotes student success, academic excellence and access to lifelong learning by delivering high quality education and services to our diverse communities.

### **Values**

The values upon which Truckee Meadows Community College bases its mission and vision statements are the principles, standards and qualities the college considers worthwhile and desirable. Truckee Meadows Community College is committed to:

- Student access and success
- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Evidence of student progress through **assessment of student outcomes**
- Nurturing a climate of innovative and creative thought
- Collaborative decision making
- Community development through partnerships and services
- Ethical practices and integrity
- Respect, compassion, and equality for all persons
- Responsible and sustainable use of resources
- Fostering attitudes that exemplify responsible participation in a democratic society

## **Section I: Standard 1.A (Northwest Commission Colleges and Universities Year One Report)**

### **Mission Statement**

Truckee Meadows Community College promotes student success, academic excellence and access to lifelong learning by delivering high-quality education and services to our diverse communities.

TMCC's mission statement embodies three core themes: Student Success, Academic Excellence, and Access to Lifelong Learning.

### **Interpretation of Fulfillment of the Institution's Mission**

TMCC's mission is aspirational. Student success defines our purpose, and we recognize that as long as any of our students is unsuccessful or any of our programs falls below the threshold of excellence, we must improve. We aspire to meet the diverse needs of all of our students, and our mission is the manifestation of a continuing challenge rather than a static position.

TMCC's core themes are mission-based institutional goals and are operationalized using strategic initiatives and measured with indicators of achievement. Benchmarked indicators provide desired outputs which are used to evaluate annual performance of the college's objectives, core themes and degree of mission fulfillment.

**Articulation of an Acceptable Threshold or Extent of Mission Fulfillment**

TMCC has established a series of benchmark goals in key performance areas. We define acceptable progress as meeting or exceeding these benchmarks by the date indicated, with the understanding that whenever one goal is achieved, a higher standard will be set as our next goal.

Each year TMCC evaluates its institutional performance relative to agreed-upon performance benchmarks. These benchmarks are the core indicators of achievement. Annual achievement of these performance benchmarks constitutes an acceptable threshold of mission fulfillment.

## **Western Nevada College**

### **Mission Statement**

Western Nevada College inspires success in our community through opportunities that cultivate creativity, intellectual growth and technological excellence, in an environment that nurtures individual potential and respects differences.

### **College Goals**

1. Improve student success in program completion and graduation rates
2. Ensure institutional excellence in teaching, programs and services
3. Embrace our college's many communities and respond to their diverse needs.