



# News Release

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## **NMCC earns continued accreditation through NEASC; College commended for developing mission as a comprehensive community college**

*Aroostook County* - Following a comprehensive evaluation that culminated with a formal review visit a year ago, Northern Maine Community College has been approved for continued accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE). Notification to the institution included positive commendation in several areas.

“Northern Maine Community College is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the Standards for Accreditation. We commend the institution for its continued progress in developing its mission as a comprehensive community college, especially in the expansion and promotion of the liberal arts,” wrote CIHE Chair Elsa Nunez.

The positive report follows a two-year process that began on the NMCC campus in early 2007 with the naming of faculty members Betty Kent-Conant, chair of the nursing and allied health department, and Ron Fitzgerald, chair of the arts and sciences department, to co-chair work on a 100-page self study. The report examined eleven areas on campus, or standards identified by CIHE, including mission and purpose; academic programs; faculty; students; human, physical and fiscal support for the institution; integrity; and public disclosure.

“The process used in this preparation involved most of the personnel of the college - administration, faculty, staff, and students - who were assigned to committees which were co-chaired by members from all parts of the campus family,” said Kent-Conant. “It served as a great opportunity for getting people together to work on a common project; the work reflected a variety of perspectives and has heightened an awareness of how all departments and/or employees perceive and experience their daily work and responsibility meeting the standards for accreditation on a daily basis.”

Last March, following the authoring of the self-study, NMCC welcomed a visiting team of administrators and faculty from institutions from throughout New England similar to the Presque Isle college. The team was led by Dr. Katherine Eneguess, president of New Hampshire Community Technical College in Berlin, New Hampshire.

“The accreditation process forces institutions to take a look at what they are doing, how well they are doing it and what they can do to make it better. If we don't take a look at what we are doing and how well we are doing it, I think that it is impossible to improve. This process also makes one realize the many excellent things the institution is doing and how they are benefiting the students and communities we serve,” said Fitzgerald.

Student and community service were among the two areas noted by the commission as particular strengths of the NMCC campus community. In both the visiting team analysis and in the letter to the College by CIHE, work in these two areas was commended.

“We take favorable note of the College’s success in developing learning partnerships with other colleges and universities in the region. The College has established an effective academic success center, and faculty and staff are clearly committed to student success. The College is equally committed to service to the region and the regard in which the institution is held in the region is evidenced in a concrete way by the College’s success in fundraising. We concur with the visiting team that the College’s planning processes are exemplary and, under the leadership of the president and his team, provide a strong foundation for future development,” wrote Nunez in her letter on behalf of CIHE.

The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education is one of eight accrediting commissions in the United States that provide institutional accreditation on a regional basis. Accreditation is voluntary and applies to the institution as a whole. The Commission, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, accredits approximately 200 institutions in the six-state New England Region.

Northern Maine Community has been accredited by NEASC since 1975, first through the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions and now through the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The College gained candidacy status under CIHE in April 2001 after a successful site visit the previous fall.

A second NEASC site team visited the College in March of 2003 to assess the institution’s readiness to move to full accreditation. After a favorable site visit, full accreditation status was granted later that year. The March 2008 visit marked the College’s first full evaluation since achieving NEASC accreditation under CIHE six years ago.

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