



STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: July 23, 2012

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INSTITUTION: Dakota College at Bottineau, Bottineau, ND

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Ken Grosz, Campus Dean

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: A progress report due on 6/30/2012 focused on planning (including finances, assessment, resource allocation, and enrollment management).

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The office of the Commission received Dakota College at Bottineau's report on the above topic on 7/3/2012.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Dakota College at Bottineau hosted a comprehensive visit in April 2009. The team report of the visit provided the following context for the team's concern relating to planning at the College:

While the last comprehensive visit held on April 26-28, 1999, there has been a Focus Visit to Minot State University -Bottineau focused on Planning, Assessment, and General Education. The Focus Visit held November 13-14, 2000 did find progress on the part of the institution with regard to program assessment and general education integration into the curriculum. That team did request a progress report on the integration of planning, budgeting, and use of assessment information for decision-making which was submitted in spring 2004 and accepted by HLC staff. This Team would concur that much progress has been made at MSU-Bottineau in assessment and general education. The Team does have concerns however with the small on-campus enrollment, the competition for funds within the North Dakota University System, and the College's reliance on athletic programs and on-line registrations for student enrollment increases, and how this may affect available resources in the future. The Team would like to see a progress report submitted in 2012 regarding the institution's addressing of these concerns.

Throughout the narrative of the team report, concerns related to planning included the College's ability to prepare for a future shaped by societal and economic trends, the challenging demographic and enrollment trends of the College, the decline in full-time students, the College's financial position and the lack of a centralized planning system. The team emphasized strongly the need for a campus-wide enrollment management plan that is fully integrated with strategic planning and the need for a shared vision.

History of Planning

The progress report detailed the many activities related to planning at Dakota College at Bottineau between October 2009 – March 2012. It is clear from the narrative that the planning efforts were wonderfully inclusive and included many creative ideas from across the College. Many, many ideas were surfaced that could enhance the College's services and programming. The planning process

wisely involved the winnowing of ideas to a manageable level that would enjoy the backing and support of the College community. The Dean's Council chose the following as high priority initiatives to develop in 2011-2012:

- Honors Program
- Capstone
- Training for the Oil Industry
- Exemplary Developmental Education Program

These strategic thrusts were examined in 2011-2012 and will be put into practice in 2012-2013. Other initiatives from the institution's Strategic Plan will be researched and implemented in subsequent years.

Integration: Finance, Assessment, Resource Allocation, Enrollment Management

The progress report had a section that gave explanations and examples of how assessment results, enrollment issues, resource allocation, and financial exigency influenced and shaped the action areas that were investigated in 2011-2012 so that they could be applied in 2012-2013.

According to the progress report, Dakota College continually surveys its environment to determine what changes are in order to better serve its clientele. The report stated that some of these initiatives are organized into a formal Strategic Plan; others are worked out and implemented on a just-in-time basis. A distinguishing attribute of a dynamic community college is its ability to move swiftly to meet student, workforce, and societal needs. Dakota College works hard to be such an institution.

Thirty-one initiatives emerged from the planning process and the progress report annotated this list by categorizing under each initiative how it demonstrated the integration of planning with resource allocation, assessment, finance, and enrollment management.

Enrollment Management Plan

With respect to an enrollment management plan, the progress report stated:

Following is a fledgling Enrollment Management Plan for the college. The development of the plan has been assigned to the Admissions Office which is a component of the campus Student Affairs Office. Turnover and an increasing workload in the Student Affairs area have so far prevented the entity from constructing the plan in full. However, segments of it have been implemented and other parts of it are developing. We are confident that during the 2012-2013 academic year a comprehensive and quality document will be produced.

The Plan to Plan

The progress report noted the next steps in planning at the College. A first priority is to complete an Enrollment Management Plan. Next on the list is developing formal action steps, timelines, measurable goals and responsibility for eighteen action areas of the College's Strategic Plan. Those action areas were listed in the progress report.

Staff comment: The progress report submitted by Dakota College at Bottineau relates impressive planning efforts at the institution that were broad based, creative and productive. There are many

ideas that emerged from this process that may serve to inform College initiatives into the future. The College is commended for the leadership that facilitated such an inclusive and productive planning process.

There are several questions that remain after a reading of the progress report, however:

- Whereas there are many initiatives that surfaced related to the operational plans of various units at the College, it was difficult to discern an overall, College-wide set of strategies to (as the team said) "realistically prepare for a future shaped by societal and economic trends." Many strategic plans make those "societal and economic trends" specific through an environmental scan and a SWOT analysis that sets all of the strategies in a specific context. Then, based on these "societal and economic trends," longer term, College-wide initiatives can be developed and pursued to secure the future well-being of the institution.
- The *Enrollment Management Plan* is a critical document for the future of the College. A review of the Commission's data related to enrollment at the College indicates a nice increase since 2009, then a pretty substantial decrease in fall 2011. What are the College's enrollment goals? Where will those students come from over the next several years? And how will they be recruited?
- Are there any strategies at the College related to facilities? Or finances? Have those strategies been integrated with the revised program portfolio or the projected enrollment increases?
- A review of the program portfolio indicates a very rich set of academic programs for such a small enrollment. Does the size of the program portfolio allow for investment in the quality of those programs – or are institutional resources stretched thin by the sheer number of programs?
- Is there a strategic planning document for Dakota College at Bottineau that has been formally approved by the upper administration and the Board? If so, such a document was not included with the progress report.

In order to address these issues, as well as to present a completed enrollment management plan that includes marketing strategies, enrollment projections, support services and staffing needs, Dakota College at Bottineau will present a progress report on 10/1/2014 on strategic planning, with special attention on the issues raised in this analysis.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report on planning (including finances, assessment, resource allocation, and enrollment management). A progress report on strategic planning, including an enrollment management plan and an integrated strategic plan document approved by the Board, is due 10/1/2014. The institution's next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2019 - 2020.