

Chapter 1

History and Profile

Overview

Minnesota West Community and Technical College (hereafter referred to as Minnesota West) is Minnesota's newest merged comprehensive two-year institution of higher education. It is a family of five campuses in a geographical area that comprises 19 southwestern Minnesota counties. The geographical distances between campuses and each campus's unique community, history, traditions, philosophies, and cultures, also distinguish Minnesota West from all other colleges in the state.

Several publicly supported liberal arts and technical colleges were merged in Minnesota in the 1990s, but unlike Minnesota West, all of them were either co-located or closely located. With a combined surface area of more than 20,500 square miles, Minnesota West's territory exceeds that of every New England state except Maine (the combined areas of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island is only about 14,000 square miles; that of New Hampshire and Vermont is only about 18,000 square miles). The shortest route from Granite Falls to Canby is approximately 40 miles, from Canby to Pipestone is 50 miles, from Pipestone to Worthington is 60 miles, from Worthington to Jackson is 30 miles, and from Jackson to Granite Falls is 120 miles.

Because of their geographical proximity, most of Minnesota's other merged two-year colleges had long-standing relationships previous to their merging. With the exception of the Jackson and Worthington campuses, which began cooperating in some associate degree programs in the late 1980s, the campuses involved in the Minnesota West merger were relatively isolated from each other. Even though Minnesota West's four technical campuses were merged

administratively as Southwestern Technical College in 1985, the four individual technical campuses continued to function with relative autonomy and compete with each other for students until they became part of Minnesota West.

Liberal Arts Education

The oldest institution in the Minnesota West family began admitting students as Worthington Junior College in 1936. Worthington Independent School District 518 established the two-year liberal arts college, and it was accredited by the Minnesota Department of Education. The institution continued this accreditation until 1973, when the Worthington campus received its first accreditation from North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). Worthington Junior College became Worthington State Junior College on July 1, 1964, when it affiliated with the Minnesota State Junior College System. In 1974, that system changed its name to Minnesota Community College System and Worthington State Junior College became Worthington Community College.

The Worthington campus of Minnesota West is located in the northwest corner of Worthington on the north shore of Okabena Lake. The Worthington community is in the center of Nobles County and has a population of nearly 11,300 citizens. In the past decade, Worthington has become the third most racially and ethnically diverse communities in Minnesota, the most diverse outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.¹ In addition to agriculture, the community's major industries include food processing, manufacturing of mobile homes and plastic products, and research and development of veterinary medicines. The Worthington campus provides and oversees most liberal arts courses for all of the campuses of Minnesota West Community and Technical College via interactive television and online courses.

¹ *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 5, 2001.

Technical Education

Technical education campuses of Minnesota West are at Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, and Pipestone, Minnesota. On July 1, 1985, these campuses, which until then had operated under the jurisdiction of local K-12 public school districts, were consolidated to form one regional technical college. Southwestern Technical College (STC) was officially created on July 1, 1985, and became part of the Minnesota Technical College System. STC received its first NCA accreditation in August 1991.

Also in 1991, the Minnesota Legislature passed legislation mandating that the Minnesota State University System, the Minnesota Community College System, and the Minnesota Technical College System merge by July 1, 1995. A new agency, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), was the result of that three-way merger. On January 1, 1997, again by order of the Minnesota Legislature, Worthington Community College and Southwestern Technical College merged to become Minnesota West Community and Technical College, a single, comprehensive two-year college.

The Canby campus of Minnesota West Community and Technical College was founded in 1965 and is located in western Yellow Medicine County. The Canby community has a population of about 1,900 citizens. Manufacturing, health care, wholesale and retail trade, education, government, and services account for the non-agricultural employment in the area. The Canby campus offers programs in automotive technology, diesel technology, dental, electrical, graphic arts, printing, and soil and water conservation.

The Granite Falls campus of Minnesota West was also established in 1965. The campus serves eastern Yellow Medicine County. The population of Granite Falls is approximately 3,100 citizens. Primary industries in the region are agriculture and light manufacturing. The Granite

Falls campus offers programs in robotics, fluid power, machine tool operations, business, computer technology, auto body technology, mechanical technology, plant processing, and childcare.

The Jackson campus of Minnesota West is located on the west edge of Jackson, a community of approximately 3,500 citizens in eastern Jackson County, another primarily agricultural area. The Jackson campus, established in 1964, was the seventeenth post-secondary vocational school in Minnesota. New buildings were added to the facility in 1965 and 1975. Jackson campus programs include accounting, administrative assistant, aviation, automotive technology, business, computer aided drafting, computer engineering technology, computer networking specialist, electrical utility technician, heating-ventilation-air conditioning technology, telecommunications, power line, farm business management, and emergency medical services.

Minnesota West's Pipestone campus was built on the site of the former Pipestone Indian Vocational School, which was established on February 2, 1893. That institution provided vocational training to Native American students until 1958, when the campus, which comprised some 56 buildings, was closed. (Three of those buildings were used by Pipestone technical college and remain in use by Minnesota West.) In 1957, the federal government ceded the property to Pipestone, a community of about 4,300 citizens in central Pipestone County. The Pipestone Area Vocational-Technical Institute enrolled its first students at the site in 1967. Currently, Minnesota West's Pipestone campus programs include business, carpentry, plumbing, cosmetology, truck driving, meat merchandizing, practical nursing, and medical laboratory technology.

Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates

Minnesota West currently provides developmental and lower-division college instruction in academic programs, occupational programs that involve a liberal arts component, and technical programs. It awards associate in arts (AA), associate in science (AS), and associate in applied science degrees (AAS) as well as one-year, eighteen-month and two-year diplomas and technical training certificates that can be completed in less than two semesters. The college also awards associate degrees in nursing (ADN) at the Worthington campus and diplomas in practical nursing at both Worthington and Pipestone. Minnesota West also provides hour-based instructional programs, continuing education units, customized training, teleconferences, online courses, and management programs to respond to community and regional needs.

In addition to traditional on-campus classes, Minnesota West offers farm business management and small business management (FBM/SBM) courses off campus and courses via interactive television (ITV) to all of its campuses. FBM/SBM programs include mentoring programs and off-site classes for credit. Each Minnesota West campus has its own ITV studios, which are connected through the Minnesota Network. The network was established to provide interactive television services to state higher education institutions. The network first became operational in southwestern Minnesota in January 1995.

Minnesota West also began offering Internet courses in 1999. The first of those courses was in accounting. In 2000-2001, Minnesota West offered seven courses online and was actively developing several others.

Enrollment

Enrollment at Minnesota West held steady or slightly increased each year during the 1990s. Full-time enrollment now averages almost 2,100 students per year, with a head count that

exceeds 5,000 students per year. Most Minnesota West students are local, but some international students also enroll each year. Although the vast majority of students are Caucasian (89 percent), the percentage of non-white students grows annually as local industries expand their hiring base. Minority populations are primarily Hispanic and Southeast Asian, although Native American and African populations also are increasing.

More than one-third (38 percent) of Minnesota West students are traditional (18-21 years old) and 62 percent are non-traditional (22 and older). In the fall of 2000, FTE was 1,916.67 and head count in credit courses was 3,289. Of those students,

60 percent attended college part time

44 percent were women

49 percent were aged 25 or over

3 percent were non-Caucasian

Many students entering Minnesota West require developmental courses to improve basic reading, writing or math skills. In fall 2000, cut scores for student entrance examinations showed that

90 percent needed one or more developmental math courses

35 percent needed one or more developmental reading courses

51 percent needed one or more developmental writing courses

When Minnesota West students who take non-credit courses were added to the total, the headcount for fall 2000 was 5,310. Noncredit bearing courses are offered exclusively by Customized Training Services (CTS).

Self-Study History

The self-study process for the merged campuses of Minnesota West has been nearly continuous since 1991, the year that Southwestern Technical College (STC) first received accreditation from NCA. In November 1993, STC underwent an NCA focused visit on libraries and general education, two services that were developed at STC largely in cooperation with Worthington Community College (WCC). In 1994, WCC began preparing for its NCA focused visit on finance and assessment that was scheduled for April 1995. While WCC was engaged in that activity, STC began to prepare for an NCA continued accreditation visit in April 1996.

After the higher education systems were merged statewide in January 1995 and the five regional campuses were combined to form Minnesota West in January 1997, a *Merger Progress Report* was prepared for and submitted to NCA in the fall of 1997. That report was followed closely by a revised *Assessment Plan for Student Academic Success*, which was submitted to the commission in May 1998. In October 2000, Minnesota West submitted a *Focused Report on Faculty Credentials and Professional Development* that NCA approved in January 2001.

Self-Study Process

The process for the current comprehensive self-study began in the fall of 1998 when Minnesota West's president appointed a Worthington campus faculty member to be self-study coordinator. After a series of meetings involving the president and the vice-president for instruction, the coordinator appointed a steering committee in December 1998. In April 1999, the coordinator and a steering committee member attended the NCA pre-conference meeting and annual meeting in Chicago. The steering committee met for the first time later in April 1999 to begin planning the self-study.

During the summer of 1999, the coordinator reviewed self-studies from other campuses and developed a structure and list of tasks for self-study subcommittees.² Although Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) models were considered for this self-study, the steering committee decided that Minnesota West was not yet ready to pursue such a radical change and elected instead to base this self-study on more traditional models.

Each member of the steering committee was appointed to co-chair a subcommittee for the self-study. Subcommittee assignments were made at a steering committee meeting in October 1999 and organized around the GIRs and the five criteria. At that meeting, every full-time Minnesota West faculty member was assigned to serve on a subcommittee.

Also at the October 1999 meeting, co-chairs approved the list of tasks for the subcommittees and agreed to meet with their respective committees before the end of calendar year 1999. Many of the subcommittee co-chairs then called meetings to explain the tasks and assign individuals or subgroups to gather information deemed necessary to complete those tasks. The subcommittees that met were directed to describe and evaluate the operational areas of the college relevant to the criterion assigned to it. The investigation and evaluation was to be completed and returned to the coordinator by March 2000.³

In the fall semester of 1999, the coordinator developed a timeline for the self-study and proposed dates for the self-study visit to the commission office. Dates proposed were November 12-14, 2001, in the first cycle, December 3-5, 2001, in the second cycle, and March 5-7, 2002, in the third cycle. In February 2000, NCA notified Minnesota West's president that the visit would be November 12-14, 2001. Because of conflicts with the observance of Veteran's Day, the dates were changed in April 2001 to December 3-5, 2001.

² **Appendix I-A** contains a list of subcommittees and their co-chairs.

In April 2000, the vice president of academic affairs, the dean of technical education, and the self-study coordinator attended the NCA annual meeting in Chicago. While there, they visited with NCA associate director Dr. Karen Kietzman and invited Dr. Kietzman to visit Minnesota West at the end of April. Dr. Kietzman accepted the invitation and visited three Minnesota West campuses - Pipestone, Worthington, and Jackson - April 24-26, 2001.

From summer 2000 until the early spring 2001, some subcommittees continued to gather information and evaluate assigned areas of Minnesota West. As their work progressed, they reported their findings to the coordinator who incorporated the information into a draft of the self-study report. Levels of subcommittee members' involvement in the self-study ranged from members offering extremely active and useful service to members relying on subcommittee chairs to gather the information to members simply responding to requests for information from the coordinator.

The first draft of the study was made available to subcommittee co-chairs, administrators, and CEOs in late March 2001. A delegation of four attended the NCA meeting in Chicago March 31-April 2, 2001, where they discussed the process with Minnesota West's commission liaison. After incorporating changes recommended from the liaison and from the college editing group, a new draft was made available to everyone in the institution for widespread review and comment. The final draft and printed document was produced in September 2001.

Strengths and Challenges

Each major section of this document is concluded with a list of strengths and challenges associated with the area described. The college will strive to build on the identified strengths and

³ **Appendix I-B** contains a brief description of subcommittee responsibilities.

devise strategies to overcome the challenges. The strengths and challenges form the foundation of the college's new strategic plan.

Summary

This self-study will show that Minnesota West is a new institution that is facing many challenges, but it is meeting those challenges head on. Its creation was a forced polygamous marriage of partners from different cultures and traditions that did not know each other well enough to trust that everyone involved could ensure the future health and integrity of the institutions they served. In spite of these worries, as each semester passes, trust among the partners increases while students, faculty and administrators come closer to finding ways to work together. As Minnesota West approaches its fifth anniversary, the partners continue their efforts to make this marriage work and to serve constituents more effectively.

Chapter 2

Responses to Concerns

Overview

The relationship between campuses in the Minnesota West family and NCA has been particularly and unusually close since 1989 and especially so since Minnesota West became one new merged institution in January 1997.

A focused visit on the merger of Minnesota West occurred in April 1997. As a result of that visit, NCA asked Minnesota West to provide subsequent progress reports on policies, the merged catalog, and assessment. Those reports were submitted by the stipulated deadlines and copies of them are available in the resource room. The 1997 visiting consultant-evaluators also stipulated that a focused visit on faculty credentials and institutional research should take place during the 1998-1999 academic year. That visit occurred in April 1999.⁴

After the focused visit in 1999, NCA asked Minnesota West to submit a progress report on faculty development October 2000. That report was filed and Minnesota West received notice in January 2001 that the report was approved.⁵

General Education

One of the concerns that NCA expressed for Minnesota West after both the 1997 and 1999 visits was that the faculties of Minnesota West had different educational philosophies regarding general education. After the visit in May 1999, NCA consultant-evaluators wrote:

There are what has been characterized as two “corporate cultures” at the College, one that has developed over many years with the former technical institutes and

⁴ A copy of the report on that visit is available in the resource room.

⁵ A copy is available in the resource room.

the other with the former junior college. The first questions the value of general education, and the second considers that value to be a given. Although substantial strides have been made to do so, Minnesota West must continue to blend these two cultures into one comprehensive community college culture that synergistically improves educational opportunities for students in both technical and general education.⁶

Addressing these cultural and pedagogical differences has consumed hundreds of hours at Minnesota West over the past four years. Faculty, staff and administrators from the technical and liberal arts cultures have joined forces on both *ad hoc* and permanent committees to reconcile differences in philosophy, to standardize college policies (when appropriate), and to increase levels of communication among the campuses. Joint duty days followed by social gatherings and recreational outings have helped to promote understanding and build new areas of cooperation and team spirit.

Faculty and administrators at Minnesota West have also worked to reduce the fiscal and strategic burdens of maintaining both general studies and general education classes at Minnesota West. Reconciling NCA requirements for general education with both state law and traditions of basic skills instruction at technical colleges has been a major goal.

At the end of the 2000 legislative session, the Minnesota Legislature complicated the discussion of general education/general studies when it altered requirements for general education in technical education. The state statute specifies:

Sec. 14, Subd. 2, b) Certificates and diplomas are credentials that demonstrate competence in a vocational and technical area and, therefore, may include a

⁶ *Report of a Focused Visit to Minnesota West Community and Technical College, April 19-20,*

general education component only as part of an articulation agreement or to meet occupational requirements as established by the trade or profession, or by the program advisory committee. Students shall be provided with applied training in general studies as necessary for competence in the program area.

While this change was occurring in Saint Paul, Minnesota West was developing plans to replace most general studies courses with developmental courses for students who need them and transferable general education courses for students working toward completion of programs of substantial length (two semesters or more).

Minnesota West faculty resisted early versions of those proposals for both pedagogical and economic reasons. Pedagogical resistance grew from the belief that many students choose technical education because they are not interested in taking college-level general education courses. Technical college programs historically limited general studies curricula to applied skills that graduates need to help them function in the workplace. Skills taught in general education transfer-level courses are considered more comprehensive than students in occupational areas desire or require to find gainful employment in their prospective fields.

Economic concerns regarding the change involved both faculty and students. Obvious job-security issues were raised for faculty members who teach general studies courses at the technical campuses but who lack minimum qualifications to teach college-level transfer courses. Students who require developmental courses to prepare for college-level work could risk using up funding sources before finishing their programs.

To help resolve these issues, an all-college curriculum committee was established by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between faculty associations during the spring semester

of 1999. The committee consists of the academic vice president and faculty representatives from each campus. Non-voting representatives from CTS and FBM/SBM also attend the meetings. The committee meets several times each year to consider new college programs or changes in existing programs. The college committee must approve curriculum changes before they can be implemented or included in the college catalog. CTS and FBM/SBM curriculum changes go directly to the college committee for review. Local campus curriculum committees must approve all campus course changes before the college committee can consider them. The Worthington campus curriculum committee must approve all changes in liberal arts components of college programs.

In addition to the all-college curriculum committee, some liberal arts and technical faculty in closely related areas of instruction have organized into divisions to consider general studies/general education issues. This organization was forced in part by the 1999 Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) order delineating faculty association representation at consolidated colleges. Starting early in 1999, discipline groups formed to consider changes in course naming and numbering, developmental educational needs, and curricula for new or revised general education courses. Among the first faculty to organize were those in accounting, computing, math, and nursing. The 2001-2001 academic year commenced with most other academic areas assigned to divisions.

Another statewide step toward merging the two cultures occurred in the summer of 2000 when UTCE and MCCFA leaders established a “Unity Committee” to explore ways to merge the two-year college faculty associations. The leaders recognized that political pressure from college presidents made such a merger inevitable, so they decided that taking the initiative on the issue was preferable to allowing MnSCU or the state legislature to force a less palatable merger later.

Leaders from both faculty associations traveled to every state two-year college campus in late summer and fall 2000 to discuss merger with member faculty. In September 2000, the Unity Committee prepared and sent a draft constitution to members for review and comment. In November 2000, members voted to adopt the constitution. That approval cleared the way for a vote to merge the unions in January 2001, and the merger was approved.

Faculty Credentials

Minnesota West submitted a progress report on faculty credentials and professional development to NCA in October 2000. The *Focused Report on Faculty Credentials and Professional Development* responded to three areas of concern cited in the NCA report after its focused visit in 1999. The report tracked the progress Minnesota West faculty are making toward enhancing credentials and reiterated the institution's commitment to providing its faculty with resources to grow. NCA staff reviewed and accepted the report on January 17, 2001.⁷

⁷The progress report and response are in the resource room.

Chapter 3

The General Institutional Requirements

Mission

GIR 1. It has a mission statement, formally adopted by the governing board and made public, declaring that it is an institution of higher education.

Minnesota West is affiliated with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system. The MnSCU Board of Trustees has adopted the following Vision and Mission statements for all colleges in the system:

Subpart A. Vision Statement. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, by focusing creativity and energy on meeting the educational needs of those it serves, will be widely recognized as the primary educational pathway for the people of Minnesota to achieve an enhanced quality of life and improved economic competitiveness.

Subpart B. Mission Statement. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities provides accessible high quality, future-oriented education and community service through technical, pre-baccalaureate, baccalaureate, master's, occupational and continuing education programs.

Each college within the MnSCU system also has a unique mission statement. The mission statement for Minnesota West was developed over several weeks beginning in January 1997 and concluding with the adoption of the mission statement in March 1997. Representatives from each campus were involved in developing the mission statement, vision statement, and goals for the college (see Chapter 4).

Minnesota West Mission Statement:

Minnesota West Community and Technical College is dedicated to serving the varied educational needs of our diverse populations in affordable, accessible and supportive settings.

Goals:

1. To provide pre-professional and liberal arts courses which lead to Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degrees. The courses are designed to transfer to a four-year college or university and will apply toward a baccalaureate degree.

2. To provide certificate, diploma, and Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree courses for students working to develop and enhance occupational or technical competence leading toward employment or further education.

3. To provide learning opportunities for people of varying ages, backgrounds, and abilities with particular focus and commitment to retraining and lifelong learning.

4. To provide continuing education, management education, and customized training for professions, businesses, and industries.

5. To provide facilities for programs, activities, conferences, teleconferences and courses to meet community needs.

6. To provide extended educational opportunities by means of flexible scheduling and delivery.

7. To provide effective and efficient use of resources through partnerships with agencies, other educational institutions, businesses and industries.

8. To provide continuous improvement processes via assessment, evaluation and upgrading of programs and services, and to support the professional development of college personnel.

9. To provide the resources to meet the contemporary standards of facilities, informational resources, technology, and teaching strategies to insure quality educational outcomes.

10. To provide comprehensive student services enabling academic and personal growth toward lifetime learning.

The mission statement and first nine goals have been approved by the MnSCU board and are published in the college catalog. The tenth goal was added in 1999. The mission statement is also included on the Minnesota West web site.

GIR 2. It is a degree-granting institution.

Minnesota West confers associate of arts, associate of science, and associate of applied science degrees on all five campuses. It also confers diplomas, certificates, continuing education units (CEU), and customized occupational training.

GIR 3. It has legal authorization to grant its degrees, and it meets all the legal requirements to operate as an institution of higher education wherever it conducts its activities.

As a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (MnSCU), Minnesota West is a public institution empowered by the State of Minnesota to confer degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Minnesota West complies with all requirements and policies established by the MnSCU Board of Trustees and Minnesota Statute 136F.

GIR 4. It has legal documents to confirm its status: not-for-profit, for-profit, or public.

Minnesota Statute 136F establishes that Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, of which Minnesota West is a member, are public, not-for-profit institutions of higher learning. The legal documents confirming Minnesota West as a public community college are located in part on the campuses of Minnesota West, at MnSCU headquarters, and at the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning offices in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Governance

GIR 5. It has a governing board that possesses and exercises necessary legal power to establish and review basic policies that govern the institution.

Minnesota Statute 136F.06, Subdivisions 1 and 2, authorizes the MnSCU board to adopt suitable policies for the institutions it governs. These policies are broad, general directions developed by the board to govern colleges and universities.

GIR 6. Its governing board includes public members and is sufficiently autonomous from the administration and ownership to assure the integrity of the institution.

Permanent membership on the MnSCU board is defined in Minnesota Statutes 136F.02, Subdivision 1, as follows: “The board consists of 15 members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. At least one member of the board must be a resident of each congressional district. Three members must be students who are enrolled at least half time in a degree, diploma or certificate program or have graduated from an institution governed by the board within one year of the date of appointment. The student members shall include one member from a community college, one member from a state university, and one member from a technical college. The remaining members must be appointed to represent the state at large.” Trustees are identified in Chapter 5 of this document.

GIR 7. It has an executive officer designated by the governing board to provide administrative leadership for the institution.

The MnSCU board, upon the recommendation of the MnSCU chancellor, appoints presidents of MnSCU institutions. The president then appoints other college and university administrators. Dr. Ronald A. Wood was appointed as president of Minnesota West Community and Technical College effective August 19, 1998.

GIR 8. Its governing board authorizes the institution’s affiliation with the Commission.

According to MnSCU Board Policy 3.24, Part 2, “The Board of Trustees shall approve each institution’s mission, vision and purposes. An institution’s mission, vision and purposes shall support achievement of the MnSCU system and vision and shall provide a foundation for evaluation, accountability, and regional accreditation.”

Faculty

NOTE: In January 2001, faculty at all Minnesota public two-year institutions of higher learning voted to merge their two associations into Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF). Negotiating a contract for the merged association is expected to be a long and complicated process and is not likely to be finished before Minnesota West’s comprehensive visit. Until a new contract is ratified, faculty will continue to work under existing MCCFA and UTCE contracts.

GIR 9. It employs a faculty that has earned from accredited institutions the degrees appropriate to the level of instruction offered by the institution.

In April 2001, Minnesota West had 381 instructors, 107 of which were full-time unlimited and three full-time temporary on the five campuses. Minnesota Community College Faculty Association (MCCFA) represented 38 full-time instructors who taught mostly transfer courses. Sixty-nine full-time instructors belonged to United Technical College Educators (UTCE) and taught mostly technical and career programs. Farm Management and Small Business Management programs involved 15 full-time instructors.

Among the MCCFA full-time faculty in FY2000, one had a Ph. D., 36 had master’s degrees (including MA, MS, MSS, MDV, MAT, and MBA), three had baccalaureate degrees (either BS or BA), and one had a diploma. The one instructor with a diploma was moved to

MCCFA by order of BMS and must complete minimum qualifications (MS) within a specified time. Three instructors with bachelor's degrees in 2000 were enrolled in master's degree programs, one of the instructors with a master's degree was working on an Ed.D, and one was working toward a Ph.D.

MCCFA represented 17 part-time faculty teaching more than four credits. Of the 17, one had a Ph.D., eight had master's degrees, and eight had baccalaureate degrees. Twenty-two MCCFA adjunct instructors taught four credits or fewer at Minnesota West in fall 2000. Of those, six had master's degrees and 16 had baccalaureate degrees.

Among UTCE full-time instructors in fall 2000, five had master's degrees, 14 had baccalaureate degrees, five had associate's degrees and 25 had diplomas. Of the 13 adjunct UTCE instructors teaching more than one-third load, one had a doctorate, two had master's degrees, four had baccalaureate degrees, two had associate's degrees, three had diplomas, and one had a certificate. Of the 18 UTCE instructors teaching less than one-third of a full-time load in that semester, seven had master's degrees, three had baccalaureate degrees, two had associate's degrees, and six had diplomas.

UTCE also represents Minnesota West's Farm Management and Small Business Management instructors. Of the 21 instructors in those programs in fall 2000, eight had master's degrees, 11 had baccalaureate degrees, and one had a diploma. Of these instructors, one planned to complete his doctorate, four planned to complete master's degrees, and one was working toward completing a baccalaureate degree.

GIR 10. A sufficient number of the faculty are full-time employees of the institution.

Minnesota West employs 110 full-time instructors. Most programs or disciplines have the equivalent of one or more full-time instructor. The MCCFA contract requires that at least 67 percent of the faculty teaching liberal arts transfer courses be unlimited full-time. The UTCE contract with MnSCU makes no stipulation regarding the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty positions. Negotiators for the new MSCF contract must reconcile this difference.

GIR 11. Its faculty has a significant role in developing and evaluating all of the institution's educational programs.

Faculty members at Minnesota West play an integral part in developing and evaluating all of the institution's educational programs. Campus curriculum committees and the college-wide curriculum committee, a general matters committee, a college-wide governance committee, vocational advisory committees, and local and college-wide assessment committees facilitate faculty involvement.

Curriculum committees play a major role in both new program development and existing program revision and compliance. Local committees must approve curriculum changes and additions before they advance to the college-wide committee for final approval. Though the merger has created many challenges, the purpose and goal of the college-wide curriculum committee is to work closely with the vice-president of academic affairs to ensure that Minnesota West offers a curriculum that is integrated, consistent, and excellent in all of its venues. Another primary goal of the committee is to eliminate unnecessary duplication of programs and courses among the campuses.

Though courses taught by multiple faculty have common descriptions and course outlines, syllabi are matters of academic freedom for faculty. Instructors also choose their own textbooks.

Educational Program

GIR 12. It confers degrees.

Minnesota West confers associate of arts (AA), associate of science (AS), and associate of applied science (AAS) degrees. The Minnesota West catalog lists all of the available associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs and requirements. Degrees and diplomas are awarded for programs of one to two years of academic and occupational education, while certificates are awarded in a variety of career fields upon completion of programs of lesser length.

GIR 13. It has degree programs in operation, with students enrolled in them.

Minnesota West currently offers two AA degrees, 13 AS degrees, and 33 AAS degrees. During the 2000-2001 academic year, approximately 900 students were enrolled in degree programs. Through consultation with students, employers, and four-year transfer institutions, the college is continually adding and modifying degrees to maintain relevant opportunities for students.

In 2000-2001, Minnesota West awarded 79 AA degrees, 43 AS degrees, 93 AAS degrees, 294 diplomas, and 30 certificates.

GIR 14. Its degree programs are compatible with the institution's mission and are based on recognized fields of study at the higher education level.

Minnesota West's mission includes general education, occupational education, and transfer education. The college's assortment of courses and programs in both academic and occupational areas meets and exceeds the post-secondary education needs of students in its geographical service area and beyond.

Minnesota West's transfer curriculum and wide array of technical education options are based on state and national standards as well as needs expressed by employers in the service

area. Courses and degrees articulate with transfer institutions throughout the state, region and country. Curricula for these courses and degrees are developed with assistance from students, faculty, advisory committees, and transfer specialists at receiving institutions.

GIR 15. Its degrees are appropriately named, following practices common to institutions of higher education in terms of both length and content of the programs.

All degrees awarded by Minnesota West comply with MnSCU policy 3.17, which describes program standards and length. Minnesota West transfer courses are designed for undergraduates. Degree requirements, course titles, and syllabi, which must include complete descriptions of both curricula and assessments, are all subject to careful review by campus curriculum committees and the college-wide curriculum committee. All degree programs are reviewed and approved by MnSCU. The normal length of time required by a full-time student to complete a degree is two years (four semesters).

GIR 16. Its undergraduate degree programs include a coherent general education requirement consistent with the institution's mission and designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry.

The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MTC) for general education is a core undergraduate curriculum recognized by all Minnesota higher education institutions. It was developed in the early 1990s to help students transfer among state public institutions of higher education. Ten general education goals, each with a number of specified competencies, are addressed in the MTC, and each institution is responsible to identify and assign courses to meet those goals. Faculty who helped develop the MTC determined that the specified general education competencies would lead students to assume a common membership in the world community; to

demonstrate personal responsibility; to gain awareness of the diversity of the world; and to acquire basic skills of discovery, integration, application and communication.

The MTC is at the heart of all Minnesota West programs of substantial length. Each degree or diploma program of more than 45 credits requires completion of a specified number of MTC courses. A complete description of general education requirements is published in the college catalog.

GIR 17. It has admission policies and practices that are consistent with the institution's mission and appropriate to its educational programs.

Minnesota West has an open door admissions policy. Anyone who has graduated from high school or who has earned a GED is eligible for admission. All students admitted for eight or more credits must complete assessment exams in reading, writing and math. Admission to Minnesota West does not guarantee admission to college-level courses nor to specific programs of study.

GIR 18. It provides its students access to those learning resources and support services requisite for its degree programs.

Minnesota West provides both daytime and evening access to its degree and certificate programs in classrooms located at its five campuses, at a college center at Marshall, Minnesota, at sites at various communities throughout the region, and via the Internet. Student service offices, libraries, bookstores, ESL instruction, and auxiliary services are located on all five of the main campuses. Services include tutoring, academic computer centers, counseling, food services, childcare, and financial aid assistance. Students can also gain access to limited library services, register for classes, and review their grades, transcripts, and financial aid records online via the Minnesota West homepage <www.mnwest.mnscu.edu>.

Finances

GIR 19. It has an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency at least every two years.

The Minnesota legislative auditor's office prepares audited financial statements annually for all state agencies including Minnesota West, which is part of MnSCU. No separate audit is currently prepared for each of MnSCU's member colleges. However, MnSCU is developing plans for institutional balance sheet audits beginning in FY2002.

Additionally, every Minnesota college and university is subject to an audit once in every three-year cycle. The schedule for such audits is determined by lot. The most recent audit of Minnesota West was completed in September 1999. It involved financial records from July 1, 1995, through June 30, 1998. The audit focused on Minnesota West's compliance with internal controls and data reliability.

GIR 20. Its financial documents demonstrate the appropriate allocation and use of resources to support its educational programs.

Minnesota West is required to prepare and submit annual revenue and expenditure budgets to the MnSCU Board of Trustees. The college budget is public information and is available on request. Reports are prepared monthly for review by each department. Summary budget information is prepared, analyzed and presented to the president's council, which meets monthly. Financial and facilities reports can also be reviewed online at <http://www.its.mnscu.edu/data/>.

GIR 21. Its financial practices, records, and reports demonstrate fiscal viability.

The most recent audit indicates that the college's fiscal practices and reports are appropriate and demonstrate fiscal viability.

GIR 22. Its catalog or other official documents include its mission statement along with accurate descriptions of

- **its educational programs and degree requirements;**
- **its learning resources;**
- **its admissions policies and practices;**
- **its academic and non-academic policies and procedures directly affecting students;**
- **its charges and refund policies; and**
- **the academic credentials of its faculty and administrators.**

Minnesota West publishes a *College Catalog*, a *Student Handbook*, an *Employee Handbook*, and a *Faculty Handbook*. All provide the information specified in GIR 22. The college also publishes semester schedules, marketing information, individual program brochures, and customized training and continuing education course descriptions and information.

Information that can be found online includes the *Student Handbook*, the *College Catalog*, and an orientation program. The *Faculty Handbook* will be online by 2002.

GIR 23. It accurately discloses its standing with accrediting bodies with which it is affiliated.

Descriptions of Minnesota West's accreditation status with North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and other state, federal, professional agencies and associations are included in the college catalog. The information is also available from the office of the college president or the vice-president of academic affairs.

GIR 24. It makes available upon request information that accurately describes its financial condition.

Minnesota West's audit and financial reports are available upon request from the office of the vice-president of financial affairs, which is located on the Canby campus. That information can also be found at <www.its.mnscu.edu/data/> or the legislative auditor's site, <www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us>.

Chapter 4

Criterion I

“The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.”

Mission Statement Background

The process for developing a merged college mission and goals statement for Minnesota West started in December 1996, when meetings to which all college employees were invited were held on each of the five campuses. Faculty and staff at those meetings discussed the mission of the new college as well as ideas for goals and themes for meeting the new college’s mission.

Following those campus meetings, the then executive vice president of instruction and the vice president of CTS chaired an *ad hoc* committee made up of one representative from each of the four technical campuses, four representatives from the Worthington campus, and one representative from the CTS program. A booklet titled *Putting Students First: MnSCU’s Plan for Minnesota* was issued to committee members to use as a guide and a reference. The members were asked to organize “work groups” on their campuses to review and comment on the mission statement drafts as they evolved.

After meeting with their campus work groups, members of the merged college mission committee met for the first time on January 14, 1997, at Slayton, Minnesota. The committee reviewed existing mission statements of both Southwestern Technical College and Worthington Community College in light of the newly developed MnSCU mission statement as well as NCA comments regarding the two colleges’ existing mission statements. They also considered

suggestions from the campus groups regarding a new mission and goals statement that would satisfy all Minnesota West constituencies. The meeting resulted in a draft mission statement that was returned to the campuses for review and comment.

The college mission committee met again on February 7, 1997, at Tracy, Minnesota. There the committee shared, discussed, and evaluated comments received from the local campuses and revised the statement to reflect that input. They released a second revision of the statement for further review on the campuses.

After the February 7 meeting, responsibility for finalizing the mission statement was turned over to the Minnesota West general advisory committee, an *ad hoc* committee the president appointed to facilitate the merger. The advisory committee considered the second draft at a meeting February 18, and the president asked all Minnesota West faculty and staff to offer additional comments on the second draft in writing before February 19. The third revision was sent to the campuses on March 3, and the advisory committee approved the final draft on March 10, 1997.

The mission and goals are published in major Minnesota West publications, including the college catalog.

Mission Statement and Goals

Minnesota West Community and Technical College is dedicated to serving the varied educational needs of our diverse populations in affordable, accessible and supportive settings.

Goals:

1. To provide pre-professional and liberal arts courses which lead to associate of arts (AA) or associate of science (AS) degrees. The courses are designed to transfer to a four-year college or university and will apply toward a baccalaureate degree.

2. To provide certificate, diploma, and associate of applied science (AAS) degree courses for students working to develop and enhance occupational or technical competence leading toward employment or further education.

3. To provide learning opportunities for people of varying ages, backgrounds, and abilities with particular focus and commitment to retraining and lifelong learning.

4. To provide continuing education, management education, and customized training for professions, businesses, and industries.

5. To provide facilities for programs, activities, conferences, teleconferences and courses to meet community needs.

6. To provide extended educational opportunities by means of flexible scheduling and delivery.

7. To provide effective and efficient use of resources through partnerships with agencies, other educational institutions, businesses and industries.

8. To provide continuous improvement processes via assessment, evaluation and upgrading of programs and services, and to support the professional development of college personnel.

9. To provide the resources to meet the contemporary standards of facilities, informational resources, technology, and teaching strategies to insure quality educational outcomes.

10. To provide comprehensive student services enabling academic and personal growth toward lifetime learning.

Vision Statement

Minnesota West Community and Technical College provides dynamic, responsive, creative, and quality education to a diverse population in an ever-changing educational, business, and cultural environment.

Vision Goals.

Access: To provide students with access to learning and information through electronic education and technology in addition to traditional methods of instruction.

Position students: To provide students with transferable credit, employment skills, and the ability to access lifelong learning.

Regional Needs: To be a partner with agencies, other educational institutions, businesses and industries in regional economic development.

Continuing Evaluation: To continue evaluating all college activities, programs and functions with regard to service to students, performance outcomes, fiscal accountability and cost effectiveness to insure future college growth and success.

MnSCU goals: To support goals of Academic Accountability, Skill-Based Transfer, Career Education, Electronic Education, Program Alignment, and MnSCU/K-12 Partnership.

Meeting the Goals

Minnesota West currently offers classes and services to meet its mission and works hard to enhance its ability to meet the mission goals it has established in each academic year.

1-2. Transfer and Technical Education

After the 2000-2001 academic year, 79 students were awarded associate of arts degrees and 43 students received associate of science degrees from Minnesota West.

Articulation agreements are in place with Minnesota State University-Mankato in computer science and the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) program and at Southwest State University-Marshall in the bachelor of applied science or technology (BAS/BAT) and 2+2. Transfer agreements are in place with several additional receiving institutions.

Minnesota West has increased night class offerings on all five campuses and plans to increase offerings as demand for night classes rises, especially in technical areas. During fall semester 2000, 122 night classes, both technical and liberal arts, were taught at Minnesota West's five campuses, an increase of 44 percent from the fall of 1999. In spring 2001, 101 night classes were offered, a 23 percent increase from the previous year. Four of the 14 courses offered at the Marshall Center in fall 2000 were liberal arts classes, but only two had sufficient numbers to proceed.

Minnesota West has also increased its number of concurrent enrollment and Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) students who are likely to transfer to four-year colleges. From fall 1998 to fall 1999, the number of PSEO and concurrent enrollment students increased from 333 to 436, or 31 percent. In fall 2000, 412 PSEO and concurrent enrollment students earned 2,789 credits for a total of 185.93 FTE.

Starting in FY2000, two liberal arts classes were available via the Internet. In FY2001, seven courses were online. At least two more courses and a certificate program are set to begin in fall 2001. Members of the faculty are developing more online courses with the help of the associate vice-president for distributed learning, who was hired in the spring of 1999. Courses presently online include five accounting courses, Fitness for Life, and Introduction to Sociology. Planned additional courses for fall 2001 are allied health courses, Introduction to Literature, and Lamb and Wool Production (a certificate program).

The number of transferable general education credits available at the four technical campuses increased to 90 in the fall of 2000. In spring 2001, at least 50 classes were offered at each technical campus.

Statewide, 5,312 students transferred from community and technical colleges in fall 1999. Of those, 2,279 transferred to state universities, 1,866 to other two-year colleges, 576 to the University of Minnesota, 148 to private career colleges, and 444 to private colleges.

Minnesota West offers instruction in 28 technical areas. At the conclusion of the 2000-2001 academic year, 93 Minnesota West students received associate of applied science degrees, 294 received technical diplomas, and 30 received technical certificates.

3. Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Minnesota West schedules classes at a variety of times to meet the demands of a working community. The college offers night courses, ITV courses, and Internet courses. In addition to the fall and spring semesters, the college offers a holiday term, a summer term with various starting dates. Minnesota West courses include transferable college-level courses, business or farm management courses, technical courses, and CTS open enrollment and contract for training courses to enhance job skills.

4. Customized Training Services and Open Enrollment Classes

Minnesota West's CTS division offers a variety of hour-based courses as well as credit courses to meet business and industry demands for updating skills quickly, efficiently, and on-site. When employers request new skills courses, CTS can respond quickly.

Minnesota West operates one of the largest CTS programs in the state. During FY2000, some 14,454 persons participated in Minnesota West CTS and contract for training programs and open enrollment classes. In fall semester 2000, 5,439 students were served.

Instructors for CTS courses are mostly adjunct faculty, men and women who work full time in their respective fields and are willing to share their expertise. CTS also employs professional consultants to ensure that course content remains current and relevant. In the first

half of the 2000-2001 academic year, CTS used 97 different instructors and 37 different consultants.

CTS courses are offered year around. From July 1 to December 31, 2000, some 1,934 clock hours of classes were offered. That number does not include some of the long-term classes that began before July and ended during that period. It also ignores training for Shott Corporation, Community Supports for People with Disabilities (CSPD) classes, and APICS training for five companies (APICS-Educational Society for Resource Management is a trade name.)

Also omitted are contract for training hours, which amounted to 7,031 clock hours during FY2000. The number of training hours offered during the first half of the year usually doubles or more than doubles in the second half of the year.

An example of a successful and recent CTS offering is the Community Supports for Persons with Disabilities (CSPD) program. Some 28 part-time CSPD students enroll in technical classes for credit via ITV. The program originated in Granite Falls and was transmitted to Worthington. Another section of 14 CSPD students met at the Marshall Center. CSPD students had the option of continuing in the program to meet requirements for a certificate or an AAS degree.

CSPD classes began with a Minnesota Job Skills Partnership grant that Minnesota West's CTS staff wrote with seven other Minnesota colleges. The two-year grant required four industry partners to sponsor students. Funding for the program expired at the end of FY2000, but the Minnesota Department of Labor provided funds to offer 10 more credits of management/leadership classes to supervisors at the four partnering industries. Minnesota West offered all of those courses and 30-35 students took each course. Credits from those courses

contributed to FYE, and students in those programs could apply the credits toward an AAS degree.

Farm Business Management (FBM) programs at Minnesota West are designed to provide lifelong education to farm and business owners and managers. These programs focus on record keeping, goal setting, and informed decision making with the goal of assuring owners and managers successful and profitable operations. Business management instructors provide one-on-one instruction in a student's business place, but they also meet groups of students in classrooms, attend small group meetings, take field trips, and arrange for tours of other enterprises. In spring 2000, FBM enrollment was 657 students; in fall, it was 569 (88 percent retention), which is lower than normal retention because of staff changes. In 1999, students enrolled in FBM courses increased their net worth by approximately 8 percent, a number consistent with program goals.

5. Facilities to Meet Community Needs⁸

Businesses, public agencies, service organizations, the judiciary and other colleges are among the outside groups that use Minnesota West classrooms, conference rooms, athletic facilities, and ITV studios. Examples include Bayer, Swift, New Vision Co-op, Nobles County Day Care Association, Prairie Driving School, State Bar Association, University of Minnesota, and Minnesota State University-Mankato. On rare occasions, ITV studios have been used for judicial court hearings.

The local chapter of Toastmasters International, Weight Watchers, and service clubs; the United States Department of Agriculture; Worthington Regional Hospital; the Workforce Center; Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA); political parties; traveling and community theater groups;

⁸ Facilities utilization studies from each campus are in the resource room.

piano teachers and students; area and national entertainers; and local school districts all use college classrooms and theaters.

Public library systems and other public and private groups rent training time in Minnesota West's computer facilities. School districts use college gymnasiums and outdoor athletic facilities, as do the local U.S. Freestyle Wrestling Club and the Worthington Area YMCA.

Minnesota West facilities serve as polling places in public elections. A local radio station hosts an annual farm show in the Worthington campus gymnasium. The Red Cross bloodmobile visits campuses to collect donations from students, faculty, and staff. Amateur and professional artists display their works in the Fine Arts Gallery on the Worthington campus. Amateur bands rehearse and perform in college music rooms and theaters.

6. Flexible Scheduling and Delivery

Minnesota West offers traditional classroom courses both day and night Mondays through Fridays from late August until early May. The college also offers a summer session with numerous start dates.

During the 1999-2000 academic year, Minnesota West offered a brief holiday break session. A dozen classes were offered and eight of them attracted enough students to be taught. The 132 students enrolled generated 22.53 FTE. Thirty-four of the holiday break session students were enrolled in other colleges for fall and spring semesters.

In 2000-2001, 134 students participated in a shorter holiday break session. Six courses were offered and five classes were taught. The session produced 21.3 FTE. Twenty-nine of the students enrolled were from other campuses.

Minnesota West offered 27 classes via interactive television in spring 2001. Most general education courses required for associate of applied science degrees at the technical campuses are taught via ITV from the Worthington campus. Worthington Community College was a pioneer in ITV, offering its first ITV classes during FY1987-88. Although the high school television studios that were involved in ITV delivery in the early days are no longer functioning, Minnesota West continues its commitment to ITV course delivery via its own campus ITV classrooms.

In spring 2001, Minnesota West offered accounting courses, a fitness course, and a sociology course via the Internet. An Introduction to Literature course was added in fall 2001. Several other new courses are also set to begin in fall 2001. Selected CTS courses will also be offered via the Internet in FY2002.

In the past, Minnesota West has offered faculty supervised television courses in such areas as art history, the humanities, literature, political science, and composition. The college has also offered weekend classes on campus and both day and night classes off-campus. It has offered concurrent enrollment and complete academic programs at area high schools and industrial sites, including the Toro plant in Windom and the former Bayer Animal Health laboratory in Worthington now owned by InterVet Corporation. While some of these attempts at alternative delivery were more successful than others, college administrators and faculty remain open and eager to find new and convenient delivery methods to meet the demands and needs of area citizens.

7. Partnerships

High schools. Minnesota West has articulation agreements with more than 20 high schools in Minnesota and Iowa. After the merger, all of these agreements were revisited and reauthorized. Each agreement is documented with a standard contract form to which an

addendum is attached outlining the course equivalencies. Appropriate faculty and administrators from the agreeing institutions then sign the agreement.⁹

Tech-prep is a program of sequential study that combines at least two years of secondary education with two years of postsecondary technical education. Minnesota West's technical campuses participate in tech-prep arrangements through Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative, a education consortium that serves southwestern Minnesota high schools.

PSEO. Minnesota lawmakers enacted the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program (M.S. 123.3514) to enable high school students to complete their junior and senior years while attending college courses and earning college credit at the same time. Students who qualify under the law and MnSCU policy guidelines may attend college full or part time. Textbooks and materials for the class are provided by the school district where the participating student resides and must be returned to the district at the conclusion of the course.

Concurrent enrollment programs allow qualified high school instructors to contract with a college to teach PSEO courses in high school facilities while being mentored by a college faculty member. These agreements permit high schools to retain their state aid and negotiate fees with the colleges. Statewide, an estimate 9,500 high school students were concurrently enrolled in college courses in FY2000. Minnesota West has agreements with Luverne and Jackson High Schools to teach concurrent enrollment courses in biology, sociology, psychology, and math.

Contract for Training. As part of the PSEO program, local school boards may enter into contractual agreements with post-secondary institutions to provide specialized training for high school juniors and seniors. In FY2000, Minnesota West participated in contract for training agreements with seven high schools. The college operates two off campus centers using college

⁹ A packet of high school articulation agreements is in the resource room.

faculty to teach auto-mechanics and auto-body courses. At two of the high schools, college instructors teach classes on the high school campus. The remaining three high schools are located in communities where Minnesota West campuses are located and students attend classes at the college campus. In FY2000, a total of 41 courses were offered to high school juniors and seniors.

Receiving institutions. Because of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, all publicly supported four-year colleges in Minnesota will accept a completed associate of arts degree from Minnesota West. Most of the state institutions will also accept completed areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum from students who transfer before completing an AA degree. Private colleges that receive Minnesota West transfer students may accept the MTC, but most consider transcripts on a course-by-course basis.

Minnesota West also has 2+2 articulation agreements with several four-year colleges interested in receiving graduates with associate of science and associate of applied science degrees. Agreements are in place with University of Minnesota-Crookston, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, Southwest State University, and Bemidji State University. Since the merger, Minnesota West's computer science department has worked closely with Minnesota State University-Mankato faculty to develop a 2+2 in computer science. Minnesota West's agriculture department is also involved in a 2+2 with the University of Minnesota – St. Paul campus.

Industry. In the first half of FY2000-2001, Minnesota West provided instruction and training to 41 different area corporations or industries, including Schwan's Sales Enterprise, Schott Corporation, Ottertail Power Company, Minnesota Corn Producers, Swift Manufacturing,

Bedford Industries, Ag-Chem, Bayliner Marine, Daktronics, Westin Automotive, and Medi-Sota, Inc.

Minnesota West's CTS coordinators initiate most contacts with industry. Coordinators establish networks and belong to organizations that help them identify training needs and make connections with industry leaders. Most coordinators come from industry or business and are expert in their fields. For example, all health care coordinators are registered nurses or have credentials in other health-related areas.

An example of a long-term relationship is the one between Minnesota West and Medi-Sota, Inc., a consortium of 25 hospitals and nursing homes in the region that has contracted with Minnesota West since 1980. Minnesota West now delivers 40 classes per year for health workers in all 25 Medi-Sota facilities.

Perhaps a more typical relationship is with Shott Corporation, a maker of components for medical and telecommunications supplies manufactured by such companies as Lucent, Cisco, and Nokia. Minnesota West has entered into several contracts with Schott Corporation. One contract requires Minnesota West to deliver 15 computer classes to Schott employees. Another requires the college to provide 18 credits of certificate training in automation technology to 30 workers. A third contract covers the cost of APICS training through an entire year for all personnel.

Other companies rely on Minnesota West for OSHA training, CPR, Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC) operations and other continuing education services.

8. Continuous Improvement

Minnesota West has always placed high priority on meeting its ethical, legal and academic responsibilities to its communities, region, and state. Its goal is to continue that

tradition far into the future. The assessment measures for student success and institutional improvement described in Chapter VI, Criterion 3, will help the college meet that goal.

9. Resources to Meet Contemporary Standards of Facilities, Informational Resources, Technology, and Teaching Strategies to Ensure Quality Education Outcomes

College faculty, administrators, and staff are committed to continuous improvement. This commitment has historically been encouraged by local and statewide faculty associations, MnSCU, and the Minnesota state legislature. That support is manifested in many ways, including faculty and staff development funds, sabbaticals, grants, system and statewide workshops, state-funded studies of facilities and programs, and special allocations for equipment, library materials, and other resources.

10. Comprehensive Student Services

Orientation: An orientation session for students is held on each Minnesota West campus at the beginning of each term. Online orientation is available for some campuses. Orientation programs help students get acquainted with campuses and services offered at the college. Students receive information on advising, registration, and academic and student life.

Placement Testing: Students entering Minnesota West are required to complete the Computerized Assessment and Placement Program (CAPP). The assessment evaluates skills in reading, English and math.

Advising and Counseling: Counseling and advisory services are offered free to students on all campuses. Services include personal counseling, academic guidance, career planning, help with interpersonal and parental issues, family adjustments, and referrals for educational assistance, chemical dependency, or gambling addiction.

Financial Aid: Minnesota West administers financial aid to students who qualify for Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Minnesota State Grant, Federal Stafford Student Loans, Minnesota Child Care Grants, Alliss Grants, Federal Workstudy Programs, Federal Perkins Loans, state and federal agency grants, and several local grants from foundations, businesses, and individuals.

Developmental Classes: Students who are under-prepared for college level coursework are directed to developmental classes in math, reading, study skills, and English. From fall 1998 through summer 1999, 251 students enrolled in developmental classes. From fall 1999 through spring 2000, 295 students took the classes.

Centers for Student Success: Individualized and small group tutoring is available for students on all campuses. Paraprofessionals and peer tutors work with students on the technical campuses, and the study skills instructor at the Worthington campus employs and supervises approximately 15 peer tutors each semester. Students may receive help with communications skills, math, reading, study skills, and tutoring for technical skills or liberal arts assignments. At the Worthington campus, 600-800 tutoring sessions are conducted each year.

Carl D. Perkins Plan: The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Technical Education Act of 1998 provides federal financial assistance for secondary, postsecondary, and adult technical education until 2004. To be eligible for funds, participating institutions must annually conduct a self-evaluation to determine local program needs and submit a local application and estimated budget to their state agency.¹⁰ The evaluation must include:

1. Integration of academic and technical education
2. Experience in and understanding of all aspects of industry

3. Technology in vocational-technical education
4. Professional development
5. Evaluation of vocational-technical programs
6. Continuous program improvement for vocational-technical programs
7. Effectiveness of services and activities
8. Broad-based community involvement
9. Special population learner accommodation(s) and support services
10. Full participation of special population learners
11. Preparation for nontraditional training and employment

Minnesota West participates in a **unified** local application process that includes all of Minnesota. The *Unified State Plan for Vocational Technical Education* was developed through MnSCU and the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning (MnDCFL). In FY2001, some 980 Minnesota West students received services funded by Perkins. In an average year, Perkins funds help 275 academically disadvantaged students, 80 handicapped students, 70 single parents, 15 displaced homemakers, and 25 minority students.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is offered at Granite Falls and Jackson campuses. In most Minnesota communities, local school districts house and administer ABE. ABE provides opportunities for adults to master the skills they need to become responsible, productive, and self-sufficient citizens. From 1996-2000, approximately 4,000 area adults accessed ABE programs at 30 sites coordinated by Jackson and Granite Falls campuses. Of those, 65 percent completed their personal education plans, which included obtaining GEDs, jobs, or job

¹⁰ The *Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 Local Application FY2001* is in the resource room.

promotions; becoming U.S. citizens; or qualifying for entry into post-secondary training or higher education programs. ABE enhances Minnesota West's ability to fulfill its mission.

English as Second Language (ESL): Southwestern Minnesota's industries have attracted many immigrant workers in recent years, so the region has become one of the most culturally diverse in the Midwest. Many new residents have limited English proficiency. English as Second Language classes and individual assistance for students with limited English skills are available at Minnesota West to assist non-native speakers.

Academic Testing Services: Minnesota West is a testing site for ACT exams, CAPP tests, College Level Examination Programs (CLEP), Psychological Service Bureau (PSB) assessment, and the National League of Nursing (NLN). The college can also administer NOCTI, ADA, MDA, NCCT, Microsoft, and FAA exams.

Computer Centers and E-mail: In addition to several computer classrooms, Minnesota West also provides students access to online computers in computer centers, campus libraries, and centers for student success. The college provides an e-mail account to every student.

Bookstores: Minnesota West operates a campus bookstore on each of its five campuses. In addition to textbooks and supplies, students and staff can purchase clothing, tools, equipment and sundries at the stores. Bookstore hours are posted and vary by campus according to need.

Food Service: Each campus provides a food service for breakfasts, lunches, and special events. Food services are operated by contracts awarded annually.

Public Awareness of Mission

Minnesota West's constituencies are kept apprised of the college mission and goals in many ways. The mission and goals are published in the college catalog, semester bulletins, and selected program and marketing publications. Marketers and friends of the college disseminate

those publications throughout the region to potential students, their employers, and their families. Marketers and staff organize events that bring constituents to the campuses to show them what Minnesota West is about, and they reach out to services clubs and other community organizations to tell the Minnesota West story.

Although the Minnesota West Internet homepage <<http://www.mnwest.mnscu.edu>> does not include the entire text of the mission statement and goals, constituents can look there to find college history, programs, schedules, services, and other vital information about the college.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West has a comprehensive mission statement and goals that represent all aspects of the college.
2. Developing the mission statement and goals was a highly participatory process involving all five campuses and all factions of Minnesota West operations.
3. The current mission statement and goals are compatible with and grow from the MnSCU mission.
4. Each Minnesota West campus provides easily accessible services to students to help them meet their academic goals. Many of those services will soon be available via the Internet.

Challenges

1. The mission statement should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it clearly directs the efforts of Minnesota West and meets the needs and interests of the service area and Minnesota West.
2. Web-based college programs, such as the Lamb and Wool certificate program, for which classes are set to begin online in fall 2001, may reach students beyond the primary Minnesota West service area. The mission statement should be amended to allow for that possibility.

3. As demographics and the needs of students and the area economy change, Minnesota West must remain flexible and able to meet the needs of its constituents.

4. As the college's Internet home page evolves, its usefulness in providing constituencies with information regarding mission, goals, values, and services must expand.

Chapter 5

Criterion II, Part 1

“The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.”

Governance and Human Resources

How Decisions Are Made

MnSCU Board of Trustees

Minnesota West follows policies and procedures established by the MnSCU Board of Trustees. The 15-member MnSCU board is appointed by the governor and responsible for oversight, planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admission requirements, tuition and fees, and rules and regulations for 35 colleges and universities in the state. The board meets monthly in Saint Paul.

The MnSCU board grants authority for implementing policies to the MnSCU chancellor. The chancellor appoints vice-chancellors to assist in specific areas of operation. The chancellor and vice-chancellors also rely heavily on assistance and cooperation from the system’s campus presidents, who serve as non-voting members of MnSCU committees and provide input to board members individually and at monthly meetings.

MnSCU Board members include:

1. The honorable Will Antell, Bayport, Minnesota; Legislative Dist. 56B. Term expires June 30, 2006.

2. The honorable Andrew Boss (vice-chair), Saint Paul, Minnesota; Legislative Dist.66B. Term expires June 30, 2004.
3. The honorable Nancy Brataas (at large), Rochester, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 30B. Term expires June 30, 2002.
4. The honorable Brent Calhoun (state university student), Little Falls, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 12B. Term expires June 30, 2001.
5. The honorable Mary Choate, Bloomington, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 41B. Term expires June 30, 2004.
6. The honorable Daniel G. Coborn, Saint Cloud, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 14A. Term expires June 30, 2004.
7. The honorable Dennis Dotson, Mankato, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 24A. Term expires June 30, 2002.
8. The honorable Ivan F. Dusek, Willmar, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 15A. Term expires June 30, 2006.
9. The honorable Robert Erickson (at large), Bloomington, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 41A. Term expires June 30, 2002.
10. The honorable Robert H. Hoffman (at large), Waseca, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 24A. Term expires June 30, 2006.
11. The honorable Jim Luoma, Cohasset, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 3B. Term expires June 30, 2004.
12. The honorable Lew Moran (at large), Minneapolis, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 60B. Term expires June 30, 2006.

13. The honorable Joann Splonskowski (treasurer and technical college student), Rochert, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 11A. Term expires June 30, 2002.

14. The honorable Joseph Swanson (community college student), Two Harbors, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 6A. Term expires June 30, 2002.

15. The honorable Michael Vekich (chair), St. Louis Park, Minnesota. Legislative Dist. 44B. Term expires June 30, 2002.

Minnesota West Administrative Structure

Within the parameters established by MnSCU policies, Minnesota West's administrative structure is as participatory as it can be, given the challenges inherent in merging two disparate higher education cultures, accommodating seven (soon to be six) employee unions, and overcoming the miles of distance that separate Minnesota West campuses.

In addition to the president, Minnesota West has vice-presidents for instruction, student services, continuing education/customized training, and finance. The vice presidents are located on separate campuses. The administrative team also includes deans and directors, including a director of library services and a director of technology services, both located at Worthington; a director of support services, a director of facilities, and a human resources director, all located at Canby; and a director of financial aid located at Granite Falls. The dean of management programs is located on the Jackson campus, the dean of communication and enrollment is at Pipestone, the dean of nursing and allied health is at Worthington, and the two deans for customized training and continuing education are located at Canby and Granite Falls.

Reporting to the vice-president of academic affairs are academic deans for transfer education and technical education and an associate vice-president for distance education. Each

campus has a CEO whose authority to make day-to-day decisions has grown steadily since the first year of the merger. The Worthington campus CEO is also the dean of liberal arts education.

During the first year of the merger, Minnesota West's governance was highly centralized. In the five years since then, the process has become more participatory. A goal is to continue to move toward a consensus-based decision-making process that is highly inclusive of faculty, students, and staff. College faculty, staff and administrators have conflicting perceptions of how much progress has been made toward meeting this goal. Faculty and staff perceive that progress has been slow, while administrators perceive that most decisions are consensus-based.

The college is involved in two types of decision-making – management decisions and change decisions. Management decisions are made within the parameters of MnSCU and local policies and procedures, and most day-to-day decisions are made within this framework. Faculty, staff, and administrators have latitude to make decisions at the classroom or campus level that they deem to be in the best interests of students and local communities. Campus CEOs can make most management decisions alone or in consultation with campus committees that include faculty, students, and staff.

Change-based decisions involve policy additions, deletions, or amendments that affect all five Minnesota West campuses and alter parameters for management decisions. All changes must be both participatory and in compliance with contracts.

Recommendations for policy changes can emanate from any segment of the college community. The President's Council, made up of the president, vice-presidents, and the dean of communication and enrollment, meets monthly to discuss policies that affect the entire college. Each campus has committees that can recommend changes to the President's Council. Each campus also has bargaining units that can recommend changes through the meet-and-confer

process. The Alternative Governance Committee, made up of senior administrators and faculty representatives from both unions and all five campuses, also has meet-and-confer status and meets monthly. The governance committee can recommend changes and respond to proposals for change. All policy changes must survive two readings from this group.

Once a new policy and procedure is adopted, the president assigns a senior administrator to guide its implementation and establish a schedule to assess and evaluate its effectiveness after it is in place. Local policies and procedures that differ from MnSCU-approved policies and procedures must be forwarded to the MnSCU office for review and approval. Sometimes, approval must also come from the MnSCU board.

To help guide internal decision-making, Minnesota West also has two types of advisory committees. The traditional program advisory committees meet at least once a year to consider academic program issues. The purpose of these committees is to ensure that Minnesota West students follow an appropriate curriculum and receive adequate support services for them to succeed. The second type of advisory committee exists to help Minnesota West collaborate with the larger community to identify and meet common goals. Initially, a large college advisory committee was created for this purpose, but it failed to work effectively. During FY2001, each campus formed a six-member campus advisory committee to carry out the same mission. Representatives from each campus committee meet periodically to consider better ways to serve the 19-county Minnesota West region.

Strengths

1. Having vice-presidents, deans, and directors on various campuses gives all employees daily access to at least one senior administrator.

2. Housing administrators on various campuses enables the President's Council to stay apprised of conditions and issues on all campuses.
3. Empowering campus CEOs enables them to make timely decisions based on the specific needs and conditions of individual campuses.
4. Maintaining several forums for generating change-based decisions creates many opportunities for good ideas to emerge.
5. Advisory committees from business and industry help assess strengths and challenges of existing programs.
6. Advisory committees for individual campuses make each campus more responsive to its immediate community's needs.

Challenges

1. Conflicting perceptions by faculty, staff, and administration regarding decision-making procedures must be reconciled through increased communication among the groups.
2. Having vice-presidents scattered among the campuses can complicate or inhibit daily communication among senior administrators.
3. Travel times and expenses for face-to-face meetings are substantial.
4. Vice-presidents are sometimes perceived to be protectors and defenders of programs on their home campuses rather than advocates for the greater good of the college.
5. Faculty access to senior administrators on distant campuses is limited.
6. Campus autonomy creates opportunities for CEOs to interpret and apply college policies and procedures inconsistently.
7. Procedures for adding or changing policies and procedures are time-consuming.

8. Distances between campuses cause some individuals to feel excluded from decision-making processes and distrustful of peers on other campuses.

Policies and Procedures

MnSCU Policies

Minnesota Statute §136F.06, Subdivisions 1 and 2, authorizes the MnSCU board to adopt suitable policies for the institutions it governs. According to the statute, “These policies are broad general directions developed by the Board to govern the colleges and universities.” The MnSCU chancellor is responsible for communicating these policies to member institutions and to make the policies available to the public. Board policies can be reviewed on the Internet via the MnSCU home page at <<http://www.mnscu.edu/Policies/PolicyIndex.html>>.

MnSCU policies provide for student involvement in decision making by requiring that students be included on “system and college or university committees involving or affecting student interests.” Policies also call for student participation in system conferences and issue forums that contribute to policy development or decision-making.

When Minnesota’s higher education merger occurred in 1995, the newly formed MnSCU board carried forward existing policies from the three previously independent systems to help smooth the transition. Many of those policies remain in place and will be reviewed and modified by the board only as board members deem such review necessary.

Minnesota West Policies

In January 1997, when five campuses joined to become Minnesota West, one of the first major challenges for the new college was to standardize policies and develop a new policy manual. In December 1996, the presidents of the two institutions appointed a task force to begin

consolidating policies from the five campuses into a single policy manual accepted by and applicable to all campuses.

As a first step, staff collected all existing policies from the various campuses. Policies had been printed in catalogs, faculty handbooks, student handbooks, safety manuals, class schedules and various other college publications. Staff photo copied existing policies and sorted them into appropriate groups. Those groups later became starting points in the process to create chapters in the first comprehensive Minnesota West policy manual.

The collected and sorted policies were distributed to the members of the task force for review and comment. A few weeks after receiving the materials, the task force met and formed subcommittees assigned to examine one set of related policies each. The subcommittees agreed to consolidate existing policies, identify potentialities for which no policies existed, and draft new policies to cover those potentialities. The seven sets of policies were labeled *Non-discrimination Policies, Health and Safety Policies, Personal and Professional Responsibilities, Facilities Use Policies, Academic Procedures and Admissions Policies, Associations and Committees Policies, and Student Services and Behavior Policies.*

Each subcommittee accomplished its task and submitted drafts of its work in the spring of 1997. The Worthington campus president then organized the first draft of a policy manual. He sent the draft to task force members and affected employees for review and comment. Task force members met several times over the 1997 summer to review, revise, and amend the draft. The chairman of the task force presented the working draft to assembled faculty and staff from all campuses at a college-wide duty day on the first day of the 1997-1998 academic year. The chairperson explained that the document was the starting point of a manual that was sure to evolve as the process of merger continued.

Shortly after Minnesota West's current president arrived in fall 1998, he ordered a review and revision of the merged college policy manual. The administrative team's effort to review and revise policies and incorporate procedures into a single volume that is consistent for and accessible on each campus is still in progress.

Minnesota West expects its policy manual to always be a dynamic working document that will grow and improve with the new institution. New policies will be initiated and adopted as federal and state laws change and new needs develop, and old policies will be modified or abandoned as their relevance wanes. Although the rate at which the policies change will likely soon slow, it is unlikely that the policy manual will ever be perfect or complete.

Policies affecting various sub-groups at Minnesota West are printed in other publications, including the *Student Handbook*, the *Faculty Handbook*, the *Curriculum Handbook*, the *Handbook on Assessment*, the *Employee Handbook*, the *College Catalog*, and others.

Human Resources

Personnel

On March 21, 2001, Minnesota West employed 644 people. The average age was 46 years, the average number of years of service was eight, and the average salary was \$36,617. Female employees outnumbered male employees 374 to 270. All employees were Caucasian except one instructor of Asian/Pacific Island heritage, one African American, and one college marketer who was Hispanic.

Employee Groups

Minnesota public policy has historically supported organized labor, and seven employee groups represent Minnesota West faculty, staff, and administration. That number will decrease to six when a new contract is negotiated for Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF), a merged

bargaining unit formed when the two previous faculty groups voted to merge in January 2001 (see below).

Reconciling the provisions of multiple contracts can be both a boon and a bother. It is a boon when contracts spell out clearly what policies and procedures must be in place. It is a bother when contract language creates conflicts among the various associations or the contract conflicts with NCA expectations for institutions of higher learning.

Faculty

NOTE: In spring 1997, the Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) clarified criteria for assigning instructors to associations at co-located and merged colleges. The ruling was controversial because some long-time members of each association were reassigned to the other. For example, practical nursing instructors at the merged community college campuses were reassigned from MCCFA to UTCE, and accounting instructors at the technical campuses were reassigned from UTCE to MCCFA. Though it clarified some work assignments issues, the BMS order also created rifts between the two faculty groups that demanded resolution.

In January 2001, members of the two faculty associations voted to merge into a new bargaining unit, Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF). Negotiating a new contract for the merged association has begun but is likely to take several months, at least through calendar year 2001. Until a new contract is in place for MSCF, existing MCCFA contract provisions will remain in force for liberal arts instructors, and UTCE contract provisions will remain in force for technical instructors.

In April 2001, Minnesota West had 110 full-time faculty members, 107 tenured and three fixed term; UTCE represented 69 full-time instructors and MCCFA 41. All three of the full-time

fixed term instructors were in MCCFA. Average salary for a full-time Minnesota West instructor was \$47,765. Average salary for a full-time MCCFA instructor was \$54,229 and \$44,474 for a full-time UTCE instructor.

Part-time Minnesota West faculty totaled 271, including 26 tenured, 64 fixed term, and 181 adjunct instructors. Part-time UTCE faculty totaled 214, with 25 tenured, 13 fixed-term, and 176 adjunct instructors. Part-time MCCFA faculty totaled 57, with one tenured, 51 fixed-term, and five adjunct instructors. Average salary for all part-time instructors was \$30,363. Average salary for a part-time tenured UTCE instructor was \$30,641 and \$42,050 for part-time tenured MCCFA instructor. Average salary for fixed term part-time UTCE instructor was \$18,690 and \$22,441 for a fixed term part-time MCCFA instructor. (Not included in these averages are approximately 80 CTS instructors classified as “customized training” instructors and not adjunct instructors.)

The Canby campus has one full-time administrator, 12 full-time faculty and three full-time staff in its For-Credit Traditional Programs (FCTP), and one full-time administrator in CTS. Canby has three part-time faculty and nine part-time staff persons in its FCTP, and eight part-time faculty and five part-time staff in CTS programs. Two other part-time instructors are housed on the Canby campus to teach non-Minnesota West programs.

At Granite Falls, one full-time administrator, 20 full-time faculty and four full-time staff persons are involved in FCTP. Two part-time faculty and 12 part-time staff are also involved in FCTP. One full-time administrator, 20 part-time faculty, and seven part-time staff persons are involved in CTS. One part-time administrator and 18 part-time instructors are involved in the adult basic education (ABE) program.

The Jackson campus employs one full-time administrator, 37 full-time faculty, and six full-time staff in its FCTP. Five part-time faculty and 16 part-time staff support traditional programs at Jackson. In CTS are 17 part-time instructors and three part-time staff. Only one full-time instructor and three part-time instructors are involved in ABE programs at the Jackson campus.

Pipestone's FCTP are staffed by one full-time administrator, 16 full-time faculty, and four full-time staff. Some 29 part-time instructors, two full-time staff, and three part-time staff operate CTS programs. No ABE programs are taught on the Pipestone campus.

On the Worthington campus, two full-time administrators, 46 full-time faculty, and 14 full-time staff are involved in FCTP. In addition, 26 part-time instructors and nine part-time staff support FCTP. Only one part-time support staff person is involved in CTS on the Worthington campus.

Finally, Minnesota West's central administration includes six full-time administrators and six full-time staff in FCTP. These administrators are housed on various campuses. Five part-time staff members also support the central administration.

Classified Staff

Minnesota West employs 132 classified staff in two unions and 22 non-union classified employees. An average classified employee is 49 years old with eight years of service and a salary of \$32,617.

Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) represent most classified employees. MAPE represents 44 employees, 26 female and 18 male, with an average age of 46 and an

average salary of \$40,043. AFSCME represents 88 employees, 69 female and 19 male, with an average age of 46 and an average salary of \$29,397.

Minnesota West also employs 22 classified staff not represented by employee associations. Of those, 14 are female and eight are male, the average age is 47, the average years of service is eight, and the average salary is \$28,412.

Administration

Three bargaining units represent Minnesota West's administrators and administrative support staff.

The Minnesota Higher Education Board (HEB) represents MnSCU administrators at Minnesota West. Minnesota West has 15 MnSCU administrators, four female and 11 male. The average age is 54 and average salary is \$77,483.

Middle Management Association (MMA) represents 14 administrators at Minnesota West. Six MMA administrators are female and eight are male. Average age is 50, average years of service are 13, and average salary is \$48,304. Included are directors involved with technology, customized training, recruitment, maintenance, and financial aid.

The Commissioner's Plan represents administrative employees who handle "confidential data." Minnesota West currently has four female employees in this group, including the president's assistant and three directors in the Human Resources office. Their average age is 45 years, with 13 years of service, and an average salary of \$35,736.

Employee Involvement in Governance

Minnesota West involvement in governance is endorsed by MnSCU policies, by Minnesota Statute (136 e and f), and by the Public Employment Labor Relations Act of 1971, as amended (179A.03, Subd. 10 and 179A.06 Subd 2).

MCCFA faculty members have historically been involved with administrative decision-making by way of meet-and-confer committees. Specifications for those committees are included in the MCCFA Employment Contract (Article 6, Section 5, Subdivisions 1-6, pages 15-16).¹¹

UTCE faculty have been involved in administrative decisions through their faculty senate structure. That structure is established in the UTCE Master Agreement, Article 9, Sections 1-6, pages 20-22.

Selected instructors on technical campuses have had additional decision-making responsibilities as program coordinators. The level of coordinator responsibility varies by program and by campus, and the entire system of coordination is currently undergoing review. A system of coordination by division will likely replace the former system in FY2002.¹²

Contracts for management, administration, and technical support personnel also include provisions for participation in administrative decision-making. The MAPE contract provides for meet and confer in Article 32, page 99. The AFSCME contract calls for local Labor/Management Committees in Article 31, section 3, page 78. MMA also provides for Labor/Management committees in Article 28, sections 1 and 2, page 59.

After the 1997 merger, two college-wide meet-and-confer committees were created to participate in college governance. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) first authorized a college governance committee consisting of the president and representatives from both faculty groups. A second MOU then cleared the way for a college-wide curriculum committee to form in January 1999. The committee's purpose is to advise administration on matters of curriculum for the five campuses and to help with the combined college catalog.

Strengths

¹¹ Copies of current employee contracts are available in the resource room.

1. Both Minnesota public law and MnSCU policy require faculty and staff participation in college governance. Without this legal support, management could operate without the advantages of the meet-and-confer process.
2. Merging the two faculty associations into MSCF should eliminate some of the obstacles to blending the liberal arts and technical college cultures.

Challenges

1. There is a perceived lack of administrative commitment to the meet-and-confer process among faculty and staff. Evidence of this is the historic lack of faculty and staff involvement in the budgeting process and their perceived lack of influence on decisions made by the governance committee.
2. Many faculty members do not serve on committees or participate in the meet-and-confer process. Only a small number on each campus view such service as important. Their reluctance may be due to prior disappointments in the process, a perception that faculty input is not valued, the responsibilities of committee work that detract from time spent teaching, or the clash of cultures that resulted from the merging of technical college faculty, administration, and mission with liberal arts faculty, administration, and mission.
3. The lack of participation in extra-classroom activities is leading to a crisis of leadership among faculty and staff. Veteran faculty and staff must serve as mentors to new faculty to develop new leadership.
4. The UTCE contract makes a faculty senate the “forum for campus faculty to act in full partnership with campus administration in determination of campus operations, policy and planning prior to decision-making.” A senate’s size may vary and, on some campuses, all faculty

¹² A current list of divisions and division chairs will be in the resource room.

members may participate along with up to three administrators or employees from outside the bargaining unit. Liberal arts faculty are more accustomed to working in small meet-and-confer committees (six faculty members) and one designated administrator, and the MCCFA contract specifies certain matters that must be discussed at meet-and-confer sessions – college budget, duty day activities, new program proposals, discontinuation of courses or programs, reductions in faculty, changes in college organization, academic standards, and credit offerings. A new contract may reconcile these differences in practice and expectations.

5. With five campuses in such a large geographical area, it is difficult to bring people together for meetings. ITV and video conferencing have been used, but scheduling and technical limitations of those resources sometimes also limit the free exchange of ideas.

6. Arranging meetings for people on five campuses also creates difficulties in adhering to a one-week prior to meeting policy for distributing agenda items and related printed information. Involved faculty and administrators must submit materials in a timely manner for them to be carefully considered.

7. Because of difficulty scheduling meetings, some complex and life-changing decisions are made without the benefit or even the possibility of widespread consultation or consensus.

Student Leadership

Minnesota West has policies and procedures for establishing student governments, so students are both empowered and encouraged to participate in college decisions. Students at each campus may determine whether to organize a separate student government or to cooperate with student leaders on other campuses. Students may consult with statewide student organizations when they make such decisions. Student governments may send representatives to non-union campus committees.

Student government has the exclusive right to charter student clubs and organizations at Minnesota West. However, the college president must approve all charters. Among the chartered groups and organizations currently active at Minnesota West are campus student senates, a regional student senate, *Alpha Nu Kappa*, the Worthington chapter of *Phi Theta Kappa*; the Business Professionals of America (BPA), a professional organization for students in business and office occupational programs; Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA), a professional student organization for students in trade, industrial, technical, or health organizations; and Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA), a national organization that promotes leadership, career skills, and interaction with health workers. Students may also participate in music, intercollegiate athletics, intramural athletics, extramural athletics, and theater.

Strengths

1. With very little effort, Minnesota West students can be involved in making decisions and creating policies. Although they are not always used, structures exist that allow students to be heard.
2. When many persons work together to solve common problems, creative solutions can often result. Minnesota West has the potential for much creativity. Solutions to problems here may serve as models for other geographically challenged colleges in the future.

Challenges

1. Satisfying the educational needs of both transfer and technical college students while keeping up with new laws and regulations is a constant challenge that requires a great deal of administrative and faculty attention and energy.

2. Merging two higher education cultures on five disparate campuses into one comprehensive college has been and will continue to be an enormous challenge for student government as well as faculty, administration, and staff. Just as liberal arts and technical college instructors and administrators have different traditions, students in the two cultures also have different academic goals, histories and expectations.

Student Resources

Numbers

Minnesota West enrollment has remained stable or increased slightly at all campuses since the merger. Increased attention and refined approaches to marketing should ensure that the college will continue to have sufficient numbers of students to accomplish its stated educational purposes.

Student Services

Minnesota West provides developmental courses on all campuses, as well as tutoring services, ESL courses, libraries, computer centers, bookstores, and food services. Three Minnesota West campuses also offer childcare services. These services are described in various publications, including the *College Catalog*, the *Student Handbook*, and semester schedules.

Counseling/Advising

Every student who enrolls at Minnesota West is assigned to an advisor or counselor. Counseling is available on each campus. Both career advising and personal counseling are offered at no cost to students.

Orientation

Orientation sessions for new students are held on each campus and online at the beginning of each semester. Orientation is designed to acquaint students with college

expectations, services, and personnel. Students receive information on advising, registration, and student life. All new students are encouraged to attend or participate in an orientation session.

Bookstores

Each Minnesota West campus provides a bookstore where students can purchase textbooks, school supplies, clothing, souvenirs and sundries. Allocated space for bookstores varies from 600 to 1200 square feet. Each campus has a bookstore manager, but managers at Pipestone and Canby have additional campus duties. Sales from 1999 to 2000 decreased from \$941,238.87 to \$804,352.10. At the Canby campus, total sales went from \$98,524.27 in 1999 to \$90,346.85 in 2000. Sales at Granite Falls went from \$160,423.15 in 1999 to \$152,466.97 in 2000. At Jackson, sales increased from \$180,217.18 in 1999 to \$197,463.38 in 2000. Sales at Pipestone increased from \$135,042.31 in 1999 to \$142,745.55 in 2000. At Worthington, sales diminished from \$367,031.96 in 1999 to \$311,696.20 in 2000.

Total profit from campus bookstore operations fell from \$77,902.67 in 1999 to \$65,016.91 in 2000. Bookstores made money in both years on all campuses except Granite Falls, where losses totaled \$1,312.91 in 1999 and \$1,210.17 in 2000.

Food Services

Each Minnesota West campus provides a food service for students, faculty, staff, and special activities on campus. Hours of operation vary by campus. Taher, Inc., 5570 Smetana Drive, Minnetonka, Minn., has managed the food services for the past four years. The contract is up for renewal annually.

Childcare Services

Childcare services are available at Granite Falls, Jackson, and Pipestone campuses. All of the childcare operations are contracted and the operators pay minimal rent to the college for the

spaces they occupy. User fees vary by center. None of the childcare operations are connected to instructional programs, although some may provide internships or campus employment to Minnesota West students.

The future of childcare at Minnesota West is currently being reviewed. Rents charged to the operators are too low to cover utility and maintenance costs, and most of the children cared for at the centers belong to workers from local communities rather than college students or staff. In FY2001, children of students accounted for only 23.6 percent of children cared for at the centers, while children of faculty and staff accounted for 13.48 percent of the total children served.

Campus Health and Safety

Each Minnesota West campus maintains a health and safety committee of up to 10 members. The purpose of the committees is to ensure that staff can work and students can learn in a healthy, safe, and hazard-free environment. Each campus committee meets on a regular schedule, records minutes, and has a published mission statement. Members of the committees include the campus CEO or designee, faculty, staff and at least one student.

In 1998, Minnesota West underwent a safety audit conducted by the Workplace Safety Division of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (MDLI). Most of the problems the audit uncovered were minor and were corrected shortly after the report was issued. No plans are currently in place for a follow-up audit, but Minnesota West continues to involve the MDLI in planning and development.

Safety committees are required to conduct safety audits of buildings and programs on each campus. Results of their audits are forwarded to the college facilities director, who takes appropriate measures to correct any problems. In addition, faculty, staff, administrators and

students are encouraged to report unsafe or questionable conditions, practices or procedures to safety committee members whenever they see them.

Minnesota West has created a *Critical Incident Plan* to help correct hazardous situations or conditions on any campus. The plan requires and outlines procedures for managing incidents, documenting problems, and filing follow-up reports. The plan also requires the college to publish an annual *Critical Incident Report* for all campuses.

Minnesota West's CTS division conducts general safety and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training throughout the region. A college priority is to model the principles of that training in its own operations and facilities.

Information and policies regarding health and safety are included in the *Student Handbook*, the *Faculty Handbook*, and the *Employee Handbook*.

Strengths

1. Maintaining campus safety is a priority backed by college policy and state and federal law.
2. Each Minnesota West campus has a safety committee that meets regularly to consider and act on safety and health issues.
3. Minnesota West encourages individuals to report unsafe acts, conditions, policies, and procedures through its AWAIR (Workplace Accident/Injury Reduction) program on each campus.
4. Minnesota West has in-house resources to provide safety training and audits.
5. If a critical incident or hazardous event would ever affect operations at one Minnesota West campus, other campuses could provide assistance or temporary facilities until the situation is resolved.

Challenges

1. Safety audits are conducted regularly at all campuses. The challenge is to find cost-effective solutions to the problems the audits reveal.
2. Minnesota West's comprehensive curriculum requires many types of classrooms and facilities, which makes college wide "one-size-fits-all" safety policies and procedures difficult to develop and manage.

Chapter 6

Criterion II, Part 2

Financial Resources

Authority

Minnesota West is a designated Minnesota state community and technical college by virtue of Minnesota Statute 136.F.10.

Responsibility

The college president has overall responsibility for the operations of Minnesota West. The vice-president of finance is responsible to support the college mission and fulfill the goals and objectives of the college by managing the college budget. A business officer on each of the five campuses helps the vice president of finance meet that responsibility.

Each campus business office has authority and responsibility to receive, record, and deposit receipts and to manage purchases and accounts payable. Minnesota West also has a central business office at Canby that houses a payroll clerk and an accounting technician.¹³

Resources

Funding for Minnesota West comes from two major sources, state allocations and tuition. State allocations are based on full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment with a two-year lag. That is, fiscal year FY2002 funding will be based on FY2000 enrollment. This formula makes 92 percent of funding dependent on FTE. For FY1997, FY1998, and FY1999, revenues from the state

¹³ An organizational chart is available in resource room.

appropriation were 68 percent, revenues from tuition were 24 percent, and revenues from all other sources totaled 8 percent.¹⁴

Budget Development

Minnesota West begins its budget development process by projecting revenues to be received from the state allocation, tuition and other sources. Estimates of state allocations are available from the MnSCU board at various times during the legislative cycle. Tuition is estimated based on projected FYE and proposed or approved tuition rates. Other revenues include Carl Perkins funding, gate receipts, rent, resale profits, and other sources.

The second step in the budgeting process is gathering information on proposed expenditures. The finance department prepares budget worksheets and distributes them to appropriate members of the President's Council. The worksheets are then further assigned to department leaders for recommendations. The worksheets include information on cost centers, two-year histories of budgets and expenditures, the current year's budget numbers, empty columns for the next year's budget proposals, and space for relevant comments that may inform and enlighten final decisions in the budgeting process.

The requests are reviewed and approved by each responsible member of the President's Council before they are passed on to the finance office. Once they are all collected, the members of the council build a budget based on the requests, considering such factors as carryover funds, estimated revenues, anticipated growth of the college, and documented areas of concentration, such as marketing in 1999-2000 or the development of additional cross-campus marketing groups in 2000-2001.¹⁵

¹⁴ Allocation reports are in resource room.

¹⁵ Budget worksheet, budget draft, and sample memo to Laura King are available in resource room.

Types and Purposes of Fund Accounts

Minnesota West uses accounting fund codes developed for the MnSCU integrated records system. The codes were developed to meet the requirements of governmental accounting and the recording needs of the National Association of College and University Business Officials (NACUBO). The major funds include general, customized training, federal grants, state grants, federal financial aid, state financial aid, and auxiliary funds. The general fund accounts for operations, capital expenditures, and repair and replacement funds not listed elsewhere. The customized training fund reports financial activities associated with hour-based education. Auxiliary funds include food services, childcare, bookstore accounts, and parking operations.¹⁶

Financial Management

In addition to the president and the vice president of finance, a variety of others are involved in reviewing Minnesota West's financial position. The President's Council receives monthly budget reports showing budgeted and actual expenses for the general fund, the customized training/continuing education fund, resale accounts, and the equipment and repair/replacement fund. Details for department's expenditures are available upon request and budget updates are distributed regularly to department heads.¹⁷

Accounting Controls

The MnSCU integrated records system has built-in controls for processing payroll and accounts payable. Rights to portions of the system are set up by request at the MnSCU computer center at Mankato, Minnesota. Rights are granted only to employees with authorized signatures. Control features include authorizing only certain employees to complete specified tasks and

¹⁶ GFS Fund Codes, Chart of Accounts, Notes to Financial Statements are in resource room.

¹⁷ President's Council monthly report, 512 balance available report and 531 General Ledger are available in the resource room.

limiting the types and numbers of tasks that one employee can complete in an accounting cycle. For example, no single individual can initiate a purchase order, approve it, and then pay the invoice. Similarly, no one individual can set up a payroll assignment, enter the hours worked, and approve the payroll. Nearly 80 percent of Minnesota West's general fund expenditures go for salaries and benefits. The system also will not allow for an automatic payment to either employees or vendors for amounts outside the limits originally programmed into the system. It is also a violation of state statute for employees to make unauthorized purchases. Should purchases be made without authorization or before encumbering is documented, when encumbering amounts are insufficient for the purchase, or when quote/bid regulations are not followed, a signed document must be attached to the corrected purchase order with detailed explanations.¹⁸

Accountability

The Minnesota Legislature requires MnSCU institutions to be audited once every three years. The MnSCU board approved the most recent audit in September 1999.

The Legislative Auditor's office also completes a statewide annual audit of all financial aid. The financial aid issued by Minnesota West is part of that audit sample.

MnSCU also maintains an internal auditing department that completes focused reviews of particular functions as determined by the MnSCU board. These reviews are intended for purposes of disclosure and correction, so errors do not necessarily carry penalties. They are meant to be part of MnSCU's plan for continuous improvement.

In 1997, Minnesota West entered into a partnership with the U.S. Department of Education to strengthen its student services administrative procedures. The USDE Quality Assurance Program (QAP) is based on the principles of Total Quality Management and its goal

¹⁸ Security request form and 16A letter are in resource room.

is to ensure that member institution follow federal financial aid guidelines and seek ways to improve delivery systems.¹⁹ The partnership agreement was approved July 29, 1997.

Access to Information

Reports on all data related to MnSCU college management can be found at <http://www.its.mnscu.edu/data/> or at the legislative auditor's site, www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West is proud of the results of its first legislative audit. The audit revealed significantly fewer areas for concern than at other state colleges, and Minnesota West was one of only six in the state that received the Chancellor's Award of Excellence for financial reporting in both FY1999 and FY2000.
2. Although the deficit projections for FY2000 and FY2001 were intentional, Minnesota West has maintained a fund balance that meets MnSCU guidelines of 5-7 percent of current year revenues.²⁰
3. The college has processes in place to allow faculty and staff to contribute to budgetary decisions.

Challenges

1. Increased training for administrators, instructors, and staff is needed to improve communication between the financial office and other departments, especially academics. This problem is typical of communications rifts between finance and other departments MnSCU wide, so MnSCU must be involved in eradicating the problem.

¹⁹ The Legislative audit report and Minnesota West and MnSCU financial aid and quality assurance documents are in the resource room.

²⁰ Carryover reports are in the resource room.

2. MnSCU is currently developing a new allocation method. It is not yet certain what changes this method will entail, but with 68 percent of revenues coming from state allocation, even a minor negative change could have a significant impact on college operations.

3. Minnesota's current governor's position on funding higher education has become radically conservative in the past year. Reductions in state allocations will create new and unforeseen challenges.

4. The 2001 Minnesota legislature's last-minute compromise on a parsimonious higher education allocation forced Minnesota West to reduce support staff and raise tuition by 16.9 percent for the 2001-2001 academic year.

Chapter 7

Criterion II, Part 3

Physical and Academic Resources

Physical Resources²¹

Minnesota West occupies space in 41 buildings at five campuses and two centers. Total area occupied by Minnesota West buildings is 571,409 square feet.

The Canby campus is set on a 76-acre site on the west side of the Canby community. Building space at Canby campus totals 107,570 square feet in six primary and four secondary structures. The buildings include the concrete Englund Hall, the main building on campus, and the remaining buildings are slab-on-grade metal buildings. Englund Hall needs a new roof and mechanical systems. The metal buildings need reskinning, re-insulating, and new heating and ventilation systems.

Granite Falls campus site includes three main buildings enclosing approximately 97,600 gross square feet. All of its buildings were constructed between 1965 and 1992 and are in generally good condition. The central heating unit of the main building was installed in the original construction in 1965 and subsequent building additions have rendered the system inadequate to distribute heat evenly through the entire building.

Jackson campus consists of one main facility and three additions with total gross square feet of approximately 119,550. Its buildings were constructed from 1966 to 1989. The Jackson buildings generally are in good condition, although the MnSCU system facilities report estimated

deferred maintenance costs at \$3.5 million. Most of the recommended maintenance was for accessibility, ventilation, and grounds.

At Pipestone, facilities include one main building, constructed in 1966, with additions built in 1969, 1977, 1978, and 1988, a day care building, built in 1904 as part of the Pipestone Indian School, and a north building, constructed in 1970 and expanded in 1972. Pipestone buildings enclose approximately 119,500 gross square feet. The main building is in good condition, but the day care facility and the north building are in fair to poor condition.

Four main structures currently exist on the Worthington campus. The Administration/Classroom building was constructed in 1965, the Activities Building was built in 1968, the Fine Arts building in 1971, and the Information Technologies building constructed in 1975 as a production agriculture building, then renovated for library, interactive television, and computer instruction in 1993. Three of the buildings are connected with covered walkways built in 1995. Total enclosed space at Worthington is 124,660 gross square feet. Pauline & Associates recommend construction of a Student Resource Center with instructional spaces within the next five years.

The Marshall Center office, located in downtown Marshall, contains 2,560 square feet, while the center at Springfield is conducted in classrooms rented from the school district.

Three of the Minnesota West buildings, about 2 percent of the total gross square footage, are more than 50 years old. Seventeen of the buildings are between 25 and 50 years old and represent about 66 percent of the square footage. The remaining 20 buildings constructed within the past 25 years represent 32 percent of the square footage.

²¹ Most of the information for this section is from *Facilities Master Plan 2000* prepared by Paulien & Associates, Inc. A copy of the full report is available in the resource room.

A recent facilities review authorized by MnSCU and conducted by the ARAMARK²² Company concluded that “resources will be necessary to prevent deterioration” of the buildings older than 25 years and “to upgrade obsolete electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems that have met or exceeded their useful lives” (10). The report writers also concluded “some buildings less than 25 years old are of an age where basic building system’s expected useful lives have been exceeded and, therefore, may prove unreliable.”

The report writers also identified the college’s maintenance needs, including some 3,250 “deficiencies” at the five campuses. They estimated the cost of eliminating those deficiencies at \$17.5 million, with deficiencies totaling \$12.1 million “sufficiently urgent to be designated highest priority.” Mechanical systems were the largest area of concern (\$5.7 million), followed by exterior shells of buildings (\$4 million), building grounds (\$2.4 million), interior space restoration (\$2.3 million) safety systems (\$1.4 million), electrical systems (\$.7 million), and improvements necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (\$.4 million). The inspectors wrote that high priority deficiencies should be fixed within two years, second priority problems totaling \$3.4 million should be addressed within four years, and third priority problems totaling \$2 million should be addressed within six years.

An audit conducted in October 2000 by the Office of Civil Rights identified some needs for physical improvements at Minnesota West. Planning is underway to remedy those deficiencies by 2004. Capital budget requests for two projects, one at Worthington and one at Granite Falls, were submitted in 2001. Those projects would allow existing space to be retrofitted into compliance as well as supply additional space to the campuses.

²² The full ARAMARK report is available in the resource room.

Minnesota West also has established a safety committee on each campus. One of the committee's duties is to assess facilities at least annually to identify potential safety and security problems. On the Worthington campus, for example, the committee determined that lighting in the south parking lot was inadequate, so new lights were ordered and installed. At Jackson, concrete sidewalks that the committee deemed hazardous were replaced and eyewash sinks were installed in shop areas.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West has a master facilities plan approved by the MnSCU board of trustees.
2. Minnesota West's buildings are generally structurally sound and well maintained.
3. The college has a facilities master plan to guide its growth for the next 30 years.

Challenges

1. Minnesota West buildings are aging and in need of retrofitting to comply with the law and to continue to be useful in the future. Funds must be allocated to meet those needs.

Information Technology and Distance Education

Minnesota West is spread over a wide area, so it is very interested in building infrastructure for distance learning. Though the primary goal of distance education is to provide alternative access for students in the local service area, some Minnesota West programs, such as a lamb and wool certificate program, also have the potential to serve students with special interests throughout the world.

At Minnesota West, an associate vice-president for distributed learning and technology works with director of technology services, a computer specialist, and technical support persons on each campus to encourage, direct, train and support faculty develop courses in technology based formats.

Interactive television (ITV) instruction was first offered by Worthington Community College in 1988 and continues to play a vital role in linking the five college campuses and communities. The first total web course, Physical Education 1130, was activated in January 2000. A sociology course and accounting courses using both web and ITV started in fall 2000, and several other web courses are now under construction and will be offered within the next two years.

Computer Services

Each Minnesota West campus provides faculty and staff with office computers as well as campus computer centers that provide students with up-to-date hardware, software and access to the Internet for completing assignments. Computer hours vary from campus to campus. All Minnesota West faculty, staff, and students have e-mail accounts. A Minnesota West home page provides off-campus access to library materials and services, registration, grades, and other important college information. The web page is frequently enhanced to provide students with increased online services.

The number of computers on Minnesota West campuses changes frequently, but in March 2001, Canby reported having 177 units, Granite Falls had 221, Jackson had 241, Pipestone 245, and Worthington 374. The Canby campus has four computer classrooms, all of which are open to students when classes are not in them. Granite Falls, where a laptop wireless pilot program was initiated in fall 2000, has seven computer classrooms. Jackson has three computer classrooms and one open center. Pipestone has two computer classrooms. Worthington has four classrooms (three PC and one Macintosh) and one open center.

Paulien & Associates, Inc., completed an *Information Technology Analysis* for Minnesota West in September 2000. The report examined infrastructure and networking, communication

technologies, teaching and learning technologies, professional development and support, IT organization and staffing, hardware and software, and IT governance and planning on all Minnesota West campuses.²³ Among other conclusions, the study found that, although Minnesota West has been aggressive about building IT infrastructure, providing IT services and training to faculty, students, and staff has lagged behind. The study also found that the college needs more “basic instructional and presentation equipment and software to prepare students adequately in their fields” (1) and that “IT staffing levels have been insufficient for providing adequate user training to faculty, students, and staff” (1).

The Paulien study recommended creation of a planning group to help with governance and planning of IT projects, a budgeting plan that would ensure consistent annual funding to meet IT needs of all campuses, closer integration of IT planning with college academic, fiscal, and facilities planning efforts, more organized college-wide professional staff development and training, and the addition of technical staff persons. All of those recommendations are now being considered for implementation.

The associate vice-president for distributed learning and technology and the director of technology also summarized Minnesota West distance learning activities in a report to the President’s Council in early 2000. The report described distance learning activities and priorities and included plans for curriculum and instruction, program assessment, library and learning resources, student services, facilities and finances, and future development.²⁴

²³ A copy of the Paulien IT analysis is in the resource room.

²⁴ The report for 2000 is in the resource room.

Libraries

Mission

The mission of Minnesota West libraries is to enable learners through its services and instruction. Service involves the provision of whatever materials, electronic resources, equipment, assistance and guidance are required by the user. The function of instruction is implemented through assisting the students to inquire, to search, to evaluate, and to develop a commitment to seeking information.

The library mission is consistent with the Minnesota West mission, “serving the varied educational needs of our diverse populations in ...supportive settings.”

The Worthington campus library was started in 1936 when Worthington Junior College opened its doors. The central libraries at Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, and Pipestone were organized in 1993, some 30 years after the colleges were started. Before 1993, collections of resource materials were maintained for each program of study on the technical campuses. Worthington campus has a long tradition of supporting and improving its library, whereas the other campus libraries are still young and developing.

Library Objectives

Each spring, library staff reconsiders the mission and goals, reflecting on program needs, current technology requirements, and the focus of the greater library community. Working objectives for the next academic year are also developed in the spring.

In the fall, the library director prepares an annual report to the vice president of academic affairs.²⁵ This report includes quantitative and qualitative data and an assessment of the previous

²⁵ See Library Documents: Annual Reports in the resource room.

year's goals. The library director uses IPEDS data to compare with other libraries in Minnesota and the nation.

Library Organization and Administration

The library functions as a unit under the vice president of academic affairs. The library director provides the leadership and development of information resources and library services for the college. The director is responsible for developing one Minnesota West library with appropriate facilities and services on each campus and a virtual library on the Internet. The director is a member of the vice president of academic affairs' advisory group.

Campus librarians are assigned to an individual campus and work as a team to provide library resources and services for students and faculty. One librarian is responsible for Worthington, one for Jackson, and one for Canby-Granite Falls-Pipestone.

Each technical campus has a part-time library technician. The liberal arts campus has a part-time office specialist.²⁶

Library Staff

The library director organizes and coordinates an integrated library program, including long-range planning, development and evaluation of services, and establishment of budgets, policies and procedures. The director also develops and maintains the library web site, coordinates web-based services and library support for distance learning courses and new programs, and monitors and evaluates new and emerging technologies.

Campus librarians provide reference and bibliographic instruction and work together to select and develop library collections. All librarians have strong reference and service backgrounds and enjoy the challenges of new technologies. Their previous experiences as

university, comprehensive community/technical college, and public library librarians bring a valuable perspective to the library team.

Library technicians assist librarians in the daily operation of the library. The office specialist has college-wide responsibilities along with campus responsibilities of collection maintenance. All of the support staff (with experience ranging from one to seven years) are part-time employees and have developed skills with on-the-job training rather than formal library training. Support staff assignments are Canby 50 percent of full time (.529), Granite Falls 60 percent (.611), Jackson 63 percent (.632), Pipestone 61 percent (.614). Hours are scheduled for days when classes are in session. A limited number of hours are scheduled during the ten weeks of summer classes. The Worthington specialist's assignment is 65 percent during the academic year and 50 percent in the summer.

When the Canby-Granite Falls-Pipestone librarian resigned shortly before the 1999 fall semester, the college was unable to hire a librarian for that academic year. Although the library director took responsibility for all the libraries, the libraries suffered from the vacancy. During that time, centralized acquisitions and cataloging procedures were established. Although some local campus control has been compromised by it, centralized cataloging is both efficient and beneficial.

Librarians complete a self-evaluation, and the library director completes a peer evaluation for each librarian. Both are submitted to the Worthington campus CEO who uses these instruments to evaluate librarians in accordance with the MCCFA contract. The library director,

²⁶ See Library Documents: Staff Position Descriptions and Librarians' Evaluations in the resource room.

with assistance from campus librarians, annually evaluates library technicians and the office specialist based on their position descriptions of duties and responsibilities.²⁷

Communication is an important part of library operations. Librarians have regular staff meetings (ITV and face-to-face) with the director. All library staff meeting together as a team has encouraged communication using e-mail or the telephone to ask one another for help or to offer help. Librarians and support staff members are encouraged to participate in staff development activities and in faculty/staff campus and college-wide committees. Library staff currently participates on curriculum, governance, general matters, personnel search committees, TLTR, safety, and technology committees.

Library Budget

The library director prepares and submits the fiscal year library budget each spring. Campus librarians provide recommendations in this process. Once budgets are set, they are given to campus librarians to spend. Approval for all library purchase orders rests with the director. The director monitors campus budgets and provides librarians with a monthly budget report. The director is also responsible for any budget changes after the initial budget is set.²⁸

Minnesota West libraries receive 2.7 percent of the general and operating budget, according to a report prepared by an MnSCU Funding Allocation Committee.²⁹ According to ALA standards, libraries should receive 6 percent of the budget. Library budgets have seen some increase in the past several years. The Minnesota legislature provided supplemental funds for library materials for FY1999 and FY2000. With these funds, libraries have purchased hundreds

²⁷ See Library Documents: Staff Position Descriptions and Librarians' Evaluation in the resource room.

²⁸ See Library Documents: FY01 Budget in the resource room.

²⁹ See Library Documents: Library Allocation in the resource room.

of books and videos as well as subscriptions to online databases. Revenues generated from fines and lost materials are also deposited into library budgets.

Library Collections and Access

The libraries use MnSCU/PALS for the online catalog, circulation, interlibrary loan, and acquisitions. Worthington began using the serials system during the 2000-2001 academic year. In September 2002, the college will migrate to a new library system, *Ex Libris*, as mandated by a statewide project. Each library's collection, containing a variety of formats, supports the curriculum of its campus.³⁰ In addition, the Worthington library supports the liberal arts curriculum across the college. Materials are moved from campus to campus via a daily courier system managed by the library director.

The physical libraries are supplemented and complemented by a virtual library. The online information includes WebPALS, the online catalog, databases purchased with MINITEX consortia purchasing agreements, and hundreds of general and subject reference links. Web pages on library services, library information, research help and Internet search strategies provide vital information to students and staff.³¹ Bibliographic instruction centers around the resources available on the web site.

No attempt is made to build general liberal arts collections at each campus, but rather to develop the library web collection so students can use resources at any time and from any place. With the rapid development and acquisition of online databases and reference websites, library staff has some difficulty being prepared to assist students in the use of new online resources. Many students are accessing the library website outside the facility where no staff help is available. Results of a survey given to students in FY2000 showed that students accessed the

³⁰ See Library Documents: Collections in the resource room.

library website as often from home as from the library or computer lab. The ability to provide reference assistance to these students is a challenge.³²

Minnesota West's library collection includes more than 45,700 items, including books, non-print printed materials, and periodicals. The collection is distributed among campuses: Canby (1,756 items), Granite Falls (2,701), Jackson (2,869), Pipestone (2,586), and Worthington (30,494). The collection size is well below ALA standards. The library provides online access to 13 general and subject-specific periodical databases and 14 subject-specific reference databases. Full text articles are available for thousands of periodical titles. The reference databases are all full text, many with images.

The Worthington campus catalogs its collection using the Dewey Decimal system, while the technical campuses catalog in the Library of Congress system. This does not hinder centralized cataloging and no plan is in place to change either system.

All collections are in need of weeding. Potential items for elimination are identified in the collection development process. Input from faculty is requested and vital to this process.

An adequate number of computers in the libraries provide access to the library web site resources. Library staff and campus technicians maintain computers. Computers are replaced on a three-year rotation plan.³³

User Services

Reference services: Worthington campus library has a librarian at the reference desk nearly all hours that the library is open (not from 8-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday). The Jackson campus library has a reference librarian during 40 percent of open hours with a library technician

³¹ See Library Documents: Web Site in the resource room.

³² See Library Documents: Assessment FY00 in the resource room.

³³ See Library Documents: Equipment Replacement Plan in the resource room.

available at other times. The Granite Falls library has a reference librarian three days per week, while Canby and Pipestone libraries have a reference librarian one day each week. As a result, students often go to library technicians for reference assistance. Students are also encouraged to use the “Ask a reference question” section of the library web site.³⁴ Responding librarians log the types of questions they receive and answer at this site.³⁵

Hours: Library hours vary from campus to campus and on the technical campuses may change each semester to better meet the needs of students. Worthington is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. The technical libraries are generally open Monday through Thursday from 8 or 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 8 or 9 a.m. to noon on Fridays. Some evening hours are also scheduled.³⁶ A librarian is available on the Worthington campus each day during the 10-week summer session. On the technical campuses, library technicians staff the libraries 10 to 15 hours per week during the summer session.

Interlibrary loan: MINITEX, a statewide interlibrary loan system, is available on all campuses for those materials not owned by the libraries. Periodical articles can be obtained in two to three days, books in seven to ten days. When possible, items are borrowed from nearby Southwest State University. Librarians also work with local public libraries; some area high schools request periodical articles from Minnesota West via a regional library system. ILL usage has decreased with the availability of full-text periodical databases and increased use of the Internet. Using the library web site, students have the ability to request ILL from anywhere any

³⁴ See Library Documents: Ask a Reference Question in the resource room.

³⁵ See Library Documents: E-mail Reference Logs in the resource room.

³⁶ See Library Documents: Hours and Campus Information in the resource room.

time.³⁷ On campus students pick up borrowed items in the library. Distance students may have items mailed directly to their homes.

Instruction: Librarians use the library web site as a basis for instruction. Current instructional goals³⁸ include new student orientation, class bibliographic instruction, and an Internet strategies unit. Librarians recognize the value of information literacy and have developed instructional goals and outcomes for these sessions using the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standard for Higher Education.³⁹ Classes are conducted via ITV or in computer classrooms. Librarians promote instructional programs by directly contacting instructors. Librarians teach Internet search strategies as part of the Introduction to Computers class on the Worthington campus.⁴⁰ Students achieve competencies in searching and evaluating databases as well as the web search engines. Because this is a required course, librarians have an opportunity to reach a large number of students each semester.

Distance Services: Distance learning services are provided through links on the library home page. Processes are in place to provide users with library cards, log-on information and reference services. A proxy service was added this past year, making it easy for students to access library databases from home.⁴¹

Library Facilities

All library facilities have been remodeled within the last few years. Square footage and seating is adequate and above the recommended 10 percent of enrollment. Libraries at technical

³⁷ See Library Documents: Interlibrary Loan in the resource room.

³⁸ See Library Documents: Library Instructional Goals in the resource room.

³⁹ See Library Documents: ACRL Standards in the resource room.

⁴⁰ See Library Documents: Internet Search Strategies in the resource room.

⁴¹ See Library Documents: Distance Services in the resource room.

campuses will need physical changes as collections grow. Library staff workspace is inadequate at Canby and Granite Falls campuses. Assessing facilities is an ongoing process.

Assessment

Each library collects quantitative data and instructional assessments, which are forwarded to the library director for compilation. A log file analyzer has been installed on the web site. Data will be compiled and used by librarians for evaluation of the web site.

During the last week of each semester, assessment questionnaires are given to classes that received library instruction during that semester. In FY2000, 95 percent of students surveyed responded that library instruction was helpful for their assignments. An increasing number of students go to the Internet for class assignments. Some 39 percent indicated that they used the Internet, 28 percent used the library home page, and 33 percent used the physical library resources. In the FY2001 assessment, students overwhelmingly felt the bibliographic instruction was helpful and librarians were competent instructors.⁴²

According to Noel-Levitz, Minnesota West students perceive library staff as helpful and approachable, and library resources and services as adequate.⁴³ On the Worthington campus, FY2000 new student orientation surveys rated the library session a 3.6 on a 1-4 scale.⁴⁴ Improved assessment information is an ongoing goal.

Strengths

1. The Minnesota West library has facilities and collections that are adequate to meet student needs.
2. The library has dedicated support staff that is focused on student success.

⁴² See Library Documents: Assessment FY01 in the resource room.

⁴³ See Library Documents: Noel-Levitz in the resource room.

⁴⁴ See Library Documents: Student Orientation in the resource room.

3. The library has the support of technology personnel, teaching faculty, and administration.
4. The library website provides access to the online catalog for books, online databases for full-text articles and reference information, and links to Internet resources. A research help section assists students with Internet searching, evaluating and documenting sources, and an e-mail reference service.

Challenges

1. Efforts must continue to develop a team of library staff at all five campuses.
2. Instruction must be focused on teaching students research strategy skills and information literacy. Librarians must continue to develop instruction services that will meet the information needs of students today and at the same time provide them with the information-seeking skills they will need for the future.
3. The total number of library staff appears adequate, but staffing levels for each campus are well below the ACRL (American College and Research Libraries) standards. When existing staff is spread over five campuses, the result is that service is compromised.
4. Stretching available funds for resources and services to five physical libraries and one virtual library is an increasing challenge. The college library budget must be adequate to update equipment, to maintain current services, to provide new services such as electronic reserves and access to e-books. This concern is deepened by the uncertainty of how a new MnSCU allocation formula will affect library budgets.
5. Minnesota West libraries will migrate from the PALS library system to the new *Ex Libris* system from September 2, 2002, through December 27, 2002. This change will greatly impact the libraries, faculty, and the college. The entire library system (online catalog, circulation, cataloging, interlibrary loan, and acquisitions), as it now exists, will be replaced by a new system

about which existing staff knows little. A plan and a budget must be developed to train library staff in all sub-systems, to teach faculty and students, and to purchase required equipment.

Chapter 8

Criterion III

“The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.”

Minnesota Transfer Curriculum

In the early 1990s, the Minnesota Legislature ordered Minnesota’s higher education systems to develop and implement a standard core curriculum for general education that could be completed by first and second year liberal arts students and provide “seamless” transfer among public institutions. Faculty representatives from the Minnesota Community College System, the Minnesota State University System, and the University of Minnesota developed that curriculum over a three-year period. When it was finished, it was titled the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MTC), and it was to be implemented by the beginning of FY1996. For a variety of reasons, Minnesota West (then Worthington Community College) faculty and administration decided to implement the transfer curriculum for students seeking an associate of arts degree one year earlier, in fall 1994.

The MTC is primarily designed for students who seek AA degrees. It specifies learning objectives in ten major general education areas - communications, critical thinking, natural sciences, mathematical/logical reasoning, history and the social and behavioral sciences, the humanities and fine arts, human diversity, global perspective, ethical and civic responsibility, and people and the environment.⁴⁵ Minnesota West courses have been designed or modified to satisfy MTC requirements by addressing the objectives in each of the ten general education areas.

Since 1995, the MTC has been the standard for general education both statewide and at Minnesota West for students seeking AS and AAS degrees. Students receiving AS degrees must successfully complete 30 semester credits of the MTC, including at least six credits of communication and at least four credits from each of four major academic areas. At least 25 percent of the total semester credits required for an AAS degree program must be in general education and a minimum of three credits from each of three other major areas of the MTC.

The 1998 Assessment Plan

In May 1998, Minnesota West prepared a college-wide assessment plan for the newly merged college to replace the Worthington Community College assessment plan that NCA approved in 1995. The 1998 plan, which NCA also approved, described both existing practice and plans for implementing additional assessment activities at Minnesota West.⁴⁶ Progress toward achieving the goals of the plan is described later in this chapter.

The 1998 plan led Minnesota West to establish and activate a college-wide assessment committee. Faculty members from all five campuses were appointed to the committee, which also includes the vice presidents of academic affairs and student services, and one of the five campus CEOs. Initially, faculty members serving on the committee were chairs of meet-and-confer committees from the Worthington campus and presidents of faculty senates or their designees from the technical campuses. The merger of faculty associations in 2001 will likely change the selection process for and membership of the assessment committee.

⁴⁵ (See **Appendix VI-A** for complete degree requirements. The AA degree is tied directly to the transfer curriculum).

⁴⁶ *Assessment Plan for Student Academic Success*, May 1, 1998, will be in the resource room.

The Assessment Handbook

The first chairperson of the college assessment committee, an accounting instructor from the Jackson campus, created an *Assessment Handbook* during the spring and summer of 1999.⁴⁷ Though the handbook will always be a work in progress, its purpose is to define assessment and describe the function and membership of the college-wide assessment committee. More importantly, the handbook articulates faculty responsibilities for classroom assessment and explains the value of clearly stated outcomes for college classes and programs.

The handbook also specifies duties of campus assessment committees. It concludes with a list of web sites where individual faculty members can obtain ideas for alternative assessment activities. The first edition of the handbook was distributed to Minnesota West faculty members attending an all-campus duty day at Pipestone in August 1999. A revised addition was distributed at an all-faculty duty day on April 13, 2001.

Student Outcomes

Among the obstacles Minnesota West has faced in becoming a single college are the historic differences that exist in the delivery of liberal arts and technical college programs. Liberal Arts colleges traditionally offer *courses* while technical colleges offer *programs*. Students in liberal arts are typically involved with many instructors, while students in technical studies may be involved with only one or two instructors.

This fundamental cultural difference created some consternation when the imperative to document student success was presented to both faculties. While liberal arts instructors were accustomed to listing learning outcomes on course syllabi, technical college instructors listed course objectives and performance outcomes. While assimilation of the knowledge necessary for

⁴⁷ The *Assessment Handbook* is available in the resource room.

further progress in an upper division college course is an expected outcome for a liberal arts course, a reasonable outcome for a graduate of a technical program - a plumbing program, for example - is to obtain the level of competency necessary to obtain and keep a job in the field.

Syllabus forms that the two faculty groups use exacerbate the problem. The MnSCU-approved syllabus form, which liberal arts instructors use, connects with the MTC and concentrates on student learning objectives and assessments. The UTCE-approved syllabus, the Instructional Performance Systems, Incorporated® (IPSI), employs a computerized template and concentrates on teaching objectives. Neither form is universally admired by its respective users, but each has champions who do not want to change the syllabus forms they use. The compromise has been to allow faculty to continue using whichever form they prefer provided the syllabus content meets MnSCU criteria.

One of the college-wide assessment committee's first tasks was to convince all Minnesota West faculty members that they and their students need a shared understanding of learning outcomes before a program's success can be documented. The committee prepared and distributed worksheets to help instructors on all campuses identify and articulate course and program objectives. Then committee members and campus CEOs, many of whom had attended workshops and seminars on assessment, offered their help with writing objectives to instructors who requested it.

When technical instructors were first asked to document course and program outcomes, their responses varied. Some instructors immediately responded by examining their programs and identifying broad and reasonable program outcomes. Other instructors ignored repeated requests to write them. Partly because of the syllabus problem, some instructors identified dozens of *teaching* goals rather than a limited number of broader *student learning* objectives;

still others listed only two or three traditional success indicators, including successful completion of professional tests, such as National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI), licensing examinations, or professional employment after graduation.

Identifying course outcomes was the essential first step toward assessing student learning, and the essential second step was to introduce faculty to new methods of classroom assessment. Faculty development funds were allocated to build library resources on classroom assessment techniques, and in-service and brown bag lunch sessions were held so peers could share classroom assessment ideas with each other.

On April 13, 2001, Minnesota West faculty from all campuses attended a duty day seminar on assessment at the Worthington campus. The primary purpose of the April seminar was to give all instructors the time and guidance they needed to complete and formalize their student learning assessment strategies for fall semester 2001. This and many smaller assessment initiatives were supported with funding and materials from campus Carl Perkins grant funds.

On the Worthington campus, the campus curriculum committee took on the additional task of serving as the campus assessment committee. During the spring of 1998, faculty agreed to include on their syllabi the list of assessments they use to measure student success, so the local committee's task was simply to hold them accountable and collect and review their results. In February 2000, the campus assessment committee devised a follow-up document faculty could use to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of their assessment plans. Beginning in spring 2000, liberal arts faculty were asked to complete forms at the end of each semester and submit them to a designated assessment committee member at the same time they reported semester grades to the registrar.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Copies of both the syllabus and the final course assessment form are in the resource room.

A similar instrument was then developed for technical courses and programs. Faculty senates on those campuses are responsible to appoint and support assessment committees to review data there. All instructors are now expected to complete a “Course Assessment Record” and a “Course Feedback Worksheet” at the end of each semester.

Celebrations of Achievement

Minnesota West celebrates outstanding student academic achievement in various ways. Students who have earned high academic honors or special achievement awards from their divisions, programs, or national organizations are feted at campus events and/or included on Dean’s Lists that are sent out to area newspapers. At Worthington, students who have earned top honors and their families are invited to a spring academic awards banquet where their achievements are publicly acknowledged. A similar event is held on the Canby campus, where a “Student of the Year” is also identified. Each year, the Granite Falls campus conducts two awards breakfasts to announce scholarship recipients, and outstanding students from each department are recognized at graduation ceremonies. At Pipestone, a Dean’s List is sent to hometown newspapers, certificates of recognition are presented to outstanding students at student assemblies in the fall and spring, and honors students wear gold cords with their gowns at graduation ceremonies. The Jackson campus names students who earn top grades to a dean’s list each semester, and honor students wear gold cords with their gowns at graduation ceremonies.

Strengths

1. The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum is a liberal arts core curriculum for all Minnesota public colleges and universities. It is the basis for all general education degree requirements at Minnesota West.

2. Faculty members who serve on campus and college assessment and curriculum committees work together with peers and administrators to create and promote a culture of assessment at Minnesota West.
3. Resources are available to maintain and enhance assessment activities on all campuses.
4. Outstanding student academic achievement is celebrated on each campus late in the spring semester.

Challenges

1. All Minnesota West instructors must accept the need for multiple assessment measures of student learning and participate fully in assessment activities. Although much progress has been made since the merger, more must occur.
2. A single syllabus form for courses on all campuses would be less confusing to students, would clarify educational outcomes, and would narrow the gap between technical and liberal arts teaching cultures.

Progress on Implementing the 1998 Plan

The *1998 Assessment Plan* specified intended outcomes and criteria for measuring Minnesota West's progress toward achieving its mission goals. Following is a brief review of the progress the college has made and the evidence available to support those claims. Strengths and challenges are also articulated for each goal. All reports and documents mentioned will be available in the resource room.

Goal 1 – *To provide pre-professional and liberal arts courses which lead to Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees. The courses are designed to transfer to a four-year college or university and will apply toward a baccalaureate degree.*

The assessment plan specified four intended outcomes to meet this goal. The first was that AA degree recipients would meet lower division general education requirements specified by the MTC. The Worthington campus curriculum committee reviews all changes to general education courses, including course names, and all applications for courses to be added to the MTC. Before a course can satisfy one of the ten areas of the MTC, it must meet more than half of the specified objectives for that area, and the course syllabus must outline a plan for assessing those objectives. Students who successfully complete approved MTC courses will demonstrate this outcome.

The second outcome for this goal was that recipients of an AS degree would “be able to transfer to a baccalaureate or professional degree program in an appropriate field.” Minnesota West AS graduates continue to transfer successfully into four-year programs. Several articulation and 2+2 programs are in place and others are being negotiated with receiving institutions. MnSCU has established a web site that lists existing agreements and provides assistance for students who transfer at <<http://www.minnesotatransfer.org>>.

In January 2001, the college entered into agreement with National Student Clearinghouse to receive information on graduates who transfer to other institutions. This information will allow Minnesota West to monitor the progress of graduates who transfer to any college in the nation. Included will be comparison ratios of GPAs within Minnesota.

The third outcome was that “services to students will be based on understanding their educational goals.” Technical students indicate their goals by the programs they choose. When transfer students register, they indicate their majors and their plans to complete a degree, transfer before earning a degree, or just take classes. This data can be compared to exit data to determine how well Minnesota West meets the needs of entering students.

The fourth projected outcome was that Minnesota West courses would have “academic integrity.” Curricula and programs are reviewed annually using enrollment criteria, graduation rates, faculty-student ratios, and MnSCU program recommendations. Individual courses are reviewed and monitored by both local curriculum committees and the college-wide curriculum committee. All courses must have syllabi that list objectives and assessments or evaluation processes. All syllabi for liberal arts course must be submitted to the Worthington campus CEO at the beginning of each semester. All syllabi for technical courses are filed with the instructional services secretary on the Jackson campus.

The MnSCU Graduate Follow-Up Advisory Committee maintains a database to present information about graduates of instructional programs in the system. The committee defines an instructional program as “a combination of CIP [Classification of Instructional Programs] code, program name, award type, and program location.” Reports based on graduate surveys for 1998-1999 show that of Minnesota West’s 695 graduates, 63 percent were employed in areas related to their instructional program, 16.4 percent were continuing their education, and the remaining 20.6 percent were either employed in other fields, unavailable for employment, still seeking employment, or could not be located for a response.⁴⁹

Full-time instructors teach 67 percent or more of Minnesota West courses. So far, however, the goal of having 100 percent of full-time faculty with master’s degrees has not been met. Currently, 50 percent of all instructors hold master’s degrees or above, and 71 percent have at least bachelor’s degrees. Among adjunct faculty, 74.6 percent have bachelor’s degrees or above. Plans are in place to move the faculty toward achieving this objective through hiring

⁴⁹ The complete *Graduate Follow-Up Report* for 1998-1999 is in the resource room.

practices and faculty development incentives. In January 2001, NCA approved a progress report on credentials that Minnesota West submitted in October 2000.⁵⁰

Strengths

1. Campus and college-wide curriculum committees and the vice president for academic affairs work together to ensure that general education courses meet MTC standards and have academic integrity.
2. Students who transfer from Minnesota West do well at receiving institutions and in most majors can graduate with a baccalaureate degree after two additional years of full-time study.
3. Articulation and 2+2 programs are in place with several receiving institutions and efforts continue to increase those articulated transfer opportunities for Minnesota West students.

Challenges

1. Additional systems and instruments must be developed to indicate graduate intentions, overall satisfaction with the college, and transfer rates.
2. Full-time faculty must continue to enhance their credentials to move toward the goal of 100 percent of full-time faculty with master's degrees or above.
3. A more comprehensive graduate survey must be developed to provide information called for to meet the fourth objective of this goal.

Goal 2 - *To provide certificate, diploma, and associate of applied science degree courses for students working to develop and enhance occupational or technical competence leading toward employment or further education.*

⁵⁰ A copy of the *Focused Report on Faculty Credentials and Professional Development* is in the resource room

Minnesota West's all-college curriculum committee must approve all program changes for certificates, diplomas, or degrees. All diploma programs of substantial length (45+ credits) must include at least 15 percent non-technical elective credits. All AAS degree programs must include 25 percent general education credits selected from three of the ten areas of the MTC. Evidence that Minnesota West meets this goal can be found in the college catalog, transfer statistics, and student surveys.

Minnesota West instructors are attempting to establish national skills standards for each of the college's technical programs. National certification assessment tools are currently in place for 58 percent of the college's technical programs.

No formal system of surveying employers of Minnesota West graduates is currently in place, although an institutional research consultant conducted a *Survey of Business and Industry* for Minnesota West in November 1999.⁵¹ Firms that responded to the survey ranged in size from a single employee to over 600 employees. Among other conclusions, the survey found that Minnesota West was well known in the area business community and "enjoys a solid reputation for delivering quality educational and training programs"(3). Fully 85 percent had a "good" or "excellent" impression of the college (3). Eight out of ten (83 percent) said that their employees had enrolled at Minnesota West in the past, and 89 percent said that course quality was "good" or "excellent"(4).

Technical program instructors regularly converse with employers to discover how their graduates are succeeding. Advisory board members also help supply this information.

⁵¹ *Minnesota West Community and Technical College Survey of Business and Industry, September 1999* is in the resource room.

Program goals and assessments are established and documented for all programs and courses. Instructors report to campus assessment committees on the efficacy of assessments at the end of each semester.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West is committed to include general education in all of its programs of substantial length and has allocated the resources to provide the courses required to meet this commitment.
2. Learning goals and objectives are articulated for every Minnesota West program.
3. Business and industry leaders are familiar with and supportive of Minnesota West programs.

Challenges

1. Additional efforts must be devoted to develop and respond to data that shows how Minnesota West students rank nationally in skills acquired and success after graduation.
2. A more formal and regular method of surveying employers of graduates must be implemented.
3. The value of articulating course and program goals and assessing student achievement must be stressed until it becomes routine at all levels of Minnesota West culture.

Goal 3 - *To provide learning opportunities for people of varying ages, backgrounds, and abilities with a particular focus and commitment to retraining and lifelong learning.*

Students entering Minnesota West must complete the Computerized Assessment and Placement Program (CAPP). This program evaluates English, math and reading skills. Results are used to place students in general education courses appropriate for their skills. Policies are in place to exempt some students from the assessment based on college transcripts, prior education or experience. Students may also challenge CAPP results by petitioning, writing essays, or taking math pre-tests.

Post-CAPP tests were administered to Minnesota West students in spring 2000 at selected sites. A cohort (20 percent) of degree-seeking students on all campuses was tested in late winter 2001.⁵² The results of those tests were disappointing. In a cohort of 17 students taking the post-CAPP exam, seven tested higher than they scored on the entrance CAPP, four tested lower, and six were not available for comparison, because they transferred in and no CAPP scores were on record. A cohort of 14 tested in reading; five tested higher, three tested the same; four tested lower; and two could not be compared. In March 2000, a cohort of 29 college algebra students took the post-CAPP; 21 scored higher, two scored the same, and five scored lower than they scored on the entrance exam.

Placement validation studies are not yet operational, but are expected to be in place in FY2002. Also being developed is a system to block students who register on line from enrolling in courses they are not yet prepared to take.

Minnesota West's CTS department surveys employers in a 19 county region of southwestern and south central Minnesota annually to satisfy MnSCU requirements. It then must follow up the surveys with performance reports.⁵³

Strengths

1. Minnesota West offers advising and counseling services for students on every campus.
2. Academic skills in English, reading, and math are evaluated for all students entering Minnesota West, and academic counseling is available to place them in courses and programs appropriate for their skills.

⁵² Results of the tests are in the resource room.

⁵³ Copies of *Results of the Employer Needs Survey 2000* and *Customized Training Network Semi-Annual Performance Report Form* are in the resource room.

3. CTS has procedures and instruments in place to determine employer needs for a skilled workforce in the region and to respond to those needs once they identify them.
4. Developmental courses and tutorial services are in place at Minnesota West to help students raise skill levels before entering college-level programs.
5. Students with limited English proficiency can be guided into ESL courses to increase their language skills.

Challenges

1. Until appropriate and effective blocks to inappropriate registration are in place, students can ignore recommendations regarding appropriate academic placement and register for courses for which they are not prepared.
2. Better data are needed to determine the efficacy of developmental courses and the relationship between CAPP scores and student success. In general, CAPP scores do not seem to correlate well with success in college algebra or college composition courses.
3. Student testing and academic support services must be offered consistently on all campuses.
4. An increasing number of students are entering Minnesota West with inadequate academic skills. Costs of raising their skill levels are burdensome to the college and the state. Minnesota West and other colleges must work more closely with K-12 districts to assess and improve the readiness of students who go to college.
5. Student interest in post-CAPP tests is limited. Scores do not affect academic standing or graduation, so those who take the exam have little incentive to test well.

Goal 4 - *To provide continuing education, management education, and customized training for professions, businesses and industries.*

Minnesota West's CTS program is described elsewhere in this document. It publishes two open enrollment catalogs annually and must regularly file employer survey and satisfaction reports to MnSCU to qualify for continued funding.⁵⁴

The number of students re-enrolling in management education programs from spring 2000 to fall 2000 was 88 percent. The percentage was lower than normal because of unusually high instructor turnover in the department. Net worth of students enrolled in management programs increased by approximately 8 percent and the farm debt to asset ratio changed by 2 percent for calendar year 1999.⁵⁵

Strengths

1. Minnesota West's CTS program has an established reputation for reliability and a network of instructors and consultants to discover and meet the training needs of area business and industry.
2. MnSCU demands regular reports from CTS programs to monitor compliance and efficacy.⁵⁶
3. Management education programs continue to attract and retain students and make a positive difference in the economic strength of the region.

Challenges

1. Downturns in the local economy, technological advancements, and higher educational funding formulas established in Saint Paul can all affect Minnesota West's ability to respond to the job training needs of the region.
2. Administrators and faculty in management programs, CTS, and traditional academic programs and support services must cooperate to clarify their missions and roles. Duplication of course

⁵⁴ Sample state reports are available in the resource room.

⁵⁵ A report on the FBM program is in the resource room.

⁵⁶ Sample state CTS reports are in the resource room.

names and similarities of course descriptions can confuse students who rely on the college catalog to guide them as they register for courses.

Goal 5 - *To provide facilities for programs, activities, conferences, teleconferences, and courses to meet community needs.*

Starting in May 2000, Minnesota West produced a long-range facilities plan that incorporates projects completed in the previous year, projects planned for the year ahead, and projects planned for the year after that. In spring 2001, much of the planning was based on information that resulted from a year-long comprehensive study by Paulien & Associates, Inc., a planning and consulting firm based in Denver, CO.⁵⁷ The Paulien study was conducted during FY2000 and included recommendations for facilities changes on all campuses through the year 2030.

Each campus has policies and procedures in place to provide access to facilities for community groups and other agencies. Community groups of all kinds take advantage of Minnesota West buildings and grounds. Campus CEOs are in charge of coordinating and documenting those uses.

CTS maintains network funding and has built a fund balance from revenue generated beyond department expenses.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West has the facilities and flexibility to continue offering courses and programs to students of all ages and interests in the region.

⁵⁷ The full Paulien report is in the resource room.

2. Minnesota West serves communities and enhances quality of life by providing access to classrooms, computing facilities, interactive television studios, science and agriculture laboratories, theaters, construction workshops, and athletic facilities.

3. Because of the Paulien study, Minnesota West has a clear understanding of its facilities needs for the next 30 years.

Challenges

1. Meeting the costs of maintaining and improving buildings and facilities is a constant challenge.

2. Knowing what the college needs and obtaining public funds to do it are separate issues. In spite of budget surpluses, the Minnesota legislature is reluctant to invest in college infrastructure and MnSCU must rank all requested college projects according to statewide needs.

Goal 6 – *To provide extended educational opportunities by means of flexible scheduling and delivery.*

Objectives for meeting this goal were to create an environment that fosters life-long learning, to assist adults with personal and professional development, and provide courses that meet relicensure requirements for occupational groups. Evidence of Minnesota West's meeting these objectives can be found in the college catalog, semester schedules, and CTS reports. The credit-bearing division of Minnesota West has increased accessibility by 10.2 percent in summer offerings and by 8.25 percent for general education classes on campus, over ITV, and for high school students and special populations, such as those who need "Survival Spanish."

Minnesota West's associate vice-president for distributed learning and technology and his staff provide guidance for an expanding schedule of online credit-bearing courses. Those efforts are described more fully in Chapter 7 of this document.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West has been offering college courses via ITV since 1988.
2. Minnesota West has evening and weekend classes, summer sessions, holiday terms, and short courses to meet student needs for alternate delivery of courses.

Challenges

1. Scheduling ITV courses at times convenient for all students is difficult. More studios would be used if they were available.
2. Video conferencing may become a reasonable alternative to travel for conducting small classes, tutoring sessions, student-teacher conferences or committee meetings.

Goal 7 – *To provide effective and efficient use of resources through partnerships with agencies, other educational institutions, businesses and industries.*

Partnerships add value to a variety of Minnesota West programs. The academic division operates in partnership with K-12 school districts, the YMCA, hospitals and nursing homes, city governments and law-enforcement entities, athletic organizations, and manufacturers and businesses. CTS partnerships are extensive and are described in MnSCU reports and elsewhere in the self-study.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West considers itself a real or potential partner in all positive enterprises in southwestern Minnesota. The college continues to seek out and enter into formal alliances with all organizations that can benefit from them.

Challenges

1. Minnesota West must maintain an awareness of potential changes in local communities and economies and aggressively lead efforts to form partnerships and alliances that can provide mutual benefits.

Goal 8 - *To provide continuous improvement processes via assessment and evaluation and upgrading of programs and services and to support the professional development of college personnel.*

The objectives for this goal were to maintain or increase funds for professional development and to encourage employees to use professional development funds. Contract settlements have created the necessary funding increases and those funds have been fully invested in staff. A faculty development committee on the Worthington campus and faculty senates on the technical campuses establish policies to guide distribution and use of the funds.

To ensure continuous improvement and measure progress toward achieving such improvement, Minnesota West monitors its operations and student satisfaction with two Noel-Levitz surveys each fall semester. Results of those surveys are generally positive, but areas needing further attention are identified each year.⁵⁸

Assessment committees are in place on each campus and a college-wide assessment committee meets monthly. An *Assessment Handbook* has been developed and provided to every

⁵⁸ Survey results from the past four years are in the resource room.

instructor. Books on assessment have been purchased and placed in campus libraries for faculty use. A college-wide workshop on assessment was conducted at the Worthington campus on April 13, 2001. Assessment feedback forms for all courses are collected from instructors at the end of each semester and reviewed by campus assessment committees.

Strengths

1. Noel-Levitz surveys provide annual information on college services and activities as well as student satisfaction.
2. Administrators encourage faculty and staff to continuously improve their academic credentials through sabbaticals, continuing education workshops, and faculty internships.
3. Faculty contracts require the state to provide funds for professional development.
4. Faculty contracts provide salary incentives for professional development.
5. The Center for Teaching and Learning provides campus and statewide workshops to help faculty improve teaching and assessment of learning.
6. As a matter of policy, Minnesota West requires that newly hired full-time instructors for transfer courses have at least master's degree credentials.
7. After much effort, the need for classroom assessment beyond traditional grading is gaining acceptance among Minnesota West faculty.
8. Materials on classroom assessment are available in campus libraries.
9. Campus assessment committees help close the "feedback loop" needed for continuous improvement by asking faculty to review the assessment tools they use and report on them at the end of each semester. The committee then reviews those reports and suggests changes. This process is evolving and will improve with experience.

Challenges

1. MnSCU policies for technical college faculty continue to support licensure through work experience rather than academic degrees as the primary credentials for hiring.
2. Language in a new MSCF contract is expected to allow “grand-fathering” of faculty credentials from the former systems, thereby minimizing incentive for existing faculty to obtain appropriate degrees for teaching in a two-year college (according to GIR 9).
3. Although campus curriculum committees collect and review assessment data from faculty, they must develop and continually refine rubrics for evaluating and analyzing it.

Goal 9 – *To provide the resources to meet the contemporary standards of facilities, information resources, technology, and teaching strategies to ensure quality educational outcomes.*

The first objective for meeting this goal was to comply with all regulations and standards for higher education facilities established by OSHA, ADA, and EPA/MPCA. To meet this goal, Minnesota West conducts annual training for all new employees and periodic refresher courses for tenured employees on these topics. Training is most often accomplished for faculty during campus meetings or duty day sessions and for classified employees at an all-staff summer workshop.

The second objective called for libraries to meet the goals of their stated mission. A description of Minnesota West libraries’ mission and progress is in Chapter 6 of this report.

The next two objectives addressed faculty development funding and goals for investing those funds. Currently, the MCCFA contract requires that \$250 per full-time instructor be allocated annually for faculty development. The UTCE contract requires that \$175 per full-time instructor be allocated annually. Faculty committees appointed by peers oversee distribution of those funds.

To reach the fifth objective, an instructional design consultant was hired through a grant received in 1999. He provides individual instruction, workshops and technical assistance on all five campuses. A coordinator in the distributed education office provides guidance to faculty who are developing online courses.

Strengths

1. Campus CEOs arrange for all mandatory training for college employees by the human services department.
2. Faculty development funds are appropriated and spent on professional development every year.
3. The college is developing an increasing number of online courses and programs to help place-bound students work toward completion of degrees.
4. Funds for purchasing needed equipment for developing online courses is supplemented through student activity fees.
5. All probationary instructors are evaluated in their classrooms at least twice per academic year. Veteran instructors go through the entire review process, which includes self-evaluation, a classroom visit, and an interview with a supervisor, once every three years.

Challenges

1. Most of the attention on curriculum development in recent years has been concentrated on technical instruction and on developing online courses and programs. Liberal arts program reviews tend to receive less attention than they did before the merger.
2. Additional funding sources must be found if the college is to provide state-of-the-art training in workshops, laboratories, libraries and offices.

Goal 10 – *To provide comprehensive student services enabling academic and personal growth toward lifetime learning.*

This goal was added to the college mission statement in 1999, so objectives and criteria for assessing progress were not included in the 1998 assessment plan. However, services to students are assessed in the Noel-Levitz survey, Carl Perkins statistics, graduation surveys and other assessment instruments.⁵⁹

Conclusion

Although Minnesota West still has room to improve assessment efforts, and fully expects to do so, it has made enormous progress toward meeting the assessment objectives established in its 1998 *Assessment Plan for Student Academic Success*. Evidence shows that the college is solidly at the second level in the “Levels of Implementation” outlined in *Addendum to the Handbook of Accreditation, 2nd Edition* published in March 2001, and is beginning to move toward the third level. The college-wide assessment committee will continue to work with student leaders, campus committees, faculty, and administration to promote participation in assessment activities until a permanent culture of assessment exists on all campuses.

⁵⁹ All these documents are in the resource room.

Chapter 9

Criterion IV

“The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.”

The Test of Time

Although Minnesota West is technically a new institution, the formerly independent institutions that formed it have operated successfully in southwestern Minnesota for decades. Those institutions have survived many changes, some more successfully than others, but they individually and collectively continue to offer meaningful and appropriate higher education experiences to students of all ages, consistent with the college’s mission and goals. Minnesota West has a qualified and stable faculty, staff, and administration, the support of its various constituencies, the financial backing of a healthy state government, and the fiscal and physical resources to continue far into the future.

Strategic Planning

History

Minnesota West’s first official strategic plan was developed in 1997 for the academic years 1998-2000. The implementation date for the plan was March 5, 1998. The plan set two goals for that period, each of which included several objectives. Strategies were set to meet those objectives and persons were assigned responsibility for directing or carrying out the strategies.

The two primary goals of the strategic plan were to

1. To expand learning opportunities at Minnesota West
2. To meet all requirements to continue NCA accreditation.

Documents considered in establishing these goals were MnSCU's 1997-2000 plan for Minnesota, the NCA report titled *Report of a Focused Visit to Minnesota West Community and Technical College, April 24 & 25, 1997*,⁶⁰ personal performance goals and objectives established by then President Ralph Knapp for FY1998, and the Carl Perkins Fund Review for FY1998.⁶¹

Three persons who were active in the development of the strategic plan in 1997, the college president, the vice president of academic affairs, and the associate vice president of academic affairs, retired at the end of the 1997-1998 academic year. Shortly after his arrival, the new president met with senior staff to review the plan and assess progress toward implementing it. During that review, the senior administrative team identified areas for additional attention, including the development of an NCA self-study plan and time line. The team also set annual goals that would fortify the strategic plan as well as respond to challenges that were unanticipated when the original plan was developed. Many of those goals have been met and the college has moved forward as a result.

A new planning development strategy was initiated during the 1999-2000 academic year with the development of the Facilities Master Plan and the NCA self-study process. Minnesota West received a \$200,000 state grant to conduct a thorough facilities development plan for all five campuses. The plan was facilitated by Paulien and Associates of Denver, Colorado, and included academic and technology components. Information for developing the plan was gathered from students, faculty, staff, and administration.

Minnesota West started developing a new Strategic Plan during the 2000-2001 academic year, but funding issues caused the process to be delayed one year. The new plan will commence

⁶⁰ A copy is in the resource room.

⁶¹ A copy of the plan is in the resource room.

in July 2001 and consider information from both internal and external constituencies. It will be developed with the assistance of the Clements Group, located in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Annual Goals

Minnesota West now sets specific annual goals at the beginning of each spring semester. The annual goals are intended to complement the Strategic Plan and move beyond it. Objectives for meeting the annual goals are established and each senior administrator is assigned responsibility for meeting those objectives. Reports on progress are filed at mid-year and again as the planning year ends and the time approaches for setting new goals.⁶²

The process of developing these goals was centralized at first, but became more collaborative in spring 2001, when setting the goals involved a team of students, faculty, staff, and administrators from each campus.

Goals set for 2001-2002 include:

Goal 1. Increase the fall-to-fall, first-time full-time 2001 student cohort retention rate to 63 percent by implementing a new retention plan.

Goal 2. Increase student cohesiveness on each campus by enhancing student services and student life.

Goal 3. Develop and implement policies and procedures for implementing new online programs and courses.

Goal 4. Increase partnerships with individuals, business and industry to enhance revenues for instructional projects.

Goal 5. Host Minnesota West's first comprehensive NCA accreditation visit.

⁶² Copies of goals and reports for 1999-2000 are in the resource room.

Goal 6. Convene a college/community task force to develop a new Minnesota West Strategic Plan.

Goal 7. Continue to identify methods and processes to improve governance and communication within the five campus/multi-union environment.

Marketing

Minnesota West's marketing efforts are coordinated from the Central Information Center (CIC) on the Pipestone campus. The director of communications and enrollment manages the CIC and reports directly to the college president. The director supervises the admissions coordinator and two secretaries. The admission coordinator supervises the five Minnesota West campus marketers and two college recruiters. The CIC director also prepares an annual report for the president's council.⁶³

Minnesota West's CIC has identified three primary audiences for its efforts - high school students, four-year college transfer students and dropouts, and the unemployed or underemployed. The most accessible of these are high school students, most of which plan to go on to college after they graduate. Many local graduates think of Minnesota West first because of its easy access and low cost. Some students enroll elsewhere and then discover they are not prepared emotionally or academically or both for moving out of their family homes or local communities. Those students must be assured that they can transfer back to Minnesota West and many do.

Secondary targets for marketing efforts include welfare recipients, alumni, disabled citizens, new immigrants, students interested in distance learning, via the Internet or ITV, and working adults who are looking to upgrade their skills.

⁶³ Sample reports will be in the resource room.

The most difficult primary group for marketers to attract consists of the unemployed and underemployed. Most of these potential students are place-bound and need classes they can complete around family schedules and, in many cases, multiple part-time jobs that provide them merely a subsistence living.

Throughout the school year and summer months, marketers meet potential students at high schools, career fairs, community celebrations, and campus open house events. During the 1998-99 academic year, marketers made 6,274 contacts. In academic year 1999-2000, contacts increased to 8,147.

In addition to face-to-face contacts, marketers also rely on the mail to attract potential Minnesota West students. The CIC has access to the Minnesota Department of Motor Vehicles Registration database for all 17 and 18 year olds within the state. The CIC uses this database for all of its direct mailings. A second database was compiled of all area Chamber of Commerce members. In the fall of 2000, the CIC sent packets to 365 primary area high schools in a three state area (South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa). Each packet included two Minnesota West catalogs, two *Viewbooks*, two college brochures, and a poster advertising “Mission Possible,” a multi-campus open house event on October 11, 12, and 14, 2000. Also, in fall semester 2000, CIC sent 1,956 smaller packets to high schools, agencies, colleges, libraries, and other entities. Each smaller packet contained a catalog, a *Viewbook*, a brochure, a poster and a return card. CIC also sent personal “Mission Possible” invitations to 6,500 area high school seniors and other potential students.

The primary CIC goal was to increase enrollment by 3 percent college-wide by fall semester 2001. It planned to reach that goal through a variety of activities, including telemarketing, which the CIC staff conducts three nights each week; distributing *Best of the West*

recruitment newspaper to potential high school students in January 2001; enlisting help from faculty and staff to attract students interested in specific majors; hosting open houses, career nights, and other community events on individual campuses; and increasing media campaigns.

Secondary CIC goals are to help with the catalog, attract more students from the growing Latino community, and help with the development of the college home page.

Fiscal Resources

The many changes in Minnesota higher education have resulted in frequent alterations of funding formulas over the past several decades. With every change, however, lawmakers have appropriated funds to cover the costs of transition. These funds have been variously labeled as “subsidies,” “guaranteed levels,” “historically under-funded allocations,” etc. For example, the formula for FY2002 is transition funded for four years with a guaranteed level not lower than FY2001. Such provisions provide fiscal stability and take much anxiety and pain out of institutional financial planning and budgeting.

The Minnesota legislature has historically been responsive to special interests when appropriating funds accessible to higher education institutions. Currently, for example, funding for educational support of projects involving agriculture, health care and start-up industries of all kinds can be obtained through state agencies such as the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership. Colleges that strive to respond to the needs of their constituents can reasonably assume that state assistance will be available to help them develop the new programs they require.

Individual colleges set tuition rates within limits the MnSCU board establishes. Although tuition represents only a part of the college’s revenue, Minnesota West must continue to increase its market share of students from the region. Increased attention to marketing and recruiting are moving the college in that direction.

When planning future budgets, the college assumes a base level of funding from MnSCU. It then projects enrollments, considering such factors as program offerings, class size, population migration, articulation agreements, and local economic conditions. The college projects these numbers five years into the future. Once these numbers are determined, planners consider the impact of union contract settlements, inflation, equipment and building needs, and other factors as they develop a balanced budget to begin the fiscal year. Factors such as carryover funds, unanticipated special allocations, or fuel price increases may come into play during the fiscal year and force decisions to increase or decrease services, reduce operating budgets, deficit spend, or carry over funds.

Planning a budget requires cooperation and participation of leaders in every area of college operations. Program reviews, curriculum changes, faculty and staff requests, marketing needs, grant expectations, new ventures in delivery systems, contract changes, reorganizations, equipment requests, and employee interviews all play a role in determining how the college will use its resources.

Partnerships/Alliances

Minnesota West values its relationships with area high schools, other colleges, the business community, private industry, and other government agencies. Many of these relationships are formal and documented. Others are historical and steeped in tradition. Descriptions of the formal partnerships and alliances are included in the discussion of Criterion 1 in Chapter 4 of this self-study.

Human Resources

Governance

Minnesota West's governance structures are described in detail in Chapter 5 of this self-study.

After a start marked by frequent staff turnover and sometimes ambiguous or tentative policy-making, the role of MnSCU has become more assertive and definitive in the past two years. Minnesota West's own administrative leadership, most of which was carried over from the two merged institutions, is learning to think more globally about solving institutional problems. Faculty roles in governance will change when the contract for a new merged association is created, but instructors on all campuses expect to continue to play a major part in institutional decision-making, as will students and classified staff.

Potential Students

Minnesota West's CIC relies on Minnesota's census information to determine the size of its potential market. Estimates on the Minnesota Planning Agency's web page (<<http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us>>) show that southwestern Minnesota will have a population of 9,760 citizens in the 15-19-year-old range in 2005, and 8,530 in 2010. Although that's a decline of more than 1,200 in the traditional college student age range, the population should continue to provide an ample number of Minnesota West students of all ages.

According to a March 2001 report by the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office, (HESO), students under the age of 24 make up an increasing proportion of Minnesota's undergraduate population. Between 1994 and 1999, enrollments of traditional students steadily increased while undergraduate headcounts of older students declined.

Faculty, Administration, and Classified Staff

Ensuring quality instruction into the future is a challenge that Minnesota West, along with educational institutions on all levels everywhere, must accept and confront. MnSCU faculty

in general are aging and nearing retirement. Citizens and lawmakers who expect educators to produce better workers and citizens with fewer resources increasingly challenge the future of the teaching profession. Lucrative offers to accept private sector positions lure skilled technical instructors out of their classrooms before they can train new skilled laborers. Skilled workers can't afford to leave their jobs to become teachers. Increasing pressures on colleges to concentrate on producing trained workers for business and industry rather than well-educated citizens redefines higher education in ways that discourage instructors who are dedicated to building culture.

A December 2000 poll of K-12 school districts conducted by Education Minnesota and Cooper & Secrest, a national survey firm based in Washington, D.C., showed that 60 percent of Minnesota's school districts face teacher shortages in the next few years. Fully 82 percent of polled districts reported difficulty finding qualified substitute teachers, and 60 percent said they had more vacancies to fill for 2000-2001 than they did five years ago.⁶⁴ Those shortages are bound to effect staffing shortages at community and technical colleges as well.

Minnesota West has already experienced difficulty attracting adjunct faculty and sabbatical replacement instructors in technical and specialty areas, such as computer science and sign language. In most academic areas, however, the quantity and quality of candidates has continued to be strong.

Physical Resources

⁶⁴ From Education Minnesota web page, <<http://www.educationminnesota.org>>

Descriptions of Minnesota West's physical resources are in Chapter 5 of this self-study, in response to Criterion 2. In 1999-2000, Paulien and Associates, Inc., of Denver, Colorado, developed a 30-year facilities plan for the five campuses of Minnesota West.⁶⁵

One of the new buildings the Paulien report recommended for the Worthington campus is a 38,111 gross square feet academic addition to the Academic/Classroom building on the Worthington campus. Funds for the design and construction of that project, approximately \$8.4 million, were to be part of Minnesota West's FY2002 capital plan. The building would represent phase one of the total project recommended by Paulien. After consulting with MnSCU facility planners, however, funds for phase two of the plan, which includes adding 3,000 square feet of space and renovating 69,000 square feet of the Administration/Classroom building will be sought first and be near the top of the FY2002 MnSCU bonding request priorities list. Cost of the renovation is estimated at \$6.3 million. If that level of funding is approved and bids for the project come in lower, extra funds will be devoted to renovating the athletic building.

Also considered for the 2002 capital plan was a 38,680 square feet addition to and 33,848 square feet renovation of buildings on the Granite Falls campus.

The goal of the "Access Transition Plan" for Minnesota West is to achieve full compliance at all five campuses by 2010. So far, renovations have included signage, automatic doorways and hardware, ADA compliant restrooms, and adaptive furniture and equipment. For 2002-2010, plans are to continue replacing non-compliant doorways, signs and restroom facilities and remodeling buildings until full compliance is achieved.

Higher Education Asset Preservation and Restoration (HEAPR) projects scheduled for 2002 include:

⁶⁵ A copy of the Paulien and Associates report is in the resource room.

1. Partial roof replacements at Canby, Worthington, Jackson, and Pipestone. \$1.05 million
2. HVAC replacements at all five campuses. \$300,000
3. Window and door replacement at all five campuses. \$318,000
4. Access and compliance adjustments on all campuses. \$600,000
5. Brick tuck-pointing on all five campuses. \$228,000
6. Energy management upgrades at all five campuses. \$110,000
7. Electrical and technology upgrades at all campuses. \$200,000
8. Science laboratory renovation at Canby and Worthington. Up to \$300,000 per campus through the MnSCU Science Laboratory Renovation Initiative

Institutional Assessment – Noel-Levitz

Since 1997, the vice-president for student services annually coordinates completion of the Noel-Levitz Institutional Priorities Survey and the Student Satisfaction Summary Report.⁶⁶

The Institutional Priorities Survey is designed to compare how staff, faculty and administrators view Minnesota West's commitment to its students and mission in terms of 11 categories. Surveys are conducted during fall semester. From 1999 to 2000, the results of the survey showed improvement in every area except academic services.

The Student Satisfaction Survey is also conducted annually late in the fall semester. In this survey, students rate eleven aspects of the college in two ways. First, they indicate how important each item is to them, and then they rate how well the institution is meeting their needs or expectations regarding each item. A "performance gap" is then determined by comparing the expectation rating to the satisfaction rating. A low "gap score" in a category indicates a high

⁶⁶ Complete results of the surveys will be in the resource room.

level of satisfaction. The “gap scores” for Minnesota West students have decreased steadily since the surveying began in 1997. When compared to national mean scores, Minnesota West students are more satisfied in nearly every area.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West, albeit a new institution, is made up of five institutions that have existed in southwestern Minnesota for many years. Those institutions are widely supported symbols of community pride and identity.
2. Strategic planning, including goal setting and review, is an on-going activity at Minnesota West. Responsible persons report twice annually on the progress made toward reaching each goal.
3. Marketing efforts are well organized, vast and varied. The CIC has adequate staff, strategies, and fiscal resources to tell Minnesota West’s story and attract students to the college.
4. Although recent budgets have been squeezed by fiscally conservative political powers, Minnesota West has stable funding sources that will enable it to continue to meet its mission.
5. State planning forecasts indicate that the region will continue to have an adequate number of potential students to attend Minnesota West for many years.
6. MnSCU administrative structures are finding focus and working beyond the early birthing pains of the now nearly seven-year-old merger of three higher education systems in Minnesota.
7. Minnesota West administrators are finding focus and thinking globally about the good of the entire institution.
8. Noel-Levitz surveys show that Minnesota West employees and students are more satisfied with college services each year. Satisfaction levels exceed the national average in nearly every category.

Challenges

1. Community identification with and pride in local campuses may be barriers to making responsible fiscal decisions about continuing future campus programs and services.
2. Long-term planning must become more structured and systematic. Too much administrative and faculty energy is spent making short-term decisions and reacting to crises.
3. Administrative travel among campuses is an inefficient use of time and must be drastically reduced. Increased use of ITV and desktop conferencing for meetings and consultations will reduce travel time.
4. The HESO study on college student ages indicates that efforts to attract traditional students from the region must continue to be the highest marketing priority.
5. Finding and keeping qualified college faculty will become increasingly difficult. Efforts to fill technical positions with instructors who have both technical and academic credentials may be especially challenging.
6. Campus buildings need to conform to student needs and public laws. Obtaining and managing funds to meet those needs will require unrelenting effort.
7. Only about 40 percent of Minnesota West instructors participate in the Noel-Levitz survey. More faculty involvement would add validity and utility to survey results.
8. Declining satisfaction with academic services must be addressed in a new strategic plan.

Chapter 10

Criterion V

“The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.”

Relationships with Other Institutions

Minnesota West prides itself on the ethical and responsible manner in which it deals with other institutions of higher learning as well as with its other external publics in the region and the state. Minnesota West complies with both the letter and spirit of laws regulating its internal and external operations. This commitment is reflected not only in the college mission, but also in partnerships, policies, procedures and practice.

In dealing with its sister institutions of higher learning, Minnesota West abides by policies established by MnSCU and state and federal laws. Minnesota West’s reputation in this regard has smoothed a path to many areas of informal cooperation and formal articulation with other institutions.⁶⁷

Minnesota West also has articulation agreements and partnerships with high schools throughout the region. Agreements are reached with individual high schools on a class-by-class basis and reviewed regularly.⁶⁸

Minnesota Allied Health programs must form partnerships with area medical care facilities. These facilities offer experience in clinical patient care, laboratory analysis and procedures, dental hygiene practices, and other valuable experience.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ A list of articulation agreements with colleges is in the resource room.

⁶⁸ A list of articulation agreements with high schools is in the resource room.

Minnesota West also has financial support from community friends and supporters. This friendship is formalized by a standard MnSCU contracts entered into by Minnesota West and the Minnesota West Scholarship and Development Foundation and the Worthington Campus Foundation.⁷⁰

Minnesota West tries to be a good neighbor and to serve the economic interests of its service area. The conclusion of a business and industry survey by Michael P. Ferranto, Ph.D., in 1999 was that “Minnesota West is well known among the business community and enjoys a solid reputation for delivering quality educational and training programs. Also, the business community feels that [Minnesota] West has made a positive impact on business and industry within its service area.”

Strengths

1. Minnesota West has entered into several partnerships and other agreements with external agencies and institutions. While some of these relationships are carried over from the past, others are new and some are still being developed. These connections benefit all parties.
2. Business and industry partners are confident that Minnesota West can and will fulfill its commitments to them and their communities.
3. Both campus foundations for Minnesota West institutions continue to grow and receive support from community leaders.
4. Minnesota West instructors, staff, and administrators are active in community institutions and services.

Challenges

⁶⁹ A list of health care facilities with which Minnesota West has agreements is in the resource room.

⁷⁰ Copies of the contracts are in the resource room.

1. Continued cooperation between Minnesota West and other regional institutions must remain an institutional priority. Not only must existing relationships receive constant attention and review, but also new relationships must be sought and aggressively pursued.

Internal Relationships

Minnesota West outlines expectations for the ethical behavior of employees and students in employee handbooks, a student handbook, a faculty handbook, and the college catalog.

The *Employee Handbook* was developed and printed in the summer of 2000. It contains information on benefits and responsibilities relevant to all college employees. The book also includes limited information regarding policies and procedures for using state vehicles, telephones, and other equipment as well as information on policies and procedures for making purchases.

The *Faculty Handbook* is a loose-leaf publication that is revised each year as policies and procedures change or are clarified. It includes information on Internet and computer software use, copyright laws, campus emergency procedures, tobacco and controlled substance use, safety and health policies, sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention, and ADA compliance. It also includes a copy of the Student Code of Conduct, grievance procedures, tort liability information, and “Principals of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning.”

The *Student Handbook* is distributed to all students at registration and orientation and is available through the year in the student services office or online. It is also distributed as part of an attractive academic year planner and calendar. Among many other topics, the handbook includes information on assessment, data privacy and security, attendance, honors programs, parental access to records, background studies of students, and controlled substance testing. It also describes equity in athletics programs, student records and release of information policies,

financial aid operations, affirmative action/non discrimination policies, sexual harassment and violence issues, campus security, weapons policies, hazing, Internet access and computer use.

The handbook is updated annually to stay current with changes in policies and regulations by the college and state and federal agencies.

Grievance and Conflict Resolution

Minnesota West grievance policies are written and widely disseminated. They are published in all the handbooks and are specifically addressed in the bargaining agreements for all unions. Appeal procedures are also published in the handbooks. Non-discrimination and anti-harassment posters are conspicuous at several locations on all Minnesota West campuses.

Faculty Senates, the all-college governance and curriculum committee meetings, UTCE and MCCFA duty days, meet-and-confer committees, and staff meetings all serve as forums for discussion and conflict resolution. The office of the vice-president for student/administrative services maintains all grievance records.

Affirmative Action

The policy of Minnesota West is to maintain a program of affirmative action and nondiscrimination as articulated by MnSCU policy 1B.1. The MnSCU policy assures that equal employment opportunities are made available based on individual qualification, and that all persons, regardless of “race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or membership or activity in a local commission as defined by law” are encouraged to seek enrollment or employment with the college. The college also complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibiting discrimination in educational programs and activities.

Minnesota West also administers all personnel activities, including recruitment, hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, transfer, lay-off, college-sponsored in-service training and tuition assistance, social and recreational programs, and all student body activities, without regard to “race, creed, color, national origin, disability, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or membership or activity in a local commission.” A statement of that policy is included in all appropriate publications.

Civil Rights

All Minnesota colleges in MnSCU must undergo an on-site Civil Rights Review Audit. Minnesota West’s audit was at the end of October 2000. A review team appointed by MnSCU visited all five campuses over a three-day period. The primary purpose of the audit was to review policies and practices of the college and check compliance with Office of Civil Rights guidelines and standards. The team gathered “elements of proof” of compliance with approximately 30 guidelines/standards. Team members reviewed records, documents and materials, conducted interviews with employees and students, and observed various activities to determine compliance with ADA, Title VI, Title IX and Section 504 regulations, and supplemental guidelines for vocational education.

Minnesota West received its report on the on-site visit in late January 2001. According to the report, the college complies with 23 of the guidelines/standards. Corrective action was required for seven guidelines/standards.

Most of the required corrective actions were in policy dissemination. To be in compliance, the college must designate individuals to contact for complaints and provide all information necessary for persons to contact those individuals; expand the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity statement in the catalog and other publications to include “marital

status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, membership or activity in a local commission”; post nondiscrimination statements at various locations throughout the campuses; and conduct ADA training on all campuses. Regarding “Access and Admissions,” the college complies with eight of nine guidelines, but must develop a written procedure to identify and assess students with limited English proficiency. In the equal opportunity area, the college must modify some of its physical structures to make them more accessible, including lowering countertops for persons in wheelchairs, providing lever handles on doors and adding Braille to signs. In the employment category, the college was found to be in compliance with eight of the nine guidelines. The corrective action called for was to add a non-discrimination statement to faculty and employee handbooks and other related documents. The college is developing a Voluntary Compliance Plan to correct these problems.

Human Resources

Human Resources Mission Statement

In support of the College’s vision and mission, it is the Human Resource’s mission to support the total operation of the college in meeting its goals through its most valuable resource, its PEOPLE. Our goal is to assist the college in recruiting and retaining a high quality work force. We aim to provide each employee a challenging career and a work environment that provides satisfaction in their lives and allows them to take pride and ownership in their work. The Human Resource Department will support the overall goals of the college by developing and administering a personnel program that focuses on quality customer service, supports professional growth for all employees and insures fair and equitable treatment of all employees.

Minnesota West's Human Resources department has offices on the Canby campus. Responsibilities of the office include but are not limited to labor relations, contract administration, policy development and implementation, professional development and training, benefits administration, seniority rosters, employee orientation, and compensation management. The department publishes an *Employee Handbook* that includes current information regarding all of those areas as well as other items of interest for Minnesota West employees at all levels.⁷¹

Faculty Organizations

Faculty Senates meet monthly on Pipestone, Canby, Granite Falls, and Jackson campuses, in compliance with the UTCE faculty contract. The purpose of the senates is to provide forums for campus faculty to collaborate with campus administrators to plan activities, develop curricula, settle disputes, exchange views on college issues, and propose and develop campus policies and procedures.

On the Worthington campus, where most faculty members belong to MCCFA, the Minnesota West Community College Faculty Association meets twice monthly for purposes similar to those of the faculty senates on other campuses. The MCCFA contract also stipulates that meet-and-confer committees made up of faculty and administration meet monthly. Currently active are committees concerned with curriculum, fiscal affairs, and general matters.

Strengths

1. Minnesota West's hiring practices are legal, uniform, and open.
2. Minnesota West administrators encourage development of current staff and offer opportunities for promotion from within the institution.

⁷¹ A copy of the *Employee Handbook* is in the resource room.

3. Minnesota West is committed to protect the human rights and due process for students, faculty, and staff.
4. Minnesota West has policies that are published and printed in a variety of venues.
5. Minnesota West's practices are consistent with its policies.
6. Minnesota West's human resources department keeps current with stipulations of multiple contracts.

Challenges

1. College publications for all employees must be kept current with Minnesota law and MnSCU policies.
2. The college human resources department must continue to understand and serve the needs of all employees on all campuses.
3. The merging of faculty associations will force changes in how faculty participate in Minnesota West governance. A challenge will be to maintain balance and fairness between technical and transfer interests.
4. Communication among Minnesota West employees on the five campuses must increase to provide a shared sense of mission and community for the college.

Student Affairs

Financial Aid

Each Minnesota West campus has a financial aid assistant for students. The director of financial aid has an office at Granite Falls. In FY2000, the college provided financial assistance to 1,396 individuals. Of those, 831 students received a total of \$1,599,460 in federal grants and scholarships, 1,017 students borrowed \$2,392,848 in federal loans, and 188 students earned

\$184,856 in federal employment funds. State grants and scholarships helped 975 students with \$1,053,333, and \$182,367 in state loans helped 57 students. Institutional grants and scholarships totaling \$10,000 went to 40 students, while institutional loans of \$10,000 helped 100 students. Grants and scholarships from other sources totaled \$77,086 and helped 135 students.

Intercollegiate Athletics

Minnesota West is a member in good standing of the Minnesota Community College Conference of intercollegiate athletics. According to the “Philosophy and Purpose” statement of the conference’s constitution, “The assurance of equitable treatment and educational opportunity for men and women in athletic programming is a core value of the conference.” The constitution also stipulates rules for conduct and gender equity that adhere to position statements of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA).

Minnesota West’s athletic department had its worst year ever for women’s sports 1999-2000. In its first year of offering a fall golf team, two women occasionally practiced with the eight men golfers, but none of them participated with the men in intercollegiate meets. Only seven women participated in volleyball that fall, and injuries and conflicts caused the team to withdraw from intercollegiate competition before the season ended. The women’s basketball schedule was also cancelled because too few women chose to participate, although game contracts were honored, according to official rules, and the coach was compensated. In spring, 11 Minnesota West women participated in softball.

Eight men participated in golf in fall 1999, while 45 men participated in the football program. In spring semester, 15 men participated in basketball and 18 in intercollegiate wrestling. A “club” baseball team, which did not participate in conference games or have eligibility for post-season play, involved 16 Minnesota West men in spring 2000.

Combined operating budgets for intercollegiate sports in 1999-2000 were \$71,053. With the disappointments in women's participation, a disproportionate share of \$52,759 was spent on men's sports while only \$18,294 was spent on women's programs.

Women and Men's sports were more equitable in 2000-2001.

Student Associations

The Minnesota Community and Technical College Student Association (MCTCSA) is the statewide organization for support of students at two-year colleges. The state association is affiliated with campus associations. Students enrolled at each campus are members of both the statewide and campus student associations. No changes in campus student associations can be made without approval from each affected campus and MCTCSA.

Students at every campus are entitled to establish a student government. The college sets policies and procedures to ensure that the associations are representative and participatory. Students on each campus determine whether to organize a campus association. Students on the campus level, in consultation with MCTCSA, make all decisions regarding the association. The student government has the exclusive right to recommend the chartering of clubs and organizations for approval by the college president.

Student clubs and organizations at Minnesota West include:

Alpha Nu Kappa is the Worthington campus chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, a national honor fraternity for liberal arts students. Membership is by invitation and based on a minimum 15 hours of credit with a 3.50 or higher grade point average. The campus group sponsors service activities throughout the year.

Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) is a national organization that promotes leadership, career skills, and interaction with individuals in various health fields.

Students in the Medical Laboratory Technician, Medical Assistant, Phlebotomy, and other health-related programs meet locally, attend conferences, and participate in state and national competitions.

Business Professionals of America (BPA) is a professional organization for students in business and office programs. Its purposes are to promote student leadership, develop vocational competencies, promote understanding of business principles, and improve student poise, sociability, attitude and tact. Members may participate in state and national conferences, elections, and competitions.

Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) is a professional organization for students in trade, industrial, technical, or health programs. Members exchange ideas, discuss problems, and work together to reach common goals. VICA offers students opportunities to gain recognition for themselves, their programs, and the college through competitions in occupational skill areas and leadership development contests.

Musical groups include college chorale and pops singers. Instrumental musicians may participate in a jazz band or a municipal band.

Intramural athletics are offered for both men and women on all campuses of Minnesota West. Any sport that generates sufficient interest and meets with college approval can be arranged.

Theater productions during the fall and spring semesters offer students opportunities to participate in major theatrical productions. The Worthington campus theater department cooperates with the Grassroots Community Theater group. Students may act or help with production.

Student Information

Several sources are used to inform students of their rights, responsibilities, policies, and procedures. Those sources include:

- ∪ The Minnesota West web page
- ∪ The Minnesota West catalog
- ∪ The Minnesota West *Viewbook*
- ∪ Minnesota West program brochures
- ∪ Student orientation programs
- ∪ The Minnesota West *Student Handbook*
- ∪ Semester course schedules
- ∪ Announcements on the college TV monitors
- ∪ College wide newsletter *Nickel News*
- ∪ Student Senate meetings and activities
- ∪ Campus intercom systems (Granite Falls, Jackson and Canby campuses)
- ∪ Campus student newspapers (Canby campus only)

Students are encouraged to use the services available to them. Students are informed of all policy and procedure changes, and students are free to initiate or participate in discussions that lead to any such changes.

Disclosure

Minnesota West complies with all laws regarding access to public records and protection of private data. Public information, including statistical and data reports, regarding many aspects of Minnesota West can be found at <<http://www.its.mnscu.edu/data>>.

Strengths

1. Through federal, state, and local financial aid programs, Minnesota West works hard to ensure that students who want to attend college can afford to do so.
2. Students have access to policies and procedures through several sources, including the Student Handbook, the College Catalog, the semester class schedules, and the Minnesota West home page.
3. Minnesota West students interested in extra-curricular activities may participate in varsity or intramural sports, pre-professional organizations, student government, or cooperative activities with the community, such as theater or band.

Challenges

1. Costs of supporting student services and extra-curricular programs continue to rise as state support declines.
2. Communication among students at the five campuses must increase to create a shared sense of community among Minnesota West students.

Minnesota West Marketing and Publications

Marketing

A dean of communication and enrollment directs Minnesota West's marketing team from offices on the Pipestone campus. The marketing department monitors publications and information released from the college to be sure it fairly represents the Minnesota West community. Marketers also plan open houses and other events to keep local campuses in the community spotlight. Examples of such events are "Winter Wonderland" open houses and Easter egg hunts.

The Minnesota West marketing department is active in the Southern Minnesota Higher Education Marketing Partnership (SOMNHEHP) and the MnSCU Two-Year Marketing

Association (TYMA). These two organizations provide leadership and cost-effective marketing and recruitment campaigns that promote the values of MnSCU's two-year institutions. An example is "Denied admittance?" piece developed by SOMNHEMP and adopted by TYMA. MnSCU universities use this piece with students who have been denied admittance to other colleges. It is an effective tool to inform students of the options available at MnSCU's two-year colleges. Another example of the cooperation and respect of the SOMNHEMP group is the southern two-year college direct mail campaign brochure. This brochure is revised annually and sent directly to all juniors and seniors in the southern third of the state. The project had the financial support of SOMNHEMP.

The Minnesota West marketing and communications staff is responsible for producing and printing all college publications used to recruit students. Part of that responsibility is to review publications to remove gender and cultural biases and ensure that they accurately reflect course and program content.

The Minnesota West Community and Technical College logo is displayed prominently on all college publications and advertising. The MnSCU logo is displayed wherever it is appropriate. All publications and advertisements also include an "Equal Opportunity Educator/Employer" statement. All major publications are available in alternative formats and contain appropriate statements of that fact.

Publications and Communications

The *Minnesota West Community and Technical College 2000-2002 Catalog* provides in-depth look at each major the college offers, including degree requirements, curriculum outlines, and course descriptions. Also included are admission policies, registration procedures, tuition costs, student services information, faculty and staff listings, and other important data.

The *Viewbook* features information regarding college course offerings as well as general information about Minnesota West. It is the initial piece sent to students interested in attending Minnesota West.

Best of the West is a newsletter developed in 1999 to use for recruiting. Articles are selected to show that community and technical college life can be fun as well as rewarding. The newsletter is mailed to all applicants and prospective students as well as to high schools and appropriate agencies.

Go Places is a full-color brochure used for recruiting that lists campus offerings. The *Go Places* title was established before MnSCU adopted a statewide marketing campaign titled “Going Places.”

Nickel News is an internal newsletter for faculty and staff on all five campuses. Its purpose is to increase communication and family feeling among Minnesota West employees. All employees are encouraged to submit announcements, articles and photos to the newsletter. The *Nickel News* is distributed via e-mail to the five campuses.

Minnesota West’s semester schedules are printed with the help of the marketing department after the academic schedule is determined. Fall and spring course schedules are inserted into 110,000 newspapers in the 19-county service area. They are also available online on the Minnesota West homepage.

Special brochures are developed each year to promote programs or events at the various Minnesota West campuses. The brochures are produced and printed at the college. The marketing team is developing plans to purchase equipment that will enhance the college’s capabilities to produce full-color brochures. The process is expensive, so will likely be implemented in phases.

Minnesota West's web site, <www.mnwest.mnscu.edu>, was introduced in the spring of 1999 and continues to evolve. Information on college programs, class schedules, registration, activities, and facilities is available on the site. Students may use the site to register, gain access to library materials, or explore Internet courses and services. Marketing efforts will increase at the site as it develops. The associate vice president for distributed education and technology is responsible for managing the web site.

In addition to publications, Minnesota West's marketing and communications division manages a database of prospective students at the Central Information Center on the Pipestone campus. All communications for prospective students are sent from this location at the request of individual campus marketers.

Strengths

1. Each year the marketing efforts at Minnesota West become more sophisticated and coordinated. These efforts have already shown positive results in increasing numbers of students entering the college.
2. Minnesota West has compiled a solid database of potential students and has developed publications and strategies to inform and attract those students to the college.
3. Minnesota West campus marketers have created events that draw positive attention to the college and its mission to serve the region.
4. The Minnesota West web site provides access to most college publications.

Challenges

1. Minnesota West competes for students who are being courted by public and private colleges throughout the state, colleges and technical training institutions in South Dakota and Iowa, and with employers who need full-time workers.

2. Minnesota West campuses have historically competed against each other for students rather than facilitating easy movement from campus to campus or from program to program. That spirit of competition must change to an attitude of cooperation.

3. Marketing itself as a comprehensive two-year college is a new challenge for Minnesota West. Creating images and messages in promotional materials that clearly indicate how all students can find appropriate courses and programs at the college is a constant challenge.

Chapter 11

Federal Compliance

In accordance with NCA Commission policies, Minnesota West complies with federal requirements established by the 1992 Amendments to the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.

1. I.C. 9. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Minnesota West courses are delivered in semester credits base on a 16-week semester. Tuition and fees for all credits in spring 2001 totaled \$78.50 per credit hour. Students also pay a technology fee, a student activity fee, and a state student association fee. Slightly higher tuition for online courses will be implemented in fall 2001. Additional fees are program specific and based on the specific costs of delivering those programs.

Minnesota West awards certificates, diplomas, associate of applied science, associate of science and associate of arts degrees. In accordance with MnSCU policy 3.17, program lengths are:

9-30 credits for a certificate

30-72 credits for a diploma

64-72 credits for associate's degrees

Information on program course requirements, program length, and tuition is provided in the *College Catalog* and on the college Internet site.

2. I. A. 5. Compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.

Minnesota West serves students with federal financial aid in the form of Pell Grants, Federal Work Study, Stafford Loans, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, PLUS loans and Perkins Loans. The college's default rate for Stafford Loans is only 3.7 percent.

3. IV. B. 2. Advertising and Recruitment Materials

Minnesota West includes the address and phone number of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Higher Learning Commission in its publications, including the *College Catalog* and the college Internet site.

4. III.A.1. and III.A.3 – Professional Accreditation and Requirements of Institutions

Holding Dual Institutional Accreditation.

Minnesota West has no institutional accreditation other than NCA. Individual program accreditations, including National League of Nursing, are listed in the *College Catalog*. No single program accreditation includes one-third or more of Minnesota West's students.

Chapter XII

Request for Continued Accreditation

This self-study shows that Minnesota West Community and Technical College is an institution with a clearly defined mission and the human and financial support and resources to fulfill it. Minnesota West represents five formerly autonomous institutions of higher learning that are in the process of becoming one new and comprehensive college that can respond to an environment of constant change. It is developing into a single, regional institution that can and will serve the higher education and technical training needs of many diverse constituencies in a large area of southwest Minnesota, southeast South Dakota, and northwest Iowa for many years to come.

Minnesota West clearly has some challenges to meet, but it also has the people, the resolve, and the public support to do so. It has the sanction of state government, the direction of MnSCU, the political support of dozens of communities, and the respect and affection of nearly four generations of proud and accomplished alumni. In many areas, including distance education and technology, the college is not only keeping up but is leading.

This self-study report has shown that Minnesota West fulfills the General Institutional Requirements of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and that it measures up well to the five evaluative criteria. Minnesota West therefore respectfully requests continued NCA accreditation for the maximum term of ten years.