



North Idaho College

Midcycle Report

Submitted to the Northwest Commission
on Colleges and Universities

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Introduction

North Idaho College (NIC) is pleased to submit this Mid-Cycle and Special Evaluation Report to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). This report includes both (a) required components of the Mid-Cycle evaluation and (b) significant responses to outstanding recommendations issued by the Commission in recent years. Together, these elements reflect the college's ongoing commitment to meeting NWCCU Standards and sustaining institutional improvement.

Over the past two years, the NIC Board of Trustees (the "board") has made significant and measurable progress in addressing the Commission's recommendations, stabilizing institutional governance, and reaffirming its commitment to student success, academic quality, and institutional integrity.

Despite prolonged governance challenges, NIC has experienced a remarkable reversal of a decade-long enrollment decline—an [unmistakable sign of institutional resurgence](#). After steadily declining from 6,751 students in 2011 to under 4,000 in recent years, enrollment surged 15.3% in fall 2024 (based on unduplicated census figures), climbing from 3,981 students in 2023 to 4,590. Growth spanned all major student categories, including a 29% increase in first-time, full-time degree-seeking students and a 13.8% increase in enrollment in career and technical education.

Summer enrollment has shown similar momentum, increasing by 14.2% over the previous year and rising 33% since 2023. This resurgence has revitalized campus life—from expanding capacity in workforce programs like Welding and HVAC, to reenergizing student clubs, campus events, and dual credit participation. The growth reflects more than effective marketing and streamlined enrollment processes; it demonstrates restored community trust following accreditation challenges and positions NIC for a stable and promising future.

NIC's enrollment resurgence is driven by a mix of traditional and targeted [digital marketing campaigns](#) that have significantly increased the college's visibility and engagement. Between July 1 and August 7, 2025, NIC's campaigns on Facebook and Instagram generated over 656,000 impressions. Meanwhile, YouTube ads reached 168,686 viewers, achieving a 38.5% view rate and over 33,000 video completions. These initiatives [resulted](#) in 2,277 website conversions and 25 campus visits, demonstrating the effectiveness of NIC's strategic communications in driving enrollment and assisting in rebuilding public trust.

This resurgence in enrollment and institutional stability has coincided with renewed recognition of NIC's regional value. On June 25, 2025, an independent [Economic Impact Study](#) conducted by [Lightcast](#) was presented to the Board of Trustees, affirming NIC's role as a key economic engine in northern Idaho. The study found that North Idaho College generated \$273.2 million in total income for the regional economy, accounting for 2.1% of the region's Gross Regional Product (GRP) and supporting an estimated 3,992 jobs.

The analysis also revealed a strong return on investment:

- For students, every \$1 invested in their NIC education yields \$4.00 in lifetime earnings.
- For taxpayers, total benefits reached \$38.1 million, showing that every \$1 invested generated \$1.80 in added tax revenue and public sector savings.
- For society overall, the benefit-cost ratio was 4.5, underscoring the broad economic and social return on public and private investments in the college.

These findings emphasize NIC's alignment with the education and workforce needs of the region while reinforcing the institution's mission of supporting student success, economic opportunity, and community vitality (See Draft Board Minutes, June 25, 2025, Page 3).

Through focused efforts by college leadership, faculty, staff, and trustees, NIC has implemented critical changes to strengthen shared governance, restore stakeholder and community confidence, enhance procedural efficiency, and ensure alignment with NWCCU Standards. The college has clarified decision-making structures, improved transparency, enhanced assessment practices, and reinforced strategic planning. These collaborative efforts demonstrate NIC's strong commitment to NWCCU standards and eligibility requirements, as well as to building a sustainable path in service to its students and community.

Section 1, Mission Fulfillment

Introduction

North Idaho College (NIC) monitors its compliance with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation through the Executive Accreditation Committee (EAC), which comprises the president and members of the [President's Cabinet](#). The EAC provides leadership and oversight for reporting obligations and other functions mandated by the Commission. The committee is responsible for completing required NWCCU reports, including the Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Mission Fulfillment), the annual report, Special Evaluation Visits, the Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review Report, substantive change requests, and the Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report.

Colleges and universities that are members of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) typically report on three years of progress in their Mid-Cycle Report. However, due to recent governance issues at the college, which resulted in several sanctions, the Commission has postponed the Mid-Cycle Report twice. It is now scheduled for the sixth year of NIC's accreditation cycle. Given this extended reporting period, NIC has decided to condense the earlier years of the cycle into a brief paragraph, along with an addendum.

Early Years of Accreditation Cycle

After NIC's Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness visit in April 2020, the college shifted from using Core Theme measures based on NIC's Value Statements to utilizing data from the 2020-2025 NIC Strategic Plan, known within the college community as "Cultivate NIC," to improve effectiveness. For more details, see the [Addendum: Transition from Core Themes to Measures for Improving Effectiveness Using the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#). At that time, NIC monitored 24 measures of institutional effectiveness, referred to as Mission Fulfillment, on a public dashboard (See [screenshots of previous dashboard](#)). This dashboard was updated in July 2025 to align with the launch of NIC's new [strategic plan](#) and the establishment of new Mission Fulfillment measures (See response to **Recommendation 1: Spring 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability**).

Emergence from Show Cause Sanction

With stable leadership and the successful resolution of a Show Cause sanction, the college initiated a new strategic planning process during 2024-2025. The progress made with this new plan will serve as evidence of NIC's commitment to fulfilling its mission.

The Show Cause Sanction period from 2023 to 2025 has had a significant impact on NIC's accreditation efforts. Although NIC initially followed its strategic plan, the college had to quickly adjust its activities and initiatives to address the eight risks outlined in the [Show Cause Action Letter dated February 9, 2023](#). Currently under a reduced sanction of Probation, NIC remains committed to its new Strategic Plan and is dedicated to regaining good standing with the NWCCU. This effort is fully supported by the administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Mission Fulfillment Definition

NIC defines mission fulfillment as demonstrating satisfactory performance on a majority of selected measures that reflect ongoing improvement in institutional effectiveness. These measures are intentionally aligned with the goals and objectives outlined in the college's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan.

To ensure focus and accountability, NIC has identified 12 mission fulfillment measures from the 21 total performance measures in the Strategic Plan. These measures were chosen for their relevance, measurability, and alignment with NWCCU Standard 1.B.2, which emphasizes the use of nationally benchmarked and peer-comparable data (See [NIC 2025-2030 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives Overview and Measures](#)).

The selection of these measures was guided by the Institutional Research Department and finalized through a collaborative process during the development of the Strategic Plan. The President's Cabinet granted final approval. These measures serve as key benchmarks for the institutional health of NIC. A significant decline in any of them could indicate underlying risks to the college's stability and long-term sustainability.

The EAC likens mission fulfillment to an annual wellness checkup. Just as an individual monitors vital health metrics during a checkup, NIC uses these measures to assess its overall institutional health and inform strategic planning efforts that ensure the college's continued relevance and success.

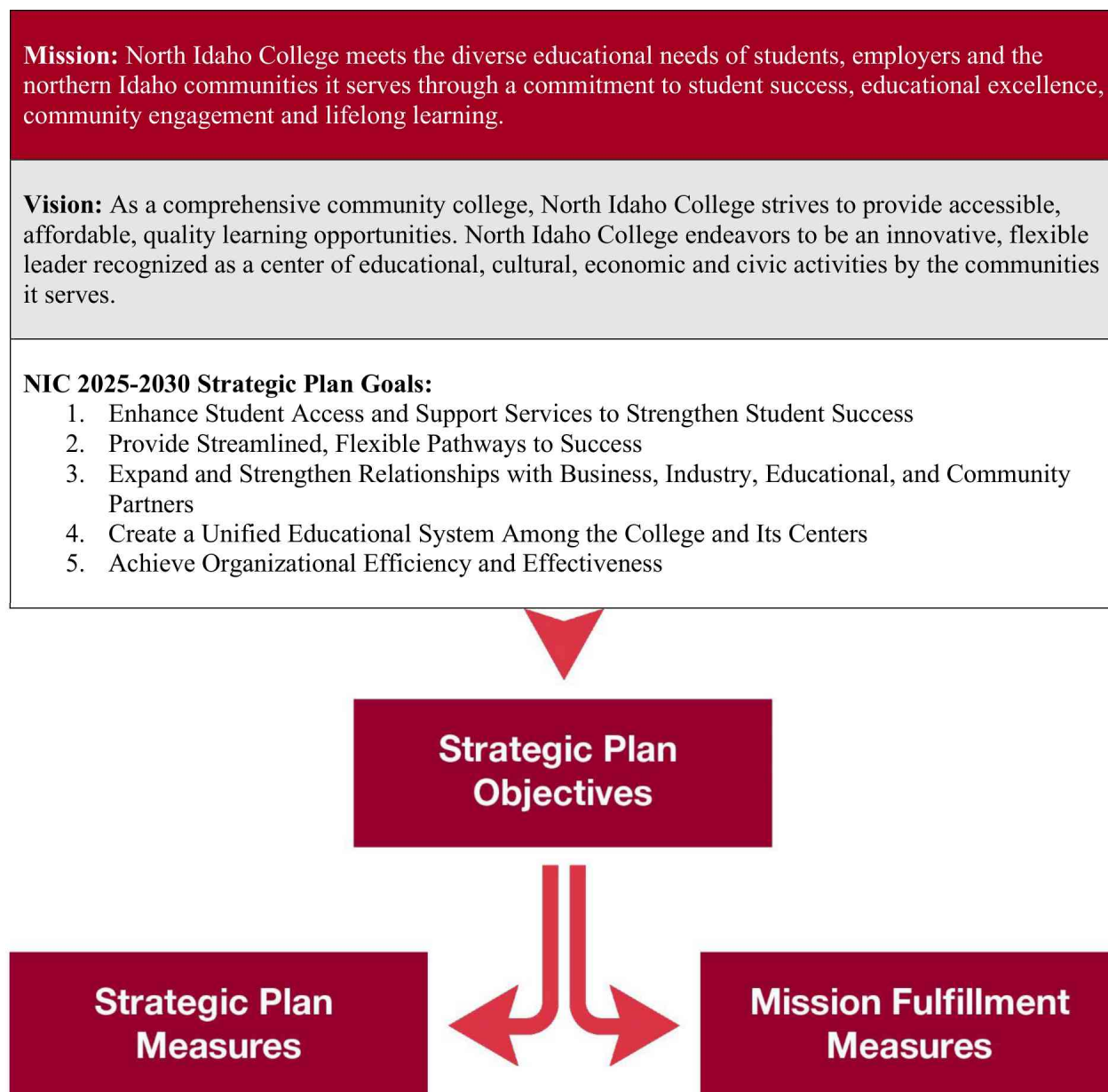
In developing these measures, the EAC prioritized the following characteristics:

- **Use of Reliable Data:** Preference was given to existing, externally validated sources that allow for national and regional benchmarking. Data sources include NIC's submissions to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP).
- **Strategic Alignment:** Measures are aligned with both the NIC 2025–2030 Strategic Plan and the Idaho State Board of Education's Statewide Strategic Plan.
- **Clarity and Accessibility:** Metrics are straightforward, easily understood, and accessible to internal and external stakeholders.

The alignment between mission fulfillment, NIC's mission and vision, and the objectives and measures of the Strategic Plan is detailed in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Relationship of Mission Fulfillment with Mission, Vision, and NIC's Strategic Plan



The development of the [2025-2030 NIC Strategic Plan](#) was a collaborative and inclusive process, guided by institutional priorities and informed by extensive input from stakeholders. NIC engaged faculty, staff, students, trustees, and community members through a series of surveys, focus groups, and planning sessions. These efforts aimed to identify shared values, assess

institutional strengths and challenges, and align future initiatives, along with budgetary support, with the college's mission and vision.

For more detailed information on the development of NIC's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, please refer to the response to **Recommendation 7: Spring 2023 Special Report**. Additionally, information about the Mission Fulfillment Measures, including a rating scale, can be found in the response to **NWCCU Recommendation 1: Spring 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability**.

Section 2, Student Achievement

North Idaho College (NIC) employs a comprehensive and data-informed approach to assess student achievement, guide institutional improvement, and support student success. The college regularly monitors student achievement measures—such as retention, persistence, completion, and post-graduation success—and benchmarks these measures against similar institutions at the state, regional, and national levels. NIC's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) comparison groups contain both regional and national peers.

These measures are published across three major platforms and are disaggregated by categories that reflect the characteristics of NIC's student population. This disaggregation allows for meaningful evaluation and improvement efforts, facilitating a thorough analysis of student performance. It also helps the college identify and address challenges that may affect student outcomes.

NIC annually publishes [Student Achievement Indicators](#) containing the following disaggregated data: Graduation Rates, Full-Time Retention Rates, Part-Time Retention Rates, Completer Transfer Rates, and Persistence Rates.

From 2021 to 2025, North Idaho College tracked and published 12 student achievement measures as part of its former [Mission Fulfillment Dashboard](#). These measures included Retention and Persistence, First-Year Credit Momentum, Gateway Course Momentum, Median Number of Credits Earned at Completion of an Associate Degree (for transfer students), Percentage of Degree-Seeking Students Completing 30 or More Credit Hours, 150% Completion Rates, and Licensure and Certification Passage Rates. These metrics provided a broad view of student progress and institutional effectiveness during the previous strategic planning cycle.

Beginning July 1, 2025, the college transitioned to a revised set of student achievement measures aligned with the strategic objectives outlined in the new 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. The current [Mission Fulfillment Dashboard](#) now focuses on four key measures: Retention (fall-to-fall), Persistence (fall-to-spring), IPEDS 150% Graduation Rate, and the Percentage of Students Who Complete or Transfer Within Two Years. These measures reflect a more focused and strategic approach to assessing mission fulfillment and institutional sustainability (See response to **NWCCU Recommendation 1: Spring 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability**).

NIC presents six measures of student achievement as part of the [strategic planning process](#) for the Idaho State Board of Education. Submitting this data is mandatory and aligns with the State Board's strategic objectives. Furthermore, NIC compares its data with peer institutions among Idaho's colleges and universities.

North Idaho College (NIC) has participated consistently in the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) since 2018, with intermittent participation dating back to 2008. The NCCBP provides a robust framework for measuring and comparing institutional

performance across a broad range of metrics relevant to community colleges. Through this participation, NIC has access to more than 500 benchmarks encompassing key areas such as enrollment, student success, retention, completion, transfer rates, student satisfaction, financial performance, and institutional effectiveness.

The breadth of available metrics allows NIC to strategically select benchmarks aligned with institutional priorities and the objectives outlined in the NIC 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. Comparative data with peer institutions nationwide supports NIC’s efforts in data-informed decision-making, planning, and continuous improvement. The NCCBP platform also provides customizable reporting tools, which NIC has frequently used to inform internal stakeholders and support data presentations in Board of Trustees meetings. The NCCBP team has proven responsive and collaborative, enhancing NIC’s ability to tailor benchmarking efforts to the college’s specific needs.

In the most recent reporting year (2024), NIC collected and monitored 182 different measures, with 77 of those focusing specifically on student achievement. Although NIC is prohibited from publicly disclosing percentile data, employees can request data for internal use only directly from the Office of Institutional Research.

The Dean of Enrollment Services provides an annual overview of key student achievement measures to the NIC Board of Trustees as part of the [Recurring Reports to the Trustees](#). This overview includes data on credit momentum, persistence and retention, on-time completion, and dual enrollment completion. Each metric is accompanied by a comparison to national averages to provide context and benchmark performance (See [Student Success Update Presentation Slides – September 2023](#), and [Student Success Update Presentation Slides – August 2024](#)).

Retention and Persistence Trends

North Idaho College has demonstrated consistent improvement in both retention and persistence rates over the past three years, reflecting progress toward achieving Strategic Plan Goals 1 and 2, which prioritize student access, success, and completion. The fall-to-fall retention rate increased from 48.8% in FY2022 to 53.31% in FY2024, consistently surpassing the median of the NCCBP peer group each year. This upward trend indicates that NIC’s strategic initiatives—such as the First-Year Experience (FYE) program and targeted retention strategies—are effectively enhancing student engagement and continuity. On August 20, 2025, the college updated the board on the most recent data from the FYE program. Data from Fall 2022 and 2023 cohorts show average retention gains of 7% for FYE participants, with overall campus retention improving by 8% (See [Retention Presentation Slides, August 20, 2025](#)). The FYE program, a strategic initiative supported during the budgeting process of the previous administration and continuing under the current administration, is detailed in **NWCCU Recommendation 1: Spring 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability**.

Similarly, the fall-to-spring persistence rate rose from 74.44% in FY2022 to 75.62% in FY2024, again outperforming national benchmarks. These gains reflect NIC’s success in fostering a supportive academic environment and providing timely interventions that help students remain enrolled through the academic year. Collectively, these improvements support institutional

efforts to meet the objectives of the Strategic Plan related to student retention, persistence, and degree completion.

Completion and Transfer Outcomes

NIC's 150% graduation rate (students completing within 1.5 times the normal program length) also improved significantly, rising from 26.4% in FY2022 to 37.5% in FY2024. This metric not only exceeds the IPEDS peer group median but also indicates that more students are reaching their academic goals in a timely manner.

However, the percentage of students who completed or transferred within two years declined slightly in FY2024 to 34.61%, falling below the peer group median and earning a rating score of 0.83. This situation suggests an opportunity for NIC to strengthen academic advising, continue its focus on retention efforts, streamline transfer pathways, and provide additional support for students aiming to complete or transfer within a shorter timeframe.

When it comes to advising, North Idaho College is responding to these opportunities, actively evolving its advising model to strengthen student retention by deepening the connection between students and advisors—particularly through assessment of advising sessions and bolstering the faculty advising structure. Key developments include:

External Review & NACADA Recommendations: In 2021, NIC sought an independent program review by the [National Academic Advising Association](#) (NACADA), which emphasized the need to build a stronger faculty advising structure alongside professional advising.

Faculty Advising Expansion (Ongoing): With growing enrollment in academic transfer programs, NIC is prioritizing a revitalized faculty advising model. A 2025 proposal, currently under review, outlines plans to clarify faculty advising expectations, with support from the Retention Committee, Provost's Cabinet, and Instructional Leadership Team.

Integration with Teaching & Learning Center (TLC): In response to NACADA's recommendations, the [Teaching and Learning Center](#) now supports new faculty advisor training and sustained advising mentorship throughout new faculty members' first year at NIC. Faculty onboarding now includes advising training through the First Year Faculty Committee.

Assessment & Feedback Mechanisms: NIC currently assesses professional advisors through learning outcomes-based surveys. Plans are underway to extend this assessment to faculty advisors, allowing students to provide feedback on all advising experiences.

NIC is actively working to improve student retention on campus. The college has taken purposeful steps to enhance student success and persistence by establishing a well-defined structure focused on retention and completion. This includes hiring a Retention and Completion Coordinator and forming a dedicated Retention Committee. These initiatives demonstrate the

college's commitment to supporting students academically and personally from the moment they enter until they complete their studies.

The Retention and Completion Coordinator plays a central role in leading and coordinating campus-wide strategies to improve student retention, progression, and graduation. This position supports departments and faculty in using data, outreach, and proactive interventions to identify students who may need additional support and connect them with resources early.

In addition, NIC has established a Retention Committee—a board-based group of faculty, staff, and administrators from all branches of campus life dedicated to identifying barriers to student success and advancing collaborative solutions. The committee (formerly known as the Strategic Enrollment and Retention Council) was reorganized and renamed in 2024 and helps align ongoing efforts across departments, monitors retention trends, and promotes practices that are responsive, caring, and data-informed.

The Culture of Care Program at NIC is an essential part of the college's overall student retention strategy. This program takes a proactive and collaborative approach to identify and support students who may be at risk, whether because of academic difficulties, personal crises, or behaviors that suggest they could harm themselves or others.

Strong, supportive relationships between students and faculty or staff are among the most effective tools for promoting retention and addressing concerns early. When distressed or disruptive behaviors are observed, submitting a Care report enables timely intervention and ensures that students receive the necessary support and resources. To further strengthen these efforts, NIC is in the process of implementing a new case management platform that will also support Title IX, student conduct, and related areas. This system will enhance the college's ability to generate more comprehensive data, provide deeper insight into where students face the greatest challenges, particularly outside the classroom, and allow for more timely and targeted interventions that keep students on track to succeed.

This coordinated effort helps foster a safe, responsive, and caring learning environment—one in which students feel supported and empowered to stay on track toward their academic and personal goals. The success of the Culture of Care depends on active engagement across the campus community. It reflects a shared commitment to student well-being and a collective responsibility to help each student succeed and connects to the college's emphasis on *Relationship-Rich Education*, a recent book that formed key themes for NIC's Convocation speakers and faculty workshops in 2024–2025.

Overall, NIC's student achievement data shows a positive trend in retention, persistence, and graduation rates. To continue serving students effectively, there will be an ongoing emphasis on improving the advising model. Maintaining focus on retention and early momentum strategies, including credit accumulation and successful completion of gateway courses, will be crucial for sustaining these gains and enhancing both two-year completion rates and transfer outcomes.

Section 3, Programmatic Assessment

North Idaho College is committed to student learning outcomes assessment that is organic, faculty-driven, systematic, grounded in current best practices, that maximizes constructive collaboration, and is informed by data to foster authentic student learning improvements. Since 2007, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOA) has been delegated responsibility for the overall leadership of the assessment of student learning at NIC.

The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee is primarily made up of faculty, with the instructional deans, leaders of Institutional Effectiveness, members of eLearning and Information Technology, and ALO serving as ex-officio members. The committee work is facilitated by faculty leadership. In 2024, as part of a commitment to Student Achievement and Outcomes Assessment, the college hired a Faculty Coordinator for Assessment/Accreditation who has teaching duties and who works with an assistant chair (also a faculty member) to facilitate the work of the SLOA committee. SLOA membership reflects the breadth of fields offered by the college on both the Academic Transfer and Career and Technical Education (CTE) sides of the house to help ensure broad representation and faculty ownership of the assessment of student learning. At NIC, student learning outcomes are assessed at the course, Program, and General Education (GEM) level.

In Idaho, the Idaho State Board of Education established [General Education Outcomes \(GEM competencies\)](#) in 2015 which serve as the foundation for Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). These competencies include Written Communication, Oral Communication, Mathematical Ways of Knowing, Scientific Ways of Knowing, Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing, and Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing. Each institution is also allowed one institutionally-designated GEM competency. “GEM” is an acronym that stands for General Education Matriculation and refers to Idaho's nickname, the “Gem State.” [NIC’s GEM outcomes](#) function as the college’s Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), since these GEM learning outcomes reach most of the student population (General Education makes up 25% of AAS programs at NIC) and are uniform across all statewide institutions, exemplifying the habits of mind and scholarship that all Idaho colleges and universities help students develop regardless of program, school, or career path. In sum, NIC students will take courses that fulfill GEM competencies, meaning they are consistently engaged with these broader outcomes as part of their educational journey.

Faculty exercise the main role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum through the well-defined processes and responsibilities of NIC’s Curriculum Council (CC). To ensure a broad cross-section of representation, the CC voting members are from 11 designated instructional groups. The CC members take an active role in monitoring changes to program outcomes and individual course outcomes.

General Description of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment at NIC

In response to NWCCU's 2020 recommendation that the college create a systematic approach to learning outcomes assessment, NIC has created a streamlined, consistent assessment data entry process for faculty to report student achievement of General Education Outcomes (GEM) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). NIC uses Canvas as the primary platform for entering learning outcomes assessment data, providing a centralized and consistent system for tracking student progress. To support this approach, faculty are now required to use the Canvas gradebook and include a meaningful assessment early in the semester—before the drop/add deadline—to generate timely student learning data that helps faculty and advisors guide students in aligning their academic paths. Faculty from GEM areas and Programs are also asked to self-select capstone or signature assignments to use for end-of-course assessment, assess student work at or near the end of the semester, and report whether students have met or not met the appropriate learning outcomes. At NIC, signature assignments are designed as key assessments where students demonstrate mastery of specific learning outcomes at a high level. These assignments showcase students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in a way that reflects deep understanding and proficiency related to course, general education, or program goals. Each year, faculty collaboratively norm student assignments by reviewing and calibrating scoring based on shared rubrics and sample work. This process ensures consistent evaluation standards and reliable data across courses and instructors. Results for GEM and Program outcomes assessment are displayed on NIC's GEM Data Dashboards and Program Data Dashboards.

NIC disaggregates its assessment data by categories that reflect the characteristics of its student population to ensure meaningful evaluation and improvement efforts. Action plans are submitted by GEM areas every year, starting back in 2020, and improvement goals are established in Program Review documents, both of which are directly tied to outcomes assessment data. Assessment data analysis aims to involve NIC's learning support resources (including First-Year Experience or [FYE](#), [Cardinal Learning Commons](#), [eLearning](#), [Testing Center](#), [Teaching and Learning Center](#), [TRIO](#), [Advising](#), [Molstead Library](#), and [Dual Credit](#)) in using data to identify and implement strategies that improve student learning outcomes. Action plans and goals for both GEM and Programs are directly informed by student learning outcomes assessment data.

SLOA maintains a 5-year assessment plan for the college, inclusive of GEM courses, transfer programs, and CTE programs. The current plan covers the years of 2025-30 and will be finalized in the Fall of 2025. At its March, 2025 meeting, the committee reevaluated and revised its values and goals to reflect and reaffirm the college's new assessment system.

This section below will highlight the progress since the April 2020 Year Seven Visit with the assessment of student learning for general education (GEM), transfer programs, and career and technical (CTE) programs. The two programs highlighted in this section include Anthropology (Transfer), and Welding (CTE).

PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT. The primary vehicle for the assessment of both Transfer and CTE program outcomes is the five-year program review cycle. Every program is

reviewed in this cycle, with the exception of programs that are state, nationally, or programmatically accredited or licensed. The respective state, national, or programmatic accreditation or licensure self-study and final report are considered in lieu of a separate program review.

Program Review is a continuous improvement process that evaluates the status, effectiveness, and progress of NIC's programs and helps identify the future direction, needs, and priorities of those programs. As such, it is closely connected to strategic planning, resource allocation, and other decision-making at the program, division, and college levels. In 2023, NIC adopted a new template for Program Review which was well-received across campus and includes specific sections for articulating both Program-level and GEM Outcomes Assessment methods, assessment results, and interpretations of data and planned interventions/improvements. The new template allows program faculty to include screenshots of meaningful data from the assessment data dashboards and to discuss planned actions based on that data. Entry of this assessment data through Canvas and the use of the disaggregated data results on data dashboards are a direct result of the NWCCU recommendation in 2020 for creating a 'systematic' assessment process across courses and programs. NIC's Program Assessment process is explained in the Best Practices for Program Assessment training document.

In years three and four of their Program Review cycle, faculty teaching selected program-required classes enter student performance data through Canvas assessment rubrics. Typically, faculty choose signature assignments that reflect whether a student is meeting or not meeting the specific Program Outcomes. Over the summer, colleagues from Information Technology, eLearning, and Planning & Effectiveness input the student learning outcomes assessment data and use Power BI to update the Program Outcomes Assessment data dashboards. The data can be viewed in aggregated or disaggregated form, and the dashboards include graphs that help identify achievement gaps. Program faculty then gather together as part of their Program Review cycle to explore and discuss the data dashboards, look for achievement gaps in student performance, and develop learning improvement/program improvement action plans to take as a result. Program goals for improvement often include further connections to campus learning support resources like TRIO, the Writing and Math Centers, the Meyer Science Tutoring Center, eLearning, Molstead Library, Academic Coaching, and Cardinal Learning Commons.

The goal of a program review is to articulate agreed-upon action plans for further improvement and development of the program. NIC's program review process is rigorous and thorough, takes place every five years, and involves comprehensive external peer review by faculty and administrators from other institutions as well as industry partners. As a member of the external review team, external reviewers are invited to consider the program's strengths and weaknesses/threats, and to consult with students, faculty, and administration on their recommendations for future directions. The program review process focuses on improvements that can be made using resources that are currently available to the program. Consideration may also be given, however, to proposed program improvements and expansions that would require additional resources; in such cases, the need and priority for additional resources are clearly specified and informed by data.

While the formal program review is conducted by all programs every five years, NIC's programs adopt a continuous improvement model in which they assess student learning on their program outcomes regularly during their program review cycle, specifically recommended in years three and four. This continuous program improvement model was approved in 2019 and is now being scaled up as part of the cross-campus implementation with the Canvas program outcomes assessment process using Power BI data dashboards. Since the very beginning of the Canvas program assessment data entry process in the spring of 2022, each semester has seen new program participation; in the most recent update from the spring 2025 dashboards, NIC has Program Outcomes Assessment data recorded for both Academic Transfer and CTE programs with a total of 32 programs, 313 separate class sections, and 56 faculty members represented. Each year SLOA plans for additional programs (that are in years 3 or 4 of their program review cycle) to join the data entry process as SLOA continues to scale up the program assessment system.

Anthropology Program Assessment and Use of Data to Support Student Learning

The Anthropology Program offers A.A. degrees for students at NIC, and the program affirms the primary mission to provide rigorous, high-quality instruction by assisting students in learning to think through a holistic lens to define, analyze, and understand biological and cultural diversity of humanity across time and space. There is one full-time and one part-time faculty member serving the Anthropology Program. The program currently offers three courses that meet state-wide GEM requirements (one GEM 7 and two GEM 6). ANTH 104 – Biological Anthropology has been approved by NIC GEM Council as a GEM 4 class and ANTH 100 sections also contribute to the newly developed First Year Experience (FYE) program. One section for fall 2023 was also linked to a Cardinal Learning Common 120 Seminar course where Anthropology faculty help orient students to the college and provide resources and support that has been proven to increase student retention and success. Anthropology faculty also team-teach INTR 250A – Death and Dying, which is a project-based, capstone integrative course that helps prepare students for the rigors of future 300 and 400 level coursework after transfer. Anthropology courses are also offered with partner high schools (STEM Charter), at distance sites, and in accelerated formats. Whether supporting general education, FYE, INTR 250, dual credit offerings, distance learning, or flexible start dates, the program is integral to numerous ongoing college initiatives.

As the Anthropology 2024 Program Review document shows, assessment data dashboards are becoming more fully integrated into conversations about program health and vibrancy. Programs on campus evaluate their program assessment data thoughtfully and carefully and to consider how to harness learning support resources to support learning improvements (including TRIO, Writing Center, Math Center, Science tutoring center, Academic Coaching, eLearning trainings, and Library information literacy trainings). The data dashboards are essential in allowing faculty to visualize and interpret disaggregated student achievement data and consider what resources students need to be more successful. Anthropology faculty used their data as the initial step in a planned three-year assessment data collection cycle to establish if there are any consistent patterns or gaps in student achievement from year-to-year.

The Anthropology program has been highly engaged in mapping course-level assignments and outcomes to established program-level outcomes. As part of a pilot program assessment process conducted in Spring 2023, five sections of anthropology courses participated. Specific assignments were identified within each course and aligned with targeted program outcomes. Program outcome rubrics were integrated into the Canvas gradebook, allowing students to receive direct scores indicating whether performance on the assignment “meets” or “does not meet” the associated program outcome.

Assessment data were collected and analyzed through the Power BI Program Outcomes Dashboard, enabling exploration of student attainment in relation to various demographic and enrollment variables. Initial results from Spring 2023 show that students met program outcomes 1–3 at a combined rate of 85%. The courses assessed included three sections of ANTH 100 (introductory) and two sections of INTR 250 (capstone), allowing for comparison in student achievement across course levels.

However, the disaggregated assessment data shows some variation that emerged across student subgroups. Lower rates of outcome attainment were identified among student-athletes (75%), dual-enrolled students, and residence hall students (each at or near 80%). Gender-based differences were also noted, with female students attaining outcomes at 89% and male students at 78%. Students aged 25 and older achieved program outcomes at a rate of 100%, compared to 83% for those under 25. Socioeconomic status analysis showed students identified as low SES attaining outcomes at 90%, while those not identified as low SES attained at 82%. Part-time students demonstrated a lower attainment rate (81%) compared to full-time students (87%).

While these initial findings raise important questions about potential disparities in outcome attainment, as of this writing, Anthropology faculty are still in the second year of the pilot for this assessment process. A three-year cycle of data collection is planned to support the identification of meaningful and reliable patterns before implementing major instructional or curricular changes, with the next review of assessment data planned for 2025-26.

At this stage, the focus for Anthropology Program improvements remains on early, intentional student support strategies—increased support from Academic Coaching, eLearning and Library training resources—rather than program-level changes. Targeted interventions will be explored to increase access to learning support resources for identified subgroups. Continuous reflection through student feedback, course observations, and engagement with professional development opportunities will guide instructional adjustments as the assessment cycle progresses and matures.

NIC is proud to highlight the Anthropology Program faculty’s commitment to fully engaging with the Program Assessment process in assessing student learning outcomes and using data to guide ongoing program improvement and excellence. Their thoughtful and intentional use of assessment data to track trends in student learning stands out as a model of how data can guide continuous improvement and support program excellence. As NIC works to scale up Program Assessment efforts across campus, the Anthropology Program’s approach serves as a powerful

example of the vision the college is striving for—evidence-based, reflective, student-focused, faculty-driven, and purposeful assessment in action.

General Description of Career and Technical Education and Health Professions Program Assessment

Several of NIC's programs maintain accreditation through their respective national or program-specific accrediting bodies. The [Associate Degree in Nursing](#) is accredited by the [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing](#) (ACEN), and the [Radiography Technology](#) program is accredited by the [Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology](#) (JRCERT). The [Medical Assistant](#) program holds accreditation through the [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs](#) (CAAHEP), in collaboration with the [Medical Assisting Education Review Board](#) (MAERB). The [Physical Therapist Assistant](#) program is accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education](#) (CAPTE). The [Medical Laboratory Technology](#) program is accredited by the [National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences](#) (NAACLS), and the [Dental Hygiene](#) program is accredited by the [Commission on Dental Accreditation](#) (CODA). In these types of programs, student evaluation is an ongoing process where assessment and evaluation dynamically occur in parallel for programmatic improvement, and this evaluation is part of the accreditation review process. Program directors recommend curriculum changes and program improvements to NIC based on feedback from student performance on relevant national and certificate examinations, as well as input from advisory committees.

For example, during its meetings on December 2, 2024, and April 8, 2024, the advisory committee for the Radiography Technology Program was informed about a recent minor curriculum change that included first-year students attending clinicals. This change aligns with best practices identified by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologies. The Program Director provided updates to the committee in subsequent meetings regarding curriculum revisions aimed at aligning expectations for clinical students, as the requirements for first-year students differ from those of second-year students. The Program Director also updated the advisory committee on the progress of the implementation of a second cohort. (See Radiography Technology Advisory Committee Minutes, December 2, 2024, and Radiography Technology Advisory Committee Minutes, April 8, 2024).

In CTE programs that are not nationally or programmatically accredited, student performance is monitored by industry standards and with input from program advisory committees. NIC participates in the [Technical College Leadership Council](#) (TCLC), a postsecondary advisory group to the Idaho Division of Career and Technical Education. Comprised of CTE Deans from all six technical colleges, TCLC serves to ensure technical education programs align with regional and state industry needs.

Program advisory committees serve as the main resource for reviewing and recommending changes to program curricula. These committees consist of industry representatives from various fields and meet twice a year to evaluate the curriculum, program outcomes, industry needs, and emerging trends in technology. Additionally, the Program Review process, conducted by external representatives every five years, also assesses the curriculum and course content,

suggesting necessary changes. For instance, based on input from the advisory committee, the Business Management program introduced an internship option for students completing the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree (See Business Management Advisory Committee Minutes, March 13, 2024).

Students are assessed with the use of third-party assessments, in association with the State Career and Technical Education Office, that are geared toward measuring proficiency of required skills for trades and industry. Curricular changes are recommended to NIC's Curriculum Council based upon an analysis of the results of these examinations. Relevant advisory groups also play a role in suggesting curricular changes.

Digital badging, or micro-credentialing, is an increasingly adopted strategy to bridge skills gaps and enhance traditional academic transcripts. NIC participates in SkillStack®, Idaho's statewide digital badging system, which allows students to earn verified credentials that reflect specific, workforce-relevant competencies. These badges are developed with direct input from industry partners and are validated by credentialed educators, ensuring alignment with both academic standards and employer expectations. This approach supports meaningful assessment of student learning and provides learners with portable, evidence-based recognition of their skills.

It is important to NIC that both sides of the college—Academic Transfer and CTE—are visualized on the data dashboards. In the spring of 2024, the SLOA Committee began working with CTE Division Chairs and faculty to scale the Canvas assessment process up across all CTE programs. As of the Summer 2025, several CTE and Trades & Industry Programs are now represented on the Program Dashboards with scaling up planned to continue. This work is important as the Canvas-based assessment system will allow CTE programs to examine their disaggregated student achievement data in order to look for achievement gaps. In the fall of 2024, the SLOA Committee began working with division chairs and faculty in CTE Programs to help onboard them into entering assessment data through Canvas so that it can be visualized on the data dashboards. Now that NIC's Academic Transfer Programs and GEM areas have dashboards visualizing their student learning outcomes assessment data, the goal moving forward is to help CTE division chairs and faculty become more comfortable entering their data in Canvas so that they, too, are represented on the data dashboards.

To support this goal, SLOA committee members have:

1. Met with CTE deans and Division Chairs to go over the Canvas assessment data entry process and help leaders and faculty understand the purpose and methodology behind assessment data collection.
2. Met with eLearning to get assistance in building Program Assessment Rubrics to assist CTE faculty with this new assessment data entry process. Making it easier for CTE division chairs and faculty to implement Canvas assessment into their courses is the ultimate goal. eLearning completed build-out of all Program Assessment Rubrics in Canvas Commons in spring 2025.
3. Hosted presentations and workshops to help train CTE faculty in how to enter student data in Canvas.

Welding Technology Program Assessment

The [Welding Technology Program](#) at NIC stands out as an exemplary model of CTE assessment through its commitment to continuous improvement and data-informed decision-making. By aligning hands-on training with industry standards and measurable learning outcomes, the program ensures students are workforce-ready upon completion. In the spring of 2025, the program has taken a significant step forward by entering assessment data directly into Canvas, enabling integration with NIC's campus-wide data dashboards. This advancement not only aligns the CTE assessment process with Academic Transfer Programs but also enhances transparency, allows for visualization of aggregated and disaggregated data, and provides valuable insights for program evaluation and future planning.

The Welding Technology Program is housed at the Parker Technical Education Center, located in Rathdrum, 12 miles north of the main campus. There are two full-time faculty serving the program. The Trades & Industry Department, under the Career & Technical Division, offers the [Intermediate Technical Certificate](#), the [Advanced Technical Certificate](#), and the [Associate of Applied Science Degree](#) designed to prepare students for entry-level employment as a welder. The programs comply with national standards established by the [American Welding Society](#) (AWS), combining theory and applied shop practice designed to develop welding skills. Students receive instruction on welding processes including OAC (oxy-acetylene cutting), SMAW (shielded metal arc welding), GMAW (gas metal arc welding), and GTAW (gas tungsten arc welding), as well as blueprint reading, layout procedures, metallurgy, and safety. Assessment is central to ensuring students master critical skills and meet industry expectations, with evidence of improvement and achievement derived from systematic data collection of in-class assignments, program assessments, and external industry reviewers.

Students' performance is monitored by AWS Certified Welding Inspector credentialed faculty using industry standards, follow-up graduation surveys, placement rates, and program advisory committee feedback. Every student in the program receives a Semester-based Practical Exercises Packet and Welding Fabrication Packet with learning objectives aligned with American Welding Society Standards and a grading rubric. Students completing will be prepared for AWS Certification Testing (See Spring 2nd Year Welding Lab Practical Exercises Packet and Spring 2nd Year Welding Fabrication Packet).

Evidence of student learning improvement in the Welding Program is reflected in its [structured course progression](#) and outcome-focused assessments. Successful completion of each semester, contingent on meeting performance benchmarks, ensures students build proficiency incrementally. For example, students must demonstrate safe equipment setup and welding techniques across multiple processes (e.g., SMAW, GMAW) before advancing, as outlined in the program outcomes. Assessment data has led to actionable changes, such as refining instructional methods or increasing hands-on practice time to address gaps in blueprint reading or weld quality.

As with all programs in the Career & Technical Division, Program Advisory Committees are the primary resource for reviewing and recommending changes to program curriculum. These

committees are comprised of industry representatives from various fields that meet twice a year to review curriculum, program outcomes, industry needs, and new and emerging trends in technology. Most of these recommendations are reviewed by the respective program advisory committees. Curricular changes are recommended to NIC's Curriculum Council with final approval by the provost (See Welding Advisory Committee Minutes November 2, 2021, March 17, 2022, and November 17, 2022, and Workgroup Meeting Minutes April 7, 2022).

The Program Review process, performed by internal and outside representatives every five years, also reviews the curriculum and course content and outlines changes that may need to be implemented. The Welding Technology Program went through the program review process during the 2020-2021 academic year (See 2020-2021 Welding Technology Program Review Document). In the 2024-25 academic year Welding faculty entered in Program Outcomes Assessment data into the NIC Canvas-based assessment system for the first time, in anticipation of their upcoming program review next year. Moving forward and matching NIC's GEM and Transfer Program Assessment processes, all CTE programs on campus are now going to enter program assessment data through Canvas. Welding faculty were excited to be some of the first to participate in the rollout.

As required by the Idaho State Department of Career & Technical Education, graduates of all of NIC's welding programs are contacted by the college. In 2024, there were nine graduates in the Welding Technology Program, seven of the nine responded to the follow up survey. There were five respondents reporting that they are now employed as a welder while one student was employed in a non-related area. In spring of 2025, there were 22 students enrolled in the Welding AAS degree program. NIC proudly features the Welding Program as a strong example of how both Academic Transfer and CTE programs engage in rigorous, intentional assessment of student learning in program outcomes.

GENERAL EDUCATION (GEM) ASSESSMENT

Building the Culture and Infrastructure for GEM (General Education) Assessment:

General Education makes up 60% of all AA and AS programs at NIC. Because of the central role that GEM classes play in NIC students' education, both for Academic Transfer and CTE students, the college is committed to strong GEM assessment practices to ensure that students are meeting learning outcomes in different GEM disciplines. The GEM (General Education Matriculation) Competencies, adopted statewide in 2015, are used by all Idaho colleges and universities as foundations for Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Because these outcomes are standardized across institutions, it is both appropriate and practical to use GEM outcomes as ILOs. The SLOA committee, in partnership with the Dean of Instruction, Transfer, and General Education, helps the campus see General Education as a distinct program in itself, one that faculty assess as a whole and that encompasses a wide swath of the student learning experience on campus.

The SLOA committee firmly believes that faculty-driven assessments are the most effective means to create a positive assessment culture. Working with campus partners in the Office of Instruction, eLearning, Information Technology, and the Office of Planning & Effectiveness, since spring of 2021, NIC has utilized a Canvas-based data entry system for both General

Education assessment and Transfer/CTE Program Assessment. This process allows faculty to participate and engage in the creation of the assessment instruments and to best decide what instruments will work to measure their course and program outcomes, all within a Canvas-based, systematic assessment data entry structure.

Each year, all faculty in GEM (General Education) areas across campus enter student performance data through Canvas using pre-populated assessment rubrics. All GEM classes in Idaho have designated course outcomes that are tied directly to State of Idaho General Education competencies. The rubrics used for GEM assessment measure student success on these GEM/State of Idaho learning competencies. Over the summer, colleagues at Information Technology, eLearning, and Planning & Effectiveness input the student learning outcomes assessment data into data dashboards for GEM areas. The data can be viewed in aggregated or disaggregated form, and the dashboards include graphs that assist with the identification of achievement gaps. GEM faculty then gather together annually to explore and discuss the data dashboards, look for gaps in student performance, and develop learning improvement action plans provide additional academic or learning support for students that may be underperforming. They are developed by the faculty and GEM leaders assigned to each discipline, then submitted to Division Chairs, SLOA leaders, and the Dean of Instruction each December. Action plans are implemented each spring, GEM data is collected again, and then the data and previous year's action plans are reevaluated during the next cycle to determine successes or refinements and to look for learning improvement stories provide additional academic or learning support for students that may be underperforming. They are developed by the faculty and GEM leaders assigned to each discipline, then submitted to Division Chairs, SLOA leaders, and the Dean of Instruction each December. Action plans are implemented each spring, GEM data is collected again, and then the data and previous year's action plans are reevaluated during the next cycle to determine successes or refinements and to look for learning improvement stories (See GEM Action Plans).

Now that NIC has had three full years of data collection for this new GEM Assessment process (2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024), faculty are at a point where they can discern repeated patterns and notable achievement gaps. There is also more trust in the data itself overall (which is also an important and ongoing conversation that happens on campus), and faculty talk freely in GEM workshops, conversations that are summarized in annual GEM action plans, starting in 2020, about what identified patterns might mean, if causality can be determined, and how best to address the achievement gaps across disciplines. The most recent GEM action plans are from 2024. This work is developing into rich, engaging conversations that span disciplines, departments, and connect the academic and student services branches of campus. Faculty engagement with General Education Assessment at NIC is impressively high, with every GEM area actively participating in fall data analysis workshops and spring action planning retreats. There is growing excitement across campus and on the SLOA Committee about the next step—bringing disciplines together through dynamic interdisciplinary workshops that spark collaboration, innovation, and shared insight across the core curriculum.

NIC faculty are truly engaging with assessment data to drive learning improvements for students and are using the assessment data to enhance learning support services. Included as evidence of this, first, are some of the early learning improvement stories from the earliest interactions with

assessment data back in 2021-2022. In the Music AA program, instructional revisions emphasizing active listening and analytical exercises led to measurable gains in music theory and aural skills. In GEM 1 (Written Communication), faculty addressed deficiencies in argument development and evidence-based writing by redesigning assignments and rubrics, resulting in improved student performance in clarity, structure, and critical thinking. At the Sandpoint Center, GEM 2 (Oral Communication) interventions included peer feedback and enhanced assessment tools, which contributed to notable progress in students' presentation organization and audience engagement. Finally, in GEM 5 (Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing), pedagogical changes that prioritized reflective and discussion-based activities strengthened students' interpretive and analytical capabilities (See the Music AA Learning Improvement Story, the GEM 1 Learning Improvement Story, the GEM 2 Sandpoint Center Learning Improvement Story, and the GEM 5 Learning Improvement Story).

More recently, the SLOA Committee and other campus constituents have taken several steps in the fall of 2024 and spring of 2025 to study notable achievement gaps, identify variables faculty would like to test, and intervene to seek student learning improvements and to tap into appropriate learning support services (like the Math and Writing Center tutoring, Academic Coaching, and eLearning and Library trainings). The committee also continues its work on creating a positive, consistent, caring, and collaborative culture of assessment across the institution to encourage all campus constituents to use the data to make informed, targeted learning support interventions as needed. NIC is proud to be an institution that uses assessment data to drive student learning improvements with interdisciplinary collaborations across divisions, departments, programs. A few highlights:

1. The SLOA Committee meets each month and discusses the GEM Data Dashboards, identifying the most noticeable patterns and achievement gaps and planning for possible interventions (whether that be curriculum changes, delivery or modality changes, or need for more access to wraparound student support services, etc.) See attached SLOA agendas for 2024-2025.
2. There is a notable achievement gap in student success among First-generation Dual Credit students. In the summer of 2024, the NIC/School District 271 Steering Committee began meeting to discuss ways to begin closing this gap, creating new online and print orientation resources for new dual credit students and their parents to better support them and anticipate their questions and needs. These resources are best used in a setting where someone is speaking about Dual Credit to an audience of students and (sometimes) parents. In the last year, the Dual Credit office has also increased its presence in area high schools for advising appointments, presentations, and assistance with registrations. All of these resources are best combined with advising appointments with both student and parent, which happen more or less constantly throughout the school year. As a result of the assessment data, the Dual Credit office has done a great deal to make these appointments easy to make, including an online scheduling system.
3. The Residence Hall student achievement gap is another notable example from the last several years. Students living in the Residence Hall underperform other student cohorts

consistently in several GEM areas. As a result of this disparity in student performance from the GEM assessment data, SLOA committee members met to discuss and draft a targeted survey to determine what variables may be leading to this achievement gap. Next, SLOA leaders worked with the Residence Hall Director to refine the student survey to get a clearer picture of some of the areas of need the students might be experiencing in terms of campus resources or academic assistance. The survey was approved by Faculty Assembly and administered to students in Spring of 2025. The Residence Hall survey went out to students from April 7-25, 2025. Results that were received in April, 2025 will be analyzed and discussed in the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026. Preliminary examination of the student comments indicates that they desire more access to campus services after-hours and more wraparound academic support to help form more positive and consistent study habits. Actions that the college will plan as a result of this survey—certain to tap into more learning support resources for Residence Hall students--will be a significant example of NIC using collaborative processes to ‘close the loop’ of the assessment cycle as a campus to improve student learning and success. The action plan draft will be initiated by SLOA, with recommendations brought to academic leadership in September, 2025.

4. In the 2024-25 academic year, due to changes made to the NIC Athletics Conference by the previous Board of Trustees, NIC saw a high influx of international student athletes enrolled in main campus classes and living in the Residence Hall. NIC English faculty and administrators worked together as soon as the students arrived on campus to create plans to help these students with reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills for their classes. The GEM data dashboards for 2024-5 showed that these students were successful in many of their GEM classes but struggled to perform in GEM 1 (Written Communication). As a result, administrators worked with English faculty to create a Summer Bridge Program. The NIC Summer Bridge Program for ESL students, beginning in summer 2025, is a targeted initiative designed to support international student-athletes before the academic year begins. The program originated from a data-informed discussion focused on how to better serve incoming students, particularly in addressing language and academic transition challenges. Funding from the Athletic Department highlights impressive, generous cross-campus collaboration and a shared investment in student success. By using insights from previous student experiences and performance, the program demonstrates a thoughtful and practical application of data to improve outcomes. Overall, the initiative reflects NIC’s commitment to a caring, data-informed culture—one where student needs guide program development, and decisions are made to maximize both academic and athletic potential.
5. The SLOA committee began partnering with the Teaching and Learning Center in the fall of 2024 to create a recurring workshop for First-Year faculty on clarifying NIC’s student learning outcomes assessment processes, identifying and discussing achievement gap patterns, and using campus teaching and learning resources to identify targeted means for closing the gaps. This is a presentation that SLOA has planned for each fall semester to help onboard new faculty to NIC’s campus assessment culture and processes. The Teaching and Learning First-Year Faculty/SLOA presentation is included in the Evidence Files.

6. The SLOA committee regularly connects with adjunct faculty, Dual Credit faculty, and CTE faculty to help train them on GEM and Program Assessment Processes. SLOA leaders meet regularly with deans and division chairs to keep awareness of—and consistency with—student learning outcomes assessment top of mind.
7. In the spring of 2025, SLOA leaders and the Dean of Instruction for Transfer/General Education were proud to award the Math/CS/Engineering Division with the first-ever GEM Assessment Award. The GEM Assessment Award recognizes faculty and staff who demonstrate exemplary assessment practices, celebrating their efforts to improve teaching and learning. By highlighting assessment success stories, the award fosters a positive, caring, collaborative culture around assessment across the institution.
8. Finally, four SLOA committee members, along with the Dean of Instruction for Transfer/General Education, have applied for and been awarded Group Professional Development funds to travel to NWCCU's Annual Conference in Seattle in December, 2025. As part of the college's response to NWCCU's 2020 recommendation to create a 'systematic approach to student learning outcomes assessment,' a team of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) committee members will attend the NWCCU annual event. SLOA is really starting to transition into a committee that has moved beyond building the college assessment system and is now using the data to foster more widespread, interdisciplinary conversations about teaching and learning and resource support, and attending the NWCCU Mission Fulfillment Fellowship presentations on outcomes assessment will be particularly useful as professional development for the committee.

As NIC's General Education and Program Outcomes Assessment systems have matured, the SLOA committee is committed to advancing a culture of intentional care and continuous improvement by promoting the value of GEM and Program Assessment across campus. Through meaningful use of assessment data, the committee supports efforts to enhance the quality of academic transfer and CTE programs—ensuring that improvement is not only data-driven, but also centered on student success, well-being, and lively, intellectual faculty collaboration. This approach reinforces the idea that effective assessment really is a form of care, guiding instructional and programmatic decisions that reflect a shared deep commitment to student growth and long-term achievement.

Section 4, Moving Forward

North Idaho College (NIC) continues to make progress toward its Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness by sustaining momentum in the areas of Mission Fulfillment, Student Achievement, and Programmatic Assessment. The institution's highest priorities include stabilizing governance and leadership, improving enrollment and retention, and strengthening newly implemented systems for Program and General Education assessment.

Key goals for continued advancement include the following:

1. Maximize NIC's stabilized governance and senior executive leadership in order to continue strategic planning efforts.
2. Continue to scale up Canvas-based assessment systems and provide enriching, interdisciplinary faculty professional development opportunities related to student learning outcomes assessment. An identified opportunity is to connect faculty with resources on appropriate interventions from existing learning support resources for closing achievement gaps in student performance.
3. With the aid of the new disaggregated assessment data visualizations, continue to develop, implement, reassess, refine, and celebrate student learning improvements.
4. Focus on strategic enrollment management initiatives for both recruiting and retaining students. One such effort is to continue to scale programs like the First-Year Experience.

Section 5, Response to Outstanding Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Spring 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability

Establish meaningful indicators (metrics) to align with and measure institutional goals and objectives in its evaluation, planning, and resource allocation processes to support institutional effectiveness and student achievement (2020 Standard 1.B.1 and 1.B.2).

North Idaho College (NIC) provided an executive summary of the institution's framework for its ongoing accreditation efforts, including a definition of Mission Fulfillment and measures for improving institutional effectiveness for measuring fulfillment of its mission in the previous section titled *Mission Fulfillment*. This section will cover the evaluation of NIC's strategic plan using measures of improving institutional effectiveness.

In addition to internal performance measures, NIC has also sought external validation of its institutional value through an independent economic impact analysis. As mentioned in the introduction of this report, the [2025 Lightcast Economic Impact Study](#), presented to the Board of Trustees on June 25, 2025, found that NIC generates \$273.2 million in total income annually, accounting for 2.1% of the region's Gross Regional Product (GRP) and supporting 3,992 jobs across northern Idaho. The study also found strong returns on investment for key stakeholders. For students, every \$1 invested in their education yields a \$4.00 return in future earnings. Taxpayers realized \$38.1 million in benefits, and the broader societal return was 4.5 to 1. These findings confirm that NIC not only fulfills its mission through educational excellence and student achievement but also contributes powerfully to regional economic vitality and sustainability.

Evaluation

The Institutional Research Office and the Accreditation Liaison Officer will create a Strategic Plan Performance Update and a Mission Fulfillment Report for the EAC. This report will highlight NIC's performance against measures of institutional effectiveness as part of the evaluation of NIC's Strategic Plan.

The report will serve as a basis for discussions on potential improvement initiatives and the corresponding resource allocation, which will be presented to NIC's Executive Council for consideration in next year's budget. Two initiatives, the First Year Experience and the Recruitment and Retention Initiative, are examples discussed later in this section that link improvement initiatives to the strategic plan and budget allocation.

Dashboard




A [mission fulfillment dashboard](#) has been created and posted to NIC's website, using Power BI visualization, that highlights the measures along with their respective scores and benchmarks. The dashboard will be updated when final reports are received from the State of Idaho, the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). In order to provide a public dashboard on NIC's website, the

IT department transitioned from Power BI on a hosted server to Power BI Service where the college's data is now hosted in the cloud.

Rating Scale

The College designates the following rating scale in the determination of Mission Fulfillment:

Rating Score = NIC Score/Respective Peer Group Median or Target Benchmark

Rating Score	Rating	Rating Indicator
Greater than 0.90	Satisfactory	
Between 0.60 to 0.89	Satisfactory, but Needs Improvement	
Less than 0.60	Not Satisfactory	

For the measures associated with Goals 1, 2, 3, and 5, the College's rating is calculated by dividing NIC's score by the corresponding peer group score. These peer group scores are determined using IPEDS and NCCBP data. A list of peer groups is provided following the section on Mission Fulfillment Measures.


For the measures in Goal 4, the rating is calculated differently. It is determined by dividing NIC's score by the target benchmark, as these specific measures are unique to NIC and are not nationally normed.

Sample Mission Fulfillment Scorecard


The sample Mission Fulfillment Scorecard below highlights measures, performance, and ratings during the College's transition to its new strategic plan on July 1, 2025. With 10 areas rated satisfactory, the College meets its definition of Mission Fulfillment as demonstrated through this scorecard. The EAC has focused its attention on the two measures not rated satisfactory (2.3 and 5.2). For instance, in support of employee retention and satisfaction (5.2), the NIC Board of Trustees (the board) has approved three consecutive years of salary increases (8% in FY2024, 3% in FY2025, and 5% in FY2026). The college continues to closely monitor employee turnover, which is trending quickly toward pre-sanction levels, with an anticipated annual turnover of approximately 80 employees, a considerable improvement from the high mark of 104 employees in 2023 (See the response to **Recommendation 2: Fall 2024 Special Report**).

NIC is enhancing academic advising, expanding faculty advisor training, and implementing feedback systems in support of completion and transfer (5.2). Section 2 of this report highlights the efforts led by the Retention and Completion Coordinator and the Retention Committee, which are working to coordinate campus-wide initiatives. Additionally, the recent implementation of the Culture of Care program is a key tool in identifying and supporting at-risk students.


- 1.1 Retention Rate: Overall credit student retention rates (fall to fall) as reported to the NCCBP (Form 4). Includes both full- and part-time students. Dual Credit students are not included in this cohort. ^[CCM 271]

Year Cohort	FY 2022 Fall 2021	FY 2023 Fall 2022	FY 2024 Fall 2023	Rating Score Fall 2023	FY 2024 Rating
NIC	48.80%	50.59%	53.31%	1.04	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	46.91%	48.57%	51.19%		

- 1.3 Persistence Rate: Overall credit student persistence rates (fall to spring) as reported to the NCCBP (Form 4). Includes both full- and part-time students. Dual Credit students are not included in this cohort. ^[CCM 272]


Year Cohort	FY 2022 Fall 2021	FY 2023 Fall 2022	FY 2024 Fall 2023	Rating Score Fall 2023	FY 2024 Rating
NIC	74.44%	74.80%	75.62%	1.05	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	71.38%	70.85%	72.30%		

- 2.2 150% Graduation Rate: First-time, full-time, degree/certificate-seeking students who completed their program within 150% of normal time as reported to IPEDS. ^[CCM 196]


Year Cohort	FY 2022 Fall 2019	FY 2023 Fall 2020	FY 2024 Fall 2021	Rating Score Fall 2020	FY 2023 Rating
NIC	26.4%	35.7%	37.5%	1.06	
IPEDS Peer Group Median	30.7%	33.8%	**		

** IPEDS Peer comparator data not yet available.

- 2.3 Percent Completed or Transferred in Two Years: First-time, full-time, degree/certificate-seeking students who completed a degree or certificate, or transferred, within two years as reported to the NCCBP (Form 2). ^[CCM 273]

Year Cohort	FY 2022 Fall 2020	FY 2023 Fall 2021	FY 2024 Fall 2022	Rating Score Fall 2022	FY 2024 Rating
NIC	31.14%	38.50%	34.61%	0.83	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	35.48%	41.85%	41.90%		

- 3.1 Workforce Training Market Penetration. Percentage of NIC's service area population enrolled annually in non-credit courses as reported to the NCCBP (Form 14a). Headcount is unduplicated. NIC's service area includes Benewah, Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties and includes all age groups. ^[CCM 280]

Year Cohort	FY 2022 2021- 2022	FY 2023 2022- 2023	FY 2024 2023- 2024	Rating Score 2023- 2024	FY 2024 Rating
NIC	1.52%	1.64%	1.68%	1.98	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	0.69%	0.92%	0.85%		


- 3.2 Cultural Activities Market Penetration. Community participation in cultural activities held at the institution as a percentage of NIC's service area population as reported to the NCCBP (Form 14b). NIC's service area includes Benewah, Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties and includes all age groups. Cultural Activities participation counts are duplicated and may include, but are not limited to, exhibits, performances, dance, and music activities. Summer Theater rehearsals and zoom counts, as applicable, are not included. [CCM 264]

Year Academic Year	FY 2022 2021- 2022	FY 2023 2022- 2023	FY 2024 2023- 2024	Rating Score 2023- 2024	FY 2024 Rating
NIC	10.67%	14.44%	15.61%	3.58	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	1.44%	2.60%	4.36%		


- 3.3 Sporting Events Market Penetration. Community participation in intercollegiate sporting events held at the institution as a percentage of NIC's service area population as reported to the NCCBP (Form 14b). NIC's service area includes Benewah, Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties and includes all age groups. Zoom counts, as applicable, are not included. [CCM 265]

Year Academic Year	FY 2022 2021- 2022	FY 2023 2022- 2023	FY 2024 2023- 2024	Rating Score 2023- 2024	FY 2024 Rating
NIC	5.64%	7.19%	5.95%	1.93	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	2.31%	2.72%	3.08%		


- 3.4 Public Meetings Market Penetration. Community participation in public meetings held at the institution by non-college organizations as a percentage of NIC's service area population as reported to the NCCBP (Form 14b). Service area includes Benewah, Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties and includes all age groups. Zoom counts, as applicable, are not included. ^[CCM 266]

Year	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Rating Score	FY 2024
Academic Year	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2023-2024	Rating
NIC	1.10%	2.81%	4.87%	1.01	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	5.02%	4.25%	4.82%		

- 4.1 Idaho Region 1 High School Market Share. Enrollment by high school as a percentage of combined senior classes in that county. ^[CCM 276]

Year	FY 2024	Rating Score	FY 2024
Academic Year	2023-2024	2023-2024	Rating
NIC	12.8%	0.95	
Target Benchmark	13.4%		

- 4.2 Annual Enrollment: Total Lives Touched. Includes Academic, Dual Credit, Career & Technical Workforce Training, Area Agency on the Aging, Adult Education, and Head Start. This measure is based on unduplicated counts within each grouping: however, a small number of students may fall into more than one category over the school year. ^[CCM 277]

Year	FY 2024	Rating Score	FY 2024
Academic Year	2023-2024	2023-2024	Rating
NIC	21,437	0.99	
Target Benchmark	21,651		

- 5.1 Composite Financial Indicator Score. As reported to the NCCBP (Form 22). This indicator was developed in Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education: Identifying, Measuring & Reporting Financial Risks (Seventh Edition), by KPMG LLP; Prager, Sealy & Co., LLC; Attain LLC. ^[CCM 169]

Year	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Rating Score	FY 2024
Academic Year	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2023-2024	Rating
NIC	5.99	6.47	6.25	1.05	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	6.43	6.58	5.93		

- 5.2 Departure Rates. Total number of departure occurrences, other than retirement, as a percentage of full-time regular (non-temporary) employees. As reported to the NCCBP (Form 19).^[CCM 262]

Year Academic Year	FY 2022 2021- 2022	FY 2023 2022- 2023	FY 2024 2023- 2024	Rating Score 2023- 2024	FY 2024 Rating
NIC	18.32%	18.06%	17.94%	1.83	
NCCBP Peer Group Median	12.64%	11.41%	9.78%		

Note: In Measure 5.2 (Employee Departure Rates), a lower percentage reflects a higher ranking.

Peer Group Selection

NIC has utilized the same comparator group since 2011 for reporting purposes to IPEDS. With the introduction of new NWCCU standards, a small committee was formed in 2021 to review the current group. However, they recommended no changes, as several measures showed no significant differences between the two groups, and the committee wanted to maintain continuity with the same peer group.

Previously, NIC relied on the national average for metrics from the NCCBP for mission fulfillment and state reporting. In preparation for the Mid-Cycle Visit, a small group reviewed this approach and recommended the following institutions for comparative analysis using data from the NCCBP. The committee finalized the list of NCCBP members using the following filters: Median Annual Household Income: Less than \$100,000, Unemployment Rate: Less than 5%, Population Area: Less than 500,000, Faculty/Staff Union: No, and only those classifying themselves as “Rural or Suburban Campus.”

NCCBP Peer Group

Colorado Mountain College (CO)*
Crowder College (MO)
Highland Community College (KS)
Laramie County Community College (WY)*
Mineral Area College (MO)
Moberly Area Community College (MO)
North Iowa Area Community College (IA)
Northern Wyoming Community College District (WY)*
Northwest College (WY)*
Seward County Community College (KS)
Spartanburg Community College (SC)
State Fair Community College (MO)
Three Rivers College (MO)
Walters State Community College (TN)

** - Indicates Regional Peer, the remainder are National Peers*

Note: The NCCBP Peer Group Median may not include the full cohort of 14 institutions as it is based on the number of institutions in the peer group that submitted data for the specific data point and year.

IPEDS Peer Group

Aims Community College, Greeley, CO
Centralia College, Centralia, WA
Central Oregon Community College, Bend, OR
College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, ID
College of Western Idaho, Nampa, ID
Colorado Mountain College, Glenwood Springs, CO
Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell, MT
Linn-Benton Community College, Albany, OR
Mohave Community College, Kingman, AZ*
Rogue Community College, Grants Pass, OR
Northern Wyoming Community College District, Sheridan, WY
Skagit Valley College, Mount Vernon, WA
Snow College, Ephraim, UT*
South Puget Sound Community College, Olympia, WA
Spokane Community College, Spokane, WA
Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane, WA
Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, OR
Walla Walla Community College, Walla Walla, WA
Wenatchee Valley College, Wenatchee, WA
Whatcom Community College, Bellingham, WA
Yakima Valley Community College, Yakima, WA

** - Indicates National Peer, the remainder are Regional Peers*

Strategic Initiatives for Institutional Effectiveness: Recruiting and Retention, and the First-Year Experience (FYE)

North Idaho College (NIC) has implemented targeted initiatives to enhance institutional effectiveness, each intentionally aligned with the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan and supported through deliberate resource alignment. This ensures that institutional priorities are matched with appropriate funding, staffing, and operational capacity. Among the most significant efforts are NIC's intensified focus on student recruitment and retention, along with the development and expansion of the First-Year Experience (FYE) program, and the creation of NIC X-Labs for experimental learning. These initiatives directly support Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan—Enhance Student Access and Support Services to Strengthen Student Success—and reflect the College's commitment to continuous improvement through purposeful investment in student-centered strategies.

The *Recruitment and Retention Initiative* builds on NIC's recent success in reversing a twelve-year decline in enrollment. Through the work of the Recruitment and Retention Committees, NIC is implementing data-informed strategies aimed at sustaining enrollment growth while improving student persistence. In Fall 2023, NIC achieved a fall-to-fall persistence rate of 75.4%, with 75.3% of new degree-seeking students retained, significantly surpassing national benchmarks.

The college has set ambitious yet attainable goals, targeting a 58.3% overall retention rate for the Fall 2024 cohort. The college aims for a 58.3% retention rate for the Fall 2024 cohort, based on the Fall 2023 NCCBP rate with an added 5%. Key strategies include increased engagement with dual credit students through the NIC Connect program, a 3% growth target for new student enrollment, and proactive support systems for both continuing and first-time students. NIC Connect is designed for all high school students, including those in dual credit programs who wish to continue their education at NIC after graduation. This program supports seniors through five meaningful visits that cover an overview, placement assessments, admission applications, scholarships and financial aid, and advising/registration.

These efforts align closely with Strategic Plan Objective 1.2 (retention strategies) and Objective 1.3 (targeted recruitment efforts), emphasizing NIC's commitment to strategic alignment and mission fulfillment.

Complementing these recruitment and retention strategies is NIC's *First-Year Experience (FYE) Program*, implemented in Fall 2022 as a signature element of the college's former Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. The FYE program is designed to ease students' transition into college and foster persistence through a triad of interventions: Cardinal Convocation, a college success seminar, and learning communities. The data gathered from the program shows promising trends. For example, the Fall 2024 FYE cohort posted a 78.1% retention rate into Spring 2025, exceeding both the FYE-eligible cohort (73.7%) and the broader student body (71.7%). Although longer-term retention rates show a typical decline by the second year, the program's initial success supports Strategic Plan Objectives 1.2 and 2.1 by strengthening student engagement and clarifying academic pathways. NIC is now considering the development of a general education course (GEM 7) to support ongoing success beyond the first year.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the college experienced substantial growth in Academic Year 2024–25, with enrollment increases of 15.3% in Fall, 12.3% in Spring, and 14.2% in Summer compared to the previous year. Notably, the college has also seen strong gains among first-time, full-time students and dual credit enrollment, which increased by 23.5%. The administration is actively monitoring leading indicators for Fall 2025 enrollment and anticipates that this positive momentum will continue.

These efforts directly respond to this recommendation by establishing indicators that align with NIC’s institutional goals and integrating them into evaluation, planning, and resource allocation processes. Three major initiatives—the expansion of the First-Year Experience (FYE), NIC X-Labs, and the College’s focused recruitment and retention efforts—were prioritized in response to declining enrollment and to support improvements in student persistence and retention (See [Recruitment and Retention Improvement Efforts](#), and [First Year Experience at NIC](#)).

Recommendation 2: Spring 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability - Engage in an effective system of learning outcomes assessment processes across all academic and learning support programs and use the results of those assessments to evaluate the quality of learning and to inform academic and learning-support planning (2020 Standard 1.C.5 and 1.C.7)

Since the 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Report and visit, NIC has built a systematic and sustainable approach to outcomes assessment across instructional programs and one that incorporates needed learning support services, in alignment with NWCCU Standards 1.C.5 and 1.C.7. This approach ensures the institution collects, analyzes, and applies disaggregated outcomes data to evaluate student learning and provides students continuous access to relevant academic and support services.

Instructional Programs Assessment

As detailed in **Section 3: Programmatic Assessment**, the College has established a structured and faculty-led framework for the assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) at both the General Education (GEM) and Program levels. These assessment activities are guided by the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) Committee and integrated into a five-year cycle of program review. All academic and Career and Technical (CTE) programs engage in outcomes assessment during Years three and four of the review cycle, entering performance data into standardized Canvas-based rubrics aligned to institutional, statewide, and industry competencies.

Following each assessment cycle, the Office of Institutional Research, in collaboration with eLearning and Information Technology, generates disaggregated Power BI dashboards for both GEM (General Education) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). These dashboards allow faculty to visualize longitudinal student performance, identify achievement gaps, and develop actionable learning improvement plans. Faculty review results by relevant demographic subgroup (e.g., housing cohort, first-generation status, enrollment type) and GEM areas submit annual assessment narratives that link outcomes data to any planned instructional changes. NIC's model of norming exercises, rubric calibration, and structured reflection aligns closely with best practices in assessment for learning and supports a robust cycle of evaluation and improvement.

Academic and Learning Support Resources and Outcomes Assessment

Over the past three years, the college has made significant strides in moving from assessment data collection to purposeful application, ushering in a more robust phase of using evidence to drive and document student support improvements. Academic programs have been supported in refining learning outcomes and aligning them more closely with course content and instructional practices. Faculty-led assessment cycles have increasingly focused on identifying specific learning gaps and implementing targeted interventions, such as embedded tutoring, revised assignments, clearer connections to learning support resources such as Math, Science, and Writing tutoring, Canvas trainings, customized library information research guides, and encouraging visits to faculty office hours. These efforts are part of a broader institutional

emphasis on continuous improvement and data-informed decision-making, with a growing culture of inquiry that supports innovation in teaching and student engagement strategies.

Highlights of this maturing assessment cycle include:

- GEM 4 (Natural Sciences) Faculty report in their 2024 GEM Action Plan that overall, students that met or exceeded expectations had risen in 2024 to 91%. One contribution to this success is the Meyer Tutoring Center which has been in operation since the Fall semester of 2022. Each semester, GEM 4 faculty have seen an increase of student use by about double. They feel that this service is vital to the success of their students and contributes to the increase in students meeting GEM competency expectations, and the GEM assessment data dashboards have helped them document the upward trend.
- GEM 7 (First Year Experience) instructors noted an achievement gap in student success in their data for First-generation and lower SES students in the cohort. As a result of the assessment data, the faculty plan deeper connections to ‘how to college’ resources, including modules on financial literacy, engaging with campus learning support programs, and tips for building a deeper sense of community.
- At NIC, teaching faculty and librarians maintain a strong collaborative relationship to support student development in information literacy (IL). Faculty regularly use in-class IL assessments in courses like COMM 101 and ENG 102, and discuss student IL skills at their GEM assessment retreats, to gauge students’ information literacy challenges, partnering with librarians to integrate tailored library instruction into course curricula, ensuring students build critical research and evaluation skills aligned with course learning outcomes. These collaborations often include co-designed assignments, embedded librarianship, and in-class workshops that directly support academic inquiry and evidence-based writing. The majority of IL instruction is delivered to students enrolled in Transfer and GEM courses; however, IL instruction is also provided to Dual-credit students and an increasing number of CTE programs. The latest CTE program to regularly schedule instruction with a faculty librarian is Dental Hygiene. The positive impact was immediate.
- The first Dental Hygiene cohort attended an IL session at the beginning of Fall 2024. One notable outcome was that students became aware they had free access to research articles they previously had been purchasing for \$55 to \$65 per copy. A week following the session, five of the students approached a librarian and arranged for a follow-up 60-minute group research consultation in the library’s classroom. These close partnerships enhance the coherence and effectiveness of information literacy instruction across disciplines and emerge from ongoing assessment of student learning.
- NIC’s campus-wide Residence Hall survey went out to students from April 7—April 25, 2025. This survey (discussed previously in this document) was a direct action taken as a result of GEM Assessment data indicating several years’ worth of underperformance in the Resident Hall student cohort. Results that were received in

April, 2025 will be analyzed and discussed at SLOA meetings and with President's Cabinet in the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026. Preliminary examination of the student comments indicates that they desire more access to campus services after-hours and more wraparound academic support to help form more positive and consistent study habits. Actions that the college will plan as a result of this survey—certain to tap into more learning support resources for Residence Hall students--will be a significant example of NIC using collaborative, interdisciplinary processes to 'close the loop' of the assessment cycle as a campus to improve student learning and success.

- In the 2023-24 World Languages Program Review document, instructors report a 94.7% student achievement rate in meeting the program outcomes. This is an improvement from the initial assessment data three years prior, attributed to the creation of eLearning Canvas tutorials for students and mandatory instructor-created video introductions for all online courses. The Program and GEM data dashboards allowed faculty to visualize and track these improvements from year to year.
- As the Mathematics Program Review document shows, the Math A.S. program has some of the most impressive program assessment practices on campus that lead to data-informed program adjustments. Spring 2022 was the first semester that Math faculty used the new Canvas entry system to assess first semester program outcomes. Conversations about the program outcomes were effective in helping Math faculty assess the program outcomes more effectively and their % MET numbers improved without course changes. For Spring 2023, more standardized assignments were included in the data and information was collected from the mathematics courses within the program, as well as the physics and computer science courses within the program. And, as of Spring 2024, as a result of these program-level assessments and faculty discussions, the physics requirement for the MATH.AS program was removed to allow students more flexibility in the choice of lab science courses to fulfill their GEM 4 requirements. The expansion of services at the Math Education Center is also a direct result of the Mathematics GEM and Program Assessment.
- The GEM data dashboards for 2024-5 showed that NIC's international student-athletes were successful in many of their GEM classes but struggled to perform in GEM 1 (Written Communication). As a result, administrators worked with English faculty to create a Summer Bridge Program. The NIC Summer Bridge Program for ESL students is a targeted initiative designed to support international student-athletes before the academic year begins. The program originated from a data-informed discussion focused on how to better serve incoming students, particularly in addressing language and academic transition challenges. Funding from the Athletic Department highlights cross-campus collaboration and a shared investment in student success, and the GEM data dashboards helped visualize the need for these learning support interventions.

The GEM disciplines, Division faculty, the Dean of Instruction, Transfer, and General Education, and the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOA) have all played

a central role in institutionalizing these improvements to assessment practices at the GEM and Program level. GEM and Program faculty are now using disaggregated assessment data to better understand achievement gaps and adjust pedagogical approaches accordingly. NIC has fully implemented a consistent assessment structure across all GEM disciplines, with regular cycles of data analysis and action planning. Program Assessment continues to scale up within this same framework, ensuring that all academic programs are increasingly engaged in meaningful, structured efforts to improve student learning. SLOA has expanded its role to serve as both a resource and a catalyst for collaborative, interdisciplinary assessment work across departments and divisions. Through workshops, targeted feedback, and shared assessment best practices, NIC has cultivated a consistent system for assessing learning outcomes and applying the results to improve curriculum design and harness student support services. These integrated efforts are creating a dynamic cycle of reflection and action, advancing the college's mission to enhance student success through intentional and data-informed practices.

Conclusion

Since 2020, NIC has built--and scaled up--its Canvas-based instructional assessment for GEM areas and for academic programs, establishing a comprehensive, collegial, data-informed culture of assessment. The campus assessment processes are cyclic, evidence-based, aligned with institutional goals, and designed to ensure the college continuously evaluates the quality of student learning and that it taps into student academic support services to enhance student learning. NIC affirms that this outcomes assessment model directly addresses NWCCU's Recommendation 2 and demonstrates sustained institutional commitment to student learning and success.

Outstanding Governance Recommendations

In response to the continuing relevance of NWCCU's governance-related recommendations, the Board has maintained the structured approach launched in 2024 to address these concerns. Central to this effort is the ongoing partnership with Ken Burke, CPA, and Debbie DiThomas, Ed.D., consultants from the [Association of Community College Trustees](#) (ACCT). They provide [quarterly training](#), guide the Board's responses, and supply independent documentation to strengthen the College's compliance record.

Although changes in Board membership have alleviated past governance challenges, this structure has enabled the Board to evolve rapidly into a model of high-performing governance. Importantly, it preserves the principle that the president does not evaluate or assess the Board, thereby ensuring appropriate boundaries and accountability. The consultants' multi-year partnership and deep knowledge of NIC's governance and institutional context uniquely position them to support continued progress.

- March 26, 2025 – The Board, ACCT consultants, the president, and the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) conducted a formal training session. This session reviewed all governance-related recommendations and developed a detailed action plan to produce additional evidence for inclusion in the NWCCU report (See [Agenda, Board Training Session, March 26, 2025](#)).
- May 28, 2025 – A second training session provided accreditation updates, reviewed governance responsibilities, and outlined the president's evaluation process and timeline. Trustees examined progress on NWCCU recommendations, improvements in Board conduct, institutional leadership, and strategic planning. The session also covered policy revisions, employee retention strategies, fiscal sustainability, and the FY2026 budget (See [Agenda, Board Training Session, May 28, 2025](#)).
- August 20, 2025 – During the third ACCT-led session, trustees reviewed results from the recent campus climate survey, completed the president's evaluation, and discussed contract terms. They also reviewed presidential goals and Board objectives for 2025–2026, conducted a self-evaluation based upon the training, discussed future board self-evaluations, and concluded with an update on the Mid-Cycle Report and October 2025 NWCCU visit (See [Agenda, Board Training Session, August 20, 2025](#)).

As part of its commitment to ongoing improvement, the College continues to reference [A Plan for North Idaho College](#)—a framework developed collaboratively with NWCCU—to guide institutional progress. To ensure continuity of support through the Mid-Cycle Report and Special Evaluation Visit in Fall 2025, NIC has extended its [contract](#) with ACCT through December 31, 2025.

Finally, NIC has proactively addressed two additional recommendations scheduled for formal review during the Spring 2027 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Visit.

Recommendation 2: Spring 2022 Special Report - *The Board of Trustees adheres to institutional and Board policies, particularly those pertaining to appropriate roles and responsibilities, expectations, professional conduct and ethics, and grievance procedures. (2020 Standard(s) 2.A.1; 2.D.2;ER 9)*

NIC understands the crucial role of the board in demonstrating effective governance and ethical leadership. The board appreciates the guidance from ACCT consultants and recognizes the significant progress made in clarifying the roles of both the trustees and the president. Due to changes in membership and the adoption of best practices, the board has developed into a more professional, collaborative, and policy-driven entity, which is evident in its actions and behavior, especially during public meetings.

Continued Training Sessions with Association of Community College Trustees

The trustees continue to attend quarterly training sessions with the ACCT consultants. These sessions covered various topics, including best practices for high-performing boards, finance, communication protocols, board policy, parliamentary training, and strategic discussions aimed at resolving the issues identified by the NWCCU. Since the Fall 2024 Special Evaluation Visit, the board attended four training sessions (See [November 19, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes](#), [January 22, 2025 Board Training/Orientation Session Packet](#), [March 26, 2025 Board Training Session Packet](#), and [May 28, 2025 Board Training Session Packet](#)).

The two ACCT consultants presented quarterly updates to the trustees, providing positive feedback on their progress in adhering to best practices in governance (See [Video Clip, March 26, 2025, Board Meeting, 1:31:19-1:43:13](#), [Video Clip, May 28, 2025, Board Meeting, 28:21-33:14](#), and [Video Clip, August 20, 2025, Board Meeting, 1:55:22-2:01:04](#)).

The training is not the only professional development opportunity for the board. Chair Corkill and Vice Chair Zimmerman participated in the ACCT's National Legislative Summit held February 11-12, 2025, in Washington D.C. President Swayne and Vice Chair Zimmerman participated as panelists in a breakout session. Trustee Zimmerman was also selected to serve on the [ACCT National Public Policy and Advocacy Committee](#) and President Swayne was [appointed](#) to the Advisory Committee of Presidents.

Rebuilding Confidence: Public and Written Affirmations of Trustee Roles and Enrollment Commendation

In response to the training and adhering to Board Member General Conduct [Policy 2.01.10](#) and New Board Member Orientation [Policy 2.01.11](#), the board publicly and in writing reaffirmed its commitment to fulfilling the appropriate roles and responsibilities of trustees during its meeting on November 20, 2024. This reaffirmation included signed statements from [Chair Corkill](#), [Vice Chair Zimmerman](#), [Secretary/Treasurer Havercroft](#), [Trustee Durbin](#), and [Trustee Knudtsen](#). More importantly, the board has exemplified its commitment through actions in every meeting since November 2024.

Later in the meeting, the board endorsed the Chair's remarks, which addressed the underlying concerns that had led to multiple votes of no confidence from students, faculty, and staff (See [Video Clip, November 20, 2024, Board Meeting, 1:06:51-1:12:15](#)). The Chair expressed the board's strong support for the principles of participatory governance and respect for each of NIC's constituency groups.

Additionally, the board also passed a [Resolution of Commendation](#) recognizing the achievements in enrollment for Fall 2024. This resolution celebrated the collaborative efforts of the administration, faculty, and staff in reversing a twelve-year decline in enrollment, resulting in a significant 15.3% increase compared to the previous year.

The Board's recent actions have successfully restored confidence and trust in the institution, as demonstrated by several positive indicators. Donations from the Foundation have increased, enrollment has risen significantly, and campus climate survey results show improved perceptions among students and staff. Additionally, an independent economic impact study has confirmed that North Idaho College (NIC) plays a vital role in supporting the regional economy. Employee turnover has also decreased, indicating greater organizational stability.

These outcomes highlight a renewed sense of momentum within the institution, leading to notable enrollment growth and increased support from local school districts. NIC has reaffirmed its Memoranda of Understanding with the Lakeland and Coeur d'Alene School Districts, solidifying its status as the preferred dual-credit provider in those communities (See [Lakeland School District](#) and [Coeur d'Alene School District](#) Partnership Agreements).

During the Show Cause sanction period, the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy [announced](#) its intention to reduce dual credit offerings through NIC. They cited "recent abrupt changes in leadership, incomprehensible financial decisions, and the imminent loss of accreditation at North Idaho College." However, following the Board's recent improvements, the STEM Charter Academy has now entered into a [dual credit agreement](#) with NIC as its sole provider.

The relationship between the North Idaho College (NIC) Foundation, Inc., and NIC remains strong. For example, the NIC Foundation has made available a record total of \$1,392,757 in student scholarships for the 2025-26 academic year to support NIC's strategic efforts in student recruitment, retention, and completion. Confidence in the institution of NIC has translated into financial support for the Foundation, with asset valuation increasing to a record of over \$50 million (See [Notifications from the North Idaho College Foundation](#)).

The board is also supporting the president at the state level. During the board meeting on February 25, 2025, Chair Corkill announced that he, along with Vice Chair Zimmerman, Trustees Mary Havercroft and Eve Knudsen, Interim Chief Communications and Marketing Director Tom Greene, and Law Enforcement Academy Coordinator Chris Wagar, traveled to Boise, Idaho. The purpose of their visit was to show support for Dr. Swayne as he testified before the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee (JFAC) for state funding. While in Boise, NIC's Legislative Reception drew 14 of the 15 North Idaho legislators, a record turnout that underscores both the college's vitality and the significance of its well-being to state lawmakers. The group of NIC trustees also participated in several legislative events and held a private

meeting with Governor Brad Little. Chair Corkill concluded by describing the experience as both valuable and productive (See [Minutes, Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, February 25, 2025](#), and [Board Minutes, February 26, 2025, Page 2](#)).

Effective Board Meetings as Visible Evidence

The most visible evidence of NIC's improved board governance is its conduct during public meetings. The board has adopted the use of a consent agenda to streamline proceedings and conduct its meetings with clarity, order, and respect for process. The board also demonstrates internal trust and confidence among the trustees by adopting policy changes from the board policy subcommittee without the discord that was so often apparent previously. Recent board meetings have been shorter and effective. Public attendance at meetings is now averaging below 10, and there have been very few public comments.

The board has passed the following action items using a consent agenda (See [Board Minutes, January 22, 2025, Page 2](#), [Board Minutes, February 26, 2025, Page 3](#), [Board Minutes, March 26, 2025, Page 4](#), [Board Minutes, April 23, 2025, Page 4](#), [Board Minutes, May 28, 2025, Page 4](#), and [Draft Board Minutes, June 25, 2025, Page 3](#)):

- Regular Meeting Minutes for December 18, 2024
- Revisions to Academic Freedom [Policy 3.05](#)
- Revisions to Distance Education [Policy 3.08.10](#)
- Regular Meeting Minutes for January 22, 2025
- Revisions to Cloud Services [Policy 3.08.07](#)
- Regular Meeting Minutes for February 26, 2025
- 2025-2026 [Head Start Grant Application](#)
- Regular Meeting Minutes for March 26, 2025
- Regular Meeting Minutes for April 23, 2025
- Sick Leave [Policy 3.04.01](#)
- Regular Meeting Minutes for May 28, 2025
- [Rescheduled](#) the August 2025 Regular Board Meeting
- Revisions to Annual Vacation Leave [Policy 3.04.02](#)
- Decommissioned Personal Leave [Policy 3.04.06.02](#)
- Revisions to Family and Medical Leave [Policy 3.04.09](#)

To provide appropriate transparency to the public, the board moved two items from the consent agenda during the June 25, 2025, and August 20, 2025, meetings and approved unanimously the following action items on separate votes (See [Board Video, June 25, 2025, Meeting, 1:57:47-1:57:57](#)):

- Approved [Permanent Positions for Program Capacity Expansion](#)
- Approved [One-Time Expenditures from Capital Investment Reserve](#)
- Regular Meeting Minutes for June 25, 2025
- [Rescheduled](#) the October 2025 and January 2026 Regular Board Meetings

With the adoption of the [2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#), recent board meetings reflect a renewed focus on shared goals and strategic oversight, supporting a culture of informed, productive engagement.

“No Surprises” Rule and Regular Communication with the President

The board and the president adhere to the “no surprises” principle, a critical governance best practice. Trustees now communicate regularly with President Swayne outside of formal meetings, in accordance with [Idaho Public Meeting Law](#), to address questions and clarify issues in advance. Since January 2025, the Chair and Vice Chair have met with the president to set agenda items for all meetings, which have been concise and productive compared to the past. This ongoing communication builds trust and facilitates collaborative problem-solving, as noted during the March 26, 2025 board training session facilitated by ACCT consultants (See [Communication Protocols Presentation Slides](#)).

Respecting Presidential Lines of Communication

The Board consistently upholds the chain of command by directing all inquiries and communications with college staff and administration through the president. This practice preserves clarity of roles and fosters a professional, respectful relationship between the Board and the College’s internal operations.

To support informed decision-making, NIC provides the Board with [recurring reports](#) during regularly scheduled meetings. These reports address core functional areas of the institution, including Athletics, Finance, Enrollment, Student Support Services, and Strategic Planning. They are presented on an annual, semiannual, or biannual schedule and include key performance indicators, areas for improvement, and objectives aligned with NIC’s [Strategic Plan](#). This structured reporting process enhances transparency, provides the Board with consistent evidence of institutional performance, and ensures that governance decisions are based on timely and comprehensive information. Notably, such systematic reporting was not in place prior to 2023, a gap that may have contributed to earlier governance challenges.

Professional and Respectful Board Meeting Conduct

Board meetings are now conducted in a professional and respectful manner. Trustees model civility and positive enthusiasm, even when addressing contentious issues such as the recent decision to implement a two-year reduction in the intercollegiate athletic program as a financial sustainability measure. The exchanges between the college’s constituency leaders and the trustees are also very cordial and collegial. This improved conduct supports the Commission's standards for ethical and effective governance and was noted as a key reason stakeholders rescinded prior votes of no confidence in the board. There are no constituency reports during the summer months (See [Video Clip, January 22, 2025, Board Meeting, 4:45-15:20](#), [Video Clip, February 26, 2025, Board Meeting, 13:50-25:03](#), [Video Clip, March 26, 2025, Board Meeting, 7:47-21:19](#), [Video Clip, April 23, 2025, Board Meeting, 9:43-18:06](#), and [Video Clip, May 28, 2025, Board Meeting, 2:13-13:28](#)).

Review of Governance Board Policies

During the sanction period, the board revised, through the use of a Board Policy Review Subcommittee, all policies impacting the board, including complaint resolution and grievances, with the assistance of Consultants from the ACCT. The college has tracked the board policy revisions since the AY2022-23 academic year (See [Board Policy Review Tracking Sheet](#)).

At the December 18, 2024 meeting, the board appointed Vice Chair Zimmerman and Trustee Havercroft to serve on the Board Policy Review Subcommittee. This subcommittee, along with the president and an ACCT consultant, reviewed five policies during the next five months. At the June 25, 2025, Board Meeting, the board approved changes to Authority, Appointment, and Functions [Policy 2.01.01](#), Responsibilities and Duties [Policy 2.01.02](#), Meetings [Policy 2.01.03](#), Communications with Board of Trustees [Policy 2.01.05](#), and Creation, Revision, or Elimination of Internal Board Governance [Policy 2.01.14](#). (See [Board Minutes, December 18, 2024, Page 3](#), [Board Minutes, May 28, 2025, Page 5](#), [Draft Board Minutes, June 25, 2025, Page 4](#) and [Video Clip, May 28, 2025 Board Meeting, 1:26:53-1:29:31](#)).

During the FY2026, the Board Policy Review Subcommittee will review four policies to ensure alignment with the Creation, Revision, or Elimination of Internal Board Governance [Policy 2.01.14](#).

Preparation and Engagement by Trustees

Trustees consistently arrive well-prepared for meetings, having thoroughly reviewed advanced materials and budget reports. All board members have the opportunity to meet individually with President Swayne to review the agenda and board materials before the regular monthly meetings. These meetings typically last between 30 to 60 minutes.

The board's preparation is reflected in the depth of their questions, and the efficiency of their deliberations. For example, at the March 26, 2025 meeting, the vice president for finance and business affairs presented the [FY2026 budget assumptions](#) to the board (See [Board Minutes, March 23, 2025 Board Meeting, Page 3](#)). To further ensure informed and aligned decision-making, trustees also received individual briefings-an approach highlighted during the May 28, 2025 meeting, when the board unanimously adopted the FY2026 budget (See [Video Clip, May 28, 2025, Board Meeting, 0:46-2:12](#)).

Culture Shift Toward Teamwork between the President and the Board

The board and president have embraced their roles as strategic partners. This culture shift allows the board and president to work cohesively toward the institution's goals. The March 2025 ACCT training reinforced this principle and emphasized the importance of operating as a unified governance team. At the November 16, 2024, Board Orientation and Training Session and again at the November 20, 2024, board meeting, the board reaffirmed the president's goals from the

prior year, formally adopted its own goals, and reviewed the plan for achieving them, with a commitment to regularly monitor progress toward implementation. During the August 20, 2025, training session, the board also reviewed presidential and board goals (See [March 25, 2025, Board Training Packet](#), [November 16, 2024 Board Orientation/Training Packet, Pages 24-30](#), [Board Minutes, November 20, 2024, Pages 3-5](#), and [August 20, 2025 Board Training Agenda](#)).

Presumption of Correctness in Administrative Recommendations

The board has adopted the principle of “presumption of correctness” for recommendations presented by the president and administration. Trustees now place appropriate weight on the professional expertise and informed judgment of the president and senior leadership, allowing the administration to manage operational decisions while the board focuses on policy oversight. This approach is reflected in the board’s deliberative process, where the questions posed and the discussions held prior to voting demonstrate effective monitoring of policy implementation. The board also affirms the importance of participatory governance and values the input of those most directly affected by policy decisions.

In addition to the previously noted Consent Agendas, the board has approved the following action items, following the president’s recommendations—since December 1, 2024:

- Hiring of a new law firm, [Stevens Clay, P.S.](#)
- Revisions to Payroll Deductions [Policy 3.02.19](#)
- Reschedule the March 2025 Regular Meeting
- The [2025-2026 Regular Meeting Schedule](#)
- Extended the length of the 2025 Summer Session
- Revisions to Faculty Evaluation [Policy 3.02.21](#)

Respectful Engagement with the Public

Trustees listen respectfully to citizen comments during public forums, regardless of differing viewpoints. They refrain from interrupting or dismissing community input, demonstrating an openness to stakeholder concerns that helps rebuild public trust. Interestingly, only two public comments were made at board meetings in 2025, which may indicate an increasing level of community confidence in the board’s leadership and decision-making.

Regular Engagement with Recurring Reports and Celebrating Success

The board receives regular, structured updates from the president on critical areas, including athletics, budget, enrollment, and student success. These updates occur during standing agenda items in public meetings and through private briefings, ensuring the board remains well-informed and actively engaged in oversight.

At each regular board meeting, the agenda typically begins with a "Celebrating Success" segment, which serves as a formal recognition of recent achievements within the college community. This segment highlights the accomplishments of students, faculty, staff, academic

and technical programs, and institutional initiatives. Examples include commendations for student competition results, such as SkillsUSA, and milestones like commencement ceremonies. Presented by college leadership—often the president or program directors—these moments of recognition reinforce NIC’s commitment to excellence, foster institutional pride, and inform trustees and the public of the college’s ongoing progress and impact. The "Celebrating Success" segment reflects a broader institutional culture of acknowledging contributions that advance student success and institutional mission fulfillment.

Through this process, the board has gained a deeper understanding of the significant work required of faculty and staff in preparing and presenting these reports. Their engagement—evidenced by thoughtful questions and expressions of appreciation—demonstrates a growing respect for the participatory governance process and for the contributions of those most impacted by institutional decisions (See [Recurring Reports Website](#), [Board Minutes, April 23, 2025, Pages 8, 13-22](#), and [Board Minutes, May 28, 2025 Pages 1-2](#)).

The board has taken significant steps to demonstrate its renewed commitment to ethical and accountable leadership that meets accreditation standards and expectations. Through these specific actions, along with others mentioned in the report and continued collaboration with ACCT, the board aims to provide sufficient evidence to regain good standing with NWCCU.

Recommendation 3: Spring 2022 Special Report – *The institution works to rebuild its administrative and academic leadership team. This includes:*

- *The appointment of a permanent president utilizing a process that permits an appropriate level of engagement by institutional stakeholders. (Standards 2.A.3, 2.A.4)*
- *Hiring for the currently vacant/interim Vice President positions after the permanent president is identified. (Standard 2.A.2) (2020 Standard(s) 2.A.2; 2.A.3; 2.A.4)*

The board appointed Dr. Nick Swayne as the 11th president of the college on June 22, 2022. The search process adhered to board policy and was inclusive, engaging a 27-member screening committee that represented all college constituency groups, as well as members of the community and administration. Dr. Swayne's [employment contract](#) was extended by the board on December 18, 2024, providing continuity in leadership.

President Swayne's employment conditions, which include his rights and responsibilities, as well as the criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, and termination, are clearly outlined in the Presidential Performance Review [Policy 2.02.02](#). This policy references the evaluation of the president as specified in [Idaho State Code 33-2109](#). The purpose of this review is to enhance the president's performance by helping both the president and the board establish mutually agreed-upon goals. Additionally, it guides annual decisions regarding compensation and other employment terms.

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) facilitated the last two presidential evaluations. During its special meeting on August 27, 2024, the board reviewed and discussed the president's performance (See [2024–2025 Presidential Performance Review Timeline](#)).

The ACCT consultants utilized part of the training sessions on May 28, 2025, and August 20, 2025, to educate the board on the evaluation process for the president. This training covered the timeline, the survey process, the survey questions, the final product, and the evaluation meeting. (See [May 28, 2025, Board Training Session Packet](#), [Agenda, Board Training Session, August 20, 2025](#), and [PowerPoint slides](#)).

The board formally approved the annual evaluation and reviewed the President's goals during the regular meeting held on August 20, 2025. Additionally, the board discussed the status of the self-evaluation process and the development of annual goals. Although the board conducted a second self-evaluation, it decided to engage the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) for a more comprehensive process. The results from this engagement will be used to update and revise the current set of board goals during the regular meeting in November 2025 (See [President's Goals 2025-2026](#), [Agenda, August 20, 2025 Regular Meeting](#), and [Video Clip, August 20, 2025, Board Meeting, 1:40:24-1:42:55](#)).

The board has consistently supported the president in rebuilding the senior leadership team using transparent and appropriate hiring procedures. All senior leadership roles have now been filled, including the recent appointment of a permanent Chief Human Resources Officer. The interim provost, who has served in the role for three years and has been with the institution for 33 years, continues to provide essential stability. President Swayne has indicated his intention to

permanently fill the provost position once the college returns to good standing with the Commission.

The board's commitment to best practices in governance, including maintaining a respectful and professional working relationship with the president and college staff, has been instrumental in re-establishing institutional stability and strengthening job satisfaction among faculty and staff. Recent employee campus climate survey results reinforce this progress, with 31 survey items improving by five percentage points or more, including 24 by over 10 points. At the same time, only a handful of areas showed minor declines. Notably, improvements were seen in key areas such as Professional Development, Communication, Collaboration, and Confidence in Senior Leadership. These results stem from North Idaho College's participation in the nationally recognized *Great Colleges to Work For*® survey, administered by *ModernThink, Inc.* NIC previously participated in this same survey in FY2020, allowing for direct longitudinal comparisons and highlighting the college's positive trajectory in employee perceptions. The survey instrument, widely used across higher education, evaluates workplace culture based on faculty and staff responses to core dimensions of institutional health, including shared governance, supervisor effectiveness, and respect and appreciation. These gains align with HR exit survey trends for FY2025, which indicate that employee departures are now driven more by typical career or personal factors rather than concerns about institutional credibility or governance. This positive campus climate has enhanced the college's ability to attract and retain qualified academic and administrative personnel. The institution continues to monitor morale and employee engagement through formal surveys and informal feedback mechanisms. Supporting documentation and additional examples of this governance approach are included throughout this report (See **Recommendation 2, Fall 2024 Special Report** for Human Resources Statistics).

Recommendation 1: Fall 2024 Special Report – *The Board of Trustees must resolve the issues underpinning all "No Confidence" resolutions and provide evidence of a willingness to work with and support faculty, staff, and students when their concerns are communicated. (2020 Standard(s) 2.D.2)*

A particularly notable development in the governance of NIC has been the rescission of prior votes of no-confidence in the board by the institution's [Faculty Assembly](#), [Staff Assembly](#), and [Associated Students of North Idaho College](#) (ASNIC).

Votes of no-confidence in boards of trustees are uncommon, yet they serve as powerful expressions of concern within higher education. Such votes typically indicate a significant breakdown in trust between different groups within the institution and its governance bodies. It is especially noteworthy, and relevant to this report, that these votes were not only voiced by all three major internal constituencies but were also formally rescinded after the board demonstrated clear improvements in behavior, communication, and accountability.

The board's strongest evidence of addressing the concerns that led to the votes of no confidence is its development into a high-performing board. In consultation with the ACCT consultants, the board remains focused on its appropriate roles and follows established best practices for community college governance. Board meetings have been a key opportunity for the trustees to publicly demonstrate this effective and responsible behavior.

At the November 20, 2024, board meeting, the Chair directly addressed the concerns underlying the votes of no confidence from students, faculty, and staff, reaffirming the board's commitment to participatory governance and mutual respect for all constituency groups (See [Video Clip, November 20, 2024, Board Meeting, 1:06:51–1:12:15](#)). The board's endorsement of the Chair's remarks signaled a unified stance on rebuilding trust and strengthening institutional collaboration.

On January 22, 2025, Board Chair Corkill commended the administration on the opportunity with board training that took place a few hours before, and also congratulated Vice Chair Zimmerman for her appointment to the [ACCT Public Policy and Advocacy Committee](#) (See [Video Clip, January 22, 2025, Board Meeting, 00:48-01:28](#)).

As of March 26, 2025, all three of NIC's constituency groups either voted to rescind their prior motions of no confidence with the board or consider them resolved.

At the December 18, 2024, board meeting, the Staff Assembly Chair proudly announced that the Staff Assembly voted to rescind the outstanding votes of no-confidence with the board commending the board's efforts "to prioritize the best interests of the college and rebuilding trust within the community" (See [Staff Assembly Transcribed Remarks](#)).

On February 25, 2025, the Student Government voted 7-0 to pass a resolution withdrawing the Votes of No Confidence with the board and that the board's recent actions "resolve our stated concerns with transparency, professionalism, and ethical and respectful conduct in its actions" (See [ASNIC Resolution of February 26, 2025](#)).

At the March 26, 2025, board meeting, the Faculty Assembly Chair reported that the Faculty Assembly voted to consider the issues in the Votes of No Confidence resolved (See [Faculty Assembly Report to Board of Trustees](#)).

These actions reflect a restoration of trust and a strengthening of participatory governance at NIC. The willingness of faculty, staff, and student leadership to revisit and reverse their positions signals meaningful progress in rebuilding institutional cohesion and fostering a collaborative climate.

This improvement is further validated by the results of the FY2025 campus climate survey conducted through the [Great Colleges to Work For®](#) program by [Modern Think, Inc.](#) Compared to the FY2020 survey, the FY2025 results showed measurable improvements across a wide range of areas. Thirty-one survey statements improved by five percentage points or more, including 24 that improved by over 10 points. Notably, the categories of Professional Development, Communication, Collaboration, and Confidence in Senior Leadership all demonstrated significant gains, underscoring a growing alignment between employee expectations and administrative practices. Only a few items showed modest declines. This trend reflects a broader institutional shift toward a more stable, collaborative, and respectful working environment. Full analysis and supporting details are included in the response to **Recommendation 2: Fall 2024 Special Report**.

This moment represents a unique and positive development in higher education governance, and underscoring the institution's commitment to continuous improvement, transparency, and responsiveness to internal stakeholder concerns. Importantly, the Board of Trustees has expressed a strong, ongoing commitment to *sustaining* that trust—working intentionally to ensure that past challenges do not resurface and that NIC continues to serve students and the region with integrity and accountability.

The Board of Trustees acknowledges that restoring trust is not a finite task but an ongoing responsibility that must be maintained through consistent actions, transparent decision-making, and respectful engagement with all members of the college community. Therefore, the board is committed to reinforcing the governance practices that led to the rescission of the no-confidence votes and to ensuring that the concerns of faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders are heard and addressed.

This commitment was clearly communicated by the Acting Chair during the public remarks at the board meeting on November 20, 2024, which the full board endorsed (See [Video Clip, November 20, 2024, Board Meeting, 1:06:51–1:12:15](#)). It was further reaffirmed in subsequent meetings, including a discussion on the board's development and leadership roles on January 22, 2025 (See [Video Clip, January 22, 2025, Board Meeting, 00:48–01:28](#)).

As noted in the response to **Recommendation 2 of the Spring 2022 Special Report**, the board publicly reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining the appropriate roles and responsibilities of trustees in writing. This commitment emphasizes the importance of fostering "a spirit of true cooperation and mutually supportive relationships in support of our community." This

reaffirmation took place during a meeting on November 20, 2024, and included signed statements from Chair Corkill, Vice Chair Zimmerman, Secretary/Treasurer Havercroft, Trustee Durbin, and Trustee Knudtsen.

Recommendation 7: Spring 2023 Special Report - *The Board and College President should ensure that they adhere to the inclusivity articulated in the college's planning and decision-making processes. The Board and College President should demonstrate a commitment to an environment respectful of meaningful discourse, in their official capacities and when interacting with each other. (2020 Standards: Std. 2-Preamble)*

The board and the president have actively taken steps to enhance their commitment to inclusive governance and respectful collaboration. They recognize the importance of transparency, shared responsibility, and civil discourse. To this end, the board and the president have implemented measures to ensure their actions are in line with the college's stated values and planning processes. The following actions demonstrate their ongoing efforts to create an environment of mutual respect, improve decision-making structures, and support the college's mission through effective leadership.

Hiring of College Attorney: The board of trustees honored the process for hiring the College Attorney by taking the president's recommendation of [Stevens Clay](#). The Faculty Assembly expressed concerns about the previous process used to hire the college attorney, highlighting it as a significant issue among the faculty (See response to **Recommendation 1: Fall 2024 Special Report** and [Faculty Assembly Statement to Board of Trustees of August 17, 2023](#)).

Improvements in Presidential Evaluation Process: The board updated Presidential Performance Review [Policy 2.02.02](#) on September 27, 2023, to address governance challenges and improve institutional accountability. The revisions introduced structured evaluation procedures, including external review and secure recordkeeping, to ensure transparency and restore trust in leadership. These changes were part of a broader effort to address NWCCU concerns, mitigate legal risks, and align presidential performance with strategic goals (See [Changes to Presidential Performance Review Policy 2.02.02](#)).

FY2026 Budget, Including State Appropriations: The board and the president worked together to develop the FY2026 Budget. During the meeting on March 26, 2025, the college presented [budget assumptions](#) based on the information available at that time. The vice president for finance and business affairs met individually with each trustee to review the budget process and address any questions. Additionally, the college held a budget forum, where the same slideshow was presented to the management team, which includes all middle management positions. The board officially adopted the budget during the meeting on May 27, 2025. The administration also provided regular updates to the board regarding state appropriations, which included funding for summer capital construction projects totaling approximately \$10,500,000 (See [Board Minutes, March 26, 2025, Pages 2-3](#)).

Reduction of Legal Fees and Risk Exposure: In collaboration with the president, the board has taken decisive steps to lower and better manage legal fees. Together, they have committed to minimizing legal disputes and ensuring that costs remain reasonable. As of February 26, 2025, NIC has resolved its final legal dispute and currently has no outstanding lawsuits. Legal fees

have been reduced from \$750,000 in FY2024 to \$380,000 in FY2025, representing nearly a 50 percent decrease, and the FY2026 budget has been reduced by a similar margin to align with current expense trends.

NIC's overall risk exposure has also declined substantially. Moody's Investor Service recently upgraded the college's bond rating outlook from negative to stable, reflecting this improved stability. In addition, the college is exploring rejoining the [Idaho Counties Risk Management Program](#), a member-owned insurance carrier for Idaho public entities. ICRMP provided a coverage quote in August 2025, signaling their recognition of NIC's reduced risk profile. While the cost of ICRMP coverage is not significantly below that of the commercial market, the program offers superior coverage and services. This represents notable progress since June 30, 2022, when ICRMP [declined](#) to renew NIC's policy due to "adverse claim development and increasing risk exposures."

Respecting Roles: The board has publicly acknowledged and formally reaffirmed its responsibilities as trustees. Central to this commitment is a pledge to collaborate with the president while maintaining mutual respect for each other's roles and areas of authority. Together, the board and president have adopted a "no surprises" approach to communication, ensuring that potentially controversial, urgent, or high-profile issues are shared in advance of public meetings. Recent governance trainings conducted by the ACCT emphasized the importance of open and timely communication, particularly to prevent situations where trustees learn of key matters through the media or the board makes commitments without first consulting the president.

Transitioning to a New Strategic Plan for 2025-2030: The board has actively participated and will continue to engage at the appropriate level with the college's strategic plan. The president has provided regular updates on the plan's progress. (See [Strategic Planning Webpage](#)).

Throughout several training sessions and regular board meetings in 2024 and 2025, the Board of Trustees explored ways to clarify their roles and responsibilities as part of the NIC's strategic planning efforts. These discussions were aimed at addressing concerns raised in the Fall 2024 Show Cause Report. In particular, the board focused on strengthening collaboration with the president, leadership, and other stakeholders to help develop and implement strategic initiatives that include defined goals, measurable outcomes, and clear timelines for progress.

The college, community, the president, and the board successfully carried out the first stages of a strategic planning process, which will eventually include corresponding goals, metrics, and milestones. The roles of each of these constituency groups are being respected and incorporated into the strategic planning process, which was drafted with the help of a national consulting group that adheres to best practices of community college strategic planning. The president included developing a Strategic Plan as one of his goals for this year, which the board approved on August 23, 2023 (See [Board Minutes, August 23, 2023, Page 3](#), and [President's Goals](#)).

Also, on August 22, 2023, the board received training from two ACCT consultants on their respective roles in the strategic planning process, as it has been seven years since the last time the college developed a strategic plan. The training included a presentation on the president's role

compared to the board's role during the process, including reviewing several examples of strategic plans developed by peer community colleges. The training was beneficial as at the May 2024 board meeting, the board demonstrated the appropriate level of oversight (See [Board Minutes, August 22, 2023, Training Session](#), [Board Minutes, November 16, 2023, Training Session](#), and [Strategic Planning Information Sheet for NIC Board Discussion](#)).

The administration informed the board on the progress of the strategic planning process during several of the president's reports and as a formal agenda item at the February, April, and May 2024 meetings (See [Board Minutes, February 28, 2024, Page 2](#), [Board Minutes, April 24, 2024, Page 3](#), [Board Minutes, May 22, 2024, Pages 2-3](#), [Video Clip, January 24, 2024 Board Meeting, 1:15:05-1:15:30](#), [Video Clip, March 27, 2024, Board Meeting, 40:00-40:26](#), [Video Clip, April 24, 2024, Board Meeting, 1:06:42-1:06:57](#), and [Strategic Planning Update, Board Materials](#)).

The college utilized a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to select a consulting firm, ultimately partnering with the [Collaborative Brain Trust](#) (CBT). CBT assisted the college in collecting data and establishing overall strategic goals through a participatory approach (See [Strategic Planning RFQ](#)).

Following the selection of CBT, the president formed a [Strategic Planning Steering Committee](#), comprised of 20 representatives from various college constituency groups, including students, staff, faculty, and administration. This committee is tasked with developing a new strategic plan with guidance from CBT. The development process consists of two parts and three phases:

Project Part A: November 2023 – April 2024

Phase 1: Discovery: Data Collection, Analysis, and Synthesis

Phase 2: Portfolio Development & Planning Assumptions

Phase 3: Goal Setting and Recommendations

Goal: Develop Strategic Plan Goals

November 2023: The Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the CBT held a kick-off meeting to orient people to the process, principles, and approach of strategic planning. In November and December, the consultants conducted a comprehensive review of internal and external data.

From November 29 to December 1st, 2023, the consultants engaged in visioning sessions with the trustees and held 29 listening sessions with 251 internal and external stakeholders. The individual meetings with each of the Trustees were the foundational starting point for collecting qualitative data and setting the vision for all additional listening sessions. Four of the Trustees accepted meetings with the consultants.

January 2024: The Collaborative Brain Trust consultants finished meeting with internal and external stakeholders as they complete Phase I Discovery: Data Collection, Analysis, and Synthesis. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee met on January 30th to review some preliminary findings as well as national, state, and local trends. The SPSC then engaged in an interactive envisioning exercise.

February 2024: The consultants continued compiling the environmental scan data that includes national, state, local, and NIC trends. They developed listening session themes from written

comments, campus tours, listening sessions with internal and external stakeholders, and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee visioning exercise.

March 2024: The Strategic Planning Steering committee met with the consultants on March 12th to review the listening session themes. The themes identified were:

- Students
- Community and External Partners
- Marketing, Enrollment and the Student Journey
- Institutional Planning and Effectiveness; Systems, Processes, and Culture
- Programs, Pathways, and Educational Partnerships
- Center Operations: Workforce Training Center, Parker Center, and Sandpoint Center

April 2024: The Strategic Planning Steering Committee met with the consultants for two days and engaged in strategic planning goal setting. After these meetings, five goals were developed, which were presented to the board at the May meeting.

May 2024: The board adopted the five strategic planning goals on May 29, 2024, including:

- Enhance student access and support services to strengthen student success
- Provide streamlined, flexible pathways to success that empower students to reach their educational goals
- Expand and strengthen relationships with business, industry, educational and community partners
- Create a unified educational system among the college and its centers
- Achieve organizational efficiency and effectiveness by fostering a dynamic college environment that invests in employees, facilities and technologies to support student success

Project Part B: April 2024 – October 2024

- Goal: Develop Institution-wide Objectives
- Goal: Develop Implementation Action Plan

September 2024: The Strategic Planning Steering Committee met with the consultants on to draft objectives for the five strategic plan goals, identify accountable managers for each objective, determine a 4-year implementation timeline, and provide edits on the draft Strategic Plan.

October 2024: The Strategic Planning Steering Committee met with the consultants and provided an overview and orientation to current draft goals and objectives, and established roles and responsibilities of goal leads. The Consultants split up each of the committee members into five groups with each working on developing outcomes for each of the objectives along with potential measures with a timeline for implementation, evaluation, and outcomes.

November 2024: The Strategic Planning Committee released the completed version of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 that includes five goals, 18 objectives, an implementation timeline, accountability, monitoring, and updating process.

March 2025: The Executive Accreditation Committee identifies 17 measures related to the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. These measures will be used to assess the college's progress in achieving the 18 strategic objectives. The objective leads will also need to develop ad-hoc goals as each phase of the strategic plan is started (See [Appendix B – North Idaho College 2025-2030 Goals and Objectives](#)). This represents a major step in addressing the language and substance of the recommendation, building on the solid foundation NIC has established through collaboration and stakeholder inclusivity. It's important to emphasize that this document marks a significant milestone in NIC's ongoing progress.

June – August 2025: The administration provided the board with updates on the metrics of the strategic plan, focusing on one specific goal for each of the next five board meetings. In the June regular meeting, the provost presented the metrics for Goal 1. The metrics for Goal 2 were presented during the August regular meeting, and Goal 3 is expected to be presented at the upcoming meeting next month (See [Draft Board Minutes, June 25, 2025, Page 3](#), and [Strategic Plan Presentation: Goal 1 Metrics](#), and [Strategic Plan Presentation: Goal 2 Metrics](#)).

In conclusion, the board and the president have made significant progress in strengthening inclusive governance, fostering respectful collaboration, and achieving greater strategic alignment with the institution's goals. Their actions, ranging from policy reforms and transparent budgeting to legal risk mitigation and comprehensive strategic planning, reflect a deep commitment to continuous improvement and shared leadership. Importantly, these efforts are not isolated responses but part of a broader, sustained strategy to embed accountability and inclusivity into NIC's culture and operations. The NWCCU acknowledged this progress, citing the institution's "established policies, robust Board training, and application of improved Board practices" as evidence of a reasonable and sustainable plan for achieving full compliance (See [February 25, 2025, Action Letter](#)). The development and implementation of the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, with clearly defined goals, metrics, and timelines, provides a durable framework for measuring progress and ensuring long-term institutional effectiveness. These initiatives affirm that the college is not only addressing past concerns but is also building a resilient foundation for future success.

Update on Recommendation 2: Fall 2024 Special Report - *The institution must take action to improve retention of existing employees and maintain adequate staffing to ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs. (2020 Standard(s) 2.F.3)*

During the height of the Show Cause sanction, NIC faced considerable challenges in recruiting and retaining employees—particularly in specialized roles such as accountants, HVAC specialists, and financial aid officers. Accreditation uncertainty contributed to high turnover and a limited applicant pool, severely impacting critical functions. In response to a complete turnover in the financial aid department during the 2024–2025 academic year, the college temporarily engaged a third-party provider to ensure continuity of services.

Over the past year, NIC has implemented strategic, data-informed initiatives to improve employee retention and stabilize staffing levels. These efforts are closely aligned with broader institutional improvements in governance, public trust, and accreditation standing. As governance practices and institutional stability have strengthened, recruitment has improved significantly. Notably, all four key financial aid positions have now been filled with qualified professionals. Positive trends are increasingly reflected in the college’s human resource metrics, signaling ongoing progress.

A major factor supporting employee retention and recruitment was the NWCCU’s decision in January 2025 to reduce the college’s accreditation sanction from Show Cause to Probation. In the [February 24, 2025, Action Letter](#), the Commission highlighted significant progress made by the board over the past seven months, including the fulfillment of six recommendations and the advancement of two additional recommendations from non-compliance. Most notably, the NWCCU emphasized that NIC has demonstrated a clear pathway toward full compliance through its established policies, effective board training, and the application of improved board practices in recent meetings.

NWCCU’s recent decision has had an immediate and positive impact on NIC’s ability to attract and retain qualified employees. The improvements in governance, particularly the board’s more collaborative and professional approach, have fostered greater confidence among the college’s constituency groups. This enhanced confidence was frequently mentioned in internal feedback, hiring committee reports, and employee exit interviews as a key reason for optimism regarding the college’s future. Furthermore, the college has successfully ended a 12-year decline in enrollment and is now poised to experience a second consecutive annual increase in enrollment for Fall 2025. This trend reflects the growing public perception and trust in NIC’s stability.

The administration actively tracks employee departures and vacancy trends through weekly reports from Human Resources. At a President’s Cabinet meeting on July 22, 2025, the HR Department presented detailed updates comparing monthly departure counts across fiscal years 2024, 2025, and 2026. As of that date, NIC had projected 80 departures in FY2025—a notable decline from the 92 departures in FY2024 and 104 in FY2023 (See [July 22, 2025, HR Update to President’s Cabinet](#)).

This downward trend in employee departures is meaningful and represents continued progress in stabilizing the workforce after multiple years of high turnover during the Show Cause sanction

period. The FY2025 departures include both voluntary and involuntary separations (e.g., retirements, resignations, terminations). Monitoring these trends weekly has allowed leadership to respond proactively with targeted interventions, including strategic retention efforts, compensation adjustments, and flexible work opportunities.

Strengthening Recruitment and Reducing Vacancies

As of May 23, 2025, NIC was actively recruiting for 33 open positions: 14 were in the interview stage and 19 were still accepting applications. This level of activity reflects both normal institutional turnover and recovery from past years of elevated attrition. With an improved public perception following NWCCU's sanction downgrade, hiring committees report that they have a stronger candidate pool and increased interest from qualified applicants.

NIC has had notable success in hiring for key leadership positions. This includes roles such as the Dean of Health Professions and Nursing, Chief Human Resources Officer, Associate Dean of Nursing, Director of Health Professions, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Facilities Operations, Director of Adult Education, as well as two new positions: Director of Student Engagement & Orientation and Director of Innovation.

North Idaho College has achieved notable success in recruiting for key leadership roles. Recent appointments include the Dean of Health Professions and Nursing, Chief Human Resources Officer, Associate Dean of Nursing, Director of Health Professions, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Facilities Operations, and Director of Adult Education. In addition, the college has created and filled two new positions: Director of Student Engagement & Orientation and Director of Innovation.

This ability to fill these positions promptly stands in stark contrast to the unsuccessful searches previously reported in FY2023 and FY2024. Recently, NIC hired a new faculty member for the Environmental Science and Sustainability program within the American Indian Studies department. Notably, there were 60 applicants for this position, with 51 of them being rated as well-qualified. This marks a significant improvement compared to previous hiring attempts in the American Indian Studies program, which either failed or attracted fewer than five applicants.

NIC has recently achieved success by filling two critical technology leadership roles: the Director of Enterprise Applications and the Director of Network Systems. These roles are essential for advancing NIC's information systems, enhancing data security, and modernizing technology across the campus. Both positions had previously undergone two unsuccessful searches in the past two years.

During the board meeting on June 25, 2025, the Chief Human Resources Officer informed the board that the conditions for talent acquisition have been favorable. Since March 2025, there have been seven new faculty members and 28 overall new hires, with a total of 102 positions filled in FY2025. Additionally, the average number of applications per position has increased to 21.3 in FY2025 (See [Human Resources Presentation Slide 7](#), and [Draft Board Minutes, June 25, 2025, Page 2](#)).

Improvements in Retention Factors

HR exit survey data from FY2025 reveal a notable shift in reasons for employee departures. Whereas prior years were dominated by concerns such as “employer reputation” and “governance instability,” recent departures more commonly cite routine reasons such as “career growth opportunities” and “work-life balance.” This trend reinforces the conclusion that institutional credibility and leadership consistency are no longer primary concerns for most departing employees. It is also worth noting that NIC’s recent efforts to hire and retain qualified personnel across departments are, in part, aimed at improving overall work-life balance by better distributing workload and supporting a healthier campus environment.

As stated previously in the report, results from the most recent campus climate survey, Great Colleges to Work For® support this positive shift. According to the Human Resources Office, 31 survey statements improved by five percentage points or more from the prior administration in 2020, including 24 statements that improved by over 10 percentage points, while only three statements declined by five points or more, and just one by 10 points or more. These outcomes underscore a substantial improvement in campus climate and employee perceptions. The most highly rated areas—Professional Development, Communication, Collaboration, and Confidence in Senior Leadership—demonstrate growing alignment between employee expectations and administrative efforts.

Professional Development in particular showed strong results, with one indicator in the “Excellent” range and two others in the “Good” range. This is significant given its known correlation with employee retention, particularly among early-career professionals. Communication and Collaboration were also strong areas of momentum, reflecting institutional emphasis on transparency and teamwork. Importantly, Confidence in Senior Leadership, a metric previously impacted by governance instability, demonstrated very significant positive momentum, with three measures rated “Good” and three rated “Fair.”

This engagement data complements operational HR data and affirms that improvements in institutional culture are being felt across employee groups. The administration will continue to track engagement trends and prioritize strategies that reinforce these gains, particularly in areas such as onboarding, communication, and collaborative planning.

For the second consecutive fiscal year, NIC has experienced a reduction in the number of departures and both the departure rates (internal and NCCBP). Employee departure and employee departure rates are presented in Table 1 and Figure 2 below.

Additional factors supporting employee retention include:

- The continuation of college-wide salary increases (8% in FY2024, 3% in FY2025, and 5% in FY2026).
- The continuation of a remote work pilot program implemented to support staff flexibility.
- Enhanced onboarding and support for new employees, including internal promotions that preserve institutional knowledge.

- Employee engagement efforts, annual employee health and wellness fair, such multiple employee appreciation events, and a spring appreciation event recognizing new and long-serving staff.

Table 1
Employee Departure and Employee Departure Rates

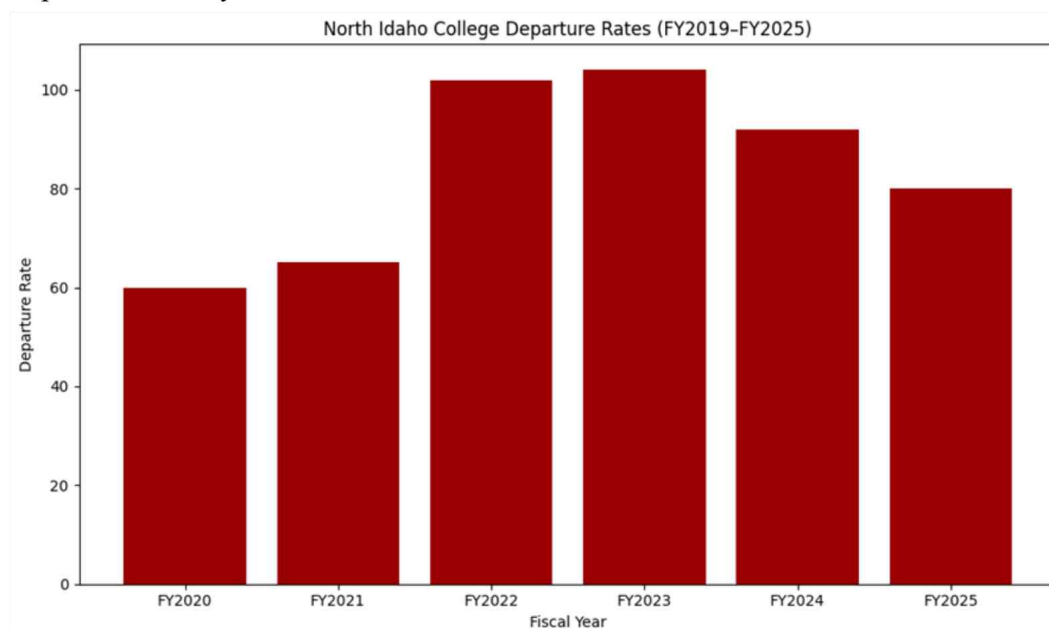
Year	Departures (HR)	Full-Time Employees	Departure Rate (HR)	NIC Departure Rate Reported to NCCBP	National Average (N)
FY2019	55	519	10.6%	6.6%	7.8% (123)
FY2020	60	524	11.5%	5.9%	7.6% (99)
FY2021	65	495	13.1%	9.3%	8.2% (93)
FY2022	102	491	20.8%	18.3%*	10.8% (91)
FY2023	104	473	22.0%	18.1%	9.6% (92)
FY2024	92	461	20.0%	17.9%	9.2% (80)
FY2025	80	470	17.0%	13.9%**	N/A

* - Revised ** - Projected

Departures (HR), Full-Time Employees, and Departure Rates (HR) all provided by HR Department. National Average is from the NCCBP. HR Departure Rates includes retirees. NCCBP Departure Rates does not include retirees.

Figure 2

Departure History FY2019-FY2025



Includes voluntary (resignations, retirements) and involuntary terminations. All data provide by HR Department.

Longevity, Internal Hiring, and Outlook

While FY2024 data showed that 37.9% of employees had fewer than three years of service, NIC observed a positive shift in FY2025, with that figure declining to 25.8% (see Table 2). At the same time, the percentage of employees with more than 10 years of service increased from 32.8% to 38.4%, reflecting a trend toward greater institutional tenure. Exit rates are beginning to slow, and although internal hiring continues to be a strategic approach, it is now less heavily relied upon to stabilize operations. Early FY2025 hiring data indicate a rebound in the successful filling of benefitted positions, rising to 88.2% after a decline to 76.3% in FY2024. This improvement has been supported by the advancement of experienced NIC staff into leadership and instructional roles (see Table 3).

Table 2

Employee Longevity (as of July 30, 2025)

Years of Service	Number of Employees	Percentage
Less than 3 Years	108	25.8%
3-5 Years	69	16.5%
5-10 Years	80	19.1%
10-15 Years	52	12.4%
15-20 Years	51	12.2%
Over 20 Years	58	13.8%

Number of Full-Time, Benefitted Positions. Data provided by HR Department

Table 3

Success of Filling Benefitted Positions

	Position Open	Positions Filled	Success Rate
FY2021	87	67	77.0%
FY2022	142	126	88.7%
FY2023	143	129	90.2%
FY2024	135	103	76.3%
FY2025	144	127	88.2%

Benefitted Position and Positions Filled data provided by Human Resources Department.

To ensure continued progress, the administration will:

- Maintain close monitoring of monthly HR trends;
- Refine position prioritization based on programmatic need;
- Advance compensation equity and workload sustainability;
- Expand professional development for staff and faculty;
- Evaluate exit interview trends quarterly to address emergent issues.

NIC's employee retention and staffing efforts have been significantly strengthened by recent progress in governance and accreditation status. The reduction in the NWCCU sanction, combined with consistent HR monitoring and targeted improvements, has created a healthier and more stable work environment. As employee and public confidence continues to rise, NIC is better positioned to meet Standard 2.F.3.

Update on Recommendation 3: Fall 2024 Special Report - *The college president and leadership, with the support of the Board of Trustees and stakeholders, adjust their business model to ensure long-term financial sustainability consistent with institutional priorities. (2020 Standard(s) 2.E.2)*

NIC acknowledges that this recommendation stemmed in part from past governance issues related to athletics budgeting. In response, the newly seated board, working closely with the president and senior leadership, has taken significant action to realign the college's business model in support of long-term financial sustainability.

As discussed throughout this report, board members have participated in extensive governance training provided by the ACCT. This training emphasized fiduciary responsibilities and policy-level engagement. It has guided recent board decisions, including the unamended approval of the FY2025 budget and the strategic priorities. Additionally, the board consulted directly with the vice president for finance and business Affairs before adopting the FY2026 budget. The administration keeps the trustees informed by providing regular budget updates, which include quarterly reports (See [FY2025 3Q](#) and [FY 2025 4Q](#) Slides) and information on the [planning cycle](#) and [budget assumptions](#). Trustees also receive monthly budget updates included in the board packet.

In December 2024, the [Athletic Budget Stabilization Plan](#) was introduced as a collaborative effort with the college administration to address financial sustainability while preserving the integrity of athletic programs. Recognizing the importance of balancing fiscal responsibility with the college's commitment to student-athletes, the plan outlines a targeted reduction of \$1.8 to \$2 million in athletic expenditures by FY2027.

The plan is guided by core principles aimed at maintaining competitive athletic programs, minimizing disruption for student-athletes, and ensuring compliance with Title IX. It outlines targeted and cost-effective measures designed to reduce expenses while limiting negative impacts on athletic programs.

One of the most significant decisions made is the elimination of the golf program. While this is a challenging choice, it is necessary and will lead to savings of over \$600,000. Additional measures will include a gradual reduction in athletic tuition and housing subsidies, which will be implemented over time to ease the financial burden in a predictable manner.

Cuts to travel support will specifically impact personal travel stipends that were previously provided to student-athletes for trips home, rather than affecting team travel for competitions. To further manage costs, the plan will also phase out textbook reimbursements linked to athletic scholarships, with complete elimination scheduled for FY2027.

Together, these measures are projected to achieve total savings of \$1,866,104, resulting in a reduced athletics budget of \$4.3 million by FY2027. This thoughtful approach ensures that while

financial adjustments are necessary, they are made with deliberate care to protect the opportunities and experiences of student-athletes.

The college maintained 21 vacant full-time positions in FY2025. As part of the FY2026 budget, it committed to holding an additional 15 positions vacant, resulting in \$1.75 million in personnel savings. The board approved the fiscal year 2026 budget, which included a 50% reduction in fund balance support, decreasing from \$2.6 million to \$1.3 million. Additionally, the budget reinstated a contribution of \$2.6 million to the capital investment reserve. This was achieved through reductions in the athletic budget, new revenue from increased enrollment, support from the State of Idaho, and strategic expense reductions. As a sign of confidence and support from the Idaho legislature, the calculations for enrollment compensation were adjusted, resulting in a net benefit of about \$500,000.

Financially, as a result of the significant increases in enrollment, NIC has strengthened its position significantly. As reported by Barry Webber of [Eide Bailly, LLP](#) in November 2024, the college experienced an increase in financial position of approximately \$4.7 million in FY2024, following a \$4.0 million increase in FY2023 (See [FY2024 Audited Financial Statements, Board Minutes, November 20, 2024, Page 3](#), and [Video Clip, November 20, 2024, Board Meeting, 56:26-1:06:47](#)).

NIC's communications strategy, as mentioned in the introduction, is closely aligned with Strategic Plan Goals 1 and 3, focusing on enhancing student access and strengthening community partnerships. The college's digital campaigns have not only increased visibility but also contributed directly to measurable outcomes in enrollment and engagement. These efforts reflect NIC's commitment to data-informed planning and institutional effectiveness.

The college maintains a strong financial position, holding more than \$18 million in unrestricted cash reserves and an additional \$14 million in its capital reserve account as of June 30, 2025.

Following the recent reduction in sanction by NWCCU and a substantial increase in student enrollment, Moody's Ratings [upgraded NIC's financial outlook](#) from "negative" to "stable." This marks a positive shift from April 2024, when Moody's downgraded NIC's bond rating from A3 to Baa1—its second downgrade since February 2023. Despite these past ratings changes, NIC continues to maintain a strong Composite Financial Index (CFI), carries no outstanding debt, and has no plans for new bond issuance. The administration is confident that strengthened board governance, improved financial performance, and sound fiscal management will position the college for a potential bond rating upgrade in the future.

North Idaho College has taken decisive and transparent steps to address Recommendation 3 by aligning its financial model with institutional priorities and ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability. With the full support of the Board of Trustees, the college has implemented a variety of measures that demonstrate prudent financial stewardship. These measures include restructuring athletics expenditures, holding vacant positions, restoring capital reserves, and reducing reliance on fund balance support.

Importantly, these actions were carried out in a manner consistent with NIC's mission and values, preserving student opportunities while making responsible financial decisions. The results are already evident: NIC has achieved significant net asset gains, increased unrestricted reserves, and received an improved financial outlook from Moody's Ratings. These indicators reflect institutional recovery and renewed stability.

The administration and board remain committed to continuously monitoring and adapting NIC's financial strategies to ensure the college's future is secure. Through disciplined budgeting, shared governance, and a clear focus on student success, North Idaho College is on a sustainable path forward—one that honors its public trust and positions the institution for continued strength and resilience.

Conclusion

North Idaho College (NIC) has made significant progress in restoring fiscal stability, improving operational efficiency, and building institutional momentum over the past several years, despite facing considerable challenges. Most notably, NIC has experienced recent enrollment growth, reversing a decade-long decline and indicating renewed confidence from the community. With double-digit percentage increases in both General Education and Career and Technical Education programs, the college is not only serving more students but also revitalizing its academic, workforce, and student life initiatives. This positive trend has directly impacted the college's revenues and has positioned it for sustainable planning in the future.

NIC has shown significant enrollment gains and has demonstrated disciplined financial management after several years of governance challenges. The college has made substantial improvements by correcting previously unsustainable athletic spending, implementing strict controls on personnel costs, and closing both FY2023 and FY2024 with budget surpluses. Additionally, NIC has reduced its reliance on fund balance for FY2025 by 50%. These achievements reflect a renewed commitment to responsible budgeting and accountability.

Moreover, NIC maintains a strong financial position with considerable unrestricted cash reserves and a well-funded capital reserve account. These resources provide long-term stability and flexibility for strategic investments. As NIC concludes FY2025, the institution remains on solid financial ground and is well-positioned to continue its recovery and growth trajectory.

As stated throughout this report, NIC used the ACCT for consulting and educational purposes. The recent governance improvements strongly reflect the principles outlined in the Association of Governing Boards' (AGB) model of mission-centered, fiduciary governance. AGB emphasizes the importance of trustees acting as strategic stewards of mission and public trust, rather than as partisan operatives—a standard the Board of Trustees has increasingly embodied through policy changes enacted since 2024. The document outlines several criteria that the board can use to assess the progress made.

First, trustee roles and responsibilities are now clearly defined and respected. The board focuses on strategic oversight rather than management, as reinforced by recent policy updates and ongoing ACCT training. This aligns with AGB's guidance that boards govern while administrators manage.

Second, the board operates as a cohesive and unified body, with trustees supporting board decisions and avoiding disruptive conduct. Public meetings are professional and respectful, reflecting AGB's emphasis on collective governance and ethical behavior.

Third, the relationship between the board and president is collaborative and mission-focused. Regular communication, shared agenda setting, and joint participation in state-level advocacy demonstrate mutual respect and strategic partnership, consistent with AGB's model.

Lastly, the board supports shared governance and academic freedom by deferring to faculty and administrative expertise, especially in curriculum and personnel decisions. The reversal of prior votes of no confidence by campus groups further affirms improved governance culture and trust.

Taken together, these outcomes demonstrate that NIC has not only addressed past governance concerns but is actively modeling a national standard of good governance. The institution's ability to navigate challenges, strengthen its leadership culture, and re-center its work around student success and community service reflects its strong forward momentum. Based on the evidence provided, NIC has exceeded the requirements necessary for a return to good standing with the Commission and is well-prepared to fulfill its mission in the years ahead.