

# **St. Norbert College**

## **Proposed Self Study Plan**

### **Site Visit - Fall, 2011**

This document outlines a plan by which St. Norbert College will conduct a self-study as an essential element of the College's request for continuing accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The proposed plan includes self-study goals, guiding principles by which the self-study will be conducted, a proposed timeline of activities and events essential to completion of the self-study, and roles and responsibilities as currently assigned. The proposed plan has been written and endorsed by the Self-Study Steering Committee and endorsed by the President of St. Norbert College and the Vice Presidents of all six College Divisions (Academic Affairs, Business and Finance, College Advancement, Enrollment Management and Communication, Mission and Heritage, Student Affairs). The plan provides an effective strategy for accomplishing the stated goals, but will likely be updated as the process progresses.

### **Goals**

The self-study process is designed to achieve the following goals:

- Assess St. Norbert College's effectiveness in meeting its mission in every program and at every level.
- Use the accreditation criteria and core components to analyze the College's strengths and weaknesses based on quantitative and qualitative data.
- Inform the College's vision for the future and initiate the next college-wide strategic planning process.
- Demonstrate that St. Norbert College has addressed the concerns raised by the last team of consultant/evaluators.
- Use the findings from the self-study to initiate strategies and processes to improve St. Norbert College.

## **Principles**

The self-study will be carried out based on the following principles. The self-study process will:

- focus on St. Norbert College as a whole
- reflect the College's unique mission and heritage
- evaluate and assess, rather than simply describe the College
- employ multiple measures to evaluate performance
- ensure widespread participation by all constituencies
- maintain frequent communication with all stakeholders
- serve as a catalyst for excellence at St. Norbert College

## **Methods**

From the very beginning, our process will be evidence-based, evaluative, and proactive. Our process begins by collecting and evaluating existing evidence. Additional fact-finding focusing on areas where evidence of compliance is weak or limited will extend immediately to the entire campus community. St. Norbert College has collected extensive assessment and program review data since our last review. The Steering Committee will analyze these and other quantitative and qualitative indicators and solicit both formative and evaluative input from academic, student affairs, and mission & heritage programs, standing committees, governance bodies, campus organizations, and external constituencies as appropriate throughout the two-year self-study process. Our process will be iterative in practice, as evidence-based conclusions are proactively transformed into institutional "opportunities for improvement." As a result of the self-study process outlined below, HLC Consultant/Evaluators will visit campus at a time when the first steps toward institutional improvement will have already been taken.

## **Proposed Timeline**

### **July, 2005-August, 2008 Pre-Planning**

- Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness meets with the President's Cabinet in a series of summer retreats to review all accreditation criteria and assemble preliminary evidence.
- Evidence is organized by criterion, core component, and examples of evidence and posted on the web for easy access (This site will become the electronic evidence room).

### **September, 2008-April, 2009 Preparation**

- Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness named Self-Study Chair by President Kunkel.
- Six member Self-Study Steering Committee identified and announced to the St. Norbert College Community. The Steering Committee is made up of 5 Criterion Chairs plus the overall Self-Study Chair and includes representatives from four of the College's six divisions.
- Technology and communications support personnel for the Self-Study are identified.
- A tentative three-year Self-Study Schedule is published in Assessment News.
- Self-Study Chair meets with each of the three academic divisions.
- Self-Study Steering Committee hold an organizational meeting.
- Senior Administrators Thomas Kunkel, President; Michael Marsden, Dean of the College and Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Mary Oling-Sisay, Vice president for Student Affairs and Dean of Students; and all members of the Self-Study Steering Committee attend Pre-Conference Self-Study Workshop and HLC Annual Meeting in Chicago.

### **May, 2009 – September, 2009 Initial Audit**

- Steering Committee outlines draft Self-Study Plan.
- Criterion Chairs review existing evidence and construct a preliminary assessment of the College's degree of compliance/quality of evidence.
- Analysis shared with President's Cabinet during a joint summer retreat. Initial consensus achieved. Subsequent steps will focus on a) confirmation of College's strengths and weaknesses by its many constituencies, and b) proactively pursuing opportunities for improvement.
- Self-Study Plan finalized and sent to HLC for approval.

### **October, 2009 – December, 2009 Targeted Data Collection (additional)**

- Additional evidence/analysis requested from targeted units/programs (drawn from all College divisions and constituencies) for core components deemed "not in compliance" or where there appears to be weak evidence of compliance.
- Meetings with key program personnel scheduled as needed.
- Initial assessment revised by the Criterion Chairs using the evidence/information supplied by targeted units/programs.
- Electronic evidence room updated (continuous throughout this process).
- Criterion Writing Team functions defined. Writing Teams will be chaired by a Criterion Chair and include 2-3 additional "experts" who will review evidence and help draft the report chapters.
- Criterion Chairs in consultation with Self-Study Chair identify Writing Teams broadly representative of all campus constituencies.

### **January, 2010 – April, 2010 - Community Forums**

- Forums with electronic feedback options will be held to a) introduce the Criterion and Core Components, b) share the Criterion Chair's analysis of SNC's compliance and identified opportunities for improvement, and c) solicit feedback on the analysis.
- Timely information supporting the forums will be communicated via *Assessment News*, e.g. 5 one page issues with the Criterion, Core Components, and Examples of Evidence on one side and the Criterion Chair's analysis on the reverse.
- Additional presentations/discussions will be held with select groups (e.g. Board of Trustees, Alumni Association).
- Based on Community Feedback, the Criterion Chairs will further revise their assessments.
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will publish a comprehensive study of Mission Effectiveness based on AAC&U's framework.
- Revised assessments and data-based findings regarding Mission Effectiveness streamed into Strategic Planning Process.
- Self-Study Chair, Criterion Chairs, and select members of the Writing Teams will attend the HLC Annual Meeting in Chicago.

### **Summer, 2010-January, 2011 Preparation of Draft Report**

- Draft chapters written.
- Draft chapters circulated widely for comment among SNC constituencies. Discussions in Academic Division Meetings, Core Leadership Meeting(s), Hourly Association Meeting(s), Salaried Association Meeting(s).
- Third Party Commentary process initiated.

### **February, 2011 – March, 2011 Synthesis and First Proactive Steps**

- Chapters revised based on constituent feedback.
- Co-sponsored by the Strategic Planning Committee, Open Community Brainstorming Sessions will be held focusing on "Opportunities for Improvement".
- Best ideas will be fed into Strategic Planning Process.

### **April, 2011 – September, 2011 Final Preparation**

- HLC Liaison and resident consultant/evaluators invited to campus to review and critique draft report.
- Final drafts submitted to Office of Communication for production.
- Electronic evidence room finalized.
- Required documents and final Self-Study Report published and sent to HLC site visit team.
- All logistical arrangements finalized.

## **Fall, 2011 – May, 2012 The Site Visit and After**

- Prepare SNC Community for site visit.
- Host the team.
- Exit report by HLC Team
- Submit draft Site Team Report to SNC for correction of errors of fact.
- Final Site Team Report sent to Reader's Panel or Review Committee.
- HLC notifies SNC of final action.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Self-Study Steering Committee**

- Self-Study Chair: Dr. Robert A. Rutter, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Professor of Education
- Criterion #1 Chair: Ms. Julie D. Massey, Director of Faith, Learning, and Vocation, and Campus Ministry
- Criterion #2 Chair: Mr. Curtis J. Kowaleski, Director of Finance
- Criterion #3 Chair: Dr. Stephen T. Correia, Associate Professor of Education
- Criterion #4 Chair: Dr. Linda Beane-Katner, Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures and Director of Faculty Development
- Criterion #5 Chair: Dr. Mary Oling-Sisay, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
- Clerical Support: Ms. Patricia A. Wery, Administrative Secretary, Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- Communications Support: Mr. Drew Van Fossen, Director of Communication and Design
- Technology Support: Ms. Michelle M. Manke, Documentation and Training Specialist

### **Charge and Expectations of Steering Committee Members**

- Participate in HLC workshops and Annual Meetings.
- Become experts on the HLC Accreditation Criteria and Core Components.
- Design and help direct the self-study process.
- Conduct an initial audit of existing evidence.
- Identify programs, committees, and units that can support and provide input into the self-study process, especially as it relates to the assigned criterion.
- Promote maximum participation by the SNC Community.
- Synthesize evidence and perspectives from all College constituencies.
- Identify, organize, and analyze data and other evidence of institutional strengths and challenges.
- Facilitate relevant meetings and forums, make presentations as needed, and communicate frequently with all campus constituencies.

- Recruit “expert” Writing Teams and coordinate writing of draft chapters.
- Assume responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the assigned chapter, or in the case of the Self-Study Chair, the entire report.
- The Self-Study Chair will serve as the principle liaison with HLC and will coordinate all arrangement before and during the site visit.
- Help prepare the community for the site visit.
- Meet with and provide assistance to the HLC Site visit Team

## **Working Report Outline**

### ST. NORBERT COLLEGE SELF-STUDY REPORT

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## Summary

Our self-study plan reflects best practices as outlined in the HLC Handbook of Accreditation (Chapter 5.2). Specifically, our process a) reflects the distinctive nature of St. Norbert College by honoring our commitment to *communion* through wide consultation and a collaborative process, b) is likely to achieve its stated goals, c) ensures evaluation of the whole organization, d) will identify opportunities for improvement and impact the College beyond the Commission visit, e) extends to every constituency and institutional stakeholder, e) draws and builds upon ongoing self-evaluation processes, f) has strong support and engagement by President Kunkel and the President's Cabinet, g) draws on the expertise of leaders throughout the institution, h) incorporates frequent and broad-based communication, i) documents evidence of compliance, j) produces a report that meets the Commission's needs, and k) demonstrates St. Norbert College's commitment to peer review.