

NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
Focused Report
Response to Findings of the Off-site Review Committee

Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1

* **3.3.1** The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas (**Institutional Effectiveness**):

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

Non-Compliance

NWFSC has established a uniform template for instructional program reviews that are conducted on a three-year cycle. Instructional program reviews include enrollment data, faculty ratios by full-time and part-time instruction, overall pass rates, and graduation or completion data. Applied Science, Baccalaureate, and General Education departments are all included in the three-year program review cycle. Program Accountability Plans outline program goals and outcomes assessment, including student learning outcomes. Program Review Summaries provide results of assessment and the use of assessment results for continuous improvement. Although the Distance Learning Department was evaluated in 2005, distance education courses or programs were not addressed as part of program reviews in the compliance certification documentation. Also, the institution did not provide examples of student learning outcomes at the course level. The institution should provide examples of student outcomes, assessment of the extent to which the institution achieves these outcomes, and use of outcomes for improvement.

Northwest Florida State College Response

At Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC), distance learning is not viewed as a program in itself, but rather as one of several delivery options. Accordingly, instruction provided in this non-traditional format, including both program- and course-level outcomes, is developed, evaluated, and analyzed in the appropriate academic department. Expected student- and course-level outcomes for the traditional format of a course and the distance learning format of a course are identical.

There is no separate academic department or organizational unit charged with responsibility for the outcomes associated with courses offered in the distance learning format. However, in an arrangement much like tutorial services, NWFSC faculty and

students enjoy technical support services through the organizational unit entitled Learning Technologies (LTech), which, until 2006, was called Distance Learning/Instructional Technology.

Distance Learning/LTech Services Evaluation and Accountability

Prior to 2008, support and service functions such as the Learning Resource Center, Student Activities, and the Academic Success Center were evaluated on a rotating schedule every five years. In 2008, however, all functions were moved to a three-year cycle to match the instructional departments and program areas; units previously on the five-year cycle were folded into the three-year cycle as their regular program reviews came up in the former system. Accordingly, the support services provided by LTech, previously reviewed with 2005 data, were due for the next review in 2009-10. That review ([11]), which addresses the elements of the LTech Accountability Plan ([2]), was completed, reported to the Board of Trustees ([3]), and posted on the college's institutional effectiveness website ([4]) on schedule. At the same time, LTech was incorporated into the three-year rotation and is scheduled for review again in 2012-2013 with all other programs and services that were evaluated in 2009-10 ([5]). Per the college's "Institutional Effectiveness Guide" ([6]), follow-up to the recommendations for improvement identified in the 2009-10 LTech review will be tracked, with initial progress reported in 2011-2012.

In addition to this comprehensive review, student performance in distance learning classes is reported each year as the fourth measure among the college's twenty-one Institutional Effectiveness Measures ([7], [8]). Further, the LTech unit prepares term-by-term reports ([9]) that are shared periodically with the Curriculum Committee, the Distance Learning/Learning Technologies Committee, and the VPI Staff ([10], [11]). To facilitate access by the instructional departments, these reports are also posted on the LTech website ([12]).

Student and Course Level Outcomes for Classes offered via Distance Learning Format

It is the philosophy and practice at NWFSC that students enrolled in classes offered in distance-learning format should encounter learning experiences that are the same as or equivalent to those in the traditional class setting. This approach encourages consistency across all sections of a course and helps ensure students attain comparable mastery of learning objectives, regardless of the delivery method. The expected student learning outcomes and course outcomes for all formats of a given course are the same. Course planning and development procedures clearly establish this standard ([13], [14], [15], [16], [17]). Accordingly, data regarding student- and course-level outcomes for all formats of a given course are collected, monitored,

and targeted for improvement by the subject area experts in the appropriate instructional department. Assessment data is collected and reviewed by term during the academic year ([18]) and reported every three years as part of the regular program review process ([19]).

The college also recognizes the special challenges the distance learning format places on students and faculty. Accordingly, the college has established specific assessment strategies related to both online and text-based distance learning classes. These strategies are designed to help ensure that outcomes for distance learning classes meet the same standards established for their counterpart traditional classes. Where the only delivery format offered for a given class is distance learning, the strategies help ensure the course meets the breadth, depth, and rigor expected of all NWFSC college-level coursework.

- 1) The accountability plan for each program of study ([20]) includes the following standard outcome.

The student success rates¹ for any courses in this program taught via distance learning will meet or exceed the student success rate for the traditional versions of those courses.

- 2) LTech produces reports each term that provide:

- a) comparisons of student success rates for distance learning students in prerequisite and subsequent courses, and
- b) comparisons of student success rates in distance learning classes and success rates in the counterpart traditional course.

- 3) A course evaluation form ([21], [22]) is prepared for each distance learning course offered in a given department/program as part of the program review process ([23]).

Using Assessment Results For Improvement

Under the college's closed-loop evaluation system, assessment results are used to foster improvement. The following examples indicate how the college has used the program review for LTech and the results of student outcomes in distance learning classes to enhance college services and improve student learning.

¹ NWFSC defines student success as [Total number of A, B, and C grades given to the students] divided by [Total number of students appearing on the final grade roster(s) for the period (students receiving grades of A, B, C, D, F, I, or W, exclusive of WN's – no shows)]

- The 2005-06 review of Distance Learning/LTech Services included a recommendation to increase and enhance opportunities for faculty training and development. Three strategies have been implemented in response: 1) open lab time for faculty development is held each Friday in the LTech/distance learning lab; 2) tutorials in D2L (the college's distance learning platform) and mini-workshops in teaching blended classes and using various software applications are available online through the LTech website; and 3) just-in-time, individualized training sessions with LTech staff are available in the faculty member's office by appointment.
- The 2007-08 program review for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program ([241]📄) included a recommendation to enhance support for distance learning courses and for the nursing research course in particular. In response, a unique arrangement called the "embedded librarian" was added to NUR 4165, Evidence-Based Practice: Incorporating Nursing Research, which offers students direct support for their research-related questions.
- A comparison of student success rates and mastery of student learning objectives in the distance learning and traditional offerings of ACG 2001 Accounting I revealed a difference of as much as 37.5 percentage points in the fall of 2006 and 20.5 percentage points in the fall of 2008. To help reduce that gap, additional practice exercises and improved integration of "My Accounting Lab" were incorporated into the online version of the class([251]📄). In addition, tutorial assistance in accounting was made available free to students through the online tutorial software, *Smarthinking*. By the fall of 2009, the gap had been reduced to 3.7 percentage points ([261]📄).

Documentation

Due to the volume of support documentation and upon the advice of the SACS Staff Representative, hardcopies of all supporting documentation will be provided on site. Electronic copies are available on the enclosed flash drive and on-line at www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/

[1] Program Review Learning Technologies, 2009-2010	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/1-FinalProgramReview.pdf
[2] Learning and Outcomes-Learning Technologies	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/2-ProgramGoalsandOutcomes-LTech.pdf
[3] Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 03-16-2010	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/3-BOTMinutes-March 2010.pdf
[4] Institutional Effectiveness Website-2010	http://www.nwfsc.edu/IE/2010.cfm

[5] Program Review Schedule Chart	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/5-Program-UnitReviewSchedule2009-2013.pdf
[6] Institutional Effectiveness Guide, pp. 31 and 32	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/6-InstitutionalEffectivenessGuidePg31-32.pdf
[7] Institutional Effectiveness Measures 2009	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/7-InstitutionalEffectReport-2008-2009.pdf
[8] Institutional Report Card-2008-2009	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/8-InstitutionalReportCard-2008-09.pdf
[9] Learning Technologies Semester Reports, Spring 2009 and Fall 2009	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/9-LTECHReportsSpring2009-Fall2009.pdf
[10] Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes 03-10-2009	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus documents/10-CurriculumCommittee03-10-2009.pdf
[11] Vice President of Instruction Staff Minutes 09-01-2009	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/11-VPIstaffminutes-09-01-2009.pdf
[12] Learning Technologies Website-Best Practices and Research	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/12-LTECHBestPracticesWeb.pdf
[13] Curriculum Procedures and Guidelines, p. 18	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus documents/13-Curriculum-GuidePg18.pdf
[14] Distance Learning Faculty Handbook, p. 7	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/14-DLFacultyHandbookPg7.pdf
[15] Curriculum Procedures and Guidelines, pp. 34 and 35	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus documents/15-CurriculumGuidePg34-35.pdf
[16] Steps for Implementing Alternate Delivery Classes	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/16-StepsforImplementingAlternativeDeliveryClass.pdf
[17] Faculty Qualifications Chart, p. 24	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/focus documents/17-FacultyQualificationsChart3-18-10Pg24.pdf
[18] Student Learning Outcomes Data Forms Samples	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/18-AthleticsEmergencyNursing.pdf
[19] Program Review Samples	http://www.nwfsc.edu/sacs/Focus Documents/19-ProgramReview-EarlyChildhood-EMTParamedic-Physical Sciences.pdf
[20] Program Accountability Plan, pp. 4-160	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus documents/20-ProgramAccountabilityPlanPg4-160.pdf
[21] Distance Learning Course Evaluations-Long and Short Format	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus%20Documents/21-DistanceLearningReview-LongAndShortForm.pdf
[22] Distance Learning Course Evaluation Text-based Format	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/22-NWFDLProgReviewTextbased-Revised7-6-2010AHS.pdf

[23] Distance Learning Course Evaluation Forms	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/23-DistanceLearningCourseReviews.pdf
[24] Program Review Summaries, 2007- 2008	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/24-Program-Review-Summaries2007-08-2columnforSACS-1-10.pdf
[25] Program Review Follow-up, 2008-2009	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/25-2008-09ProgReviewFollow-up-forBOTfinal3-2-101.pdf
[26] Learning Technologies Semester Reports, Fall 2009, p. 7	http://www.nwfsc.edu/SACS/Focus Documents/26-Fall2009LTechreportPg7.pdf