ASSESSMENT IN A TRIBAL COLLEGE CONTEXT:
A CASE STUDY OF NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE

by

ANNE MARIE KARLBERG

B.Sc. (Honours), The University of Toronto, 1986
M.P.H., Tulane University, 1989
B.Ed., The University of Toronto, 1992

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ABSTRACT

Approximately 32 tribal colleges are located on reservations in the United States. Their aim is to provide Native American students with a culturally relevant and meaningful post-secondary education. Assessment uses methods of applied research to improve student learning. The aim of this study is to advance theoretical and applied knowledge in the field of assessment within tribal colleges. This undertaking is noteworthy given that tribal colleges are vital to the development and future of Native American communities. I use a case study methodology to examine a specific assessment program that is being developed at Northwest Indian College (NWIC), a tribal college in Washington state.

In this study, I provide responses to three research questions: (1) What criteria are best used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context? (2) Which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1? and (3) What preconditions and other contextual factors contribute to the relative success or failure of different elements of the NWIC assessment program? I review the history of Native Americans in higher education, provide an overview and critique of the emerging assessment movement, and discuss the state of assessment within the tribal college system.

This study demonstrates that assessment can be done in a tribal college context in a culturally respectful and meaningful way and provides insights into how this can be approached. My findings suggest that effective tribal college assessment programs use three types of information to assess student learning — direct indicators, indirect indicators, and institutional and community data — and assess each of these at the tribal community, college, program, and course levels. It is equally important to pay attention to the inputs into the assessment program

(i.e., plans and resources) and how the assessment program is carried out. Furthermore, the

intention of the assessment program is to impact the college's context. Articulating and

revisiting the tribal college's mission — with its focus on the self-determination of Native

peoples — is a critical initial step in the development of assessment programs that should be

emphasized in this framework.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines assessment in a Native American tribal college context. Tribal colleges are located on reservations in the United States. Their aim is to provide primarily Native American students with a culturally relevant and meaningful post-secondary education. Assessment uses methods of applied research to improve a college's mission-related performance — especially as it relates to student learning; however, Native American theory and research protocols suggest that, to date, the type of data and methods of data collection that have characterized most mainstream assessment are not well-suited to a Native American context (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Boyer, 2003; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1997; Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Hampton, 1995b; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Menzies, 2001; National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, 1999; Royal Commission, 1996; L. Smith, 1999). Fortunately, approaches to assessment are changing and more progressive assessment programs are now becoming valuable tools in higher education throughout the United States — even though they are not yet well developed in Native American contexts. In fact, a study of American tribal colleges by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Carnegie, 1997) determined that, due to the lack of financial resources, expertise, and technology, even the most basic assessment data are generally not available in tribal colleges.

Nonetheless, Indigenous educators are beginning to recognize assessment as an emerging priority — for internal improvement as well as for accreditation purposes (Blanchard et al., 2000; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003; L. Smith, 1999; Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999). The World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (2003), which "provides an international forum and support for Indigenous Peoples to pursue common goals through higher education" (p.

1), has the goal of creating "an accreditation body for Indigenous education initiatives and systems that identify common criteria, practices, and principles by which Indigenous Peoples live" (p. 1). The general concern among Native American administrators is that if tribal colleges do not articulate for themselves a meaningful approach to assessment, then external accreditation bodies will do it for them. Elaborating on this theme, Swisher (Hunkpapa Lakota), president of Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, and Tippeconnic (Comanche), professor of education at The Pennsylvania State University and Director of the American Indian Leadership Program, explain that assessment research in tribal colleges should revolve around teaching, curricula, pedagogy, and higher education issues such as "enrollment, retention, and graduation" (1999, p. 298). They state that Indigenous institutions should develop "alternative assessment or unbiased standardized tests to assess student achievement and abilities" (p. 298) as they can play a valuable role in decision making to improve practice. Demmert (2005), an Alaska Tlingit Native and professor at Western Washington University's College of Education, also comments on the need to focus on developing "measures for assessing e.g., cognitive development, language development, academic achievement, for identifying those who need interventions, and for the monitoring of student progress" (p. 21). He states that "new measures that are culturally and, where applicable, linguistically appropriate (i.e., in Native languages)" and that "could be researcher-developed or could be produced by test publishers…are specifically needed that would address culture-based education" (p. 21). Finally, he says that educators in Indigenous educational institutions can "examine existing approaches to program evaluation and incorporate evaluation in the planning and implementation of any new (or existing but unevaluated) programs. The fruits of any such program evaluations should be

shared broadly, via a central clearinghouse, publications, or via any networks or list-serves that exist" (p. 22).

In this context, the primary aim of this study is to advance theoretical and applied knowledge in the field of assessment, within tribal colleges. In 2002, administrators and faculty at Northwest Indian College (NWIC), a tribal college on the Lummi Reservation in northwestern Washington state, asked me to be their assessment coordinator and to assist them in devising and implementing an assessment program that is appropriate and meaningful to their tribal college mission. For my doctoral research, I present the context of NWIC's assessment program and then document and critically evaluate the inputs, processes, and products of this innovative assessment effort, so that other tribal colleges can learn from our experience.

Research Questions

Through this research, I seek to answer the following questions:

(1) What criteria are best used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context?

(2) Which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1?

(3) What preconditions and other contextual factors contribute to the relative success or failure of different elements of the NWIC assessment program?

NWIC Assessment Program Case Study

I carried out this research at NWIC on the Lummi Reservation in Washington state. NWIC is 1 of approximately 32 tribal colleges throughout the United States that prepare Native

American students for positions of leadership and self-determination within their communities, through culturally appropriate pedagogy and curricula.

The Lummi Reservation

The Lummi Reservation occupies approximately 12,500 acres of land on a peninsula that extends into the Pacific Ocean in the northwestern corner of Washington state (Lummi Indian Business Council, 1993). It is located just a 2-hours' drive south of Vancouver, British Columbia, and a 2–hours' drive north of Seattle. There are approximately 3,800 enrolled Lummis, with about 2,100 Lummis currently living on the reservation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The Lummi are part of the Coast Salish cultural and linguistic group, and their main sources of employment are fishing, gathering shellfish, the gaming industry, agriculture, and forestry.

The History of Higher Education on the Lummi Reservation

Higher education on the Lummi Reservation is rooted in the community's desire to provide its older youth and adults with an educational program that reflects and respects Lummi's cultural heritage, knowledge, customs, and needs. As a result, in 1973, the Lummi Reservation took the first step in this direction by establishing the Lummi Indian School of Aquaculture. This school was designed to train Lummis and other Native Americans in the technical aspects of operating fish and shellfish hatcheries. Trained technicians went on to work in Native American owned and operated hatcheries throughout the United States and Canada. By the early 1980s, however, demand for these technicians declined drastically.

At about the same time, the high rate of general unemployment and the low rate of high school completion on the reservation created an awareness of the need for a post-secondary tribal

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college in northwest Washington; therefore, in 1983, the Lummi Indian Business Council closed the Lummi Indian School of Aquaculture and established a public, non-profit community college. The purpose of the college was to provide adult basic education (i.e., basic reading, writing, math, and life skills) and post-secondary education to northwest Washington Native American communities (Hayes, 1990; NWIC, 2002). Thus the Lummi Nation established Lummi Community College in 1983 as a Native American administered community college. Initially, Lummi Community College operated under a contract with Whatcom Community College, which is an accredited college nearby. Within the scope of this contract, courses offered at Lummi Community College had to meet standards set by Whatcom Community College for maintaining its own accreditation (NWIC, 1991).

In 1988, the Lummi Community College charter was expanded to include higher educational opportunities for tribes in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Because members of various Northwest tribes attended the college, a more representative name for the college was desired. In 1989, it began operating independently of Whatcom Community College and, in order to more accurately reflect its new mission and the wider communities it now served, its name was officially changed to *Northwest Indian College* (NWIC, 2002).

NWIC Today

NWIC is a tribally administered institution chartered by the Lummi Indian Business Council. Although the college predominantly relies on grants for its funding, it is also federally funded through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1993, the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges accredited NWIC (NWIC, 2002). NWIC is the only accredited tribal college in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Although the college primarily serves four northwestern states (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska), some of its 650 students come from all corners of the

United States, as well as from Canada. NWIC has six extended campuses — on the Colville, Muckleshoot, Nez Perce (Idaho), Port Gamble S'Klallam, Swinomish, and Tulalip reservations — which offer face-to-face classes and classes transmitted on interactive television (ITV) from the main Lummi campus. Interactive television involves students attending classes at extended campuses while having a live connection to the main campus class. In addition, a significant portion of the college enrollment is generated through extension services, such as independent learning.

NWIC is located on the old site of the Lummi Day School, built in 1910. The original Lummi Day School building now houses the college's library. The college campus consists of mainly portable structures. Although the current president, the vice presidents, and most of the staff are Native American, most of the faculty members are not. Crazy Bull (2006a), NWIC's president, summarizes her expectations for the college:

> We are a place where the vision of our ancestors comes together with the present — our students today — to build a future for coming generations. We are the place where our understanding of traditions and cultural practice are translated into contemporary education. We are the place where Native knowledge is honored, new leadership blossoms, and where students find their voice. (p. 1)

Thus, NWIC strives to provide a holistic approach to education in a culturally relevant and supportive environment that provides students with as many opportunities for success as possible. Its mission statement emphasizes the college's hope: "Through education, Northwest Indian College promotes Indigenous self-determination and knowledge."

Positioning Myself

In February 2002, NWIC hired me to coordinate its assessment program. Since that time, I have been facilitating and coordinating a participatory assessment process related to teaching and learning at the college. In this regard, I am a cultural outsider doing organizational insider

research. As a White woman, from a relatively privileged background, my understanding of the world has been shaped by my own culture, education, and life experiences. As a result, I am challenged to continually reflect on how my own worldviews impact my research and assessment work within a tribal college context (Haig-Brown, 1992). If I am going to be involved in creating knowledge that relates to Indigenous people, I must situate myself as a learner within the tradition of Indigenous knowledge (McIsaac, 2000). From this position, I can learn much both personally and professionally (Haig-Brown, 1992) while, at the same time, I also hope that through a participatory research process, I can assist in generating new knowledge that directly serves NWIC and from which other tribal colleges can benefit.

Many Indigenous scholars have articulated their thoughts regarding non-Natives working cooperatively within Indigenous communities and educational institutions. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2000), professor of Maori Education and Director of the International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, states that non-Natives need not be excluded from contributing to Native American educational research. Mihesuah (2004), editor of the *American Indian Quarterly*, echoes this thought and believes that "a balanced, inclusive methodology is ideal" (p. xi). Graham Smith (1992), Visiting Distinguished Professor in the Department of Educational Studies graduate program at the University of British Columbia and a Maori education scholar, articulates situations in which it may be appropriate for non-Indigenous researchers to conduct research in Indigenous communities. One of these is if the researcher empowers the community to address issues and concerns in a manner that leads to beneficial outcomes. Furthermore, Marker (2000), Director of Ts''kel First Nations Graduate Studies in Education at the University of British Columbia, states clearly that "the quality of research in First Nations education is not improved simply by having

Aboriginal people doing the writing. It is improved by a more detailed analysis that includes the

perspectives and location of both Natives and non-Natives" (p. 31). This is the perspective that

the NWIC administration adopted when they hired me as their assessment coordinator in 2002.

In their 1998 accreditation review, administrators at NWIC received several

recommendations regarding assessment that were essential to address before their next review.

The following recommendations related to assessment:

(1) The team recommends that the college move deliberately to a process of broad-based continuous planning and evaluation (Standard 1.B).

(2) The team recommends that the college adopt and consistently implement an educational assessment plan, which provides for a series of outcomes measures that are internally consistent and in accord with its mission (Standard 2; Policy 2.2).

(3) The team recommends that the college adopt a consistent systematic process of evaluation of faculty, staff, and administration (Standards 3.A.2, 6.C.3; policy 4.1). (Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities, 1998)

The administrators decided the assessment work was worthwhile and in their best

interest, but that it should be done in a culturally meaningful way. As a result, the

administrators' primary interest was to find someone who could respect their cultural protocols,

beliefs, and values and integrate them with conventional research procedures and best practices

(Marker, 2004; L. Smith, 1999; Steinhauer, 2002). Unable to find or attract a Native person with

the required skills and expertise in this regard, they accepted me as a partner in their assessment

work.

Just as some non-Natives have contributed positively to Native American struggles

regarding control over education (Haig-Brown, 1992), I have now become an ally linking NWIC

to relevant resources and expertise in the non-Native world. Through my work at NWIC, I also

have opportunities to educate non-Native communities of interest, such as accreditation bodies

and funding agencies, and to translate Native values and interests into language that is familiar to

these external agencies. Nonetheless, I can conduct this research only because I have been invited into and accepted within this community and have been asked to perform this work.

Moreover, the literature on research within Native American communities emphasizes the importance of the commitment of researchers to a participatory process, based on a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the community (Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Hampton, 1995b; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Menzies, 2001; National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, 1999; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; L. Smith, 1999). In addition, as alluded to above, the research itself needs to be relevant and meaningful to the community and conducted in a responsible and ethical manner (Darou, Kurtness, & Hum, 2000; Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Royal Commission, 1996; L. Smith, 1999; Stringer, 1999). Ideally, these principles should guide research performed in any community, but past experience within Native American communities has left them acutely sensitive to abuses in this regard. In my role as a bridge between NWIC and the field of assessment, it is especially important that I introduce and facilitate approaches to assessment that are consistent with these research principles. NWIC administrators have been extremely encouraging and supportive of this doctoral research. In the following section, I briefly discuss the relevance of insider research and clarify my own position in this regard.

Significance of Organizational Insider Research

Various approaches to organizational insider research — such as participative inquiry, cooperative inquiry, participatory action research, and action inquiry — have been developed in the past decade as this practice has been increasingly legitimized (Bensimon, Polkinghorne, Bauman, & Vallejo, 2004). All of these approaches involve the community identifying a problem or concern and the researcher collaborating with the community in order to address the

problem or concern through a participatory research process. As a form of action research, assessment connects insider research to pedagogical practice. By deriving assessment research from community-identified needs, by engaging the community as participants in the research process, and by reporting the results back to the community in meaningful ways, Bensimon et al. (2004) contend practical knowledge is produced. In this regard, they refer to a "practitioner-as-researcher" (p. 109) model, a method of research for bringing about college-wide change, in which "stakeholders produce the knowledge" (p. 109) (instead of external researchers) to provide information that illuminates local problems in a specific context in order to work toward a solution; thus the insiders conduct the research and produce the information.

The benefits of organizational insider research are now well documented (L. Smith, 1999). For instance, by interviewing key people and being a participant-observer, insiders can effectively draw on their experiences and observations within the community as well as use "reflective thinking" to enhance their research (Haig-Brown, 1992; Hampton, 1995b; Pelto & Pelto, 1978). Within a college context, this information can be used to improve institutional performance and generate practical information that is effective for initiating change (Bensimon et al., 2004); however, as Linda Smith (1999) emphasizes, "the critical issue with insider research is the constant need for reflexivity" (p. 137). *Reflexivity* refers to the ability to reflect fairly upon one's actions and responsibilities and to respond continually to changing circumstances and needs. In a tribal college context, involving faculty, staff, students, and community members in this reflective process can improve learning and teaching and ensure that assessment processes are serving the college effectively (Stufflebeam, 2003a). To do this, however, inside researchers need, among other things, to train participants in assessment techniques, help them acquire or develop assessment resources, seek feedback on draft

assessment reports, facilitate the use of relevant information in databases, and assist in creating

realistic assessment plans (Stufflebeam, 2003a).

Overview of the Doctoral Thesis

The doctoral thesis is divided into seven chapters. In chapter 1, I have established the

research questions and positioned myself as a non-Native person working at a tribal college and

participating in organizational insider research that affects this community. In addition, this

chapter introduced NWIC as a case study. It provided an overview of the Lummi Reservation;

reviewed the history of higher education on the Lummi Reservation; and examined where NWIC

is today. Chapter 2 provides a summary of Native Americans in higher education, including a

history and overview of tribal colleges in the United States. Chapter 3 provides an overview and

critique of contemporary approaches to assessment. Chapter 4 is divided into two sections. The

first section summarizes guiding principles of culturally appropriate research in Native American

communities that are most relevant to the future of assessment at tribal colleges. The second

section reviews emerging assessment practices and discussions in tribal colleges, along with

elements from progressive mainstream assessment thinking that can inform assessment in a tribal

college setting.

Chapter 5 overviews relevant approaches to methodology — including the case study

method and the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Model — and data analysis. Chapter 6

articulates an evaluation framework for the context, inputs, processes, and products of NWIC's

assessment program by outlining in each section a set of elements or criteria that may be taken

into consideration when establishing an assessment program in a tribal college and summarizing

the results of the research. In chapter 7, I overview the responses to the three research questions

and present a list of elements that might assist tribal colleges to develop their assessment

programs. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and applied implications of this research, the limitations of this study, and suggestions for future research and work.

One last note before I conclude this chapter: Because there is no one term by which Native Americans prefer to refer to themselves, in this doctoral thesis, the use of terms such as *tribal*, *Indian*, *Indigenous*, *Aboriginal*, *First Nations*, and *Native American* reflect the vocabulary most appropriate to each context. Certain terms are used because they were used at the time by Native Americans, because they are preferred by one of the primary audiences for this doctoral thesis (the Native American members of the tribal college community), or because they are a part of common names, such as *tribal college*, *Bureau of Indian Affairs*, etc.

CHAPTER 2 NATIVE AMERICANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION — HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF TRIBAL COLLEGES

The tribal college system in the United States is poorly understood and has not been recognized for what it has accomplished. The primary purpose of this chapter is to outline the history, early development, and contemporary state of tribal colleges. Tribal colleges are a relatively new phenomenon in the torturous and painful history of education for Native Americans in the United States. Neither the significance of this achievement nor the conceptual bases underlying the creation and functioning of these colleges can be fully appreciated divorced from an understanding of the historical experience from which they evolved. This chapter, therefore, reviews both that historical experience and the contemporary picture of tribal colleges.

The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the history of Native Americans in U.S. higher education through three distinct periods: (1) the colonial period, when the objective was converting Native Americans to Christianity through Indian missions in early colleges; (2) the federal period, during which the federal government largely ignored Native American higher education, yet enacted a series of policies that were devastating to the Indian community; and (3) the self-determination period, characterized by significant shifts in federal policy toward self-determination, as well as the founding of tribally controlled colleges (Carney, 1999). Each of these periods significantly influenced the evolution and direction of higher education for Native Americans in the United States.

The second section of this chapter examines the evolution and founding of tribal colleges in the United States, beginning with Navajo Community College, the first tribal college in the U.S. It provides an overview of the most significant policies and events that led to the establishment of tribal colleges, and the current state of these colleges, including an examination of the unique features of tribal colleges that increase Native American student access, retention,

and success. Finally, it summarizes other fundamental characteristics tribal colleges have in common, including shared challenges.

The History of Native Americans in Higher Education in the United States

The Colonial Period (1500s – 1775)

Traditionally, the education of Indian youth consisted of the family, extended family, and elders preparing them for the challenges they would face throughout life. Through this unstructured process, life skills, history, and religious and cultural norms and expectations were passed on (Oppelt, 1990). In contrast, the objective of early European North Americans, from the arrival of Columbus, was the "civilizing" of Native Americans through conversion to Christianity and the elimination of their traditional ways (Oppelt, 1990). Conversion, they believed, would necessitate making Native Americans literate. Thus, during the early 1600s, higher education for Indians focused on literacy and vocational training combined with the primary goal of converting them to Christianity (Carney, 1999).

Throughout both the colonial and, later, the federal period, the practice of removing Indians from their homes to be educated was a predominating feature of White education for Indians. This practice likely originated in 1568, when the Jesuits established a school in Havana, Cuba, to serve Indians from Florida (Carney, 1999). This school was the first attempt of many in the last 450 years to remove Indians from their homes, a practice that severed them from the cultural influences of their families and tribes, with the underlying intention of assimilating them into mainstream society.

The first effort to establish a college for Indians, which occurred in the Jamestown settlement of Virginia in 1616 to 1622 (Carney, 1999), was unsuccessful; but had it been

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successful, it would have been the first college of any kind in the United States. In 1616, Pocahontas, the first convert in Jamestown, traveled to England to raise funds for educating Indians. King James was so impressed with her that he ordered the church to send money to fund a university for Native Americans in Jamestown, which he wanted to call Henrico College in honor of his son. Unfortunately, the large sums of money contributed for the college were diverted to the Virginia Company. In 1622, after an Indian uprising against the Virginia settlement that killed many colonists (Carney, 1999), the idea of founding a college for Indians in Jamestown ended; however, the practice of sending Indians to England to raise funds for Indian education, deceptive as it continued to be, lasted throughout the colonial period.

Surprisingly, of the first nine colleges established in the United States, three (Harvard, William and Mary, and Dartmouth) included Native Americans in their vision. In 1636, the New College (now Harvard University) in New England was the first college founded in the United States. In its 1650 charter, Harvard professed as one of its goals "the education of the English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge; and godliness" (quoted in Carney, 1999, p. 1). Although the first Indian student attended Harvard in 1653, it was not until 1665 that the first one graduated. Few Indians ever attended Harvard until the 20th century, largely because of its irrelevant curriculum and the rampant sickness and disease ravaging Indian communities (Carnegie, 1997). In 1970, Harvard experienced an increase in Native American enrollment and renewed its commitment to Native American education by establishing the American Indian Program at the Graduate School of Education. Between 1970 and 1995, Native American students in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard earned 156 master's degrees and 19 doctorates (Encyclopedia of North American Indians, 2005c); however, in 2003-2004, only 0.7% of the student body at Harvard was Native American (Mass Mentor, 2004), thus demonstrating

that Harvard still struggles to fulfill its original mission to educate Indians, among others

(Karabel, 2005).

In 1693, the College of William and Mary in Virginia became the second college

chartered by the crown in the United States. Its mission statement expressed the desire "that the

youth may be piously educated in good Letters and Manners, and that the Christian faith may be

propagated amongst the Western Indians, to the Glory of Almighty God" (quoted in Carney,

1999, p. 1). A handful of Indian students attended the college between 1705 and 1721 and then,

again, from 1743 to 1776. Most of these students received support from the Boyle endowment,

the last student receiving funds in 1776. In 1783, the Indian-serving section of the school closed,

and the endowment was reallocated to provide higher education opportunities for Black students

(Oppelt, 1990). In 2003-2004, less than 0.5% of the College of William and Mary's total

enrollment were Native American and 5.5% were Black (Electronic Campus, 2004b).

The next six colleges established in the United States, founded between 1701 and 1766,

had no Indian mission. These six colleges are now Yale University in Connecticut, Princeton

University of New Jersey, Columbia University in New York, the University of Pennsylvania,

Brown University in Rhode Island, and Rutgers The State University of New Jersey (Wikipedia,

2005). Although none of these colleges encouraged Native Americans to enroll, the College of

New Jersey did admit three Indian students, none of whom graduated during that time (Carney,

1999). Finally, in 1769, the ninth college, Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, also professed

a mission for educating Indian students and included in its charter "the education and instruction

of youths of the Indian tribes in this Land in reading, wrighting, and all parts of Learning which

shall appear necessary and expedient for civilizing and Christianizing Children of Pagans as well

as in all liberal Arts and Sciences; and also of English Youth and any others" (quoted in Carney, 1999, p. 1).

      As Pocahontas had done earlier, another Native American, Samson Occum, traveled to England in search of funds for Indian higher education. Born in 1723, Samson Occum, a Mohegan, was one of the finest scholars of his time and eventually became a teacher and a Presbyterian minister. He was revered as the perfect example of a "civilized" and educated Christian Indian (Oppelt, 1990). His teacher, Eleazar Wheelock, was an evangelical minister. Thanks to Wheelock's success in educating Occum, Wheelock became excited about the idea of educating Indians. Wheelock convinced Occum to travel to England and Scotland in 1766 and 1768 to raise money for Indian higher education. The fund-raising trip was an immediate success, and, as a result, Dartmouth College was established in 1769. Although he was successful in raising funds that led to the establishment of Dartmouth, Occum later felt betrayed when few Indian students ever attended the college and the funds he raised were not used for their intended purpose. Although Dartmouth demonstrated minimal success in educating Native Americans, its recent history has been more promising. With a new president in 1969, Dartmouth was "refounded" (Encyclopedia of North American Indians, 2005b). This president reaffirmed Dartmouth's commitment to Native American higher education and made a pledge to maintain 3% Native American undergraduate enrollment. He has also devoted significant financial assistance and resources to their education. The undergraduate Native American graduation rate has increased from 50% in 1970 to 72% in 2004 (Dartmouth College, 2005) and, in 2003-2004, 3% of Dartmouth's total undergraduate enrollment (i.e., from 4,098 students total) was Native American (Xap, 2004). In the first 125 years of its existence, only 58 Indian students attended Dartmouth College, and 11 graduated (Carney, 1999).

During the period when these first U.S. colleges were founded, the purpose of recruiting Indian students was essentially either to access funds devoted to an Indian mission or to convert Indian students to Christianity. The first three colleges to profess a mission for Indians all experienced similar financial challenges: fraudulent behaviour, misappropriation of funds from Indian education to the general education of the colony, and a small Indian population base from which to increase Indian student enrollment. The only source of large donations for the colleges was England, where fundraisers were sent on the false pretext of raising money to educate Indians (Carney, 1999). Whatever the intentions of these colleges, 50 Native Americans actually attended these early institutions before 1776, and one graduated (Carney, 1999).

A number of factors may have contributed to these failed, half-hearted experiments in higher education for Indians. For example, many Indians resisted a White education, believing it would be irrelevant to their vocation and culture and fearing it would lead to the acculturation of their people (Oppelt, 1990). The racism and lack of support that Indian students experienced from the local colonists also hurt the missionaries' cause (Oppelt, 1990; Szasz, 1988). Furthermore, few people in society could attend college at that time, as a college education was reserved for only the elite male population. The colleges' presidents eventually realized that unless Native Americans found a practical and meaningful use for their education, higher education for Indians would remain a futile exercise (Carney, 1999).

The Federal Period (1775 – 1928)

The so-called federal period in the history of Native American education cannot be easily characterized, except that it was devastating to Native American communities and education. It was during this period that the new federal government was delegated responsibility for the education of the Indian peoples under its jurisdiction, but this did not signal the beginning of

either consistent or beneficial policies and approaches to Indian education. Two competing, and

equally dreadful, points of view alternately dominated the direction that Indian education took

for much of this time: (a) the assimilationist view, which favored vocational training for Indian

people to prepare them for manual labor in White society and (b) the "removal" view, which

favored removing Indians from White society by relocating them to separate, segregated tracts of

land. The assimilationist view ultimately dominated (Carnegie, 1997). During both the colonial

and the federal periods, the culture and values of Indians attending colleges were neither

appreciated nor reinforced. In addition, Indians had no control over the purpose of their own

education and thus feared they would lose their culture if they attended these institutions

(Carnegie, 1997).

Treaty Period (1778 – 1871)

        With the founding of the United States in 1776, the responsibility for Indian-related

endeavours was delegated to the federal government (Carney, 1999), and Indian tribes now had

to deal with this new authority. During the treaty period (1778 to 1871), the government

negotiated 645 treaties with tribes (97 of which included minimal educational provisions), thus

recognizing the sovereignty of those communities. Tribes therefore became "dependent nations"

of the federal government (Carney, 1999). This began an era, lasting until the 1960s, when the

higher education of Indians was largely neglected.

The Indian Civilization Act (1819)

        The Indian Civilization Act of 1819, the most important legislation during the federal

period, granted $10,000 a year for educating Indians in "civilized" agricultural practices and

Christianity (Carney, 1999; Oppelt, 1990). In effect, only a small amount of this money was

ever allocated to Indian education (University of Illinois, 2000). Because the government had been unsuccessful in its attempts to educate Indian children up to this time, from 1770 to the 1870s, these minimal funds for educating Indians were channeled through missionaries who, once again, were in charge of the Indians' education. The purpose of this religious instruction was yet again mass conversion (Carnegie, 1997) — it also called for the obliteration of Indian religious practices, dances, and cultural practices (University of Illinois, 2000). Because it provided money to churches to educate and promote Christianity, the Indian Civilization Act program ended in 1870 when controversy arose over the issue of the separation of church and state (Carney, 1999).

During the early 1820s, when the federal government's support for Indian education consisted of minimal financial assistance for Indian students attending eastern colleges, there were no higher education institutions for Native Americans in the U.S. (Carney, 1999). It was also during this time that the historical trend of the government's not allocating appropriated funds for Indian education originated, as the minimal provisions for Indian students were infrequently honored (Carney, 1999).

Removal Policies (1825)

In 1825, the forced relocation of Indians westward, with its concomitant loss of their lands, became the primary federal policy for Indian populations (Carney, 1999). The little involvement the federal government had with education during this period was limited to policy and funding. Educational policy shifted its focus from higher education (to convert and civilize Indians) to vocational training (combined with religious education) to prepare Indians for largely manual jobs.

About this time, several tribes recognized that getting a White education might help their cause (Oppelt, 1990). Most notably, the Cherokee and Choctaw tried to negotiate provisions for education in many of their treaties (Carney, 1999). The Choctaw even planned a higher education institution, but their plans fell through when they were forcibly removed from their lands. Nonetheless, the Cherokee and Choctaw were still able to obtain funding for some of their top students to attend colleges in the east (Barbara Wright & Tierney, 1991).[1] Later, after the Civil War (1861 – 1865), the Choctaw were able to provide scholarships from tribal funds for students to attend college. Both tribes established excellent school systems and remained committed to higher education (Carney, 1999; Oppelt, 1990).

Assimilation Policies (1870s)

Since their first encounter with Indians, Whites have discussed the pros and cons of assimilation versus removal and have been rather haphazard in their attempts at both. Up until the 1860s, removal advocates predominated as Indian tribes were forced farther and farther west (Carney, 1999). In the 1870s, however, assimilation replaced removal as the dominant policy. As White populations continued to increase, there was less available land on which to relocate Indian communities.

In 1870, the federal government provided $100,000 for Indian industrial schools that were to be under federal control for the first time (Barbara Wright & Tierney, 1991). The underlying intentions were again to inculcate White values and to assimilate Indians into low-level positions in society. Furthermore, because individual Indians would soon be allocated

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[1] Mainly from the Civilization Fund and Scottish (Occum's) Fund.

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tracts of land, it was thought that Indians should be educated about farming practices (Carney, 1999).

Federal assimilation policy found its expression in two significant pieces of new legislation: the Dawes General Allotment Act (1887) and the Curtis Act (1898). Together, these two acts affected two essential aspects of the Indian way of life and values: education and land (Szasz, 1999). The Dawes General Allotment Act officially removed land from tribal control and allotted individuals parcels of land. The logic was that it would be easier to assimilate Indians into the larger society if there were no tribal structures or tribal land (DeJong, 1993). The Curtis Act abolished tribal courts and governments (DeJong, 1993) and resulted in the loss of tribal sovereignty (Carney, 1999).

Throughout the 1870s, the government's approach to Indian education also included moving students from their families and tribes into residential schools, whereby, it was believed, they could be assimilated into American society (Carnegie, 1997). In 1879, the first government boarding school was established in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The Carlisle Indian School was founded by Richard Pratt and, by 1899, 25 "Carlisle" schools had been established, with 20,000 Indian students attending 25 boarding schools in 15 states (Encyclopedia of North American Indians, 2005a; Szasz, 1999). In these schools, Native American children were provided with vocational education and some religious training. It was hoped the children would later return to their families as missionaries and convert them to Christianity (Carney, 1999). Children were forced to speak English and were not allowed to speak their Native languages or practice their culture in any way. Pratt honestly believed Native American students could excel in that environment and that they had a capacity to learn, a belief held by few people at that time — he also believed that it was best to "kill the Indian and save the man" (Encyclopedia of North

American Indians, 2005a, p. 1; Szasz, 1999). Many of the children were physically, emotionally, and sexually abused — and hundreds of them died under these harsh circumstances (Encyclopedia of North American Indians, 2005a; Szasz, 1999).

The approach was deeply flawed: Dropout rates were high, attendance was not mandatory, inappropriate training was provided, and no employment was offered to graduates in the community. Thus, in 1917, the last Carlisle school closed and Indian students returned to their communities and their traditional ways of life (Carnegie, 1997). As the schools failed, so too did the assimilation policy.

Despite the failure and closing of the Carlisle schools, Pratt was able to convince the public that Indians could be educated. As a result, these schools were the progenitors of what finally evolved into more progressive educational initiatives. Some of these schools developed into vocational boarding schools, a number of which have survived and operate today (Szasz, 1999). Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, was established in 1884, and the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, was founded in 1890 (Szasz, 1999). Both of these institutions are now federally chartered and provide exclusively Native American higher education opportunities. In particular, Haskell has been influential in that it has provided, and it continues to provide, Native Americans from diverse backgrounds with culturally relevant educational programs. Thus, Pratt's vision and his belief in educating Indians — however misguided it was — considerably shaped the progress and course of post-secondary education for Native Americans in the United States.

The Evolution of Private Indian Colleges (1880s)

Only two privately funded Native American colleges originated in the 19th century: "Indian University" (now Bacone College) in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and the Croatan Normal

School (now the University of North Carolina at Pembroke) (Carney, 1999). The first private

Native American college, Bacone College (established in 1880), was based on Christian

principles. Although it was also open to non-Natives, it was the first tribally controlled college

and the only one in the U.S. for many years (Carney, 1999). Almon Bacone was a missionary

and teacher, a proponent of providing a curriculum built upon the local culture and taught in the

communities themselves. He was concerned about the decreasing Indian population. The Creek

Council granted the college 160 acres to establish a campus in 1910. Bacone College was the

first land grant college founded by Native Americans (Barbara Wright & Tierney, 1991). In

2003 to 2004, 39% of its 914 enrolled undergraduate students were Native American (Electronic

Campus, 2004a).

The second private Native American college, the University of North Carolina at

Pembroke, was founded in 1887 and is the only state-supported four-year college founded

specifically for Native Americans (Carney, 1999). Initially, the General Assembly of North

Carolina established it to serve the Lumbees (i.e., the Croatan), with the aim of educating Indian

teachers. Over the years, the college struggled financially and finally evolved into a mainly

White institution. Although from 2003 to 2004, 21% of all enrolled undergraduate students at

the University of North Carolina at Pembroke were Native American (of a total of 3,813), the

college has abandoned its focus on Native American culture (Carney, 1999; Electronic Campus,

2004c).

Between 1887 and 1954, Bacone College and the University of North Carolina at

Pembroke were the only private institutions of higher education in the United States to serve

mostly Native American students. It was difficult to establish Native American colleges for a

number of reasons, including pervasive racism, the small Native American population base, the

dispersion of Native Americans, and federal control of all levels of Indian education (Carney, 1999). Furthermore, the only government assistance available to Native Americans in higher education at that time was limited scholarships and loans (Carney, 1999). In addition to Bacone College, there are two other small private Native American colleges still functioning today: American Indian College in Phoenix, Arizona, which was founded in 1972, and Nazarene Indian Bible College in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which was established in 1975 (Albuquerque Colleges and Universities, 2005; American Indian College, 2005). American Indian College is sponsored by the General Council of the Assemblies of God and offers bachelor's degrees in Christian ministry and elementary education. Nazarene Indian Bible College offers limited bachelor's and associate's degrees in Biblical studies and human resources management.

The 20th Century

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, changes in the perceptions and attitudes of a number of government officials, as well as the general public, toward Native Americans began to appear. More people were beginning to understand not only that Native Americans were worthy of a higher education but also that their education would benefit all of society. Furthermore, they were starting to believe that acculturation did not benefit society, that Native American culture should be valued and preserved (Carney, 1999). Despite these changes, Native American higher education, in practice, remained substandard and continued to offer only a basic curriculum that focused on low-level vocational skills (Carney, 1999).

By the turn of the century, the Native American population in the United States was less than 250,000, the lowest it had ever been, compared to an estimated 5 million at the time of

Columbus's arrival (Carnegie, 1997).[2] Tribal governments had been powerless to stop the federal government's attempts to eradicate their cultural identity and sense of self (Carney, 1999). By this time, the federal government's policies had had a devastating impact on Native American communities across the country, which had lost much of their language, land, culture, and hope. Disenfranchised in every way, Native American communities had become dependent on the government for their survival (Carnegie, 1997). In the early 1900s, only some tribes, one state, and some religious organizations paid any attention to Native American higher education; the federal government essentially ignored their plight.

Since the early 1900s, some individuals believed that Native Americans should control their own higher education institutions (Stein, 2003). In 1911, August Breuninger made the first serious proposal to start a university that would enable Native Americans better access to higher education (Crum, 1989). He envisioned a curriculum that would focus on Native American culture and proposed that the college be associated with a museum. Breuninger's ideas, as well as others', were dismissed by assimilationists, and, over the next 50 years, other proposals to start Native American vocational colleges also failed (Carnegie, 1997; Stein, 2003).

In the late 19th and early 20th century, a trend began whereby schools evolved into normal schools, which trained teachers, and then, occasionally, into colleges. Instead of transforming into Indian colleges, however, a number of Indian schools instead became White colleges, because of the financial need for a wider student base (Carney, 1999). These included Ottawa University in Kansas, Sheldon Jackson College in Alaska, the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma, Northeastern State University in Oklahoma (where Native Americans still have a significant

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[2] This number has been steadily increasing. In 2000, the U.S. Census reported that 4.1 million people (or 1.5% of the total population) claim some Native American ancestry (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

presence today), and Fort Lewis College in Colorado (Carney, 1999). The Indian students from these closed schools were sent to the public schools, where their culture was unappreciated (Carney, 1999).

By 1920, interest in Native American culture increased significantly in intellectual circles. Reformers became interested in the Pueblo Indian society and the preservation of Native American culture (Carney, 1999). This movement was to set the stage for the next era.

The Self-Determination Period (1928 – present)

Up until this time, "the principle of local citizen control of schools, that is a keystone of public education in the United States, was never extended to the education of Indians because they were deemed to be unqualified to manage their own schools" (Oppelt, 1990, p. 14). Things were about to change as the 20th century brought with it the most significant federal policy shifts toward self-determination in history (Carney, 1999). Two major reforms forced the government to begin to relate differently to Native Americans. The first, the Snyder Act of 1921, gave the Bureau of Indian Affairs direct responsibility for Indian higher education, even though, as in previous years, this was still limited to the support of students rather than institutions (Carney, 1999). The second, passed in 1924, was the Indian Citizenship Act, which granted U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans (Carney, 1999). These two pieces of legislation were significant in that they forced the government to regard Native Americans more justly, as citizens who deserved the right to control the future of higher education. It also set the stage, a number of years later, for the dreadful findings of the Meriam Report.

<u>The Meriam Report (1928)</u>

In 1928, the Meriam Report, which was also known as the "Problem of Indian Administration," condemned the federal government for the abuse Native Americans had long endured (Carnegie, 1997; National Advisory Council on Indian Education, 1993). It particularly criticized federally run boarding schools, charging that because of the abuse experienced in these schools, the situation for Native American communities was bleak. It criticized the emphasis on vocational training, finding it completely unrelated to Indians' traditional ways and providing little hope for employment. It found that Native Americans were prevented from managing their own programs and being forced to use substandard services (i.e., health and education programs). The report encouraged more Native Americans to pursue higher education and suggested the federal government provide additional funding and financial aid for this purpose (Oppelt, 1990). Although the report recognized the importance of traditional culture and values, as well as community-based education, it stopped short of recommending the establishment of tribally controlled colleges (Carney, 1999). Nonetheless, the government's gradual shift from its paternalism to acceptance of self-determination stemmed from this report. In its wake, many boarding schools were closed, more Indian high schools with a greater percentage of Native American teachers were established, Native Americans were trained to serve in Bureau of Indian Affairs positions, and Native American culture was formally and actively preserved through financial support. These were the first concrete steps the federal government took away from the policy of acculturation.

In 1932, as a result of the findings of the Meriam Report, President Franklin Roosevelt and Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier, initiated significant changes affecting Native American communities (Carnegie, 1997). Collier, who was knowledgeable about Native American cultures and innovative community-based education models, began making decisions

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based on Native American needs, advocating self-government and sovereignty for Native American communities (Oppelt, 1990). The goal now became empowering Native communities to restore their culture and to work with the government. For example, because most teachers were White, there was a movement to train Native Americans teachers. The situation was improving, but White men still continued to make most policies, and Native Americans themselves had little voice in the design of their own education. In addition, the potential for improved opportunities was set back when funding for these programs was reduced during and after World War II (Carnegie, 1997). Despite these challenges, the government's attitude toward Native Americans had changed significantly, paving the way for Indian self-government.

The Indian Reorganization Act (1934)

With the advent of the Indian Reorganization Act (also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act or the Indian Bill of Rights) in 1934 and the concomitant termination of the Dawes General Allotment Act, tribal communities were finally given the right of self-government (Oppelt, 1990). Thus, Native American history moved from a dark period of assimilation and elimination to a period of tolerance and preservation (Carney, 1999). The Indian Reorganization Act resulted in the creation of a minimal loan fund for Native American college students and increased funding for higher education (Oppelt, 1990).

At about the same time, the Johnson-O'Malley Act also provided substantial vocational student loan funds and allowed states to provide education. Nonetheless, these two acts had little effect on increasing the numbers of Native Americans taking advantage of the opportunities for higher education because the education offered was still not relevant to Native American students, nor did it recognize or support their culture and values (Carney, 1999).

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, there was little apparent progress. The Bureau of

Indian Affairs,[3] and some tribes, did begin scholarship programs, but the Bureau of Indian

Affairs primarily concentrated its efforts on establishing elementary schools, a number of high

schools, and a couple of technical institutes. As a result, no tribally controlled colleges were

formed during this time. The success of the scholarship programs was negligible as well;

students still faced financial limitations, cultural barriers, inadequate academic preparation,

minimal student support services, and long distances to the colleges (Carney, 1999). By 1954,

Congress again terminated its responsibility for Native Americans and thus funding for more

than 100 Native American tribes (Carney, 1999).

"Indian Education"

This discussion would not be complete without pointing out that in Native American

communities, there has always been disagreement over the appropriateness of Native Americans

pursuing higher education.

> The juxtaposition of the two words 'Indian' and 'education' has almost always been
> problematic in spite of the agreement by Indian parents and Anglo policymakers on the
> importance of education for Indians (Bradley, 1980). Part of the problem is that Indian
> education is inherently a bicultural enterprise that has been directed at two sometimes
> competing and sometimes complementary goals: assimilation and self-determination
> (Havighurst, 1981). (Hampton, 1995b, pp. 7-8)

The purpose of "Indian education" is to know oneself; to determine from where one has come, as

well as one's passions (vocation); and to dedicate one's life to those pursuits. The ultimate goal

is to become a complete individual and to provide the next generation with a sense of what is

important and what is valued in society (Cajete, 2000). "Indian education must enhance

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[3] The Bureau of Indian Affairs scholarship program started in 1948.

Aboriginal consciousness of what it means to be an Indian, thus empowering and enriching individual and collective lives" (Battiste, 1995, p. xv). In order to do this, knowledge of one's community is essential (Marker, 2004). Finally, "the effectiveness of education is measured by how well it prepares people to handle the problems and opportunities of life in their own time and place" (Watt-Cloutier, 2000, p. 114).

For over 350 years, the few Native Americans who could pursue higher education had to attend mainstream colleges that aimed at assimilating them into White society or recruiting them for missionary work (Carnegie, 1997; Karabel, 2005). These attempts to "educate" the Indians largely failed. Finally, by the late 1950s, the civil rights era that was on the horizon, combined with the new community college movement, would bring new momentum and attitudes to support the founding of the first tribally controlled colleges (Stein, 1992). These efforts would be the first attempts of pursuing the vision of a true Indian education.

The Founding of Tribal Colleges in the United States (1960s)

In the early 1960s, Forbes, a Native American professor in California, proposed creating a Native American university. His vision for the university included providing kindergarten to grade 12 teacher training; recording the written form of Native American languages; teaching language, culture, and arts; and offering adult basic education courses to bring adults up to college-level work. Most importantly, he believed that Native Americans should control their own institutions (Stein, 2003). Forbes laid the groundwork for the tribally controlled colleges that were established in the following decade. Deganawidah-Quetzalcoatl University, founded in 1971 in Davis, California, was based on Forbes's proposal (In Search of Aztlan, 2004).

Also during the 1960s, greater numbers of Native Americans started attending college (Oppelt, 1990). This trend coincided with a number of factors and events. First, Native

American leaders renewed their commitment to self-determination, and tribal members increasingly regarded higher education as a way to serve the tribe, advance the process of self-determination, and restore traditional culture and knowledge (Carnegie, 1997). Second, in 1968, under President Johnson, the government committed to the policy of "self-determination" (Carney, 1999). Every president since that time has supported this policy (Carnegie, 1997). Third, in 1966, for the second time ever, a Native American, Robert Bennett, was named commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[4] He was committed to self-determination and, thus, education became a priority (Carney, 1999). Finally, following World War II, access to higher education improved when the GI Bill provided funding for returning veterans to pursue college degrees (Carnegie, 1997). Many Native American veterans took advantage of this opportunity but, discouraged by racism and discrimination, also dropped out at unusually high rates (Carnegie, 1997).

Navajo Community College (1960s)

In 1957, the Navajo Nation, with a population near 200,000, realized that with few members having the ability to lead the tribe, they needed to provide higher education if they were to attain self-determination (Carnegie, 1997). To achieve this objective, the Navajo Nation established a scholarship fund to enable tribal members to attend colleges and universities. Over 50% of the students awarded scholarships dropped out by the end of their first year because they could not navigate the foreign cultures of those institutions (Carnegie, 1997; R. Nichols & Monette, 2003). Then, in 1966, the federal government funded educational services to the Navajo tribe through the Rough Rock Demonstration School. This successful project eventually

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[4] The first Native American was named commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1869.

led to the establishment of Navajo Community College (now called Dine College) in 1968, the first tribally controlled college in the United States (National Advisory Council on Indian Education, 1993). The college was federally funded and secured further funding from the Navajo tribe, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Donner Foundation. The clearly articulated principles implemented at Navajo Community College became the model for all future tribally controlled colleges: The college would be controlled and managed by the local people "in order to enhance the understanding of their heritage, language, history, and culture" (Stein, 2003, p. 31); would foster a sense of cultural pride and self-esteem, by integrating tribal culture, language, art, and history; would encourage the ability of students to work effectively in the larger society; would provide individualized attention to address social as well as academic challenges; and would seek new innovative teaching methodologies to effectively transmit knowledge (Carnegie, 1997; Stein, 2003).

Coinciding with the civil rights movement, the tribal college movement arose from an increased sense of pride and a resolve to legitimize and preserve cultural traditions, values, and knowledge through the process of self-determination (Carney, 1999). These objectives were to be accomplished through the creation of higher education institutions that would provide some of the many needed academic and vocational skills to tribal members. Some tribes experimented by bringing local community colleges into their communities, but, because the curriculum was culturally irrelevant, the effort died out (Carnegie, 1997).

The closest higher education model available at the time was that of the rapidly expanding community college system (Stein, 1992). Therefore, founders of the tribal college movement chose to base the tribal college system on that model, which embraced community control (Stein, Shanley, & Sanchez, 2003). Tribal colleges and community colleges both valued

the importance of local control, local needs, open admission, job training, and local community development. One difference was that tribal colleges had as their goal the self-determination of Native people through education. Other differences between community colleges and tribal colleges lay primarily in the sources of funding, the governance structure, and the focus on culture (Carnegie, 1997; Stein, 1992).

Following the example of the Navajo, in the 1970s, several other tribes founded their own tribally controlled colleges. In 1970, Deganawidah-Quetzalcoatl University in California was established, followed, in 1971, by Sinte Gleska University and Oglala Lakota College, both in South Dakota (Stein, 1992). During their accreditation processes, many tribal colleges maintained relationships with mainstream universities and colleges (e.g., the mainstream institution would provide courses through the tribal college). Indian leaders reasoned that agreements made with non-Native American colleges and universities would provide support while the tribal colleges were gaining strength in their pursuit of self-determination (R. Nichols & Monette, 2003).

Federally Supported Native American Colleges (1962 – 1971)

The Bureau of Indian Affairs currently operates and funds two Native American higher education universities: Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, which evolved from an Indian school in 1884 and became a junior college in 1970, and Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which also evolved from an Indian school and then was founded in 1971 as a higher education institution providing technological training (Carney, 1999; Crazy Bull, 2007). The Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is a federally chartered institution with a specific mission to support Native American arts and culture. It was founded in 1962.

The Kennedy Report (1969) and Indian Education Act (1972)

In 1969, about mid-way through the period when the Bureau of Indian Affairs established its first tribal colleges, the Kennedy Report, also known as the report of the Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education (chaired by Robert Kennedy and then later by Edward Kennedy), examined Indian education and the dismal rate of success of students at all levels (DeJong, 1993). Reminiscent of the Meriam Report, there was still no mention of the importance of establishing tribally controlled colleges. The years following the release of this report saw a flurry of bills supporting Indian education. One of these, the Indian Education Act of 1972, required Indian education programs across the country to address low achievement and high dropout rates among their students. Another, the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975, committed Congress to improving the social and economic conditions of Native Americans significantly by providing funding for technical training, Bureau of Indian Affairs support, and financial assistance for taking control of their own programs (Carnegie, 1997). It also gave tribes the right to contract with the federal government to operate educational programs serving their tribal members, such as Head Start, while maintaining local control of elementary and high schools. This added control over educational programs provided Native Americans with the impetus for creating additional educational opportunities in their communities and the confidence that self-determination was more than a hope.

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (1973)

In 1973, the presidents of the first six tribal colleges founded the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), an institution that represents the interests of the tribal colleges and is instrumental in supporting their work in assisting Native American communities in their national effort toward self-determination (Benham, 2003). By pooling their resources, AIHEC

assisted the early tribal colleges with accreditation procedures, curricula development, and planning (R. Nichols & Monette, 2003). Today, AIHEC represents 32 colleges in the United States and is governed by all the member institutions. Its mission is to

- maintain commonly held standards of quality in American Indian education;

- support the development of new tribally controlled colleges;

- promote and assist in the development of legislation to support American Indian higher education;

- encourage greater participation by American Indians in the development of higher education policy. (AIHEC, 2004, p. 1)

The second central organization of tribal colleges, the American Indian College Fund, was established in 1989 through AIHEC to raise funds and provide financial assistance to tribal colleges and their students (Stein et al., 2003). In 1986, tribal college students founded the AIHEC Student Congress "to promote leadership, self-governance, cultural preservation, educational achievement, community development, economic sustainability and success for all Native people" (AIHEC Student Congress, 2004, p. 1).

The Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act (1978)

Three pieces of legislation addressing Native education followed upon each other in 1978: the Education Amendments Act of 1978, which focused on elementary and high school education; the Higher Education Act, which provided increased funding both for Native American students attending college and for Native American college programs (Barbara Wright & Tierney, 1991); and, finally and most significantly, the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act, which provided minimal federal funding for the main operations of

tribally controlled colleges (Benham, 2003; Carnegie, 1997; R. Nichols & Monette, 2003).

"After a lengthy struggle" (Shanley, 2003, p. 63) with AIHEC, the government provided this

minimal funding annually to each tribally controlled college for each Native American student it

served. Native Americans with new skills were required to implement this new legislation

effectively; therefore, the need for educated leaders and higher education, specifically tribal

colleges, became obvious (Carnegie, 1997).

Land Grant Status (1994)

In 1994, through the Morrill Act, land grant status was granted to 29 tribal colleges (Stein

et al., 2003). This important designation provided these colleges with support from mainstream

institutions and provided minimal funding for agricultural and natural resource programs.

Furthermore, in 1996, the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities created a

partnership between the federal government and tribal colleges and mandated that tribal colleges

receive increased resources and services (Stein et al., 2003).

From the beginning of the self-determination period through 1994, measures were created

with the intention of improving Native American access to higher education, strengthening

educational programs, increasing graduation rates, and educating people "who are grounded in

their own culture, yet are prepared with the social, civic, and work skills they need to live and

contribute to a multicultural, global society" (Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 2). Tribal colleges

were attempting to fill a void by providing a link between higher education in mainstream

society and tribal communities, so that their graduates would be capable of functioning in both

worlds (Carnegie, 1997).

Tribal Colleges Today

Purpose and Philosophy

In the United States, tribal colleges evolved because existing systems of higher education still required assimilation and were not benefiting Native American students, who were often geographically isolated, had fewer opportunities to access post-secondary education, or did not have the academic preparation to succeed in mainstream post-secondary institutions. For example, in 1984, only 3% of Native Americans graduated from college, compared to 16% of non-Native Americans (Tierney, 1991). As Boyer (1997) notes,

> especially since [enactment of] the GI Bill and the Higher Education Act, the federal government, as well as individual colleges and universities had encouraged Indian students to enroll. But as more did, it became clear that access did not guarantee academic success. The dropout rate for American Indians remained at 90 percent or higher at many institutions. (p. 25)

In response to these concerns, tribal colleges were established for a two-fold purpose: (1) to preserve and restore traditional tribal culture and knowledge and (2) to provide certificates or associate's (two-year) degrees that would provide Native American students with better employment opportunities and facilitate transfer to four-year colleges or universities (Fann, 2002; Stein, 2003). Tribal colleges, in the broadest sense, are committed to the self-determination and survival of Native peoples through education (Boyer, 2003). As NWIC President Crazy Bull (2004) elaborates, "self-determination means choice, access, and control over human and natural resources" (p. 1). The colleges provide Native American students from isolated areas, who might not otherwise pursue post-secondary options, with access to higher education (Boyer, 2003). In addition, as Boyer (1990) points out, more Native American students are attending tribal colleges to avoid racist and non-relevant curricula, to counter prior

negative experiences in mainstream community colleges and universities, and to be educated in an environment that addresses the needs of tribal communities.

In addition to serving individual students, tribal colleges also have a wider mandate: to address issues of social justice as well as the social and economic needs of their tribal communities, through research, instruction, service, and other innovative means (AIHEC, 1998; Benham, 2003; Stein, 2003). Furthermore, tribal colleges provide a supportive learning environment for students who generally have not been successful in mainstream colleges; promote tribal culture, art, history, traditions, and language (the preservation of language is seen as being of primary value in protecting Native American culture); provide services that enhance the communities they are in; and are centers of research and scholarship that also benefit their tribal communities. Furthermore, tribal colleges provide Native American people with

> a means of realizing equality and sharing in the opportunities of the larger society; for collective social and economic mobility; of overcoming dependency and "neo-colonialism"; of providing the expertise and leadership needed by First Nations communities; to demystify mainstream culture and learn the politics and history of racial discrimination…to address communal need for "capacity-building" to advance themselves as a distinct and self-determining society, not just as individuals. (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 4)

Finally, in the context of Native American perspectives and culture, tribal college programs also include some of the more mainstream liberal arts purposes to which Axelrod (2002) refers, such as developing the critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills of their students. Thus, tribal colleges provide access to post-secondary education, a first step to acquiring social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and an essential step to self-determination.

Enrollment and Locations

Since the establishment of the first tribal college in 1968, Native American participation in higher education has increased at a rapid rate, as more than one third of all Native American

students in two-year colleges are attending tribal colleges (AIHEC, 1998; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003). Currently, there are 32 tribal colleges serving approximately 30,000 full- and part-time students, about 85% of whom live below the poverty line (AIHEC, 2005; Benham, 2003). As indicated by Figure 2.1, tribal colleges are located throughout the United States, mainly in the northern plains states (i.e., Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota).

Figure 2.1 Map of Tribal Colleges and Universities in the United States
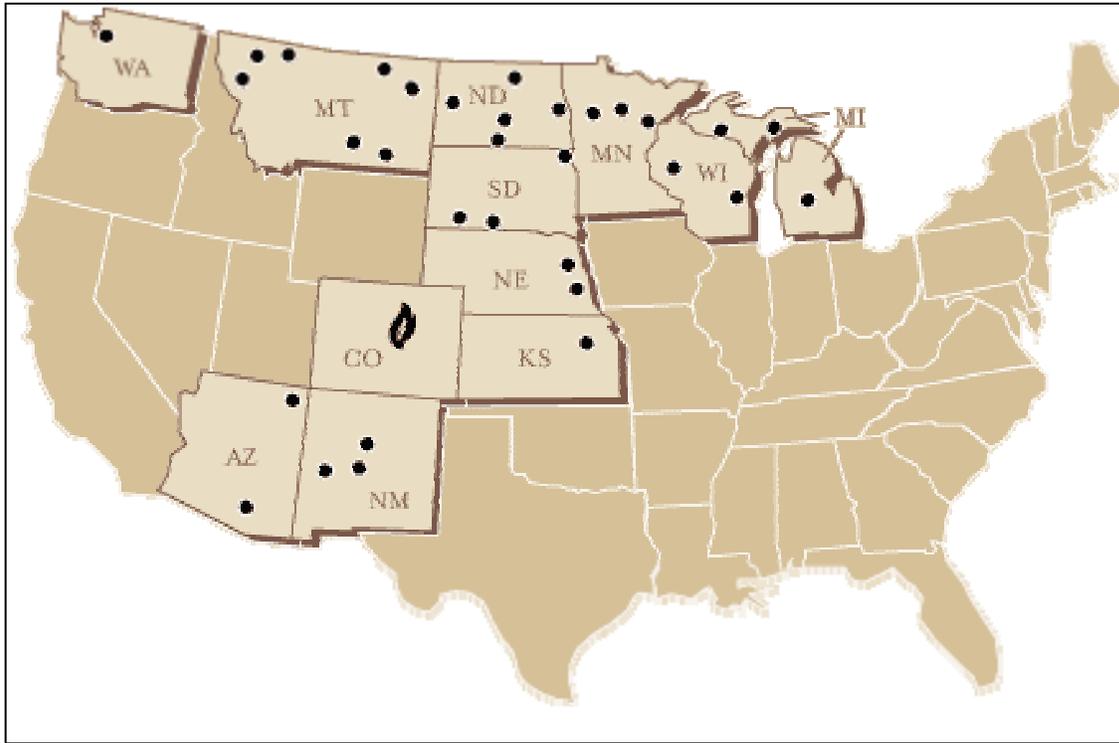
Note. Map from the American Indian College Fund (2007). Founding dates are in parentheses.

Arizona

1. Diné College
    Tsaile, Arizona (1968)

2. Tohono O'odham Comm. College
    Sells, Arizona (1998)

Colorado

Amer. Indian College Fund (headquarters)
Denver, Colorado (1989)

Kansas

3. Haskell Indian Nations University*
    Lawrence, Kansas (1970)

Michigan

4. Bay Mills Community College
    Brimley, Michigan (1984)

5. Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Comm. Coll.
    Baraga, Michigan (1975)

6. Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
    Mount Pleasant, Michigan (1998)

Minnesota

7. Fond du Lac Tribal and Comm. College
    Cloquet, Minnesota (1987)

8. Leech Lake Tribal College
    Cass Lake, Minnesota (1992)

9. White Earth Tribal and Comm. College
    Mahnomen, Minnesota

* These colleges are federally chartered.

Montana

10. Blackfeet Community College
     Browning, Montana (1979)

11. Chief Dull Knife College
     Lame Deer, Montana (1975)

12. Fort Belknap College
     Harlem, Montana (1984)

13. Fort Peck Community College
     Poplar, Montana (1978)

14. Little Big Horn College
     Crow Agency, Montana (1980)

15. Salish Kootenai College
     Pablo, Montana (1977)

16. Stone Child College
     Box Elder, Montana (1984)

Nebraska

17. Little Priest Tribal College
     Winnebago, Nebraska (1996)

18. Nebraska Indian Comm. College
     Macy, Nebraska (1978)

New Mexico

19. Navajo Technical College
     Crownpoint, New Mexico (1993)

20. Institute of American Indian Arts*
     Santa Fe, New Mexico (1962)

21. Southwestern Indian Polytechnic
     Institute*
     Albuquerque, New Mexico (1971)

North Dakota

22. Cankdeska Cikana Comm. College
     Fort Totten, North Dakota (1974)

23. Fort Berthold Community College
     New Town, North Dakota (1988)

24. Sitting Bull College
     Fort Yates, North Dakota (1986)

25. Turtle Mountain Community College
     Belcourt, North Dakota (1972)

26. United Tribes Technical College
     Bismarck, North Dakota (1987)

South Dakota

27. Oglala Lakota College
     Kyle, South Dakota (1971)

28. Sinte Gleska University
     Mission, South Dakota (1970)

29. Sisseton Wahpeton College
     Sisseton, South Dakota (1984)

Washington

30. Northwest Indian College
     Bellingham, Washington (1983)

Wisconsin

31. College of Menominee Nation
     Keshena, Wisconsin (1993)

32. Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Comm. Coll.
     Hayward, Wisconsin (1982)

Although the largest tribal college (Dine College) has approximately 1,500 students, most tribal colleges are small, with enrollments of less than 400. Even with such small enrollments, the colleges have the potential to significantly influence their communities where the populations they serve are usually also small (i.e., a couple of thousand people) and graduating a handful of tribal members can make a difference. Furthermore, because some tribal colleges are gaining reputations as "legitimate institutions of higher learning" (Carnegie, 1997, p. 36), they now recruit Native Americans from outside their immediate areas.

<u>Programs</u>

Initially, all 32 tribal colleges were established with the intention of providing vocational training to upgrade tribal members' skills to become employed, and the majority still focus much of their curricular efforts in this direction through certificates and two-year degrees (e.g., construction trades, medical coding, office professional training) (Carnegie, 1997). Furthermore, though most began as two-year colleges, currently, seven tribal colleges offer four-year bachelor's degrees,[5] and two offer master's degrees[6] (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2005). In addition, some two-year tribal colleges offer transfer degrees by forming partnerships and articulation agreements with local universities that provide opportunities for tribal college students to transfer and complete their bachelor's degrees (Carnegie, 1997). The most common programs of study are the ones that directly support the social and economic development of the tribes they serve: education (especially early childhood education and K-8 teacher training), health, business, and environmental studies.

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[5] Sinte Gleska University, Oglala Lakota College, Salish Kootenai College, Haskell Indian Nations University, Institute of American Indian Arts, Sitting Bull College, and Turtle Mountain Community College.

[6] Sinte Gleska University and Oglala Lakota College.

Overall, the students at most tribal colleges are different in significant ways from their non-Native American counterparts at other colleges (Boyer, 1990). Most obviously, approximately 80% to 85% of students attending tribal colleges are Native American, and the average student is a single mother (typically in her late 20s or early 30s) (Carnegie, 1997; Fann, 2002; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003). Although the majority of tribal college students work, most still have substantial financial limitations that affect their ability to provide themselves and their families with stable housing and food. College is a significant financial burden for most tribal college students. In addition, students often lack basic reading, writing, and math skills. All these factors combine to result in higher *stop-out*[7] and dropout rates compared to students in mainstream community colleges (Ness, 2002; Oppelt, 1990). On the bright side, most tribal college students are the first in their families to attend college, approximately 40% of the graduates pursue further education, and many graduates find meaningful work (AIHEC, 2004; Fann, 2002; Bobby Wright & Weasel Head, 1990).

Factors Influencing Access, Retention, and Success in Mainstream Higher Education

Native Americans have been proportionately under-represented in colleges and universities since the advent of higher education in the United States (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Native American students face two major hurdles related to college: getting accepted into and graduating from a mainstream college (Carnegie, 1997). Bourdieu's (1986) work on class reproduction clearly demonstrates that many people do not have a real "choice" to pursue their education further because of social-structural barriers that prevent them from advancing. Rather

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[7] A student stops-out when he or she skips a term and returns at a later time.

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than assist individuals to advance, education systems perpetuate social inequalities. Life experiences and employment outcomes can still be predicted based on social class and gender, demonstrating that all people do not have equal opportunities to learn (Andres, 1994; Dougherty, 1987; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997; Guiton & Oakes, 1995; McCall, 1992).

Bourdieu (1986) regards capital as "accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its "incorporated," embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor" (p. 241). Capital is "the set of actually usable resources and powers" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 114) and it takes time to amass. Social and cultural capital relate most to this thesis. He defines *social capital*, or power derived by social means, as the connections an individual has to social networks and resources, including to people and groups (1986). Social capital plays an important role in the acquisition of other forms of valued capital. *Cultural capital* is the accumulation of advantages a person has as a result of cultural resources, which are passed on primarily through the family, such as behaviour, attitudes, and habits. The various forms of capital an individual accrues as a result of life experiences will assist him or her to realize his or her goals. The course of an individual's life is a product of interacting factors related to social structure, individual agency, organizational processes, and historical precedence (Gerhardt, 1996).

In addition to economic barriers, a number of social and cultural barriers self-exclude Native Americans and make it difficult for them to pursue higher education (Anderson, 1993; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003). The three factors most commonly identified in the literature that influence the access, retention, and success of Native American students in higher education and

are related to cultural and social capital are (a) family support and background, (b) family obligations and domestic challenges, and (c) academic preparation.

The first factor found to be critical to access, retention, and success is family support and encouragement (i.e., social capital) (Falk & Aitken, 1984; Lin, 1990; Wenzlaff & Biewer, 1996). Family support and encouragement are measured in a number of ways, and Native American students are disadvantaged on nearly all measures. For example, students who have close family members who have succeeded in college are more likely to be successful themselves (Wenzlaff & Biewer, 1996). Few Native American college students have this advantage (i.e., cultural capital); most are the first in their families to attend college. Parents' education and household income are also strong determinants of post-secondary access and success, and mean earnings increase with educational level (Andres, 1994; Finnie, 2001; Leck, Onge, & Lalancette, 1995). Higher parental educational attainment and higher earnings have a positive effect on children's educational attainment (Haveman & Wolfe, 1995). Such parents have, for example, more social, economic, and cultural resources to assist their children to succeed. Furthermore, parents can play an important role in motivating their children to pursue post-secondary education, and those who place a high value on higher education transmit that value to their children (Andres, 1994; Knighton, 2002). Thus, Native American students who have graduated from college tend to encourage other family members, including their children, to pursue higher education (American Indian College Fund, 2002).

Family obligations and domestic challenges constitute the second factor influencing access, retention, and success for Native American students and include issues in students' lives such as childcare or transportation needs, housing problems, relationship difficulties, health problems, and employment concerns. These types of challenges, which are widespread in Native

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American communities, often interfere with students' attempts to pursue higher education (Boyer, 1997; Ness, 2002). Extremely high unemployment rates combined with high rates of suicide, alcohol and drug addiction, poverty, and domestic abuse indicate conditions that often prove to be insurmountable (Boyer, 1997). When a student is faced with challenges such as these, survival, rather than educational advancement, becomes the goal (Raffo & Reeves, 2000).

Academic preparation is the third major factor outlined in the literature as critical to improving access, retention, and success in college because mainstream elementary and high schools are typically not responsive to the needs of Native American students. Native American students often lack fundamental academic skills, such as basic reading, writing, math, and study skills, as well as basic career information. Remediation eventually becomes a considerable barrier because students have to spend significant time and money taking developmental coursework to upgrade their skills before they can move on to college-level work (Boyer, 1997).

In addition to the three main factors listed above, the literature identifies other barriers that prevent Native American students from attending or succeeding in higher education. The most prevalent of these include distance from colleges, lack of financial resources, lack of motivation, low self-esteem, loneliness or alienation at school, inability to integrate in the college culture, lack of support groups, lack of long-range commitment or career goals, conflict of values and customs, and poor fit (i.e., academically, socially, or culturally) between the institution and the student (Machamer, 2000; Ness, 2002; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003; Shishkoff, Thomas, & Al-Bayati, 1999). Furthermore, once at college or university, Native American students often feel cultural discontinuity between what they learn in the classroom and what they know from their culture and tribal communities, as mainstream colleges do little to make the curriculum and teaching styles culturally relevant to students (Reyhner, Lee, & Gabbard, 1993). Again, lack of

cultural capital disadvantages Native American students and decreases their likelihood of success.

The racism many Native American students experience on college and university campuses also affects their chances to succeed (Archibald & Selkirk, 1995). Instructors may have lower expectations for Native American students (Archibald & Selkirk, 1995; Shields, 1999), and the lack of mentors or role models reduces success rates.

Finally, in addition to the challenges outlined above, Native American students face many of the same barriers that mainstream college students face, such as the complexities of course scheduling, inadequate academic advising and counseling services, and problems accessing student financial aid (Andres & Carpenter, 1997; Archibald & Selkirk, 1995; Benjamin, 1994; Ness, 2002). Many of these factors combine to make pursing a college education a low priority.

Unique Features of Tribal Colleges that Increase Student Access, Retention, and Success

Tribal colleges offer several advantages that ease the challenges facing Native American students outlined above. These advantages include convenient locations and easier access, lower cost, an appreciation of Indigenous knowledge and culture, appropriate teaching methodologies, relevant curricula, extensive student support services, and dedicated faculty. Each of these is elaborated upon below.

Location, Access, and Cost

A primary advantage tribal colleges offer is their location. Because many Native American students can remain at home while attending a local tribal college, the financial burden of a college education is significantly reduced, and they can be close to the support of their

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extended families and maintain their cultural connections. This is especially important because most graduates prefer to seek employment in or near their own communities (Hayes, 1990; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003).

In addition, tuition fees at tribal colleges are generally lower than at community colleges, and open admission policies mean that many students who cannot meet admission requirements elsewhere, or who lack clear career ambitions, still have the opportunity to pursue further education (Hayes, 1990; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003; Shishkoff et al., 1999).

Indigenous Knowledge and Culture

Indigenous knowledge and culture shape tribal colleges and their philosophy of education (Carnegie, 1997; NWIC, 2002). Although there is no universal agreement about the nature of Indigenous knowledge, there is some consensus in Indigenous knowledge and research literature that it comprises an integrated and holistic approach to knowledge (Archibald, 1999, 2001; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Cajete, 1994; Castellano, 2000; Dei, 2000; Dei, Hall, & Rosenberg, 2000; Hanohano, 1999; Marker, 2000; L. Smith, 1999; White & Archibald, 1992). Battiste and Henderson (2000) quote the Royal Commission's understanding that Indigenous knowledge is "a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and their environment" (p. 42).

Indigenous knowledge is "oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical language"; it "is rooted in personal experience and lays no claim to universality" (Castellano, 2000, p. 25). Castellano highlights three sources of Indigenous knowledge: traditional teachings, which are preserved and passed down from elders; empirical observation, which is acquired through careful observation; and, revelation, which is obtained through visions

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and dreams (p. 23). These forms of knowledge are "qualitative and subjective rather than quantitative and objective" (p. 27) in nature and are "rooted in local cultural traditions, values, and belief systems. It is a worldview that shapes the community's relationships with its environments. It is a knowledge base that is crucial for group and community survival" (Dei, 2000, p. 79).

Marker (2000) writes that "an Aboriginal approach to teaching and learning would emphasize how knowledge and sense of selfhood come from a concrete place" (p. 41). Accordingly, values based on kinship, relationships, respect of elders, and connections to the land are integral to tribal colleges' mission. "Students learn firmly that who they are and what they believe has great value. Rather than being a disorienting experience for students, college represents a reinforcement of values inherent in the tribal community" (Carnegie, 1989, p. 56). One of the major challenges tribal colleges face is how to found the curriculum and college experience with this holistic and integrated approach to Indigenous knowledge and education.

Pedagogy

One of the most significant and, at the same time, challenging factors that contributes to tribal colleges' success is that they reflect the culture, values, and history of their surrounding reservations, which results in greater sensitivity to the unique cultural needs of their students (Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003). By framing the curriculum in a holistic and culturally relevant way, the instructors reaffirm the identity and values of their students, as well as of the surrounding Native American communities (P. Hughes, 1998; P. Wilson, 1994).

The tribal college philosophy infuses familiar cultural elements and a practical approach into the post-secondary educational experience (Pavel & Colby, 1992). Battiste and Henderson (2000) note that elements of Indigenous knowledge can best be passed on to students when

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traditional teaching methods such as apprenticeship, ceremonies, oral stories, and practice are employed. Tribal colleges provide Native Americans with an opportunity for higher education, with smaller class sizes, in a less competitive environment (Lin, 1990; Shishkoff et al., 1999). Furthermore, whereas the focus of the curriculum at mainstream universities tends to be on "decontextualized literal knowledge" (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 4), traditional, oral, or Indigenous knowledge is "interconnected" (Marker, 2004, p. 180), "is integrated in everyday life," and is "acquired through direct experience and participation in real-world activities" (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 4). Ideally, Indigenous knowledge forms the foundation of the classroom and tribal college experience.

Related to this natural inclination toward real-life and service-oriented experiences is a relatively new movement in mainstream colleges, and now in some tribal colleges, toward incorporating *service learning* into the curriculum. Service learning lends itself well to the tribal college context: Opportunities for community service work are incorporated into courses, allowing students to apply the concepts they are learning in a relevant and meaningful way (Crazy Bull, 2004). Because tribal colleges work endlessly to provide culturally relevant experiences for their students, service learning provides the structured link between the community and the students' learning experiences. Crazy Bull (2004) emphasizes that "these experiences can serve as the foundation for social action, which is critically needed to overcome poverty and loss in our communities" (p. 1).

Likewise, in order to respond to the educational needs of isolated students in remote communities, learning technologies, such as interactive television, have become a more accepted mode for learning (Carnegie, 1997). Independent learning and online classes are also becoming more popular, although there continue to be problems with access to computers and the Internet

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in remote areas (Barden, 2003). Neither of these modes for learning is ideal and, as a result,

tribal colleges struggle to find ways for isolated students to access higher education using more

appropriate instructional methodologies. Faculty members at tribal colleges continually

experiment with culturally responsive teaching methodologies to increase their students' success.

Curriculum

Like mainstream colleges, general education requirements at tribal colleges dictate that

students take a variety of courses to complement their core area of study (Carnegie, 1997). On

the other hand, the incorporation of traditional culture and knowledge throughout the curriculum,

including the general education requirements, is an effort to make the curriculum more relevant,

interrelated, and accessible to students (Boyer, 1990; Carnegie, 1997). The curriculum at tribal

colleges, therefore, emphasizes not only academic requirements but also the cultural knowledge

and traditional pedagogies of Native American communities (Pavel & Colby, 1992). Therefore,

all tribal colleges offer Native American studies courses in areas such as history, art, philosophy,

botany, and local language. Restoring the use of traditional languages is of particular importance

to Indigenous knowledge, for as Mann (2003) emphasizes, "when a language is at risk, so is a

culture" (p. xxiii). According to Amiotte and Allen (1989), "one of the key reasons for the tribal

college's success has been the belief and practice that students can remain Indian, can practice

tribal traditions and retain tribal values and also be successful students" (p. 1).

Student Support Services

Extensive student service programs are offered at many tribal colleges. These services

include additional academic support, peer support, and individual and financial assistance (Stein,

2003). Students registering at a tribal college are assessed and then enrolled in courses based on

their ability (Stein, 2003). Many students require remedial coursework, which is often self-paced

and offers individual attention in a supportive learning environment (Machamer, 2000). Students

are treated with respect by staff and faculty, as the well-being of each student is of primary

importance to the tribal college and community (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

Finally, tribal college staff and faculty attempt to foster in students a strong sense of self-

esteem and resiliency, a goal-completion mentality, and an ability to "walk in two worlds"

without losing personal identity (Ness, 2002). They try to prepare students academically, assist

with family matters (where appropriate), and actively support students in obtaining financial aid.

Because "educational attainment is an important determinant of [future] job opportunities and

relative well-being" (De Broucker & Underwood, 1998, p. 30), this support system is crucial not

only to students' academic success, but to their (and their community's) well-being. Thus, tribal

colleges provide a critical transition to higher education for many Native American students,

whereby cultural and social capital is gained and cultural identity is affirmed (Tierney, 1999).

Faculty

Faculty members play a key role in students' success at tribal colleges. Currently, most

instructors at tribal colleges are non-Native because the extremely low wages, minimal benefits,

and the limited number of qualified applicants at tribal colleges make it difficult to attract Native

American faculty. Tribal colleges attempt to increase the proportion of Native faculty because

these faculty provide role models for students and help them to realize the importance of

education (Carnegie, 1997).

The Carnegie Foundation (1997) identified a number of challenges instructors at tribal

colleges face that limit professional development opportunities and result in high turnover rates.

These include heavy teaching loads, isolation from colleagues at mainstream colleges, limited

funds, and under-prepared students. Generally, however, those who overcome the challenges and stay at the colleges tend to be sensitive to the culture in which they are serving and dedicated to their students. Faculty are found to be enthusiastic, supportive, caring, respectful, knowledgeable, and accessible (Carnegie, 1997). Students frequently report satisfaction with having a significant personal connection to faculty who are dedicated to their well-being (Ness, 2002). This satisfaction might be attributable to instructor-student learning relationships being more reciprocal and respectful in nature, when compared to mainstream colleges (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

In addition to professional educators, tribal colleges may employ part-time instructors who are tribal members with limited formal education but who have expertise in particular areas such as language, art, history, and culture. Elders also play an important role in the tribal colleges, either as instructors or advisors to the colleges on issues of cultural importance (Carnegie, 1997).

Other Common Features and Challenges of Tribal Colleges

Although each tribal college has a distinctive culture and serves a unique community and economy, they all share fundamental similarities, including the challenges that they face (Stein et al., 2003). The common features of tribal colleges include their governance structure, their focus on "strengthening economic empowerment" (Benham, 2003, p. 11), Indigenous research, and funding sources, all of which are expanded upon below (Carnegie, 1997).

Governance

All tribal colleges are chartered by at least one tribal government and have a board of directors who are mostly Native American (Carnegie, 1997; Stein et al., 2003). In order to

become accredited, they must demonstrate administrative distance from their tribal governments (i.e., autonomy), so they can develop their own policies and avoid conflict-of-interest situations (Stein et al., 2003). Tribal colleges are endorsed as post-secondary educational institutions serving the cultural, social, and economic needs of their communities. Their presidents and most of the administrators are well-qualified and credentialed Native American educators who are committed to the long-term success of their institutions (Carnegie, 1997).

Economic Empowerment

Tribal colleges are "seen as integral and contributing partners (in some situations, leading ones) in the cultural and economic growth of a community" (Benham, 2003, p. 5). Higher education is important for economic development and for improving quality of life, the key to the social and economic growth of Native people, as well as to their continued survival. Tribal colleges empower local communities in a number of ways (Fann, 2002). They provide higher education opportunities to tribal members that are specific to the needs of their communities, resulting in many graduates remaining in their communities to work. They also spend money, create employment, and provide various services to their local communities — a significant achievement, given that many reservations have unemployment rates anywhere from 45% to 90% (Boyer, 1997). Even though their primary obligation is to the specific needs of the local community, they also recognize and attempt to address the more general needs of other Native American tribes, as well as the national and international communities (Barden, 2003).

Tribal colleges are committed to providing their local communities with social and economic development initiatives through education (Barden, 2003). In the past, the primary development strategy was to attract businesses to the reservations, but most of these initiatives were unsuccessful. Tribes learned that they needed to assess their local strengths and needs and

to develop culturally appropriate initiatives that could be sustained over the long term (Barden, 2003). A couple of tribal colleges have done just that and own and operate their own businesses, which provide employment for tribal members and which they hope will eventually be sold to individuals in the community (Barden, 2003).[8]

Tribal colleges provide vocational training and education so that students can return to the community as contributing and skilled members. From almost the beginning, tribal colleges, like their mainstream counterparts, have provided services to the markets, including curricula that train students to fill specific market needs (Trow, 1993). For example, for the gaming industry, which has become a huge business for some tribes, tribal colleges may provide training for employees or management skills to staff. A reciprocal benefit of this relationship is that the colleges may also receive dividends from casinos to support the college (Barden, 2003).

Research

Research, or the production of Indigenous knowledge, is an important goal of tribal colleges. In order to conduct research, tribal colleges need financial and human resources, funding, faculty time, and advanced students — none of which they currently have. Whereas well-endowed research universities are generally involved in the creation of new knowledge, up until this point, tribal colleges have had to focus primarily on surviving and on transmitting and preserving Indigenous knowledge (Trow, 1993) and "rebuilding respect for traditional ways of knowing" (Carnegie, 1997, p. x).

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[8] For example, Salish-Kootenai College has an environmental testing project.

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These conditions are now starting to change. In 1989, with the conception of the Tribal

College Journal,[9] a forum for sharing research and ideas among tribal colleges was created

(Tribal College Journal, 2005). In order to engage in research to advance Indigenous knowledge,

however, in addition to adequate funding, tribal colleges can create their own research agendas

and define Indigenous scholarship for themselves (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). As they

progress in this direction, tribal colleges hope to be leading centers of Indigenous research and

scholarship that benefit their tribal communities socially, economically, and culturally (Stein,

2003).

Funding

Undoubtedly, the biggest challenge facing tribal colleges today is the lack of operational

funding. Tribal colleges are possibly the "most underfunded institutions of higher education in

the United States" (Gipp, 2003, p. xiv). Some of their financial challenges stem from the fact

that tribal colleges are generally located in poor communities, have low tuition fees, and do not

have wealthy alumni on whom to rely (Carnegie, 1997). Furthermore, it is costly for tribal

colleges to deliver education to students who are under prepared for college.

Under these conditions, sources of tribal college funding are limited to tribal funds,

grants, state or local funds, private and corporate donations, philanthropic organizations (e.g., the

Kellogg Foundation and Ford Foundation), and federal appropriation (Carnegie, 1997; Stein et

al., 2003). Federal money provides subsistence existence to most tribal colleges through the

Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978, which is administered by the

Bureau of Indian Affairs (Carnegie, 1997). Although tribal colleges rely heavily on federal

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[9] Initially, it was called the *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*.

funds for core operational funding, the federal government has not, for years, provided them with the amount authorized. For example, during the 1980s, Congress appropriated $6,000 per Native American student but only provided tribal colleges with $1,900 of that amount per student (Barbara Wright & Tierney, 1991). During the 2004-2005 academic year, Congress authorized $6,000 per Native American student and provided tribal colleges with $4,447 per Native American student (Goetz, 2005). Most commonly, no amount is provided for students who are not Native American or who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the act; overall, 15 to 20% of students attending tribal colleges are not Native American (Carnegie, 1997; Fann, 2002; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003).

As a result of the inadequacy of federal support, some tribal colleges have come to rely on grant funding in order to provide for their fundamental needs. Like many universities that compromise their autonomy through corporate sponsorship and donations, some tribal colleges struggle to pursue their goals in the face of requirements that are frequently determined by the grants they secure (Axelrod, 2002). Thus, the more sources of funding a college has, the greater its institutional autonomy (Trow, 1993).

Tribal colleges are in a unique position with regard to funding. Although state funding and property taxation are the main sources of support for community colleges, these sources are not available to tribal colleges because state governments are not mandated to provide them with funding and property taxes are not collected on trust property on reservations (Fann, 2002; Stein et al., 2003). This remains a significant problem for tribal colleges as they continue to struggle with a lack of resources (Shanley, 2003).

Tribal colleges have an additional financial challenge. They are often located in remote areas with small population bases. Class sizes are, therefore, small, and it is more costly to

deliver programs to relatively few students. Moreover, because many of their students live in even more isolated areas, the colleges must use expensive innovative solutions, such as interactive television or online classes, to reach them. Tribal colleges must also use some of their limited resources to provide support services to these distance students (Barden, 2003).

Because of the shortage of funds, tribal colleges typically have only "bare minimum" facilities — facilities that are frequently dilapidated, old, modular structures. Classroom space is usually limited and faculty share offices. Many tribal colleges also lack dining facilities, a gymnasium, student residences, childcare services, computers, or lab equipment (Carnegie, 1997). In addition to the inadequate facilities, low per-student expenditures, lack of comprehensive student services, low staff and faculty salaries, under-funded libraries, and generally inadequate budgets continue to plague tribal colleges (Carnegie, 1997; Bobby Wright & Weasel Head, 1990). Upgrades in the facilities and services offered to tribal college students would certainly contribute significantly to their college experience and to learning.

There is a great need for tribal colleges to obtain permanent, stable funding — and the federal government has the responsibility to provide this funding for the tribes with whom it has treaties (Stein et al., 2003). As a result, the Carnegie Foundation, in its 1997 report, recommended that the government begin to honor and provide the full amount it appropriates to each tribal college student annually. This would be a significant step forward for tribal colleges in their search for stable funding.

Conclusion

Despite the lack of basic funding, of agreement about how to fulfill their "Indigenous" mandates, and of student preparation, tribal colleges have had a significant impact on Native American communities. In fact, more Native American students than ever are transferring to

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four-year institutions from tribal colleges (Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003). This is significant because, as Astin (1985) points out, there is sufficient evidence that completing a bachelor's degree benefits the individual significantly more than completing an associate's degree. By assisting Native American students "who have not enjoyed full access to equal educational opportunity" (Boyer, 2003, p. 127) to transfer successfully to four-year institutions, tribal colleges are developing cultural, social, and academic capital among their students (Andres, 1994; Bourdieu, 1986; Ortiz & HeavyRunner, 2003; Tierney, 1999).

In order to overcome the challenges Native Americans have faced in the last 450 years, tribal colleges continuously experiment with better ways to preserve culture and to base their curricula on Indigenous knowledge. This commitment is consistent with Castellano's (2000) hope that one day "Aboriginal knowledge will resume its place as the basis of decision making and social order" (p. 34) in Native American communities. Tribal colleges are trying to support this process and to advance the processes of decolonization and self-determination (AIHEC, 2004; Benham, 2003; Carney, 1999; Crazy Bull, 2004; Marker, 2000; R. Nichols & Monette, 2003; Patterson, 1999; Shanley, 2003; Tippeconnic & McKinney, 2003). The Carnegie Foundation (1997) asserts: "Without question, the most significant development in American Indian communities since World War II was the creation of tribally controlled colleges" (p. 1). "Tribal colleges," they state, "are crucial to the future of Native American societies, and of our nation" (p. 4).

CHAPTER 3   ASSESSMENT IN THE UNITED STATES — OVERVIEW AND CRITIQUE

Assessment in higher education has a dual purpose: first, to improve student learning and performance (*formative* purpose), and second, to demonstrate to external accreditation bodies that the relationships between the institution's mission and learning outcomes (*summative* purpose) are evident (Trimble et al., 2000). Conventional assessment programs have tended to collect basic data such as student retention, graduation, transfer, and employment rates, success after transfer rates, and employer and graduate satisfaction, in order to guide and promote program development, long-range planning, external evaluations, and fund raising — all largely data used for summative purposes (Frye, 1999; Trimble et al., 2000); however, progressive assessment programs are emerging that are faculty- and student-driven, action-oriented, focused on mission-related performance and innovations, and attentive to student learning outcomes (Mentkowski, Rogers, Doherty, & Loacker, 2000).

The first section of this chapter presents an overview of the nature and purpose of assessment. It also reviews numerous criticisms of assessment and suggests strategies for addressing them. The second section examines mainstream approaches and responses to assessment, reviews the types of data that can be used for assessment purposes, and discusses issues specific to two-year colleges. Some of the more innovative approaches to assessment, which foster institutional learning, are then presented. Finally, basic planning and reporting aspects of the assessment initiative, which are essential for closing the loop and improving learning, are outlined.

What is Assessment?

In this doctoral thesis, I use the term *assessment* to refer to "the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning" (Walvoord, 2004, p. 2). As an evolving concept in education, what I am calling *assessment* is sometimes referred to by different terms in the assessment literature. Terms such as *student outcomes assessment*, *educational outcomes assessment*, *institutional assessment*, and *institutional effectiveness* are all used in relatively interchangeable ways by different authors (Banta, 2002). I have chosen to simply use the term *assessment* in part for readability and in part because each of the other terms has self-limiting connotations that do not embrace the fullest sense of the concept as it is evolving in the literature and as I will be using it. For instance, the term *student outcomes assessment* tends to connote individual student evaluation and obscure the importance of assessing the educational systems that facilitate student learning, while the terms *institutional assessment* and *institutional effectiveness* tend to take the focus off student learning and are easily confused with simplistic accountability measures such as job placement rates, balanced budgets, and resource allocation.

Assessment can be thought of as *action research,* a scholarly endeavour used "to inform local action" (Walvoord, 2004, p. 2). The focus of assessment today, even for accreditation bodies, is on a formative outcomes-oriented process that can be used to better understand students and for "institutional self-study, financial retrenchment, [and] program evaluation" (American Association of Higher Education, 2004, p. 1). Angelo (1995) further elaborates on this definition:

> Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting

evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education. (p.7)

Assessment, as it is being used here, is not about evaluating individual student performance (Seybert, 2003); rather, it is about evaluating the overall achievement of a group of students in order to provide feedback to students, faculty, parents, the college, policy makers, and the public about the current effectiveness and future refinement of educational programs (Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001). The American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) (2004) points out that Angelo's definition of assessment (above) is based on the following feedback that he received from experts in the assessment field: that the primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning; that effective assessment efforts are not restricted to the classroom, but include all the institutional processes that affect learning; that assessment is rooted in a process embedded within a larger organic structure; that effective assessment programs result in a coherent, linked, and focused curriculum; and that the tension between the two purposes of assessment — that is, improvement and accountability — must, and can, be resolved.

Assessment programs identify college, program, and course outcomes that derive from the institution's mission, and they compare these intended outcomes with the actual results achieved (Seybert, 2003). Outcomes and assessment can thus be divided into three levels: *college* outcomes and assessment (i.e., across the entire campus environment); *program* outcomes and assessment (i.e., within specific programs and departments); and, *course* outcomes and assessment (i.e., in specific courses and by particular instructors) (Maki, 2004).

Why do Assessment?

The overarching purpose of assessment in higher education, as outlined above, is twofold: improvement and accountability (Trimble et al., 2000). As Farmer points out, "excellence in education does not occur accidentally" (quoted in Green & Castelli, 2002, p. 7). Assessment, at its best, is a process through which excellence can be systematically cultivated in all aspects of higher education.

Accountability

The initial impetus for assessment, however, was narrower in its focus and largely derived from the second purpose identified above, accountability. Accountability refers to summative evaluations reported to the community, funding sources, and accreditation bodies about the use of educational resources (e.g., human, financial) in order to make decisions (AAHE, 2004). Though assessment programs can address accountability concerns, they are broader in their scope and purpose. As public stakeholders, legislators, accreditation bodies, funding agencies, parents, and students began scrutinizing higher education in recent decades, they began demanding more financial efficiency and accountability, along with a more competency-based approach to education, including a change in focus from instructor-centered teaching to student-centered learning. Pressure has also been exerted from some sectors to shift from a liberal arts focus to workforce training, resulting in less distinction between education and training. Due to concerns about the quality of higher education, colleges have been increasingly pressed to demonstrate value-added benefits for individual students as well as for surrounding communities and potential employers (Banta, 1999; Dill, 2003; Lieberman, 2005). Other pressures forcing the unprecedented rise in assessment and accountability include increasing competition among colleges, credential inflation, and the trend toward corporate-like

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organizational models (Atkinson, 2004; Gaither, Nedwek, & Neal, 1995). The advent of new

technologies has impacted assessment significantly; thanks to effortless modes of

communication, it is easier now for stakeholders to voice their complaints about higher

education. Expectations for information are also higher as it is simpler now to collect, analyze,

and report data (Knight, 2003).

Now that higher education is accessible to the masses, and is no longer only a luxury of

the elite, there is greater demand for accountability and for identifying inefficiencies in the

management of institutions in order to reduce public spending, increase the meaningful use and

management of resources, improve planning and policy functions, and ensure academic quality

(Dill, 2003). As a result, in the United States, formal processes of accreditation have become the

norm and serve the following needs:

> Regional accreditation of postsecondary institutions is a voluntary, non-governmental,
> self-regulatory process of quality assurance and institutional improvement. It recognizes
> higher education institutions for performance, integrity, and quality to merit the
> confidence of the educational community and the public. Accreditation or
> preaccreditation by a postsecondary regional accrediting agency qualifies institutions and
> enrolled students for access to federal funds to support teaching, research, and student
> financial aid. (Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, 2005)

For two-year tribal colleges, the importance of accreditation cannot be overstated because

the acceptance of their students' transfer credits by four-year colleges depends upon it (Knight,

2003). In the United States, six accreditation bodies are responsible for determining whether a

college has a suitable mission and goals, whether it has the appropriate resources to reach those

goals, and whether those resources are being used in the most effective ways. The review

process involves a peer review by experts from other colleges, a self-study, and a review of the

assessment program that evaluates articulated performance outcomes (Dill, 2003). The entire

process is meant to encourage continued and ongoing self-study and improvement, to impart evaluation skills to participants, and to institutionalize assessment (King, 2004).

The Evolution of Assessment

Assessment is not a new phenomenon; faculty have been doing assessment for centuries (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998). Traditionally, assessment was confined to the classroom, and, over the last several decades, the assessment movement has evolved substantially. In the 1960s and 1970s, assessment programs began by trying to measure institutional effectiveness through readily available quantitative data such as retention and graduation rates, time to degree completion, enrollment capacities, transfer and employment rates, and performance on standardized tests. By the 1980s, however, educators recognized that most of these measures did not indicate whether student learning was actually occurring nor did they probe the nature and quality of that learning. Hence, educators sought more sophisticated assessment indicators, often qualitative in nature, to assess actual student learning. This required a more integrated approach to education and assessment, with greater potential (or, some would say, risk) for educational reform (Stark & Lattuca, 1997). Moreover, it became clearer that accreditation bodies were not interested in the actual findings of assessment, but rather were interested in determining whether or not the college had the processes in place to collect assessment data and to use them to improve programs, services, and curricula (Walvoord, 2004). Colleges were now being called upon to collect information in a more meaningful format and to use the results to make more informed decisions (King, 2004).

Improvement of Student Learning

Assessment advocates assert that when assessment is done well, it emphasizes evaluation and reflection (involving students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members) at the college, program, and course levels and results in a continuous and incremental improvement of learning and teaching. Therefore, though external accountability pressures created the initial need for evidence that institutions of higher education were accomplishing their goals, progressive colleges have since been working to channel these pressures into meaningful and constructive assessment programs by defining the assessment process in their own terms (Mentkowski et al., 2000). Thus, assessment programs can be used to stimulate improvements in learning and teaching, while simultaneously demonstrating accountability commitments to the wider community (Banta, 1999).

Furthermore, in the absence of the external accountability pressures that public institutions are increasingly facing, some private colleges have pioneered strong and innovative assessment programs precisely because they provide an effective means for pursuing educational excellence (Farmer, 1988; Mentkowski et al., 2000). As these colleges demonstrate, when assessment is done well, it can improve student learning, clarify and strengthen the mission of a college, improve program quality and performance, inform planning and decision making, support requests for funding, and assist in meeting and exceeding accreditation requirements (Bresciani, 2002; Diaz-Lefebvre, 2003; Green & Castelli, 2002; National Forum on Assessment, 1995; Pellegrino et al., 2001; Seybert, 2003; The State University of New York Geneseo, 2004).

Criticisms and Concerns about Assessment

Institutional change does not come without resistance. This resistance is rooted in a range of concerns, including concerns about the relationship between assessment, power, and

administrative control; concerns that assessment programs threaten faculty independence; and concerns about the validity and purpose of measuring higher learning outcomes. In the discussion that follows, frequently cited criticisms of assessment are discussed and strategies for addressing them are suggested.

<p style="text-align:center">Power</p>

Concerns

Critical planning theorists express concerns that colleges are institutions of power that selectively shape information, communication, participation, impressions, and attention to issues (Forester, 1989). They emphasize that information is a source of power in several ways: It responds to the social needs of the institution; it provides a way for groups with fewer means to participate in the planning process; and it assists those who already have power in the system to retain it (Forester, 1989).

Assessment programs require technical expertise and a central location for data and information at colleges (King, 2004). Thus, assessment programs can extend the power of administrators by extending their possession and control of information, including their control over who has access to what information and when (Forester, 1989). Assessment coordinators may determine what information is relevant and timely for decision-making purposes, may shape participation in relevant decision-making processes, and may influence these processes by interpreting assessment data (Forester, 1989). In all of these ways, assessment programs can advance the interests, agendas, and perspectives of administrators. At the same time, such programs can exclude the interests, agendas, and perspectives of those who are in less privileged positions — including faculty, staff, and even students.

As a result of power dynamics, some faculty are concerned that assessment protocols will become rigid and will be prescribed in a top-down manner and that assessment data will be used inappropriately by policy makers or administrators to rationalize administrative decisions that faculty may not support (Banta, 2002; Coffman, 2004).

These concerns are well founded. How administrators draw attention to assessment issues and information can have significant political consequences that may include impacts on professional advancement, on workload pressures and expectations, and on resource allocations. Furthermore, administrators are themselves accountable to, or under pressure from, a range of external entities, from accreditation bodies to legislators to powerful lobbies and special interest groups. In this context, assessment programs can become instruments of socio-political control that powerful external agencies and groups use to reshape institutional missions and priorities and to redirect scarce resources according to their own interests and agendas.

Alternative Perspective

Though many assessment programs were initiated through the demands of external entities, such as legislators and accreditation bodies, assessment practice appears to be shifting toward an internal locus of control with a focus on internal audiences and maximum relevancy to faculty, staff, and students (Coffman, 2004). Although assessment can serve as an instrument of external control, the best way to ensure an internal locus of control is for faculty and administrators to embrace assessment and take the lead in defining assessment measures and processes according to their internal values and priorities — rather than waiting for external agencies to define them according to the political pressures of the day.

Moreover, within institutions, the way administrators present information and interact with instructors can either result in indifference, suspicion, and rejection, or it can build

understanding, trust, and consent (King, 2004). The manner in which power is exercised is the key. Forester (1993) emphasizes that in order for planning practices to be positive and socially transformative, they must be "sensitive to the continual reproduction of relations of knowledge, power, trust, and attention" (p. 103). Individuals in positions of power can strive to present information in an open, unbiased, and user-friendly manner; commit to using the results of the assessment program; create opportunities for interdependence to enhance collaboration and to build trust; anticipate conflicts, obstacles, and concerns; develop keen listening and speaking abilities; cultivate a network of meaningful relationships; and respond in sincere, respectful, cooperative, and nurturing ways (Forester, 1989; King, 2004).

A collaborative response enhances a sense of collective identity and purpose, an approach that results in better solutions and has the potential to transform working relationships (Forester, 1989). Meaningful participation in the process, whereby faculty's perspectives are validated, increases commitment to the process and, thus, chances for the college's success. In order to do this, it is essential that administrators relinquish some of their power and collaborate more with faculty (Coffman, 2004). Issues of power will always remain, but, if administrators sincerely listen to faculty and staff, this power can be used to transform educational institutions into models of decision making built on shared values and interests (Forester, 1989; King, 2004). Thus, the individuals involved have ethical responsibilities to not silence voices and to understand how their presentation of analyses influences power relations within the organization, so that they can empower the faculty, students, administrators, and staff in positive ways (Forester, 1989).

Academic Freedom and Evaluation

Concerns

Some faculty have raised concerns that assessment findings may be used to evaluate and reprimand them or their students. A related concern is that assessment processes will increase external control over curriculum and testing. Within the new assessment regime, critics assert, some faculty will try to anticipate what external bodies are looking for and adapt their teaching to what they believe will be measured. This kind of behaviour may discourage instructional creativity and risk-taking as well as increase competition among programs (Ewell, 2002; Fisher, Rubenson, & Rockwell, 2000; Lieberman, 2005; Rodrigues, 2002).

Alternative Perspective

Assessment proponents point out that assessment processes do not give administrators the authority to advise faculty on how to teach (Lieberman, 2005). Instead, the goal of assessing student learning is to assist faculty, as a group, to improve the learning process; the data gathered under these conditions can be used to improve curricula, programs, and instruction from the bottom up rather than the top down (Walvoord, 2004). In an effective assessment program, the emphasis is on the entire group of instructors and when evidence of poor student learning in a particular class emerges, it can and should be addressed with a supportive and encouraging response from the department or college. Moreover, in a two-year college context where teaching is the primary responsibility of instructors, proponents believe that assessment makes instructors more accountable and that some level of accountability is healthy, because it can result in more meaningful learning experiences for students (Walvoord, 2004). Because assessment programs use aggregate rather than individual data about learning, and do not

associate students' names with their scores, fears about student privacy and evaluation are

unfounded (Lieberman, 2005). Finally, because accreditation bodies' focus is now on individual

college-generated outcomes (ideally determined by the faculty), the risks of discouraging

instructional creativity and "teaching to the test" are diminished.

Resources

Concerns

Many faculty also assert that the time, money, and effort required to learn about and

implement complicated assessment processes could more profitably be directed toward

supporting conventional teaching, learning, and service activities (Fisher, Rubenson, &

Rockwell, 2000; Rodrigues, 2002; Walvoord, 2004; Zorzi, McGuire, & Perrin, 2002). In

addition, they argue that faculty already grade students and this should be an adequate form of

evaluation[10] (Rodrigues, 2002). Finally, because faculty often receive no compensation or

reward for learning about and implementing assessment processes, many are not motivated to

devote the extra time necessary to carry out these added responsibilities.

Alternative Perspective

These concerns will be addressed from two perspectives: those of administrators and

faculty, both of whom are essential to the implementation of a successful assessment program.

In both cases, a transformational change is needed: administrators "toward a culture that more

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[10] Refer to the section titled *Grades* in chapter 3 for a discussion about grading and its relationship to assessment.

freely embodies the principles of a learning organization" (Banta, 2002, p. 284) and faculty

toward a culture of active responsibility for documenting and improving student learning.

Assessment scholars agree that administrators must provide visible advocacy as well as

real material support for assessment if it is to succeed. The value they place on it can be shown

by their taking an active role and interest in assessment; collaborating with faculty, staff,

students, and others involved in the process; allocating financial, technical, and human resources

to assessment; and referring regularly to the assessment process and its results in reports and

presentations to both internal and external audiences (Center for the Study of Higher Education,

2002).

In an effective assessment climate, administrators only hold individuals and programs

accountable for what they have control over (i.e., monitoring improvement rather than

comparing performance), and they use the results to improve the collective benefit of the

programs, rather than to encourage competition between programs (Ewell, 2002). They

recognize and value feedback, ideas, and input from staff and faculty, and they incorporate these

suggestions into their plans and decisions. Furthermore, time-consuming assessment processes

and meetings are streamlined and simplified, and administrative obstacles are reduced so that

instructors' time may be used wisely (Rodrigues, 2002). For example, assessment processes

should only be designed to provide information the college can use; not to collect data for which

there is no identified use (Banta, 1999; Gray & Goodman, 2003; J. Nichols, 2002; Seybert, 2003;

Walvoord, 2004).

To facilitate the assessment process, administrators may also need an assessment

coordinator who has the responsibility to support and coordinate institution-wide assessment

activities; provide expertise and consulting for all educational programs and administrative

departments; collect data in an efficient manner; and provide a centralized location for the storage, analysis, and dissemination of assessment results. In addition, administrators also need a process for evaluating the effectiveness, including the cost-effectiveness, of the assessment program itself (J. Nichols, 2002).

As an increasing number of colleges attempt to implement assessment programs (El-Khawas, 1995), faculty often emerge as the main source of opposition for the reasons discussed above as well as others (Cohen, 1994). For instance, traditionally, faculty have focused on the process, not the product, of teaching. Assessment is a cooperative process that requires agreement about mission, program goals, and learning outcomes; methods and standards of assessment; interpretation of results; and use of information to improve the learning experiences for students. Many faculty, however, are used to teaching in relative isolation and are not well-prepared for this type of collaborative approach (Banta, 2002). In addition, developing assessment programs takes time and energy, and many faculty already feel overburdened. As a result, faculty often prefer to let administrators deal with assessment (Walvoord, 2004).

Yet, proponents of assessment agree that a successful assessment program needs to be driven by strong faculty leadership, implying primarily that faculty participate fully in the design of learning outcomes (Seybert, 2003). To be effective, faculty can take ownership of assessment and embrace it as an intrinsically valuable developmental process whereby teaching and learning can be continually improved through evaluation, reflection, and identification of needs for change. A sense of ownership, and hence cooperation, is enhanced when faculty and their colleagues themselves create meaningful assessment processes, rather than having them imposed by the administration (Rodrigues, 2002). This requires faculty being involved daily in

assessment processes that reflect what they value, such as their teaching, disciplines, and research (Rodrigues, 2002).

Faculty ownership and participation result in a continuous process of improved learning and teaching. Toward this end, strategies to make the assessment process more streamlined include integrating assessment into the curriculum; embedding assessment in classroom assignments to serve both grading requirements and collective performance purposes through the use of rubrics (Ewell, 2002); determining in advance clear learning outcomes, high standards, and clear criteria for levels of achievement; agreeing upon the tools that will be used consistently to measure success; pre-determining a process of using this information in meaningful ways to improve teaching and learning; communicating assessment results frequently; connecting "assessment, as a form of systematic inquiry, with the scholarship of teaching" (Banta, 2002, p. 288-289); and using the results to improve programs and student learning experiences.

Finally, assessment scholars agree that it is wise to start the process with interested and supportive faculty; to provide them with the necessary opportunities, incentives, and material resources to learn about assessment; and to celebrate, credit, thank, and reward their efforts and achievements publicly through institutional processes and practices (e.g., with stipends, promotion, tenure, release time, etc.) (Banta, 1999, 2002; King, 2004; J. Nichols, 2002).

Measuring Higher Learning

Concerns

Faculty raise many legitimate concerns about the validity of measuring educational outcomes, as well as the socio-political consequences of the movement toward greater accountability. Most notably, many instructors think it is impossible to measure the important

goals of higher education and lament the skewed picture that results from too great a reliance on

quantitative data (Rodrigues, 2002). They have a point. Too often, during the planning

processes in which assessment approaches have been developed, meaningful outcomes and

activities have been excluded in favour of more easily quantifiable measures. Not only is

reliance on quantitative data easier, it is politically popular in a society that is preoccupied with

measurement and testing (Banta, 2002; Fisher, Rubenson, & Rockwell, 2000). As a result, many

faculty argue, quantitative indicators have a disproportional influence relative to qualitative

indicators that may be more difficult to measure, but more meaningful or important (A. Wilson

& Cervero, 1997). This "technical rational" approach, based on scientific problem-solving,

limits understanding of what is considered to be appropriate theory or practice and excludes

certain approaches to education and problem-solving that are not quantitative (A. Wilson &

Cervero, 1997). As Axelrod (2002) states, "traditional teaching methods based mainly on

memorization, frequent testing, and other quantitative assessments may satisfy the current

craving for educational 'accountability,' but on their own they insufficiently cultivate the life of

the mind" (p. 124).

Alternative Perspective

Though faculty voice concerns about measuring higher types of learning in a meaningful

way, proponents of assessment point out that instructors are frequently called upon to use their

professional judgment to evaluate the work of their colleagues, students, and themselves by

criteria accepted in their fields. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect faculty to use the

same kind of expert judgment to assess how their students' work compares to the higher

expectations of the college (Ewell, 2002; Walvoord, 2004). Furthermore, faculty can transform

the discourse about accountability by devising meaningful ways to demonstrate quality or

student performance and creating "processes that develop a sense of common purpose and shared accountability" (Gaither et al., 1995, p. 4). Outcomes discussions among faculty often initiate insightful and meaningful conversations and are "in service of understanding the discipline and how it might and should affect students. Ending with a potentially measurable outcome may be the least important result" (University of Washington, 2005, p. 1).

In addition, because education is a fundamental contributor to collective social progress, the responsibility of faculty, and everyone else engaged in the educational enterprise, is to devote their talents and insights to the admittedly difficult, but nonetheless necessary, task of continually improving its quality. As Ewell (2002) points out, "large-scale assessment of higher-order collegiate abilities can be an important tool of social policy, if it is directed toward determining gaps in the nation's store of 'educational capital' and filling them" and not used for "rating and governing institutional performance" (p. 14). Therefore, the discourse about the value of educational assessment "must recognize the role of liberal education in furthering the public good" (Fisher, Rubenson, & Rockwell, 2000, p. 24) and the importance of education in instilling social values and responsibility. Through their contributions, faculty can contribute to more creative and flexible assessment programs, incorporating qualitative as well as quantitative measures, which may result in what Wilson and Cervero (1997) refer to as "emancipatory learning" (p. 100) and in the emergence of alternative planning models based on the ideals of social justice and social transformation.

Other Measurement Issues

Concerns

Other related concerns faculty often raise about measurement are the following: First, assessment concentrates on tools of the trade, such as the current focus on rubrics, rather than on important questions (Ewell, 2002). Second, colleges frequently focus on target outcomes rather than the processes (Harris, 1998). Third, it is difficult to develop indicators and methods that capture meaningful data or to agree about definitions of outcomes and connect measurable outcomes to a single educational process (Cohen, 1994; J. Nichols, 2002). Fourth, quantitative measures can reduce the complexity of situations, are often inaccurate and inconsistent when compared among colleges, are burdensome, and are unable to provide meaningful information that allows colleges to draw useful conclusions (Fisher, Rubenson, & Rockwell, 2000). Put another way, Coffman (2004) characterizes quantitative measures as those that focus on the "logical versus the creative, the planned versus the emergent, the revolutionary versus the transformational, the strategic fit versus reaching with a stretch, and the pursuit of a strategy versus going after effectiveness" (p. 21).

Alternative Perspective

Though concerns about over-reliance on quantitative data are valid, approaches to assessment are evolving in a direction that makes these concerns less relevant. The socio-political discourse mentioned above has had a profound impact on the evolution of assessment. Banta (2000) summarizes how the current thinking developed. These concerns, she says,

> forced practitioners to sharpen the philosophical grounding of the movement — rooting it in the tenets of scholarship and the process of teaching and learning. It also reemphasized that the evidence used by assessment must always rest upon a peer-based

community of judgment (American Association for Higher Education, 1992; Mentkowski, Astin, Ewell, & Moran, 1991). Finally, the debate forced explicit recognition of the fact that evidence is consistently constrained by the context in which it is generated (Mentkowski & Rogers, 1988) and by the uses to which it is put (Messick, 1988). Epistemological issues of this kind thus remain at the heart of the movement and remain healthily and vigorously contested (Ewell, 1989; Harris & Sansom, 2001). But protests based solely on principle or politics have steadily diminished. (p. 18)

Thus, just as the focus of the debate has shifted, so too has the focus of assessment. Today, assessment tends to focus on the institution's goals and a determination of whether students are attaining those goals — rather than on how outcomes compare to other colleges. This position has resulted in assessment becoming a more meaningful endeavour. Fortunately, accreditation bodies are supporting this approach, replacing a focus on rigid data-driven reports with a focus on encouraging and expecting colleges to use their data, especially qualitative information, to improve curricula and programs (Banta, 2002). Locally developed, authentic assessment approaches are now preferred (Fisher, Rubenson, & Rockwell, 2000; Stufflebeam, 2001). Alverno College, discussed later in this chapter, provides a leading example of the effort to apply authentic qualitative indicators to the learning process.

<center>Student Learning</center>

Concerns

Another concern some faculty have cited is the lack of evidence that assessment improves learning (Ewell, 2002). A related concern is that the policies resulting from assessment will not improve institutional climate.

It is true that assessment processes, as relatively recent developments in higher education, have not yet yielded much data to support the claim that they improve learning; however, assessment advocates would argue that the only way to determine whether such evidence will be forthcoming is to experiment with assessment approaches and monitor the results. When properly conducted, assessment may well be a valuable tool for improving program quality and performance and, thus, enhancing students' learning. Furthermore, assessment scholars emphasize that, if students are provided with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to practice skills and receive feedback, the assessment process itself can improve learning (Mentkowski et al., 2000; Stufflebeam, 2001). At Alverno College, for example, faculty assert that when assessment is done well, it results in *learning that lasts* (Mentkowski et al., 2000). For a more thorough discussion of this topic, refer to the *Assessment as Learning* section in chapter 4.

Dual Purposes of Assessment

Concern

Another source of tension over assessment stems from its dual purposes: *improvement*, which is internally designed in order to improve an institution's own teaching and learning, and *accountability*, which is externally imposed (through state mandates, government, and accreditation bodies[11]) to judge how well an institution is meeting the external goals of these agencies. These two purposes can be contradictory and incompatible (Ewell, 2002).

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[11] Faculty sometimes see university administrators, such as presidents and deans, as external.

Assessment scholars assert that this issue is resolvable. To begin with, it is necessary and useful to recognize the nature of the different purposes of formative (improvement) and summative (accountability) evaluation. Both types of evaluation are essential, but they must be dealt with as separate and distinct processes. Second, formative information can be extracted from the existing processes designed to acquire summative information. For example, a grade provides a summative evaluation of a student's work; on the other hand, an assessment rubric provides formative information that can lead to an immediate focused response and remediation to improve learning (Ewell, 2002). By recognizing the tension between assessment for improvement and assessment for accountability, by dealing with them in separate processes, and by extracting formative information from summative processes, assessment processes may be streamlined and tensions between them resolved. Accreditation bodies are beginning to assist in the process of resolving this tension. In the last couple of years, they have shifted their focus from requiring prescribed data-driven reports (i.e., addressing external concerns) to focusing on the fulfillment of each college's mission and goals and how the college uses its assessment results to improve student learning (i.e., addressing internal concerns).

Assessment is a Fad

Concern

Some faculty are still convinced that assessment is just a fad and will disappear (Ewell, 2002).

Proponents of assessment insist that this is not the case and that the assessment movement will continue to gain momentum (Ewell, 2002). This momentum can be detected in the assessment literature where the debate is no longer about the pros and cons of assessment but about better means of accomplishing its purposes (Banta, 2002). Banta affirms, "just as assessment revitalized accreditation, accreditation's insistence on assessment has kept the assessment movement alive and thriving" (p. 252). Politicians, external stakeholders, the media, and the market are all obsessed with data and information (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998). Furthermore, Banta (2002) points out, "assessment has been a point of confluence for a raft of issues in education" (p. 252) (e.g., the use of technology as an instructional mode, outcomes-based curricula, writing-across-the-curriculum, learning communities, service learning, and problem-based learning), all of which must demonstrate their effectiveness. All of these developments have served to shift educational focus from teaching to learning and to propel the assessment movement forward (Ewell, 2002).

Benefits of Effective Assessment Processes

Despite the concerns and criticisms discussed above advocates believe that good assessment practice can be used to improve colleges and to meet the needs of accreditation bodies and other stakeholders. Assessment is an ever-evolving, dynamic process, that can be adapted to the needs of the college culture (Banta, 2002; Maki, 2004; J. Nichols, 2002; University of Wisconsin, 2004). When done well, advocates insist, the benefits of assessment are numerous: It initiates meaningful conversations at all levels within a college; provides an opportunity for creating a shared vision for the future of the college, based on common values; redirects resources towards priorities outlined in the mission and goals; increases the college's

responsiveness to the needs of the community; builds cohesion, collaboration, relationships, and trust among faculty, staff, and administrators; re-values teaching, service, and students; improves the instructional capacity of the college as well as its public image; increases students' confidence in the college and in themselves; provides the basis for college planning and budgeting decisions; provides financial or reputational rewards at the individual, department, or college-wide level; and demonstrates accountability, the responsible use of limited resources, to the public (Fisher, Rubenson, & Rockwell, 2000; Fisher, Rubenson, Rockwell, Grosjean, & Atkinson-Grosjean, 2000; Lieberman, 2005; Walvoord, 2004; Zorzi et al., 2002). Assessment data can be used to improve everything from curriculum and course content, pedagogy, assessment tools, internships, and faculty-student interactions, to facilities, course staffing and scheduling, class size, inclusion of students in faculty research, and student advising (Walvoord, 2004, p. 62).

Indications of the assessment movement's advancement include the creation of teaching and learning centers and greater faculty interest in teaching and learning scholarship (e.g., the promotion of assessment in various disciplines' associations, publications of journal articles, and presentations at conferences) (Ewell, 2002). Based on an explicit understanding and analysis of the critiques, Banta's (2002) view reaffirms the significance of the assessment movement, which, she says, has "begun to build a whole new infrastructure for teaching and learning, for improvement and accountability…Building that infrastructure takes time. It progresses at a glacial pace. But it reshapes the whole landscape" (p. 257).

Mainstream Approaches to Assessment

Many assessment advocates refer to the following set of nine principles that they believe form the foundation of good practice for assessing student learning:

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.

2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.

3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.

4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes and also to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.

5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.

6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.

7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.

8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.

9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public. (AAHE, 1992, p. 1)

In varying degrees and in varying ways, colleges are attempting to integrate these principles into their assessment of student learning.

In addition to agreement about integrating these principles, a consensus about the steps involved in the development of an effective program of assessment appears to be emerging in the assessment literature (Banta, 1999; J. Nichols, 2002; Seybert, 2003; The State University of New York Geneseo, 2004; Walvoord, 2004). The first step is to either establish or update the college's mission statement and articulate college and program outcomes. Outcome statements describe "what students should be able to demonstrate, represent, or produce based on their learning histories" (Maki, 2004, p. 60). Next, indicators and standards are established to operationalize these outcomes, methodologies are selected for the data collection, evidence is gathered of how well students are attaining the outcomes, and the information is analyzed.

Finally, administrative and communication systems are designed to ensure the findings are actually incorporated into decision-making processes and used to refine policy and practice at the college, program, and course levels.

Types of Information Used for Assessment Purposes

Effective assessment programs use three types of data — often referred to as *direct indicators*, *indirect indicators,* and *institutional data* — for assessing success at the college, program, and course levels (Palomba & Banta, 1999). Whereas *direct indicators* require that students demonstrate their learning through, for example, essays, capstone projects, tests, and presentations, *indirect indicators* ask students to reflect on their learning through, for example, graduate or student satisfaction surveys, interviews, and focus groups. *Institutional data*, on the other hand, are institution-level measures that do not necessarily indicate student learning but do reflect the overall condition and effectiveness of the college and may include, for example, retention and graduation rates, student-faculty ratios, and enrollment trends (Ewell, 1997; Walvoord, 2004). It is worth noting that in the assessment literature, there is some disagreement and inconsistency regarding which specific indicators fall within each of these three broad categories (and even some disagreement regarding the utility of the categorization scheme itself).

Direct Indicators

It is widely accepted that certain teaching strategies — such as self-reflecting, practicing and repeating, applying concepts to a relevant context, teaching material to peers, writing about a subject, and asking essential questions — foster deep learning (Maki, 2005). It is also known that "what and how students learn depends to a major extent on how they think they will be assessed" (Biggs, 1999, p. 141).

Traditional and Authentic Assessment Tools

       Direct methods of assessing student learning tend to fall into two general categories:

traditional tests (e.g., exams) and *authentic assessment tools*. Both of these approaches attempt

to assess the observable performance of students. Table 3.1 provides examples of both

traditional tests and authentic assessment tools that can be used directly to assess student

learning, at the college, program, or course levels (Cal State San Bernadino, 2004; Gipps &

Stobart, 2003; Green & Castelli, 2002; Knight, 2003; Maki, 2002; J. Nichols, 2002; Palomba &

Banta, 1999; Seybert, 2003; The State University of New York Geneseo, 2004).

Table 3.1 Examples of Direct Methods for Assessing Student Learning

Traditional tests	Authentic assessment tools
• Certification exams	• Apprenticeships
• Cognitive assessment tests	• Capstone projects or experiences
• College competency tests	• Case studies
• Comprehensive tests / exams	• Competency-based curricula
• Critical thinking tests	• Essays (written projects, pre and post)
• Entrance tests	• Internships (externally reviewed)
• General knowledge tests	• Interviews
• Graduate entrance exams (e.g., GRE)	• Job performance
• Licensure exams	• Journals
• National exams	• Juried reviews
• Oral communication tests	• Observations of student behavior or skills
• Placement tests for entering students (e.g., math, writing or reading)	• Oral presentations and exams
	• Peer evaluation
• Pre- and post-tests for attitudes and mastery of knowledge	• Performance-based mastery tests
	• Portfolio system
• Professional exams	• Presentations
• Quantitative problem solving tests	• Projects (e.g., abstracts, advertisements, brochures, budget with rationale, research)
• Standardized tests	
• Writing proficiency and reading competency tests	• Reflection logs
	• Self-assessment
	• Simulation exercises
	• Thesis / major project / doctoral thesis
	• Video and audio tape evaluations (pre/post)
	• Workplace competency

Traditional tests may be standardized or locally designed and may be of different types (e.g., multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, true or false, etc.). Although they may or may not reflect a student's ability to truly understand or apply the concepts and material, some

scholars believe that traditional tests provide information about cognitive outcomes (Palomba & Banta, 1999). Authentic assessment tools, on the other hand, may provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate behaviours and performance in more "real-life" and applied situations. These authentic assessment tools ideally measure the knowledge and abilities expected by professionals in the students' respective fields (Wiggins, 1998). The main disadvantages with using authentic assessment tools is that they require a large investment in resources and in time setting up the systems; they take more time and effort to score; they may not be reliable; they often lack comparable norms; and they usually cover a narrow range of skills (Stufflebeam, 2001).

Grades

The relationship between grades and assessment is not as straightforward as it might first appear. Typically, completion of a course, or receipt of a grade, does not in itself provide evidence of learning or meeting a learning outcome (Strain, 2003). The fact that a student obtains an *A* in a course does not mean that he or she has gained understanding or knowledge as a result of the course. For instance, the student may have entered the course with the understanding or knowledge required to earn an *A*.

Grades do not necessarily measure how much students know, value, or are able to do; how much they have learned due to a course; or, if learning has occurred, what elements impacted their learning most (Center for the Study of Higher Education, 2002). Furthermore, because the way grades are determined can vary greatly among instructors and colleges, they cannot be used for comparison purposes.

Nonetheless, in a tribal college setting, there are two circumstances when it is generally acceptable to use the actual course grades for assessment purposes. The first is when students

move from developmental to college-level classes. The second is when students transfer from a

two-year tribal college to a four-year university. In both these instances, grades may be used to

assess successful transfer from one level to the next (J. Nichols, 2002; Walvoord, 2004). By

comparing a student's performance at the next level with others at that level, the tribal college

can get a sense of how well prepared their students are and how effective their grading system is.

An effective grading process can serve several purposes. It can enhance evaluation of the

student, can extend communication between the instructor and student, can motivate students to

learn, can organize course concepts, and can be used to improve teaching (Walvoord &

Anderson, 1998). Grading, however, is a complex process, is never totally objective, and can

greatly affect student learning, both positively and negatively. It is a "socially constructed,

context-dependent process" which, at its best, "can be a powerful tool for learning" (Walvoord &

Anderson, 1998, p. 10).

If the grading process is approached using rubrics (e.g., see Table 3.2), where criteria are

made explicit, are evaluated using a scale, and are used to foster improvement, then "the grading

process is an excellent basis for direct assessment of learning" (Walvoord, 2004, p. 15). Rubrics

articulate criteria that instructors use to evaluate a specific assignment, and these results can be

used to communicate and compare aggregate results (Walvoord, 2004). As a result, instructors

can determine specifically where students are having the most difficulty and whether, after

adjusting teaching strategies, students improve on a specific criterion over quarters. Moreover,

in terms of assessment, rubrics make grading public and analyzable (Walvoord & Anderson,

1998).

Table 3.2 A Section of the NWIC Rubric for Evaluating Writing Skills (Draft)

	Level of Proficiency			
Criterion	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
Outcome a: The student writes standard English				
1. Idea and content	Writes with unclear purpose or central theme. Does not clearly define or support position on topic. Uses limited or disconnected details that disrupt the unity of the paper.	Partially focuses on topic with minimal or no support of position. Writing is basic, too general for the reader to develop a clear understanding.	Maintains clear focus throughout the paper with sufficient appropriate details indicating awareness, knowledge, and insight.	Writes clearly and with focus; relevant details support the central theme.
2. Organization / structure	Writes with organization that is unclear or inappropriate to the thesis; lacks transitions between ideas.	Writes with some signs of logical organization; may include abrupt or illogical shifts and ineffective flow of ideas. Makes few transitions between ideas.	Supports thesis and purpose through organization and paragraphing; most transitions are appropriate, but sequence of ideas may need improvement. Reiterates introductory elements in conclusion.	Provides clear introduction and reinforcing conclusion. Orders writing logically with effective transitions, providing sufficient information in the appropriate places.
3. Word choice	Chooses nonspecific or distracting words that limit meaning. May include slang and colloquialisms.	Chooses ordinary words using adequate verbs, nouns, adjectives, and phrases.	Chooses correct words that result in clarity.	Chooses interesting, specific and accurate words that contribute to communicating the writer's purpose.
4. Writing conventions: Grammar / spelling / punctuation	Writes with a minimal grasp of standard writing conventions; numerous errors impair readability.	Writes with a basic grasp of the standard writing conventions; occasional errors may impair readability.	Writes with a good grasp of standard writing conventions: capitalization is proper; punctuation is smooth and enhances meaning; spelling and grammar are essentially correct.	Writes with a strong grasp of the standard writing conventions; all conventions are properly applied.
5. Presentation / formatting	Produces writing that looks untidy and does not follow basic formatting rules (e.g. margins, headers and subheaders).	Produces writing that looks fairly neat but violates some formatting rules.	Produces writing that looks neat but violates one or two formatting rules.	Produces clean, neat, and easily read document in which the form and presentation of the text enhance the written message.

In order to use the grading process for the direct assessment of learning, Walvoord (2004)

advises instructors to ensure that the assessment tool actually measures the learning outcomes. It

must

> state explicitly in writing the criteria for evaluating student work in sufficient detail to
> identify students' strengths and weaknesses; develop systematic ways of feeding
> information about student strengths and weaknesses back to decision makers…and using
> that information for programmatic improvement. (p. 15)

Using the grading process for the direct assessment of learning can be accomplished in a

number of ways. For example, in a supportive faculty meeting environment, instructors can

present their students' assignments, the written criteria (e.g., rubric) (see Table 3.2), and the

class's aggregate scores compared to previous quarters (see Table 3.3) for feedback. Faculty can

then make recommendations for improving student learning, and someone can take minutes of

the meeting to record the exchange. The instructional changes that result from these sessions can

later be documented.

Table 3.3 Mean Aggregate Scores from a Native American History Class Assignment Assessing
the NWIC Outcome "Writing Standard English"

	Quarter				
Criterion	Fall 2004	Winter 2005	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Winter 2006
1. Ideas and content	4.0	3.5	3.7	3.5	4.0
2. Organization / structure	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.2	3.5
3. Word choice	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.9
4. Writing conventions: Grammar, spelling, punctuation	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.4
5. Presentation / formatting	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.5

Note. Adapted from Walvoord (2004).

Table 3.3 illustrates how the grading process may be used for assessment purposes. In this example, instructors assessed the NWIC outcome *writing standard English* in this course over a number of quarters. The second criterion, *organization and structure*, had the lowest score in the fall quarter of 2004. The instructors focused more of their attention on this criterion during the next few quarters, and results indicate modest improvement each quarter.

Of course, grades also serve a purpose in evaluating individual student performance in a course because they summarize the level of the student's achievement of a set of outcomes. Grades inform students about how well they perform in a class compared to other students, yet without clear and detailed rubrics they do not indicate in which areas the student is strong or weak (Palomba & Banta, 1999). For instance, in Table 3.4, although all four students varied significantly on their final grades, all were successful in demonstrating criterion 3 (word choice).

Table 3.4 Relationship between Individual Student Grading and Assessment

Criterion	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Average of criterion
1. Ideas and content	5	3	4	3	3.75
2. Organization / structure	5	2	2	3	3
3. Word choice	5	5	5	5	5
4. Writing conventions: Grammar, spelling, punctuation	5	3	4	4	4
5. Presentation / formatting	4	2	3	3	3
Total	24	15	18	18	
Grade	A	C	B	B	

Note. Adapted from J. Nichols and K. Nichols (2000, p. 43).

Therefore, if we want to understand student achievement of a certain learning outcome, we can gather information specific to that learning outcome, repeatedly, over time (J. Nichols & Nichols, 2000).

Some scholars think grades may be inappropriate in Native American institutions, as grades tend to single out individuals from the group (Fixico, 2000). With the strong emphasis in Native American culture on cooperation, rather than competition, and the unity of the community and group, it may be important for tribal colleges to develop "learning-oriented" rather than "grade-oriented" students (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998). Nonetheless, because tribal colleges must respond to the demands of the universities to which their students transfer, it is important for tribal colleges to determine ways to use the grading system to their advantage.

Classroom Assessment Techniques

Some direct methods for assessing student learning are actually not graded. For instance, short, frequent, ungraded attempts to assess student learning, referred to as classroom assessment techniques provide immediate in-class feedback from students about which concepts are clear and which are not (Angelo & Cross, 1993). One example of a classroom assessment technique is called the "muddiest point," where the instructor asks the students at the end of a class to write down, in one minute, the concept that was least clear to them during the class. The instructor gathers the sheets, reviews the responses, and then responds to them the following class (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

These formative assessment techniques provide instructors with the opportunity to make adjustments to courses mid-stream (or even mid-class) and to build trust and relationships with their students (Lieberman, 2005). The use of other formative assessment techniques, such as self-assessment and peer reviews, are also useful and tend to be intrinsically rewarding for

students. Although it is difficult to tie these efforts formally to program assessment, assessment scholars are convinced that employing these strategies improves student retention and engagement and provides instructors with feedback as to what students are or are not learning (Banta, 2004; Walvoord & Anderson, 1998).

Curriculum Map

An effective tool for determining where each of the college outcomes is being assessed is the curriculum map. By listing all program or college course requirements, this simple matrix summarizes the level to which students are expected to master each of the outcomes in each of the required courses (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Example of a Section of a Curriculum Map

Required course	College outcome															
	1. Cultural		2. Written comm.		3. Oral comm.		4. Technology skills						5. Quant. skills		6. Reading skills	
	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	c	d	e	f	a	b	a	b
ENGL 101	B		B	B			B			B					B	
MATH 102		B			B			B					B	B		
BIOL 101	B					B			B						B	
POLS 101		B									B				B	
HIST 201		I	I							I					I	

Note. Adapted from Walvoord (2004). The level to which each goal is assessed in each class is identified: B = *beginner*, I = *intermediate*, A = *advanced*.

The curriculum map provides an efficient and useful way to identify gaps in the program where outcomes may be neglected. For example, the abbreviated curriculum map in Table 3.5 indicates that Reading skill 6b — *extending students' vocabulary through reading* — is not being assessed in this curriculum. A draft list of NWIC outcomes is posted in chapter 6 (College Outcomes).

<center>Indirect Indicators</center>

The second category of data used for assessing student success is indirect indicators. Indirect indicators provide information about students' perceptions of their learning experiences. Examples of indirect indicators of student learning are listed in Table 3.6, according to the enrollment status of the student (Alfred, Ewell, Hudgins, & McClenney, 2000; Banta, 1999; Cal State San Bernadino, 2004; CSHE, 2002; Green & Castelli, 2002; Lancaster et al., 2003; Maki, 2002; Seybert, 2003).

Although indirect indicators can provide valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of a college, program, or course, Palomba and Banta (1999) argue that these data must be combined with activities that directly assess learning in order to produce reliable assessment results. Thus, indirect measures can support results of direct measures or supplement them when they are difficult to measure.

Table 3.6 Examples of Indirect Methods for Assessing Student Learning

Current students:

- Campus climate surveys
- Course evaluations by students
- Engagement surveys
- Evaluations of programs and services by students
- Exit interviews and focus groups
- Self-evaluation
- Student goal attainment and values inventories
- Student perceptions of non-cognitive outcomes
- Student satisfaction, experience or opinion surveys (of program completers and non-completers)

Graduates:

- Graduation follow-up studies and surveys: reporting satisfaction with college program and career success / advancement and performance at subsequent colleges; completing goals; obtaining appropriate employment; tracking of honors, awards, and achievements
- Employer satisfaction

Other students:

- Non-returning student survey (goal completion information)

Faculty:

- Faculty survey of student engagement

Institutional Data

In contrast to the first two indicators, which either directly or indirectly evaluate student learning, institutional data, also referred to as *non-measures* of student learning, can be used for monitoring internal improvement of the college (Green & Castelli, 2002; Walvoord, 2004). This type of information is typically quantitative data and it may be compared longitudinally or may be used to monitor the progress of an entire cohort of students. Typically, colleges use institutional data to address important concerns or answer pertinent questions. Examples of institutional data are listed below in Table 3.7 according to their data source (Alfred et al., 2000; Banta, 1999; CSHE, 2002; Green & Castelli, 2002; Maki, 2002; J. Nichols, 2002; Seybert, 2003; Walvoord, 2004).

Table 3.7 Examples of Institutional Data

Current students:
- Grades
- GPAs
- Levels of participation in the following:
  → co-curricular activities
  → learning communities
  → community service / volunteerism

Graduates:
- GPAs
- Grades (i.e., performance at receiving universities)
- Graduation rates and numbers
- Honours or other achievements by graduates
- Job placement rates

Faculty / staff / administrators:
- Faculty:
  → faculty/student ratios
  → faculty flow, retention and salaries
  → faculty evaluations: peer review and chair/supervisor evaluation
  → publications and recognitions
- Administrator reviews/evaluations
- Teaching and assessment methodologies survey
- Staff reviews/evaluations

Enrollment services:
- Attrition/retention rates (for all levels of courses):
  → course level (completion rates)
  → program level
  → college level
- Course-taking patterns and profiles
- Demographic data / diversity of student body (number of students)
- Enrollment trends / admissions practices
- Grade distribution analysis
- Length of time to degree
- Success rate of developmental students in subsequent college-level courses

Program:
- Content analysis and review of program, courses, syllabi and curricula
- Cost
- Enrollment patterns
- Course-taking patterns
- Degree completion rates
- Number of graduates
- Student GPAs

Institutional:
- Comparison of outcomes with peer institutions
- Cost-benefit analysis (financial costs)
- Curriculum / syllabus analysis (e.g., analysis of transfer student preparation)
- Strategic planning reviews

Community:
- Community perception of program effectiveness
- Responsiveness to community needs

Ideally, assessment at a college involves a combination of approaches integrating multiple sources of information from all three types of data (i.e., direct indicators, indirect indicators, and institutional data).

Assessment Issues Specific to Two-Year Colleges and Tribal Colleges

Assessment can be particularly challenging in two-year colleges because of their wide-ranging and numerous missions (Banta, 2004). Tribal colleges face many of these same challenges. These colleges typically provide a wide range of options: vocational programs, developmental courses, adult basic education and GED courses, continuing community education courses, and, of course, college-level courses and degrees for transfer to four-year institutions. As a result, the nature of the student body and faculty at community colleges is quite different from that of those at four-year colleges — and both the students and instructors affect assessment.

Students attend community college for a number of reasons. Some students enroll at a college to complete adult basic education courses; other students enter college with the goal of completing an associate's of arts degree in order to transfer to a four-year institution; and others enter with the goal of completing a two-year terminal or vocational degree in order to obtain employment. Still others enroll in one or two courses just for interest, with no intention of ever completing a degree. As a result, these students are more likely to appear to stop-out or dropout than students attending four-year colleges. Due to open admission policies, community college students also have a wider range of academic abilities and preparation, which makes it difficult to conduct any cohort-based research that demonstrates value added. Also, because community college students tend to be more transient (sometimes as a result of financial limitations), tracking them once they leave the college is a significant problem (Banta, 2004; Mundhenk,

2004). Because many community college students attend their classes and then leave campus and because it is more difficult to engage two-year college students in meaningful ways outside of the classroom, assessments are generally embedded in their courses (Banta, 2004).

Instructors at community colleges are more likely to be part-time, adjunct, and overwhelmed with teaching responsibilities. Furthermore, because of their temporary nature, part-time and adjunct faculty are unlikely to attend faculty meetings or be involved in discussions regarding assessment of student learning, and, therefore, less likely to "buy-in" to the assessment program. Because of their higher teaching load, faculty at community colleges are less likely to be involved in assessment research, but are more likely to be involved in developing student learning outcomes and meaningful classroom assessment techniques. As a result, most of the assessment research at community colleges tends to be conducted by one person in an assessment department and focuses mainly on information gathering for external reports and institutional surveys (Mundhenk, 2004).

Due to limited resources, community colleges integrate a number of approaches in their assessment efforts including combining standardized measures of student learning with locally developed measures (Banta, 2004); examining student goals at entry and exit; reviewing student functional skills at entry and exit; exploring active student involvement in learning through administering student engagement surveys; following up on the grades and retention of graduates who transfer to four-year institutions; asking local employers about their needs; and exploring course completion, retention, and graduation information (Banta, 2004). Many colleges start by simply setting realistic goals and limiting selection of their learning outcomes to the three or four most important ones (Walvoord, 2004). Regardless of the findings, the results of each of these

measures provide a point at which to initiate meaningful conversations among the members of the college community.

On a positive note, the mission of community colleges, that of serving the local community's needs, lends itself well to the "public nature of assessment" (Mundhenk, 2004, p. 38). Community colleges are in the business of providing comprehensive services to external bodies to which they are accountable, such as associate's transfer degrees to students who transfer to universities and two-year terminal technical degrees to students who seek employment in local businesses. Because community colleges serve the needs of these external entities, their assessment efforts tend to reflect that focus. Thus community colleges frequently seek information about the level of graduates' preparation by such means as surveying employers, surveying graduates, and tracking transfer students through transfer reports and communications with receiving four-year colleges. As a result of this external feedback, community colleges and their instructors adjust their programs, curricula, and teaching methodologies. If done effectively, community colleges have the opportunity to transform themselves through this essential accountability process.

It appears that assessment has been more successful, to date, in smaller colleges (Farmer, 1988; Mentkowski et al., 2000). This is probably because smaller colleges are generally more committed to excellence in teaching (as opposed to research) and are more able to cultivate a unified vision among faculty and staff, who can be involved directly in the development of the mission, goals, outcomes, and assessment program. Developing an assessment program appears to be more difficult in larger colleges where faculty frequently perceive the goals of the college as conflicting with their own interests or even the interests of their students. Despite these constraints and hurdles, more and more colleges, both large and small, are attempting to

implement assessment programs (Palomba & Banta, 1999). The need to satisfy accreditation

requirements undoubtedly provides much of the initial and ongoing motivation in most cases, as

does the lure of additional funding or the threat of reduced funding (J. Nichols, 2002; Seybert,

2003).

Emerging Innovative Approaches to Assessment

Engagement

One innovative approach to assessment in two-year colleges is the use of student

engagement surveys, such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement — a

standardized national survey that attempts to assess student motivation and involvement in their

learning process — or engagement. This survey solicits students' perceptions of their level of

engagement in various aspects of college life, such as collaborative learning, student effort,

academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners (Community College

Survey of Student Engagement, 2004). This information is valuable because research indicates

that students who are more engaged in educationally purposeful activities like these and in the

college environment are more likely to succeed (Kuh, 2001; J. Nichols, 2002). Not surprisingly,

preliminary research conducted in this area found that the students who withdrew from college

were the least engaged (R. Hughes & Pace, 2003). Colleges can use the results from this highly

respected national survey to initiate meaningful conversations about increasing retention rates

and improving student learning, as well as improving the quality of the overall college

experience.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) refer to seven good practices in undergraduate education,

which result in effective teaching and learning. These practices

encourage student-faculty contact; encourage cooperation among students; encourage active learning; give prompt feedback; emphasize the time the student devotes to the task; communicate high expectations; and, respect diverse talents and ways of learning. (p. 15)

Astin reaffirms and expands upon these practices by outlining three essential "conditions of excellence" for student learning: a high level of meaningful and active student involvement in the learning process; high expectations by the students themselves and by the instructors; and high quality instructor assessment and feedback (Astin, 1996). The Community College Survey of Student Engagement is built upon this sound educational research, attempts to determine the level at which students are engaged in the practices articulated by Chickering and Gamson and Astin, and provides a forum for discussing learning and teaching.

In addition to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, there is a corresponding Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, which focuses on faculty perceptions of student engagement, the importance faculty place on different types of learning and development, the frequency and nature of faculty members' interactions with students, and how faculty members organize class time (Pike, 2003). The perceptions of faculty and advisors toward each of these areas can be compared with those of students, which can inform conversations about teaching and learning and can lead to refinements in both. Because many of the items included in these two surveys raise awareness of issues and attitudes that faculty and advisors can recognize in conversations with students, the use of these surveys has the potential to improve student retention (R. Hughes & Pace, 2003). By utilizing these surveys periodically to assess student engagement, colleges can demonstrate improvement in the learning environment.

Assessment as Learning

In the United States, a few colleges have taken the lead in engaging students in the assessment process itself — as a means of *promoting* learning. Alverno College, a small Catholic liberal arts college for women in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is one of these. Alverno College has been a leader in assessment for the last 30 years and has pioneered the concept of *assessment as learning* (Mentkowski et al., 2000). Faculty and staff at Alverno College believe that students should learn something through every assessment process and, if assessment is done well, the result should be *learning that lasts* (Mentkowski et al., 2000). Thus, assessment at Alverno College is as much a part of the learning process as it is a part of the evaluation process — and the success of this approach has been impressive. Serving a predominantly low income, minority population, Alverno College (both its faculty and students) has received numerous awards and widespread recognition for its achievements (Alverno College, 2004).

Mentkowski (2000) explains that this success is a result of Alverno College's philosophy of assessment, which is based on the following principles:

1. If learning is to be integrative and experiential, assessment must judge performance.

2. If learning is to be characterized by self-awareness, assessment must include expected outcomes, explicit public criteria, and student self-assessment.

3. If learning is to be active and interactive, assessment must include feedback and external perspectives as well as performance.

4. If learning is to be developmental, assessment must be cumulative and expansive.

5. If learning is to be transferable, assessment must be multiple in mode and context. (p. 60)

These principles form the foundation of all learning and teaching at Alverno College, as it pushes the concept of authentic assessment farther than most other institutions. In the process, Alverno College established a standard of experiential learning by integrating internships,

content, and abilities, and by defining learning outcomes as abilities. To support this approach, Alverno College's curriculum is ability-based: Students are required to demonstrate competence at increasingly advanced levels in eight abilities throughout the course of their studies. Alverno's eight college-wide abilities are "communication, analysis, problem-solving, valuing in decision making, social interaction, global perspectives, effective citizenship, and aesthetic responsiveness" (Mentkowski et al., 2000, p. 63). Because the assessment of these eight abilities is integrated into a coherent educational system, students make connections across different disciplines (as well as within their major). Furthermore, Alverno College students are required to track the progress of their own learning outcomes. Because the importance of self-reflection is emphasized, students at Alverno become motivated, responsible, and accountable for their own learning and progress (Mentkowski et al., 2000).

At a workshop at Alverno in June 2003, I observed one of the many intermediate-level ability-based assessments of the communication ability. The process was simple yet impressive. Alverno staff placed students in teams of eight and gave students a sophisticated problem to solve, with an ethical dimension related to their field. Several retired professionals in their field, from outside the college community, observed the students consulting for approximately one hour and provided them with detailed and immediate individual and group feedback according to specific criteria. The assessment also required students to provide a self-assessment and peer review of their performance. It was obvious that by the end of the afternoon, the students had gained significant and valuable insight into strengths and weaknesses of their ability to communicate.

Many academics and institutions have written about and supported some of the principles listed above (Gipps & Stobart, 2003), but few have been as successful as Alverno College in

implementing them in such a comprehensive assessment system. For instance, Strain (2003) recommends that all assessment tools used in the classroom should directly benefit students and their learning. The Center for the Study of Higher Education (2002) suggests assessing learning outcomes at three points during the student's college experience: at admission (beginner level), at the midpoint of their college degree (intermediate level), and at graduation (advanced level). They recommend that each program map out their curricula. For each learning outcome, they recommend outlining in a chart the level of learning based on Bloom's Taxonomy (i.e., knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Tinto (1993) reaffirms the importance of immediate feedback to effective individual student learning and Woosley et al. (2003) stress the importance of putting larger scale structures in place to respond immediately to students who go astray in their first year of college. Furthermore, the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (2002) affirms Alverno's competency-based approach in a report stating "strong competency-based initiatives produce meaningful assessment results that are used in making critical decisions about ways to improve student learning" (p. 19). Other aspects of Alverno's approach that are referred to in a report include the importance of the transferability and applicability of knowledge and understanding, practice and feedback, and meta-cognition for self-correction (Pellegrino et al., 2001). This report notes that assessment cannot be kept isolated from curriculum and instruction — although it stops short of stating that every assessment process should result in learning.

The Committee on the Foundations of Assessment (Pellegrino et al.), in an extensive report produced in 2001, used as the foundation of its work two basic principles: (a) students should always learn something from being assessed and (b) this information should be used to improve student learning. Supporting Alverno's approach, the committee emphasizes that in

order for assessment to be successful and improve learning, students must understand the

learning outcomes and their relevancy. It reflects on the importance of integrally relating

instruction with assessment as well as timely feedback. The committee also recommends what

Alverno has long known, that "assessment practices need to move beyond a focus on component

skills and discrete bits of knowledge to encompass the more complex aspects of student

achievement" (Pellegrino et al., 2001, p. 3). Alverno faculty address this concern by assessing

their students while they are applying the knowledge and understanding they have gained

through their education to other situations (Mentkowski et al., 2000). Thus, while reports such

as this one are just beginning to articulate and recognize these important principles, Alverno has

embodied them for the past 30 years.   Alverno's success in this regard is largely due to its

faculty's research on the assessment of student learning. Regardless of the professors'

discipline, Alverno faculty are encouraged to engage in assessment-related research.

Planning and Reporting

The Assessment Plan

In its *Accreditation Handbook*, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

(2003), the accreditation body that oversees the colleges and universities in the northwestern

United States, emphasizes the importance of the college and program assessment plans:

> The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities expects each institution and
> program to adopt an assessment plan responsive to its mission and its needs. In so doing,
> the Commission urges the necessity of a continuing process of academic planning, the
> carrying out of those plans, the assessment of the outcomes, and the influencing of the
> planning process by the assessment activities. (p. 37)

The assessment plan serves either one or both of the following purposes: first, to outline

existing assessment strategies and to recommend ways to *improve assessment;* or, second, to

summarize outcomes of assessment measures and recommend ways to *improve student learning* (Walvoord, 2004, p. 9). If the purpose of the assessment *plan* is to improve assessment, then the assessment *report* may include the following information: the person responsible for overseeing assessment; the resources and structures available for assessment; how faculty created the learning outcomes and how they are used for assessment; the measures of student achievement, the reasons chose these measures, how they relate to the outcomes, and how they are administered; how assessment results are used for improvement of learning; and recommendations to improve the assessment program (Walvoord, 2004). If the purpose of the assessment *plan* is to improve student learning, then the assessment *report* should include a list of the learning outcomes; data from assessment measures and what the results suggest about student achievement of the learning outcomes; and recommendations to improve student learning (Walvoord, 2004). NWIC's 2002 – 2006 assessment report primarily focuses on the first purpose, recommending ways to improve assessment. The 2007 to 2012 assessment report will primarily focus on the second purpose, recommending ways to improve student learning (although it will also recommend ways to improve assessment).

The assessment plan coordinates campus-wide assessment efforts and college activities, presents to external bodies a well-conceived approach to assessment, and provides a systematic way to determine the extent to which outcomes have been achieved. The assessment plan focuses on educational outcomes and is dynamic in nature (J. Nichols, 2002). Furthermore, the assessment plan may be a simple matrix that overviews the time-frame for accomplishment of each of the items and may include strategic plan, the college assessment plan, the academic program assessment plans, and a faculty evaluation process (Eastern Oregon University, 2004).

In order to build an assessment plan or report that is useful to the college, several steps must be taken: first, embed assessment in essential processes (such as strategic planning, curriculum review, program review, grading, developing independent learning programs or learning communities, and teaching evaluations); second, articulate college outcomes; third, conduct an assessment inventory (i.e., an inventory of what the college is already doing or planning in terms of assessment and how the information is used for making decisions and improving the college); fourth, highlight strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for improvement; fifth, improve the assessment program; sixth, improve student learning; and, finally, write the plan or report (Walvoord, 2004).

Closing the Loop

Assessment plans can be implemented at the course, program, and college levels. For instance, a basic assessment plan at the course level may include the instructors' learning outcomes; the tests and assignments; the instructors' criteria and standards (i.e., rubrics); student scores over time; and evidence of feedback into learning and teaching (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998). An example of a section of NWIC's assessment plan for 2007 – 2012 is included in Appendix A. Using a matrix, similar to the section of the program-level plan in Table 3.8, provides a framework for encouraging faculty and staff to use the assessment plan and results to improve learning.

Table 3.8 Example of a Section of an Environmental Studies Program Assessment Plan

Program outcome	Assessment criterion and procedure	Assessment result	Use of result
Students will be able to propose solutions to and solve real-world problems by applying the correct numerical data.	80% of students completing the program will score 4 or higher on the rubric for this outcome for the final project in the graduating seminar.	Only 70% of students completing the program had a score of 4 or higher on this rubric for the final project in the graduating seminar.	This concept will be reinforced in two additional required environmental studies courses.

Note. Adapted from J. Nichols (2002, p. 247).

After the college implements its plan, it may report its results in various ways. For instance, Lower Columbia College presents the results of a different section of its assessment plan in a reflective meeting every second month to its board, faculty, staff, and students (Weinstein, 2003). In this way, it can focus on a new area every couple of months and present more manageable portions of information to its community. Its assessment process includes a deep reflection on the results and recommendations for changes for the future. It also reports on results of changes made in previous years. Other colleges opt for annual report cards that report on the progress of institutional data (Banta, 1999). This option can be overwhelming as it requires a more substantial annual reporting project and is more of a one-time effort. Other faculty and staff meet regularly through faculty retreats, meetings, forums, and so forth to reflect on experience gained through the assessment process and translate this learning into actionable reforms (Ewell, 2002). Regardless of the reporting method chosen, because feedback of the assessment results is a significant step in the assessment process, it should not be rushed;

adequate time should be allowed for reflecting upon the information (Rodrigues, 2002).

Furthermore, effective assessment requires that colleges move beyond merely documenting

processes to evaluating the college's overall effectiveness (Banks & Colby, 1989).

Conclusion

A well-planned and supported assessment program has the potential to lead to a

transformed college environment and toward learning that lasts; however, transformation takes

time and is influenced by the college's culture (Mentkowski et al., 2000). Thus, in order to

create a culture of assessment, assessment must permeate all aspects of the college — from

planning, budgeting, program mission statements, and the first-year experience program, to the

catalogue, publications, website, job descriptions, and promotion. Just as self-assessment and

reflection are essential for the development of the student, so, too, are they necessary to

sustaining a process of institutional transformation, which will expand awareness of strengths

and weaknesses in the quest to become a learning-centered institution (Mentkowski et al., 2000).

CHAPTER 4 ASSESSMENT IN TRIBAL COLLEGES

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the guiding

principles of culturally appropriate research in Native American communities that are most

relevant to the future of assessment at tribal colleges. The second section provides a discussion

of the state of tribal college assessment in the United States and an initial exploration of

possibilities for adapting best practices in mainstream assessment to a tribal college context in

culturally appropriate ways.

Guiding Principles

The literature on research with Native American communities emphasizes the

commitment of researchers to a participatory process, based on a respectful and reciprocal

relationship between the researcher and the community, when they conduct research in these

communities (Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Hampton, 1995b; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991;

Menzies, 2001; National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, 1999; Royal

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; L. Smith, 1999). In addition, the research itself needs

to be relevant and meaningful to the community and conducted in a responsible and ethical

manner (Darou et al., 2000; Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Royal

Commission, 1996; L. Smith, 1999; Stringer, 1999).

Over the last century, researchers have conducted a substantial amount of research in

Indigenous communities; however, repeatedly, researchers have ignored basic principles of

respect and ethics (L. Smith, 1999). Furthermore, researchers have misinterpreted and excluded

Native Americans from telling their stories (L. Smith, 1999). As a result, scholars of Indigenous

research and knowledge are now formally articulating principles that are essential to integrate

into research conducted in Indigenous contexts (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blanchard et al., 2000; Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Hampton, 1995a; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Menzies, 2001; NSERC, 1999; Royal Commission, 1996; G. Smith, 1992; L. Smith, 1999; Steinhauer, 2002; S. Wilson, 2003).

Methods of research appropriate in Native American communities are unique in that they "privilege(s) Indigenous concerns, Indigenous practices, and Indigenous participation" (L. Smith, 1999, p. 107) by recognizing their distinctive worldviews and knowledge; honouring Aboriginal traditions and lands; "emphasizing the social, historical and political contexts, which shape" their lives; "privileging the voices, experiences and lives of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal lands; and, identifying and redressing issues of importance" to them (Martin, 2001, p. 3). This section reviews and elaborates upon the essential principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relevance that apply most directly to the assessment processes at tribal colleges and to this research (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

<u>Respect</u>

The importance of researchers or, in this context, tribal college assessment coordinators maintaining respectful relations and a sense of humility with those participating in the assessment process is emphasized throughout the literature on Native American research (Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Menzies, 2001; NSERC, 1999; Royal Commission, 1996; L. Smith, 1999). If the traditions, culture, and knowledge of the tribal college community are protected and validated, the community becomes empowered. "An essential and defining element of ethical issues in research on Indigenous peoples is respect for Indigenous peoples' laws and institutions" (Battiste & Henderson, 2000, p. 144). Taking it a step further, Linda Smith (1999) maintains not only that research "processes are expected to be respectful" but that, when carried

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out properly, they can also "enable people, to heal and to educate" and "lead one small step further towards self-determination" (p. 128).

Recognizing that this is the ideal and that it is a difficult process, Menzies (2001) also outlines four basic steps comprising a respectful research protocol. First, the researcher or the community initiates meaningful consultation in response to a college need or concern. Second, the researcher refines the research plan in consultation with the appropriate faculty, staff, students, or community members. The tribal college contributes a lot of the input and directs the project's goals and outcomes. It ultimately determines if the projects and methodologies being proposed are appropriate. Third, the research is conducted. Fourth, the researcher, always maintaining close contact with the tribal college community, writes, analyzes, revises, and distributes the report to the community. Involving many members of the tribal college community in this way, Smith (1999) asserts, results in an effective process and a significant increase in the capacity of the community. Needless to say, this approach often results in a prolonged research process and thus requires self-reflection, patience, flexibility, and openness on the part of the researcher (Steinhauer, 2002). I attempt to follow these fundamental guidelines, both in my work and in my doctoral research, as I have responded to and been flexible with college needs; consulted continually with faculty, professional staff, and administrators; had numerous faculty, professional staff, and administrators review and edit my work; and reported results back to the tribal college community.

Responsibility

Many of the principles and thoughts that are articulated in Indigenous research literature are also gaining momentum in mainstream research literature and approaches. One of these "approaches to participative inquiry" (Bensimon et al., 2004, p. 109), called Participatory Action

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Research (also known as Community Action Research), seeks to maximize responsible research

practices by engaging communities as full participants in the research process in order to

empower them (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Stringer, 1999). A collaborative and community-

based approach "overtly engages the human relationships that are involved, is concerned with the

style and manner of communication among people, and purposefully includes all those affected

by the research as active participants in the process" (Stringer, 1999, p. xx). By forming

partnerships and by using community-level resources (A. Wilson & Cervero, 1997), these

approaches give those who are being researched control over the process, enabling them to build

local community skills and resources (Hudson & Taylor-Henley, 2001; Weber-Pillwax, 2001).

Responsible research approaches include the use of ethical research protocols and

professional practices (Royal Commission, 1996; L. Smith, 1999). They also require an

understanding of tribal college protocols and a reflective and non-judgmental attitude (S. Wilson,

2003). As L. Smith (1999) points out, "the processes of consultation, collective meetings…and

shared decision making" (p. 129) are important aspects of this process. Thus, ultimately, the

tribal college decides which research is pursued; who the research is for; the effect it will have;

who carries it out; how it is carried out; how it is determined the research is worthwhile; who

owns the research; who will benefit; and how the findings will be shared (L. Smith, 2000).

Reciprocity

"Practices of reciprocity" involve "negotiating better research relationships" (L. Smith,

1999, p. 136 and p. 119) and are skills that are fundamental in the pursuit of respectful research

processes with Native American communities. Research in a tribal college context recognizes

the inter-connectedness and interrelatedness of the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional

dimensions and involves the individual, family, and community (Graveline, 1998; Weber-

Pillwax, 1999; S. Wilson, 2003). Because this research is community-oriented and requires a holistic approach, the assessment coordinator is accountable to the tribal college community, rather than to his or her own pursuit of knowledge (Cardinal, 2001; Steinhauer, 2002). Historically, Native American people have not benefited from research conducted in their communities; therefore, the research should originate in the tribal college community, serve its needs, and enrich its members' lives (Marker, 2004; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Weiss, 1998).

Reciprocity implies a collaborative research process, one that enables community members to participate in the planning, implementation, and analysis of research results (Royal Commission, 1996). It requires everyone's contributing input and control equally and results in "changing the power relationship in research partnerships" (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 10). It encourages researchers to listen, to hear, to attempt to understand, and only then to speak (Blanchard et al., 2000). It emphasizes the importance of frequently reporting back to the community for accountability purposes so that the community can use the information learned for improvement (L. Smith, 2000). It implies that the research questions being asked are relevant, valuable, and important to the community, and it implies a commitment to building relationships, which takes time. Furthermore, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) suggests that "wherever possible, research should support the transfer of skills to individuals and increase the capacity of the community to manage its own research" (p. 327).

Relevance

The Royal Commission also suggests important ways for ensuring that research is relevant to the community. When the tribal college is involved in defining the problems to be examined, it insures their relevance to the improvement of the community. As a result, the

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research engages the community directly in formulating solutions to problems it experiences. Ways this can be accomplished include involving the tribal college community members in the design of the project and incorporating local practices with technical knowledge (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). In addition, involving the community in the review of the findings and their reporting validates the content of the research and further builds upon the principles of relevance and reciprocity (Stringer, 1999). Research conducted in a tribal college needs to be useful to the community, to recognize and legitimize Indigenous knowledge[12] and skills, and to be grounded in the lives of the students and community (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Nelson-Barber, LaFrance, Trumbull, & Aburto, 2005; S. Wilson, 2003). Thus, Darou, Kurtness, and Hum (2000) concur that research in Native American communities needs to display significant social value as well as adaptation of the instruments to the culture.

NWIC has developed a mechanism for protecting the research interests of the college and the tribal communities it serves. Its Institutional Review Board reviews all research pertaining to the college and its tribal communities with the goal of conducting effective and culturally acceptable research that benefits its communities. In a similar way, NWIC has a five-member Board of Trustees that governs the college. The trustee members are appointed by the Lummi Indian Business Council and are representative of the tribes NWIC serves. The role of the NWIC Board of Trustees is to maintain accountability to the larger tribal communities. In an effort to do this, the president and administrative team meet monthly with the Board of Trustees to share triumphs and to consult about challenges. The Board of Trustees and the Institutional Review Board both work to assist in maintaining respectful, reciprocal, relevant, and responsible relations between NWIC's endeavours and the local communities it serves.

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[12] Refer to chapter 2 for a discussion about *Indigenous Knowledge and Culture*.

Research in tribal colleges has the potential to transform local communities (Blanchard et al., 2000; Nelson-Barber et al., 2005; L. Smith, 1999), but, to do so, it "requires a context that is consciously considered and purposefully incorporated into the research by the researcher" (Weber-Pillwax, 2001, p. 166). As long as the above-mentioned protocols of respect are followed, mainstream research methodologies can be integrated into those of tribal colleges (Marker, 2004); however, ultimately an Indigenous research methodology, based on Indigenous epistemology, is fundamental to the creation of Indigenous knowledge (Weber-Pillwax, 1999, 2001; S. Wilson, 2003). Blanchard et al. (2000) elaborate further on the importance of research in Native American communities: "We are interested in research and enthusiastic about its usefulness, but we want it to be inclusive of our knowledge, values and inquiry perspective, and we want to be genuine partners in its production, distribution and application" (p. 3).

State of Assessment in Tribal Colleges

To date, tribal colleges unfortunately have found it difficult to gather even basic assessment data. For instance, quantitative data measuring the most basic conventional institutional data referred to earlier (e.g., retention and graduation rates, time to degree completion, transfer and employment rates) are often difficult to collect in tribal colleges due to inadequate technology and to a lack of experienced human resources (Gagnon, 2007). Thus, the Carnegie Foundation (1997) asserts, "increased funding for staff dedicated to this research role is a necessary next step in the growth of the tribal colleges" (p. 94). Moreover, these conventional indicators alone do not provide a useful picture of what matters most to tribal colleges (Boyer, 2003).

While conventional assessment frameworks clearly do not reflect the values or address the needs of Native American communities, progressive assessment frameworks may reflect these values and address these needs, due to their more inclusive, relational, and process-oriented approaches (Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, 1999; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; L. Smith, 1999). The more innovative assessment programs focused on student learning outcomes are gaining attention as valuable tools in post-secondary education, yet they are not well developed in a Native American context (Carnegie, 1997). If they are developed in Native American contexts, these progressive assessment frameworks may anticipate and address concerns that derive from critical educational theory regarding issues of power and control in assessment and the political and economic context and motives surrounding assessment practices (A. Wilson & Cervero, 1997; Forester, 1993; L. Smith, 1999).

Traditionally, mainstream assessment has not been characterized by either the principles articulated above or the methodologies their implementation requires. Rather, it has been driven somewhat narrowly by Euro-American definitions of student success, definitions that have, to some extent, been imposed on tribal colleges in the past. In addition, as is the case of mainstream colleges, tribal colleges are now being asked to demonstrate institutional effectiveness to accreditation bodies in more rigorous ways. As there is a potential tension between outcomes-based assessment and Native American worldviews, some tribal college advocates initially were understandably concerned that Euro-American definitions of student success would be imposed on tribal colleges even more than they have been in the past (Crazy Bull, 1994); however, with the new emphasis on learning outcomes assessment, many tribal college advocates believe they now have an opportunity to re-define their own measures of

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success and, therefore, their own curricular and pedagogical values, in more culturally appropriate ways (Boyer, 2003). Moreover, even though mainstream colleges are focusing their assessment efforts primarily on academic learning outcomes, tribal colleges believe that *cultural* outcomes are at least as important as cognitive, psychomotor, and affective outcomes, if not more important (Astin, 1999). The broader mandate of tribal colleges also provides them with an opportunity to widen the scope of their assessment efforts by articulating and documenting community-wide outcomes in the tribal communities they serve. Indeed, tribal colleges emphasize community-wide outcomes, such as the "self-determination of Native Peoples" (NWIC, 2005b, p. 4), in their mission statements. These outcomes are difficult to measure, especially in two-year colleges. To approach assessment in a meaningful way, tribal colleges would need to track not only their ability to improve the lives of students, but also their ability to improve conditions within tribal communities.

In this context, the task of assessment in tribal colleges "is to measure a college's ability to both serve a community and build community" (Boyer, 2003, p. 143). To date, Paul Boyer is the only person to articulate elements of an assessment model in a tribal college context. He suggests that tribal college assessment programs address six levels of accountability, which can satisfy the needs of accreditation bodies and funding agencies while also providing a means for tribal colleges to monitor their progress, demonstrate their strengths, act on their weaknesses, and fulfill their mission statements. He suggests that tribal colleges focus their assessment efforts on the following six aspects: mission statement, cultural outcomes, larger campus community, learning outcomes, wider tribal community, and communities beyond the reservation (Boyer, 2003). In this section, I elaborate upon and apply Boyer's framework by drawing on current best

practices in mainstream assessment and adapting them in culturally appropriate ways to a tribal college context.

<center>Mission Statement</center>

Boyer's first area of accountability concerns familiarity with, and support for, the institution's mission statement. As mentioned earlier, tribal colleges were established with a two-fold mission: (a) to preserve traditional tribal culture and knowledge and (b) to provide certificates or associate's (two-year) degrees that provide Native American students with better employment opportunities and facilitate transfer to four-year colleges or universities (Fann, 2002). This two-fold mission is not well understood, is complex, and is challenging to implement, let alone measure. Boyer (2003) suggests that faculty, staff, students, and the larger tribal community can collectively examine the mission statement, question it, refine it, and engage in on-going dialogue about it, in order to increase the level of familiarity with and support for it. "Appreciation of the mission statement," he states, "encourages members of a college community to look beyond a lack of institutional resources and focus instead on the strength of the college's vision" (p. 144).

The mission statement and goals of a tribal college should provide a clear understanding of the college's institutional intentions so that program outcomes can be directly developed from and linked to them (J. Nichols, 2002). The mission statement and institutional goals are generally articulated through a strategic planning initiative. Once articulated, the mission statement and goals provide guidance for administrative decisions, direction for each of its programs, a framework within which academic units can assess and improve their programs, and a structure for overall assessment and improvement (J. Nichols, 2002). Therefore, the mission statement and goals of the college need to be specific enough to provide clear direction for the

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college and highlight its unique niche (Mentkowski et al., 2000). When the mission and goals are clarified, and assessment indicators are developed, students are more likely to "experience the curriculum as purposeful and connected" (Mentkowski et al., 2000, p. 322). It is therefore important that the indicators chosen to demonstrate student success reflect the college's mission and goals. When this is the case, it also becomes apparent when the mission statement and goals no longer reflect the direction of the college and need to be updated.

In view of the challenges tribal colleges face both in fulfilling their ambitious missions and goals and in meeting the needs of the students they serve, a process whereby they are able to measure their success and make adjustments and refinements in the direction they are taking is vital. For example, in addition to preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges, many tribal colleges provide access to career training and retraining, developmental coursework, continuing education, and, most significantly, cultural enrichment. Moreover, tribal colleges serve a challenging student population, many of whom live below the poverty line and have minimal academic preparation. Students represent a wide range of ages and have various intentions for enrollment (Boyer, 1990). Therefore, agreeing on a set of institutional goals, which addresses the needs of a diverse student population, can be quite a challenge. The process of ongoing reflection needed for refinement of mission statements, goals, and indicators assists tribal colleges' efforts to address these challenges and more efficiently focus their resources on their students' needs.

Cultural Outcomes

The second area pertains to how successful the tribal college is at supporting cultural outcomes, such as increasing students' sense of cultural identity and increasing connection to their tribe and community (American Indian College Fund, 2002). Tribal colleges are only just

beginning to articulate these outcomes, let alone assess them (Marker, 2000). For instance, Turtle Mountain Community College, a tribal college in North Dakota, bases its curriculum on the seven Ojibwa teachings of bravery, wisdom, love, respect, honesty, humility, and truth (Ortiz & Boyer, 2003b). The college developed a survey to examine its students' learning experiences and to determine how effectively faculty were integrating traditional culture and knowledge into the curriculum. The first time staff conducted the survey the results indicated that only a handful of instructors were basing the curriculum on the culture. These results stimulated a flurry of open discussions about priorities and new approaches. After many discussions and in-service meetings, increased cultural awareness resulted in greater integration of culture into the classroom. Turtle Mountain Community College is now trying to determine how students are applying this cultural knowledge outside the classroom (Yellow Bird, 1998-1999).

In the winter quarter of 2003, NWIC took a similar approach and had similar results. It conducted a survey of instructors to determine the teaching and assessment approaches they were using (see Appendix B, *Survey of Teaching and Assessment Methods*, for a copy of the report). This survey also asked basic questions about writing, technology, and Native American cultural content in courses taught that quarter. At least 35% of all courses reported having minimal to no cultural enrichment with Native American materials, and only 15% reported being primarily based on Native American materials. Twenty one percent of courses used Native American speakers and approximately half the courses reported meeting the needs of students by incorporating Native American texts, perspectives, films, writers, websites, music, and art. The discussion of these results contributed to faculty enthusiasm for establishing clear standards, including cultural standards, for all NWIC programs.

Tohono O'Odham Community College has another innovative approach. It requires all staff and students to take the college's Native American language and history courses within their first year of employment or attendance. Several faculty have reported enhanced understanding of cultural issues and a more unified approach with this initiative (St. Clair, 2006).

One of the most challenging areas of this kind of assessment in a tribal college context is that of first determining and then assessing cultural outcomes. This is one of the areas where the least amount of clarity exists as it is up to each individual college to determine for itself its desired cultural outcomes. In addition, assessing these outcomes can become extremely difficult when individuals from different tribes are represented and have different views about this sensitive subject (Gagnon, 2007). Alaskan Native educators have developed a set of culturally responsive standards for students, educators, schools, curriculum, and community, which may well serve as a model for Indigenous colleges. These standards are articulated in a document titled *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1998).

Finally, Demmert (2005) highlights six criteria he believes are essential for culturally-based Native American education programs: Culturally-based Native American education programs (a) require students to learn Native languages; (b) have "pedagogies that stress traditional cultural characteristics"; (c) have teaching strategies that "are congruent with the traditional culture as well as contemporary ways of knowing and learning"; (d) have a "curriculum that is based on traditional cultures, which recognizes the importance of Native spirituality and places"; (e) "have strong Native community participation including partnering with parents, elders, and other community resources"; and (f) have "knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community" (p. 4). When articulating cultural outcomes, tribal

colleges may want to consider Demmert's suggestions and the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1998).

<div align="center">Learning Outcomes</div>

Learning outcomes pertain to measuring student learning, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor outcomes (I discussed cultural outcomes in the *Cultural Outcomes* section, in chapter 4) (American Indian College Fund, 2002; Archibald & Selkirk, 1995). All learning outcomes may be demonstrated at three levels: the college level, where students are assessed throughout their time at the college with regard to a set of general education or college outcomes; the program level, where students demonstrate their learning of program outcomes through, for example, capstone experiences; and the course level, where students are evaluated on their short-term learning of course outcomes. An example of a common college outcome may be that *students will be able to write Standard English*. A program outcome might be that *students will be able to conduct environmental assessments, impact monitoring, modeling, and prediction*. A course outcome in a math course might be that *students will be able to complete an income tax return*.

College Outcomes

Tribal colleges are just beginning to articulate college outcomes. When students are evaluated for college outcomes both at entrance to and at exit from college, this is referred to as *value-added assessment*. Value-added assessment, where students are their own controls, emphasizes gains in students' abilities to identify the impact of their college education. This approach requires buy-in from faculty and staff, effective leadership, an effective computerized tracking system, a commitment to use the results, and time (Stufflebeam, 2001). Experts in the

assessment field advocate the use of course-embedded assessments (also known as secondary analysis of course papers or projects) rather than, for example, the use of separate "testing days" to assess college outcomes (Banta, 2003; Suskie, 2003). As the name implies, course-embedded assessments involve evaluation of student work that is done in the classroom; in this case, however, samples of work may be assessed by faculty a second time to assess college outcomes. Course-embedded assessment becomes even more essential in tribal colleges where many students enroll with the intention of only completing one or two courses (J. Nichols, 2002). The advantages of this approach over separate testing days for a tribal college are that it is cost-effective (because the same assessment tool can be used for two purposes) and some students are motivated by grades to perform their best.

In addition, in the opinion of Gagnon (2007), a professor of Indian Studies at the University of North Dakota and a tribal college evaluator, more innovative assessment strategies that take advantage of small class sizes may be employed at tribal colleges:

> Small size means that assessment can be more informal — less testing instrument oriented. If you have only 5 faculty members teaching general ed. courses, then they can get together regularly to describe student learning based on their intimate knowledge of students in their courses and in the context of the college. (p. 1)

Tribal colleges are beginning to think about college-wide assessment in more creative ways.

Program Outcomes

The assessment of program outcomes is central to a tribal college's commitment to accomplishing its mission and goals (J. Nichols, 2002; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). Because implementation of the college's mission takes place at the program level through the identification of outcomes linked to the college's mission and goals, assessment results indicating that program outcomes are being accomplished imply that the college's mission is

being accomplished (J. Nichols, 2002). Tribal colleges are just beginning to develop program-level assessment processes (Gagnon, 2007).

Once an institution has agreed upon its mission statement and goals, there is general consensus among assessment experts about the subsequent steps that should be taken in developing a program assessment plan (Maki, 2002; Mentkowski et al., 2000; Rossi et al., 2004; Stark & Lattuca, 1997). The first step is for each program to identify and define its learning outcomes. These outcomes clearly state what the program would like its students to be able to do upon graduation, as well as specify the expected level of performance. Next, the related activities and capstone experiences that will be used to teach the material are identified, as well as appropriate evaluation methods (both quantitative and qualitative) for assessing student achievement for each outcome at key stages in the program. The number of outcomes to be assessed (perhaps three or four) is limited to those that are generally weak and reasonably attainable, both "measurable" and observable, in the allocated period of time (The State University of New York Geneseo, 2004; Walvoord & Anderson, 1998).

After determining how the results will be used for program improvement, the faculty can then implement the evaluation methods to determine the extent to which learning outcomes are being achieved. In order to do this, criteria are identified that clearly articulate successful accomplishment of learning outcomes (e.g., 80% of students completing the program will score 4 or higher on the rubric for this outcome for the final project in the graduating seminar) (refer to Table 3.8). Later, results are communicated to faculty, staff, and students so that recommendations and decisions can be made to improve learning.

Ideally, the tribal college implements its assessment activities on a regular cycle during which it may review and possibly modify its mission, goals, or program outcomes. Ultimately,

of course, the results are used to improve learning and teaching. As expected, a time-line is developed to track the assessment of program outcomes, and the entire assessment process is reviewed to determine whether it is providing the most useful information possible (Bresciani, 2003; Hatfield, 1997; The State University of New York Geneseo, 2004; University of Wisconsin, 2004). To assist in organizing this information, the process of systematically determining which outcomes have been achieved and how the information will be used can be recorded in a program assessment plan similar to the one in Table 3.8. A point that is worth emphasizing is the order in which assessment activities at the program level are implemented: The intended educational outcomes are established first and then the appropriate means of assessment are identified (J. Nichols & Nichols, 2000). The approach to assessment planning outlined above provides a valuable tool as it requires faculty and administrators to "close the loop" and to demonstrate the use of assessment results to improve learning (J. Nichols & Nichols, 2000).

James Nichols (2002) points out additional considerations that are equally important to the organization of a successful program assessment plan. First, it is important to gain the confidence of program chairs, faculty, and staff by carefully explaining the process and how the data will be used. As discussed in chapter 3, the key to the success of any assessment program is that it is faculty-driven, so the administrators' roles are limited to encouraging and providing support and resources. Second, to ease the burden on faculty, who commonly lack the time and resources to be adequately engaged with the development of an assessment plan, existing data and course-embedded assessments should be used as much as possible (J. Nichols, 2002). Third, successful program assessment plans focus their efforts on end results (outcomes), rather than evaluating the process, which has been the traditional focus of assessment efforts at this level

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(SUNYG, 2004). This outcomes-based approach will be unfamiliar and even uncomfortable to some faculty as the focus is on the *impact* of faculty actions (i.e., learning), rather than on the action itself (i.e., teaching). Finally, a successful program-level assessment process educates the students about the role of assessment in their education (University of Wisconsin, 2004).

These different elements of a successful program-level assessment process can be incorporated into a wide variety of situations. Because tribal colleges provide an assortment of programs to serve students with various educational objectives or intentions (e.g., two-year college transfer, continuing education, vocational training), the methods chosen to assess different programs might vary. Nevertheless, it is wise for all programs to select a combination of direct and indirect indicators of student learning, as well as institutional data. For instance, when assessing a program that provides vocational training, a tribal college might collect information about how students performed in their apprenticeships or internship (direct indicator), how graduates evaluate their career training through focus groups or surveys (indirect indicators), how successful students have been in obtaining suitable employment (institutional data), or whether the college is meeting local tribal or regional labor market and economic needs (institutional data) (Alfred et al., 2000; Banta, 1999; Seybert, 2003). Likewise, a developmental education program at a tribal college may evaluate a writing assignment (direct indicator), conduct a course evaluation (indirect indicator), document course completion rates (institutional data), or monitor student migration from non-credit to credit courses and programs (institutional data) (Banta, 1999). Other forms of program evaluation include external exam, portfolio, classroom, capstone course, research or senior thesis assessment (direct indicators); student self-assessment and entry, midway and exit surveys, focus groups or interviews (indirect indicators). Finally, as a side note, at the program level, although only a few relevant learning outcomes are

generally assessed, they are likely to be assessed in different courses at different stages of program completion.

Course Outcomes

As I discussed in the previous section, program assessment combines the assessment of key learning outcomes in capstone experiences (direct indicators) with indirect indicators, and institutional data and reports the information back to the department in relation to program goals to improve learning and teaching. In contrast, in course assessment, the work of students is primarily evaluated by the instructors, using mostly direct indicators that are based on course outcomes to generate grades and to improve their teaching and the students' learning (Walvoord, 2004). James Nichols (2002) notes that learning outcomes are "changes that result from instruction" and must be "focused on student learning and the improvement of teaching and learning" (p. 157). These learning outcomes may include those required to be successful in upper level courses, in obtaining employment, or in becoming a contributing member of society (J. Nichols, 2002). It is preferable to assess these learning outcomes in the classroom using authentic assessment tools. An example of an indirect indicator of student learning at the course level is the use of student course evaluations that include questions about how well students think they have mastered each of the learning outcomes as well as the quality of the instruction (Walvoord, 2004).

Authentic Assessment Techniques

In a tribal college context, elements of Indigenous knowledge can best be passed on to students when traditional teaching and assessment methods, such as apprenticeships, observations, ceremonies, and practice are employed (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). Crazy Bull

(2006b) emphasizes that "Native people are experts in experiential learning, learning by observation and practice, and in reflective learning. Our cultural teachings are grounded in this type of learning" (p. 4). The incorporation of traditional culture and knowledge throughout the curriculum makes the curriculum more relevant and accessible to students (Boyer, 1990; Fixico, 2000). Because students respond more favorably to experientially grounded and contextualized learning experiences, the use of authentic assessment tools over traditional tests is a natural and more appropriate approach to assessment in tribal colleges. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) emphasize the importance of measuring

> students' achievement through the students' ability to effectively perform meaningful and contextually appropriate tasks…that allow for the integration of various forms of knowledge and the application and display of that knowledge in a variety of ways. (p. 10)

NWIC, as an example, has experimented with assessing learning outcomes in more authentic and creative ways. Its Tribal Environmental and Natural Resources Management Program "emphasized practical competency" and "an ability to synthesize and to solve complex real-world problems":

> Important measures of success include whether the students stay grounded in cultural values; maintain self-respect and a healthy sense of self within the context of community; are able to use critical and integrative abilities to problem solve and imagine creative solutions; and make substantial improvement in writing, reading comprehension, speaking and computational abilities. (Burns et al., 2002, pp. 57-58)

By making the curriculum, as well as the assessment of student learning, more relevant and authentic, students are able to make meaningful connections between their coursework and their life experiences.

As instructors in tribal colleges are being encouraged to increase the relevancy of the coursework to their students' lives and to use more authentic assessment methods in class, portfolios are becoming a more widely accepted and encouraged tool for documenting student

learning and improvement over time. They provide a more creative and real-life option than traditional tests and are an effective way of evaluating general knowledge and learning in tribal college programs. Student portfolios are a collection of the students' work over the course of their college experience and may include writing samples, self-assessments and reflections, videotapes, speeches, and so on. Colleges that have introduced portfolio systems have found that portfolios encourage better communication between faculty, students, and advisors (J. Nichols, 2002). Student portfolios also encourage the use of multiple assessment methods to evaluate competency of important learning outcomes (Maki, 2002; SUNYG, 2004). Ideally, several faculty should evaluate student work at multiple points of their college career (Walvoord, 2004). Tribal colleges are already experimenting with promising assessment methods, such as portfolios, self-evaluation, and applied "real-life" situations, which can demonstrate student progress in the more elusive affective learning outcomes.

<u>Larger Campus Community</u>

Boyer's third area of accountability pertains to the larger campus community, including direct indicators (specifically college outcomes), indirect indicators, and institutional data, which I previously discussed in this doctoral thesis. Because tribal colleges' resources are substantially limited, it is highly recommended that they begin the assessment processes by using data that are currently available and taking an inventory of their assessment practices in a systematic way (i.e., an assessment inventory) (CSHE, 2002; J. Nichols, 2002).

Many tribal colleges are already doing some assessment work and have existing data — either direct or indirect indicators, or institutional data — that can be tapped. For instance, some have entrance or licensure exams, some test graduating students (with standard or localized tests or performance tests), and others conduct graduate or satisfaction surveys. In addition, most

colleges have an institutional data system (e.g., financial aid, registration, and payroll) from which they generate reports that can also be used for assessment purposes (e.g., transcript analysis). For example, all accredited tribal colleges are expected to generate Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDs) reports, which include information about students, degree programs, faculty, and finances, and these reports may be adapted for use in the assessment program.

Direct Indicators (College Outcomes)

Some tribal colleges are beginning to articulate broad college outcomes, such as writing proficiency, through entrance tests and then capstone courses, videotapes of performances, portfolios, internships, or exit exams. Much work remains to be done in this regard as this work is grueling and time-consuming and gets at the core values of the college. Refer to the section titled *College Outcomes* in chapter 4 for a more in-depth discussion of college outcomes.

Indirect Indicators

After a tribal college inventories its current assessment procedures, James Nichols (2002) recommends conducting attitudinal surveys. There are many types of surveys that can be administered to current students, alumni, employers, faculty, staff, administrators, and the tribal community, depending on the needs of the college. Colleges can either use existing standardized surveys or, depending on the resources available, develop their own. Fortunately, many standardized surveys now allow tribal colleges to add a set of their own questions at the end of the survey, which provides for customizability. Conducting national attitudinal surveys is one way to be active in the assessment process, the advantages being the costs are minimal and the tests provide baseline information while the assessment program is being developed. Especially

in a tribal college context, alumni surveys can provide valuable information about further educational progress and performance, satisfaction with the college experience, and job acquisition and performance (J. Nichols, 2002). Finally, because a significant factor in student retention and success is satisfaction, these surveys can also provide useful information for assessment (Banta, 1999; J. Nichols, 2002; Ouimet, 2003).

Institutional Data

Most tribal colleges are now tracking patterns of student enrollment, retention, graduation, transfer, and, sometimes, employment. Although it would be extremely valuable for tribal colleges to collect, use, and interpret this information, several constraints exist (over and above lack of finances and resources). One of these is the challenge of creating standardized definitions for calculating retention, graduation, and course completion rates. Up until recently, it was virtually impossible to compare data among tribal colleges, or from year to year within tribal colleges, because of the lack of consistent definitions.

Tribal colleges are starting to define these rates. In fact, in 2004, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium initiated a new tribal college project — called the American Indian Measures for Success:

> The American Indian Measures for Success (AIMS) project is a two year project with two goals: to define relevant quantitative and qualitative indicator data of American Indian student success, as determined by the tribal colleges, and to develop and implement a strategy for collecting, analyzing, and presenting annually the success indicator data using electronic information management tools. Through data collection and analysis, this project will be the foundation for systemic reform that significantly increases — and for the first time, accurately measures — American Indian success in higher education. (Systemic Research, 2006, p. 1)

This comprehensive and uniform set of tribal college data is now being collected annually from all tribal colleges and is being used by AIHEC to appeal for tribal college funding and support.

One constraint of collecting assessment information is that important data, which are needed to interpret assessment results, are frequently missing. For example, knowing a student's *intentions* (e.g., to obtain a two-year degree, to learn a traditional language or culture) upon enrollment is central to any assessment effort — especially in a tribal college setting — because it is difficult to monitor student success without it. For instance, in order to calculate a graduation rate, the college must only include in the calculation those students who enrolled with the intention of completing a two-year degree (J. Nichols, 2002). The college can use this information for many purposes. By combining the students' intentions or reasons for attending college with other information such as GPA, gender, age, or number of children, important information can be generated about patterns of student flow. Moreover, tribal colleges can determine how successful students are at accomplishing their goals and explore whether students upgrade their original goals after attending college (J. Nichols, 2002).

The information gleaned from multiple assessment activities at the larger campus community level should include direct and indirect indicators and institutional data and can be used extensively for many purposes, including initiating meaningful conversations about improvement among faculty, staff, students, and the community.

Wider Tribal Community

The next level of accountability Boyer refers to is to the wider tribal community — the "importance of connections, service, and community" (Ortiz & Boyer, 2003a, p. 46). Toward this end, tribal colleges are exploring what it means to be agents of change in the larger community, as well as how to measure the impact of the college on the community. Eventually, tribal colleges hope to strengthen local economies, improve standards of living, increase household income, revitalize Native language and culture, restore traditional values and skills,

rebuild cultural knowledge, and generally provide hope for tribal community members (Boyer, 2003). For example, Turtle Mountain Community College is making an initial attempt to measure its impact on the wider tribal community; all staff (including faculty) are asked to participate in extended community affairs, and information about their staff's involvement in these community activities is reported in their final assessment report (Yellow Bird, 1998-1999).

Given their limited resources, it is extremely difficult for tribal colleges to assess their impact on the wider tribal community. Community impact surveys of local tribal members can enquire about the amount of contact they have with the college as well as their overall impressions and satisfaction with its programs and services (Alfred et al., 2000). In addition, tribal colleges could benefit from needs assessments to determine the priorities from the tribal members' perspectives. Furthermore, alumni surveys can provide much-needed information regarding the ultimate economic, personal, cultural, and other benefits for the students and communities served by tribal colleges.

Finally, Crazy Bull (2004) notes that the trend toward incorporating *service learning* at tribal colleges has provided a

> formal mechanism for student and community engagement. Service learning experiences and learning communities help colleges and universities address key elements of accreditation — student outcomes, assessment, and community engagement… Success of students — their retention and completion of their programs of study are closely linked to their engagement — so these opportunities also strengthen the most basic mission of higher education in the United States — to develop an educated, pluralistic, democratic population. (p. 1)

President Crazy Bull explains that

> despite over 30 years of control of Indian Education by Native people, we still struggle to create culturally-relevant opportunities. Tribal colleges that have been using service learning strategies find that those opportunities are very grounded in community and that they can make a difference in their communities. (p. 1)

As expected, a great deal of work needs to be done in assessing the impact of tribal colleges on their wider tribal communities and in creating culturally relevant learning opportunities. Nonetheless, the trend toward formally incorporating service learning into tribal college curricula is making that job easier.

Finally, in order to assess the impact of tribal colleges on local communities, tribal colleges may develop direct indicators, indirect indicators, and data at the community level to monitor their progress.

<div align="center">Communities beyond the Reservation</div>

Boyer's final level of accountability pertains to communities beyond the reservation, including accreditation bodies, federal funding agencies, and charitable organizations who are supporting the tribal colleges. Although positive in many ways, these relationships sometimes result in tension when tribal colleges' values are questioned or challenged.

For instance, Crazy Bull (2006) states that for tribal colleges, accreditation means "participating in a process that requires us to integrate our understanding of the world as Native people and as Native educators with a different, often western/European based understanding of higher education" (p. 6). She outlines special accreditation issues for tribal colleges including the

> unique cultural environment, language experiences, social and familial relationships, tribal government's role, rural and often economically poor and isolated environments, older student population, increasing need to respond to younger students with different expectations, majority of students are women, unusually high number of non-college ready students, generally very limited financial and human resources compared to other educational institutions, often different delivery strategies in use, and pedagogy of teaching and learning based in tribal knowledge and worldview. (p. 7)

However, as long as tribal colleges are dependent upon, and accountable to, these agencies for accreditation, funding, or support, tribal colleges will have to use assessment in creative ways to resolve this tension. Work in this area has barely begun.

With the limited time and scarce resources at their disposal, tribal colleges struggle with balancing the needs of the accreditation bodies and funding agencies with the priorities and values of the college, as well as their capacity to generate the data. In addition to the overwhelming challenge this presents, Marker (2000) points out a potential challenge in the accreditation process: "As First Nations continue to create programs that celebrate and promote language and identity, they must negotiate cultural outcomes with agencies and institutions that control funding and accreditation" (p. 30). To address this difficulty, tribal colleges might ultimately have to play a role in educating the accreditation bodies and funding agencies regarding culturally appropriate outcomes. If tribal colleges are successful, the accreditation bodies and funding agencies might be more receptive to the colleges' "culturally responsive structures and programs" (Marker, 2000, p. 30) and responsive to the creative, unique, and unconventional ways tribal colleges choose to assess their cultural outcomes. The challenges for colleges will be to determine how to assess such outcomes in a culturally appropriate manner. On the other hand, this challenge presents an opportunity to break new ground, not only in the field of tribal college assessment, but also in the entire assessment field — which has traditionally ignored these kinds of outcomes.

In the meantime, the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) formed in 2002 with the intention of creating an accreditation process for Indigenous higher education institutions worldwide. It is "committed to building partnerships that restore and retain Indigenous spirituality, cultures and languages, homelands, social systems, economic

systems and self determination" and "united in the collective synergy of self determination through control of higher education" (WINHEC, 2003, p. 3). Although unique in its mission in that it recognizes Indigenous culture, traditions, worldviews, and history as valuable assets, like mainstream accreditation bodies, WINHEC evaluates the quality of a college by how well it is able to accomplish its mission (WINHEC, 2003).

WINHEC membership includes individuals from institutions from Alaska, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia, Canada, Hawaii, Saamiland (Norway) and the continental United States. To date, WINHEC has approved three undergraduate programs — from Te Wananga o Aotearoa, Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi, and Te Wananga-o-Raukawa — all colleges in New Zealand. In 2006, it supported an accreditation request from the Seven Generations Education Institute of Ontario and Sami allaskuvla/Sami University (Norway). Other institutions intending to pursue WINHEC accreditation include the First Nations Technical Institute (Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Canada); Ke Ala Pono (an Indigenous college in Hawaii); Halau Wanana and Ka Haka 'ula o Ke'elikolani (at the University of Hawaii); and the University College of the North Manitoba (Canada) (WINHEC, 2006, p. 13).

Conclusion

Using a holistic approach, the first half of this chapter proposed a set of ethical considerations that need to permeate assessment processes at tribal colleges with the belief that the assessment *process* itself is as important as the ultimate *product*. Linda Smith (1999) points out that "negotiating and transforming institutional practices and research frameworks is as significant as the carrying out of actual research programs" (p. 140). This will be evidenced when the work proceeds in a respectful, responsible, and reciprocal manner, where relationships are developed through a participatory and consultative process, and when the project can

maintain its relevance for the college and all those involved. The Northwest Commission on

Colleges and Universities (2005) reaffirms this belief when it emphasizes that personnel from all

segments of the institution, including faculty, staff, students, administration, and the governing

board, must be included in the accreditation, self-study, and assessment processes. This

participatory approach is important because processes of consultation and shared decision

making are essential aspects of educational research in a tribal college context (L. Smith, 1999).

The second half of this chapter discussed current assessment initiatives in tribal colleges

in the United States and explored possibilities for adapting best practices in mainstream

assessment to a tribal college context in culturally appropriate ways. I used Boyer's (2003)

suggestion of focusing tribal college assessment efforts on six levels of accountability — the

mission statement, cultural outcomes, larger campus community, learning outcomes, wider tribal

community, and communities beyond the reservation — as a framework to explore these

assessment initiatives.

CHAPTER 5 METHODOLOGY

In order to respond to the research questions — (1) What criteria are best used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context? (2) Which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1? and (3) What preconditions and other contextual factors contribute to the relative success or failure of different elements of the NWIC assessment program? — I conducted a case study of the assessment program at NWIC. This approach honours the principles outlined by scholars of Indigenous research in chapter 4, uses several data collection methods, such as surveys, participant-observation, and document review, and is informed by the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Model developed by Daniel Stufflebeam (2003b). The case study approach and CIPP model are described below in more detail.

Case Studies

According to Robert Yin (2003), a case study

> is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident…The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result, relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result, benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 13-14)

We can learn a lot from a single case that can apply to other cases and situations (Stake, 1995). A case study is appropriate under a number of circumstances: when it is a *critical* case used to test existing theory; when it is a *unique* case; when it is a *representative* or typical case; when it is a *revelatory* case; and when it is a *longitudinal* case (Yin, 2003). In addition, a case may be used as a *pilot*.

This case study — the assessment program at NWIC — fulfills several of these conditions. The study is *representative*, in that NWIC is a typical tribal college, and it is *longitudinal*, in that NWIC is easily accessible to me over a long period of time. It is also a *revelatory* case in that it can reveal crucial information about assessment in a tribal college context from which other tribal colleges can learn (by modifying generalizations about mainstream assessment to a tribal college context). Finally, it is a *pilot*, in that it is one of the first studies of assessment in a tribal college context.

The literature outlines various limitations of case studies. In fact, some researchers call case studies weak, subjective, imprecise, and lacking rigor (Stufflebeam, 2001; Yin, 2003). Yin (2003), who has written a comprehensive text about case studies, counters these arguments by suggesting that these criticisms of the case study method are "misdirected" (p. 10). He believes the lack of rigor often characterizing these studies has been mainly due to careless research techniques because skills for conducting case studies have not been well defined up until now. Stake (1995), another case study researcher, sees the subjective and qualitative nature of case studies as a strength that is essential to understanding (as long as precautions are taken to minimize misunderstanding). Also, in the past, case studies commonly took a long time to complete, were expensive, had little impact on social practice, and resulted in long, poorly written reports (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). All of these concerns can be addressed if the researcher takes the time to properly organize the case study. Others believe that case studies leave little grounds for generalization; however, Yin (2003) claims that, although case studies cannot be used for "statistical generalization" (i.e., case studies typically do not collect empirical data that lend themselves to statistical analysis, so this form of generalization is not typically made from case studies), they can be used to "generalize theories" (also referred to as "analytic

generalization") (pp. 31-32). I will discuss the generalizability of case study findings in more detail later in this chapter.

Case studies are commonly used because they are valuable tools, especially in evaluation research, that offer great flexibility to examine a program in an in-depth, holistic way as it naturally occurs (Alkin & Christie, 2004; Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Merriam, 1998; Schwandt, 1994; Stufflebeam, 2001; Yin, 2003). A case study can be used in evaluation research, such as this study, where it is used to explain, describe, illustrate, and explore various elements of the NWIC assessment program and how these may apply to different situations (J. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005; M. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Yin, 2003). Stufflebeam (2001) evaluated 22 different evaluation approaches using the program evaluation standards of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy and found that the case study method was one of the most effective. These program evaluation standards (The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994) — some of which have already been discussed in various sections of this doctoral thesis — are abided by during my research. The accuracy standard comprises reliability and validity issues, which are of particular concern and which are elaborated upon below.

<u>Validity and Reliability Issues in Case Study Design</u>

The quality of a case study design is essential, and it can be evaluated using several validity and reliability criteria. Whereas validity is "the extent to which a measure actually measures what it is intended to measure" (Rossi et al., 2004, p. 436), reliability is "the extent to which a measure produces the same results when used repeatedly to measure the same thing" (Rossi et al., 2004, p. 433). The following section overviews three different types of validity and one type of reliability criterion and suggests ways of improving the quality of a case study in

each of these respects. In this case study, I attempted to maximize validity and reliability by

addressing all of these criteria.

Construct Validity

       Construct validity is the process of "establishing correct operational measures for the

concepts being studied" (Yin, 2003, p. 34). This is a challenge in case study research because of

the subjective nature of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1987); therefore, in

order to minimize this concern, the researcher uses multiple sources of information and

"establish[es] a chain of evidence" (Yin, 2003, p. 34) during the data collection phase. A "chain

of evidence" is a clear association between the research questions, the information, and the

conclusions (Yin, 2003). The

> rationale for using multiple sources of evidence…allows an investigator to address a
> broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues. However, the most
> important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development
> of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation. (p. 98)

Thus, triangulation can be used to "disconfirm major assertions" (Stake, 1995, p. 87). Also, in

order to improve construct validity, during the writing phase, the researcher has drafts of the

report reviewed by participants in the case study. This way, facts and interpretations can be

corroborated and an opportunity is provided to make corrections (Yin, 2003).

       I used a combination of complementary data collection methods or sources of

information — including surveys, participant-observation, and document review — during this

case study to triangulate the data in an attempt to maximize construct validity (Stake, 1995). In

this case study, I used at least one of these three methods to gather the information needed to

answer each of the three research questions. I used the participant-observation method for each

question. To illustrate: I used a review of the literature combined with my observations and

experiences in the assessment field at a tribal college as a basis for the response to Research

Question 1. In addition to these two methods, the responses to research questions 2 and 3 are

based on surveys of professional staff, faculty, and administrators — and, to a lesser extent, on

the analysis of NWIC documents. Surveys, participant-observation, and document review will

be discussed further in the following section.

Surveys

Structured surveys can be used to target specific topics and can provide valuable insight.

At the same time, there is a danger that bias or inaccuracy can be introduced into the process due

to a number of reasons: survey questions may be unclear or imprecise; respondents may

remember inaccurately or provide dishonest responses; and the relationship between the

researcher and the respondent may be poor. In this case, many staff, faculty, and administrators

and the NWIC Institutional Review Board reviewed the survey questions and provided valuable

input. In addition, I protected anonymity.

Participant-observation

One advantage of participant-observation as a means of collecting information is that the

observations of real activities and behaviours take place in context. In addition, this method is

unobtrusive and provides access and insight into people's struggles in challenging situations

(Stake, 1995). The disadvantages of the participant-observation method include that it can be

time-consuming and selective and the possibility that the presence of an observer may influence

or even change the course of the events being observed. Furthermore, a bias may result due to

the researcher's manipulating events (Yin, 2003, p. 86). Most of these disadvantages were

minimized in this case study because I am an NWIC employee and my observations are a by-

product of my work.

Document review

Document review involves reviewing relevant documents to the research in order to make inferences and to verify basic information (Yin, 2003). Sometimes it provides information that is unanticipated (Stake, 1995). The advantages of document review are that documents are permanent, secure, unobtrusive, and provide a wide coverage over time and of events. The disadvantages include that they can be difficult to retrieve, may be incomplete and, therefore, biased, the author may be biased, or access might be denied. In this study, I reviewed and referred to NWIC's accreditation reports, strategic plan, and survey reports.

Because each of these methods (i.e., surveys, participant-observation, and document review) has advantages and disadvantages, construct validity is maximized when several are used together. Furthermore, when both the researcher's perspective and the participants' perspectives are considered, the research tends to be better informed.

Internal Validity

Internal validity is the extent to which a condition can be determined to be caused by another condition (Stake, 1995). The researcher can address this concern during the data analysis stage by comparing results with expected outcomes for consistency (Stake, 1995), by building explanations, by addressing alternative explanations or interpretations, by being attentive to all the information, and by using logic models (such as tracing events over time in a flow chart) (Yin, 2003). In addition, triangulating data can minimize threats to internal validity. Internal validity is more of a concern for explanatory or causal case studies.

External Validity

     External validity is the extent to which a study's conclusions or findings can be generalized to another population or situation (J. Gall et al., 2005; M. Gall et al., 2003). As mentioned earlier, empirical data from case study research cannot be generalized to other cases; however, findings in a case study can be generalized to theory, and this theory can be used to examine other cases (Flyvbjerk, 2006; Yin, 2003). Therefore, a *theoretical proposition* can orient the analysis (Yin, 2003, p. 111). Stake (1995) states that "valid modification of generalization can occur in case study" (p. 8) research; therefore, the researcher should "indicate how the findings might be extrapolated, how they could be interpreted in various circumstances, and how they accommodate theoretical discourse" (p. 93). Following this logic, I can identify criteria from mainstream assessment research and determine which of these criteria applies to assessment in a tribal college context. From these findings, theory can be generated that can be applied to other tribal colleges (Feagin et al., 1991). Marshall and Rossman (1999), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Talbot (1995) discuss four ways to enhance the trustworthiness of a study: credibility/validity (through triangulation of sources, data, and methods); transferability/generalizability (through thick descriptions); dependability (through adjusting the steps of the research design); and confirmability (through verifying steps of the research, keeping a research log including thoughts along the way, and having participants in the study review the report). Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba underscore the importance of ensuring the researcher spends ample time in the community of interest. As an insider to the college, I took all of these steps in this study in order to improve its trustworthiness.

<u>Reliability</u>

Reliability is the extent to which the procedures, such as data collection methods, are repeatable with the same results (J. Gall et al., 2005; M. Gall et al., 2003; Yin, 2003). In order to increase the reliability of a case study, and minimize bias and error, during the data collection phase, the researcher should follow case study protocol and create a database or system for storing and organizing the information. This information may include notes (such as from observations), documents that have been collected, quantitative data (such as from surveys), and narratives (Yin, 2003). Throughout this research, I have kept thorough records of my observations and a database of quantitative and qualitative survey responses. In addition, all NWIC documents that are referred to are kept in my possession.

<center>Essential Components of Research Design</center>

Case study protocol recommends the proposal include an overview of the project (which it did), identification of the case (i.e., the case is NWIC), a list of research questions (with sources of information and method for obtaining information for each), identification of the audience (the audience for this research is the tribal college community, the NWIC community, and my doctoral thesis committee), an outline of field procedures, and an outline of the report. "The logic linking the data to the propositions" is then identified, as are the "criteria for interpreting the findings" (Yin, 2003, p. 21). Furthermore, it is beneficial in case studies to develop and test a theory or hypothesis from the beginning of the research (from the research and literature review).

Researchers who conduct successful case studies generally start writing their reports early on in the process — I, for example, began thinking and writing about this topic four years ago and wrote much of the case study as time progressed. Researchers reflect constantly upon

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their practices — because I have worked at NWIC for over five years, I have a good sense of what methodological approaches might be effective, and I have informally adjusted the design of the study based on these observations. For example, online surveys (accessible through personal emails) have proven to be an effective way of gathering information in a short period of time at NWIC, so that is why I decided to pursue this mode of survey delivery for my research. Also, initially, after conducting the survey, I was going to interview individuals, but staff responses to the survey were so comprehensive and in-depth and the response rate was so high, that it was unnecessary to conduct the interviews. Researchers who conduct successful case studies identify their case so that readers can integrate previous knowledge with what is being presented and references can be accurately reviewed (NWIC is identified as this case study). They leave respondents in the report anonymous (I removed names from the data) and have drafts of the report reviewed by participants who were involved in the case study (the president, several administrators, faculty, and a member of NWIC's Institutional Review Board reviewed drafts of the report) (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Exemplary case studies are revelatory, in that they reveal something that has not been known in the past; are complete, in that an exhaustive amount and quality of information is produced; consider different perspectives; and engage the reader (Yin, 2003).

The CIPP Model

The CIPP Model is an approach in which educational initiatives are evaluated at various stages of development by examining *context*, *inputs*, *processes,* and *products* (Stufflebeam, 2001, 2003a, 2003c, 2004). Like case studies, the CIPP model encourages a multi-method approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods, such as surveys, literature reviews, document reviews, participant-observation, interviews, and so forth. It is an established

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educational evaluation framework and uses an inclusive, participatory research approach, which

is suitable in this context (Nelson-Barber et al., 2005). It is especially appropriate for use in a

Native American context due to the value it places on *process* (L. Smith, 1999).

The CIPP model has evolved since 1965 with the help of educators like Egon Guba.[13] At

that time, U.S. public schools were discontented about the evaluation approach — "controlled,

variable manipulating, comparative experiments" (Stufflebeam, 2003a, p. 24) — available to

evaluate federally funded projects for disadvantaged students. Stufflebeam tried to encourage

schools and evaluators to design functional evaluations that would assist in decision making;

thus, those initial evaluations focused on process (assessing program implementation) and

product evaluations (assessing outcomes). Stufflebeam and his colleagues soon realized that the

process and product evaluations lacked a focus on goals so they added a context evaluation

component. Finally, in 1967, Stufflebeam added input evaluation to assist with program

planning. The CIPP model has recently evolved so that the *products* stage is now subdivided

into the evaluation of *impact, effectiveness, sustainability,* and *generalizability.*

I chose an adaptation of this model because the research questions correspond with the

four components of the CIPP evaluation framework. Stufflebeam (2003a) makes it clear that

"the CIPP Model has to be applied flexibly" (p. 24) and that not all four areas have to be

evaluated. In this case, I am evaluating the NWIC assessment program mid-stream. For the

purposes of this doctoral research, the context and several of the inputs (i.e., strategic planning,

assessment inventory, assessment plan, assessment coordinator, financial support, and technical

support) are described, and the remaining inputs (i.e., mission statement, administrators, and

faculty) and the process and product are evaluated.

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[13] Egon Guba was Daniel Stufflebeam's mentor at Ohio State University (Stufflebeam, 2003a).

The response to Research Question 1 addresses the *inputs, processes,* and *products*; the response to Research Question 2 addresses the *inputs, processes,* and the first three aspects of *product* (*impact, effectiveness,* and *sustainability)*; and the response to Research Question 3 relates to *context* and *product (generalizability).* I present all of these responses in chapter 6 (Results). In chapter 7, the conclusion of the doctoral thesis, I discuss the model's *generalizability* (i.e., the fourth aspect of *product*) and suggest aspects of assessment that tribal colleges may want to consider when developing their assessment programs. Table 5.1 provides a graphical summary of the data collection methods I used for each of the research questions and the CIPP areas that correspond to each.

Table 5.1 List of Research Questions, Data Collection Methods*,* and CIPP Areas

Research question	Data collection method	CIPP area
(1) What criteria can be used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context?	• literature review • participant-observation	• inputs • processes • products: impact, effectiveness, sustainability, and generalizability
(2) Which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1?	• survey faculty, administrators, and professional staff • participant-observation	• inputs • processes • products: impact, effectiveness, and sustainability
(3) What preconditions and other contextual factors contribute to the relative success or failure of different elements of the NWIC assessment program?	• survey faculty, administrators, and professional staff • participant-observation • document review	• context • product: generalizability

Research Design

The NWIC assessment survey contained 129 closed-ended questions and 40 open-ended questions (the *NWIC Assessment Survey* is included in Appendix C). The questions covered the following areas related to assessment: mission statement; institutional data; indirect indicators; direct indicators (NWIC outcomes, course outcomes and cultural activities); faculty; administrators; assessment process; college processes; retention strategies; learning, teaching, and assessment approaches; overall successes and challenges; and impacts. In order to demonstrate the concept that every assessment should be a tool for learning, my intent for the survey was for it to be both an evaluation tool and an educational tool; therefore, even though NWIC has not initiated many of the listed assessment initiatives, the purpose of those sections of the survey was to educate staff about the direction in which the NWIC assessment program is headed. Several sections of the survey served only an educational purpose.

Four faculty, two professional staff, two administrators, the vice president for instruction, and the president reviewed and edited the survey (and several of them reviewed the survey more than once). In addition, NWIC's Institutional Review Board — comprising several faculty, administrators, professional staff, community members, and professionals — reviewed the survey a number of times. NWIC's Institutional Review Board and the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board both approved the research (see Appendixes D and E for copies of the approval letters).

The target audience for this survey was all full-time faculty, administrators, and professional staff. At the time I conducted this survey, there were 20 faculty, 24 administrators, and 12 professional staff working at NWIC. On June 15, 2006, I emailed these staff a personal

link to the online survey.[14] I sent out reminder emails on June 29, July 6, and July 12 and received the final survey on July 27.

Respondents

Three faculty and one professional staff to whom I emailed a survey during the summer did not respond due to the fact that they did not have summer contracts at the college; therefore, 52 staff were eligible for completing this survey. I received 47 completed surveys, resulting in an adjusted response rate of 90% (3 of these individuals partially completed the survey). We provided all respondents with a $10 gift certificate for gasoline. The high response rate may be due to a number of factors: (a) we offered respondents a gift certificate; (b) many faculty, staff, and administrators contributed to the development of the survey and the assessment program and therefore felt some ownership of them; (c) some individuals felt a personal connection to me; and (d) individuals knew the administrators were supportive of this survey and research project. Table 5.2 describes the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents.

Table 5.2 Demographic Breakdown of Staff who Responded to the Survey

	Female			Male			
Staff	Native American	Non-Native	Total female	Native American	Non-Native	Total male	Grand total
Administrators	11	3	14	2	6	8	22
Faculty	1	6	7	2	5	7	14
Prof. staff	4	1	5	1	5	6	11
Total	16	10	26	5	16	21	47

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[14] The online survey service, *Survey Monkey,* was used for this purpose. A copy of the cover letter is attached in Appendix Z.

Twenty-two administrators, 14 full-time faculty, and 11 professional staff completed the survey. Twenty-one respondents were Native American. Of those 5 staff members who did not respond to the survey, 3 were female, 3 were Native American, 2 were administrators, and 3 were faculty. Five of the 6 extended campus managers responded.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began on August 30, 2006. To ensure confidentiality, I stripped the names and identifying information from the data. I used SPSS and Excel software to analyze quantitative survey data for research questions 2 and 3 as an initial gauge of the overall efficacy of various aspects of the model. I conducted qualitative data analysis on open-ended survey data and used Atlis.ti software to interpret and evaluate recurring constructs, themes, and patterns.

CHAPTER 6 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the results of the case study in the order of the elements of the CIPP model — context, inputs, processes, and products. Within each CIPP element, I articulate a set of *criteria* or a framework to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context. These criteria form a conceptual framework and are based on both a synthesis of literature about assessment and research protocols in Native American communities (reviewed primarily in chapters 3 and 4) and my experiences working in tribal college assessment. An *implementation* section, where I present what NWIC has accomplished regarding each element, follows the criteria sections. Following the implementation section, I present the assessment *survey results*. A more detailed presentation of the quantitative data is posted in Appendix F, *Summary of Closed-Ended Assessment Survey Responses*, broken down by faculty, administrators, and professional staff responses. The number of *I don't know* and blank responses is indicated in this appendix. In addition, for the remainder of this analysis and for the sake of simplicity and clarity, the term *staff* is used to refer to faculty, administrators, and professional staff as a whole.

Context (Research Question 3[15])

Criteria

Elements of the context of an assessment program include the cultural and institutional preconditions and the assessment program's goals, priorities, needs, and challenges. Understanding, learning about, and taking into account the cultural context of an institution and

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[15] Research Question 3 is *What preconditions and other contextual factors contribute to the relative success or failure of different elements of the NWIC assessment program?*

its population and the effect of these preconditions on a program is a prerequisite to exceptional evaluation practice (Nelson-Barber et al., 2005). The context in which this evaluation took place is only briefly described below, as it is not the intention of this research project to evaluate it.

<div align="center">Implementation</div>

In the last few years, NWIC has made progress toward the accreditation recommendation of ensuring "that all components of the campus embrace a culture of continuous improvement focused on the assessment of student learning" (Policy 2.2 — Educational Assessment) (Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities, 2004). This college-wide initiative has been a unified, cross-campus effort by many staff, as well as by many community members. In 2002, the following cultural and institutional preconditions at NWIC contributed to this favourable response: (a) external accreditation pressure, (b) a sincere commitment by many individuals to the mission of the college and to improve the college, (c) faculty and staff wanting to increase NWIC's Native American curricular focus and content (NWIC, 2004b; NWIC, 2005a), and (d) faculty's and administrators' desire to create more consistent standards among instructional sites and modes of learning (NWIC, 2004b; NWIC, 2005a). In addition, factors that I previously discussed in this doctoral thesis that contribute significantly to the context include NWIC's having a mostly non-Native American faculty and limited funding, which comes largely from grants, plus, although the majority of its students are located at extended campuses, most of NWIC's resources are situated at the main campus.

A summary of the history of assessment at NWIC follows. Before the 2002 – 2003 academic year, faculty and staff conducted few formal assessment efforts at NWIC. For example, faculty and staff conducted occasional course evaluations; however, faculty seldom received students' feedback in a timely manner. In addition, faculty evaluation policies existed.

In 1999, in response to pressure from its regional accreditation body to develop an assessment program, NWIC hired consultants to create an assessment plan for the college. Unfortunately, because outsiders created the resulting plan, administrators found the plan neither feasible to implement nor useful to the college; the assessment plan lacked buy-in and was never used. Continued accreditation pressure and the availability of funds, however, eventually led to administrators deciding to create an assessment coordinator position. Thus, in February 2002, NWIC administrators hired me with National Science Foundation Tribal College and University Program grant funding.

When NWIC first hired me, NWIC was in a major transition. The previous president and vice president of instruction had been let go and the college had an interim president while the college searched for a new president. Few employees at the college had had exposure to assessment or knew in what direction NWIC should head. Therefore, during my first couple of months at the college, I decided that the most logical initial steps for me to take would be to educate myself as much as possible about assessment, about teaching and learning at NWIC, and about the Lummi and other Native American cultures. In order to accomplish these three objectives, I researched assessment and teaching and learning best practices; taught several courses at the college (which exposed me to the daily challenges our students, staff, and faculty face); and observed and asked many questions of Native American staff and students and attended funerals, celebrations, festivals, canoe races, meals with elders, and other events in the tribal community. Several months later, NWIC hired a vice president of instruction who was not only supportive of assessment, but was an expert in accreditation and understood the implications, both internally and externally, of having a strong assessment program.

The goals of NWIC's assessment program are to assist NWIC in accomplishing its mission, to improve student learning, and to fulfill accreditation requirements. The challenges to creating and implementing the assessment program were numerous. They included learning how to make the program culturally appropriate and meaningful; persuading people to make time in their already full schedules to participate; educating faculty, staff, students, and the community about assessment; and making certain that assessment results would be used to improve student learning and the college.

Inputs (Research Questions 1 and 2[16])

Input evaluation considers (a) the plans and strategy and (b) the resources that go into the assessment program. *Criteria* that can be used to evaluate the plans and strategy and the resources of an assessment program, NWIC's *implementation* strategies, and assessment *survey results*, where available, are outlined below. In order for any project to be successful, plans, strategy, and resources need to be responsive to the assessed needs.

Plans and Strategy

Ideally, the plans and strategy for approaching assessment work should be well thought out, with a systematic assessment plan being developed in advance. In order to develop an assessment plan, the tribal college may first create a clear direction (i.e., mission), conduct an inclusive strategic planning initiative (or some other type of process), conduct an assessment inventory, and, finally, create its assessment plan. The components of the plans and strategy of

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[16] Research Question 1 is *What criteria are best used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context?* and Research Question 2 is *Which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1?*

the NWIC assessment program, including the mission statement, the strategic planning initiative, the assessment inventory, and the assessment plan, will be explored in more detail below.

<u>Mission Statement</u>

Criteria

It is essential to tie all assessment efforts to the mission of the college. Before a tribal college can embark on a successful assessment program and process, it is important that it

- updates its mission statement;
- increases its staff's familiarity with the mission;
- increases its staff's appreciation of the mission;
- increases its staff's support for the mission;
- begins accomplishing the mission.

Implementation

During the strategic planning initiative (2002 to 2003), administrators updated NWIC's mission statement, including staff and community members in the process. Since that time, NWIC has spent much time and energy increasing familiarity, appreciation, and support for its mission. From 2003 to 2005, NWIC restructured its programs, curriculum, and staff to more accurately reflect the direction of the strategic plan (NWIC, 2004a).

In May and June 2005, an external organizational development consultant conducted an Institutional Wellness survey among all staff across all NWIC campuses. The purpose of this survey was to determine the level of well being of the college and its staff. The president increased staff focus on the NWIC mission when the Institutional Wellness review of the college indicated a need for improving communication and leadership skills as well as renewing focus on NWIC's mission. Because of these findings, during the 2005-2006 academic year,

administrators decided to offer classes only Mondays through Thursdays in order to free up all staff for meetings on Friday mornings. Administrators dedicated these meetings to improving communication and leadership skills and advancing various college-wide and community-building initiatives, including increasing familiarity, appreciation, and support of NWIC's mission. This dialogue continues during the 2006-2007 academic year with the intention of improving the health and working environment of the college community in order to result in the most effective learning environment for students.

Survey results

The scale for the quantitative survey questions ranged from *not successful* (1), *minimally successful* (2), *somewhat successful* (3), *successful* (4), to *very successful* (5). Given that NWIC has just created its assessment program and has not yet embarked on many of these initiatives, the primary purpose of this rating is for comparison to future survey results. In order to improve readability, the term *successful* is used in this doctoral thesis to refer to survey responses where staff selected either *successful* or *very successful*. In the narrative sections, the percent in parentheses indicates the percent of staff who rated the item as being *successful* or *very successful*.

Overall, most staff (85%) indicated in the assessment survey that NWIC was successful in the process of updating its mission statement (no one indicated that NWIC was unsuccessful in this area). Faculty were more positive about the process of updating the mission statement, whereas more professional staff and administrators did not know. An instructor noted that, during the 2002-2003 academic year, "the work to create the mission statement and strategic plan involved us all as a college community." An administrator reiterated, "if anyone was interested, they could participate."

Staff indicated that NWIC was successful at increasing familiarity (83%), appreciation (74%), and support (81%) for its mission as characterized by the following statements (no one indicated that NWIC was unsuccessful in any of these areas):

> The president and her staff have made extraordinary attempts at both clarifying and communicating the mission statement to the NWIC staff, stakeholders and students.

> I believe that we have been very successful in increasing campus wide knowledge of the college mission and the importance of moving in the same direction of that mission.

On the other hand, only 57% of all staff thought NWIC has been successful at accomplishing its mission[17] as exemplified by the comments of one of the professional staff:

> Familiarity with the mission statement has been increased through the Friday workshops. The college has been moving in the right direction, but still has work to do in accomplishing its mission.

In the assessment survey, several individuals stated that this increased focus on the mission statement over the last two years had resulted in positive changes throughout the curriculum, such as the new Native American Studies degree and coursework that helps students "know who they are." In the opinion of one faculty member, NWIC has been

> increasingly successful in accomplishing its mission through greater emphasis on Native American Studies degree coursework and through the First Year Experience, which builds a community of students with shared understandings of themselves as Indigenous people working on their own education and their individual and tribal self-determination.

In the fall of 2003, faculty developed a First Year Experience sequence of cross-discipline, cohort-based courses to provide first-year college students with a meaningful and culturally relevant experience that will hopefully increase their chances of success.

Appendix G provides the results, challenges, and strengths from the assessment survey for the process of updating the mission statement and becoming more familiar with, appreciating,

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[17] Professional staff responded more positively than administrators and faculty.

supporting, and accomplishing the mission. Overall, staff emphasized challenges regarding the tension surrounding delivering Indigenous knowledge and cultural curricular components with a primarily non-Native American faculty. Strengths of this process that staff identified included the articulation of a "clear," "brief" mission statement that "encompasses an immense vision"; the "vision and leadership" of the president; the Friday all staff meetings that contributed to the shared vision; and staff perseverance and commitment.

Also, Appendix G provides suggestions (for improvement) and subsequent actions (for use of the results) at NWIC. A dominant theme in the responses was communication as a means of better accomplishing the college's mission. Comments about improving communication fell into four main categories: among staff, with NWIC's extended campuses, with tribal communities, and with students. Each of these will be elaborated upon.

Communication among staff.

Many staff were encouraging about continuing "to do campus-wide activities in support of common goals and the mission," which help to keep "the lines of communication open between departments." Other suggestions regarding communication among staff are listed in Appendix G. Referring to the Institutional Wellness initiative, the aim of which is to improve communication and leadership skills, one administrator suggested that NWIC "successfully complete the Institutional Wellness initiative…particularly increasing accountability, improving communications and developing greater trust." By immediately dealing with any tensions, NWIC can develop into a learning institution, where "it has a culture of constantly learning how to improve itself." The overriding message from most of the staff was positive and focused on persevering to pursue the vision.

Communication with extended campuses.

Clearly, the extended campus managers want increased support and communication with the main campus, as indicated by the following comments:

I'd like to have a school-wide discussion of the College's mission, with a meeting with relevant … administrators at our site with all the students, faculty and tribal members invited to attend.

It is very hard to feel or experience the mission when you are located at an extended campus — I believe more 'Environmental' support would help. By this I mean that we need to create an atmosphere branded by NWIC at all of the sites, which includes the mission statement and a handbook of the detailed goals of the mission and strategic plans provided to all employees.

I would like more opportunities for constituencies at sites to participate (perhaps tribal specific focus groups with tribal leadership, students, educational employees, etc).

From an off-campus perspective, I observed increase in activity of accomplishing mission activity through constant in-service training to main campus during 05-06 with no activity to off-campus site to keep abreast of progress. I am totally unaware of the intent or outcomes met this last year as a result of main campus activity.

Although communication of the mission on the main campus has improved over the last couple of years, the improved communication clearly has not transferred to the extended campuses as much as it could have.

Communication with tribal communities.

In order to better achieve its mission, a professional staff suggested that NWIC communicate "with our tribal partners and ask them what they need" in a more structured, ongoing, and deliberate way (several other people made similar comments). A number of individuals stressed the importance of improving communication with the local tribal and non-tribal communities that NWIC serves, as exemplified by this administrator's comments:

We need more community involvement on campus. Need programs to work collaboratively with Lummi community and other tribes served by NWIC. An elder's advisory council could compliment [sic] and support the efforts for the president and the NWIC board of trustees.

Furthermore, staff suggested that NWIC "work with Tribal communities to incorporate their needs into college curriculum"; "improve structures for staying in touch with what the communities we serve need" and "who our students are; use this information to create structures to meet those needs; monitor the implementation to make changes"; "promote the mission statement throughout the community and to the non-Native community as well"; and compensate financially "more family groups…to participate in making NWIC a pillar for the community." Related to promoting NWIC's mission throughout the Native and non-Native communities, a number of people's comments mentioned improving formal advertising of NWIC, particularly "streamlining college promotions and marketing with other departments" as well as incorporating the mission statement "with the college logo, letterhead, and other print material."

Communication with students.

Finally, one person suggested that NWIC continue to involve "students in discussions regarding the mission statement and the ways in which it guides our work at NWIC."

Strategic Planning Initiative

Criteria

Ideally an inclusive strategic planning (or other) initiative should be conducted to determine a vision for the college and this initiative should include tribal community members, tribal college staff, and students.

Implementation

During the 2002 – 2003 academic year, NWIC conducted an extensive, intensive, and inclusive strategic planning initiative that identified NWIC's core values and included a needs

assessment. The needs assessment surveyed over 200 community members, who identified the

tribal community's top educational priorities. The core goals the community identified were for

NWIC to develop a four-year bachelor's degree program, build a permanent campus, strengthen

academic programs, address extension and community development needs for tribes and

communities, strengthen the cultural and tribal foundation of the college, and increase resources

to fulfill its mission. The results of NWIC's needs assessment identified the tribal community's

top educational priorities as providing ABE/GED programs, four-year degrees, job/technical

training, Native language restoration programs, cultural arts and enrichment programs, computer

training, Native American studies programs, a tribal administration program or training, a

Human Services program, health professions training, and education training. This process was

generally successful because of the initiative and determination of the president and because it

was extensive and included extended campuses and tribal communities. The result was the

establishment of a clear and concise NWIC mission statement and a set of community-articulated

priorities — based on NWIC's values — that provide direction for guiding NWIC's programs

and required coursework. The main challenge in implementing the strategic plan continues to be

inadequate resources.

Assessment Inventory and Assessment Plan

Criteria

Before embarking on a formal assessment program, colleges may conduct an inventory of

their current assessment practices. After the assessment inventory is completed, a systematic

assessment plan may be developed.

Implementation

During the first couple of months of my tenure at NWIC, I conducted an informal inventory of assessment practices, which concluded that NWIC only had a semi-functional course evaluation process and that faculty evaluation policies existed. During this time, the vice president and I regularly discussed assessment best practices and an appropriate course of action. Because we were both relatively new to the college and did not have the institutional experience to create a formal assessment plan (and there was no precedent to follow), rather than having a pre-conceived notion as to steps to be taken, the approach we took was to determine what the most important need for the college was at the time, and where the most enthusiasm was, and proceed in that direction. Because the vice president of instruction was supportive of the assessment program and had access to resources, the assessment work proceeded without major obstacles. We chose assessment activities that were informed by assessment research — which included direct indicators, indirect indicators, and institutional data. Although NWIC did not have a formal assessment plan when I was first hired in 2002, we made informed decisions within a consultative framework, responded to receptivity and needs, and remained open-minded and flexible. We considered this approach as being appropriate. Now that NWIC has a clear vision of the direction of assessment, subsequent assessment cycles will have formal assessment plans — with a timeline of when goals are to be accomplished — developed in advance (see Appendix A for an example of NWIC's 2007 – 2012 Assessment Plan). An example of an assessment report is this chapter (chapter 6), which summarizes, evaluates, and reports on NWIC assessment activities for the last assessment cycle (2002 – 2006).

<center>Resources</center>

Since 2002, NWIC administrators have made assessment a top priority for the college. This is demonstrated by the availability of resources for hiring a full-time assessment coordinator and providing adequate financial and technical resources. In addition, administrators and faculty generally have been supportive of the assessment program. Each of these areas is described below in more detail.

Assessment Coordinator

Criteria

The assessment literature emphasizes as a top priority the importance of hiring an assessment coordinator who is knowledgeable about assessment best practices, who is culturally sensitive, and whose time is completely devoted to facilitating the assessment program.

Implementation

In February 2002, initially due to external accreditation pressure, NWIC created a full-time assessment coordinator position and hired me to fill this role. The assessment coordinator is responsible for coordinating the continuing assessment of student learning at all locations. NWIC administrators have demonstrated their commitment to the assessment of student learning by supporting this position with institutional funds.

In October 2005, the assessment coordinator's office was moved into the faculty building in the cultural area. This move has resulted in increased visibility of assessment and improved interactions between assessment personnel, faculty, and the cultural department. Furthermore, in October 2006, NWIC administrators approved the creation of an institutional research position to expand the scope of this work, beyond the instructional side, to all departments.

Survey results

Throughout the assessment survey, faculty emphasized the importance of having one person with "interest, enthusiasm, validation, and guidance" to facilitate, "organize and clarify" the assessment process (this "arduous task"). Faculty and staff note that the assessment coordinator's "strong knowledge base," "compassion," and "leadership have been critical," "invaluable," and "pivotal in developing institutional assessment" at NWIC.

Financial Support

Criteria

Financial support for a successful assessment program includes funding for the administration of assessment-related tasks. For example, in addition to funding an assessment coordinator position, financial support includes funds for the administration of surveys and for additional faculty salaries for completing assessment work during non-contract times.

Implementation

NWIC administrators have fully supported the functioning of the assessment office by providing all requested funding for assessment-related tasks (e.g., for the administration of surveys and additional faculty salaries for completing assessment work during non-contract times).

Technical Support

Criteria

It is essential to have an adequate enrollment database system, an effective data collection system, and a dependable data administrator who is able to extract the data and create reports.

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Implementation

Due to administrative support, NWIC now has an adequate database system, a functioning data collection system, and a data administrator who is able to extract data and create reports. This person, who administrators hired during the 2004 -2005 academic year, has been instrumental in the progress of NWIC's assessment initiatives.

Administrators' Roles

Criteria

The assessment literature refers to the importance of the administrators' roles throughout the assessment process. Native American education literature focuses on the way in which research is carried out and the way in which people interact with one another. Based on both of these bodies of literature, the following administrator responsibilities and attitudes are conducive to a positive assessment process. According to those standards, successful assessment programs have administrators who

- respond in respectful, cooperative, and supportive ways;
- collaborate with faculty and staff;
- provide visible advocacy as well as real material support for assessment;
- show appreciation and thanks to faculty and staff;
- solicit feedback, ideas, and input from staff and faculty and incorporating these suggestions into plans and decisions;
- streamline and simplify meetings and reduce administrative obstacles to the assessment process;
- refer regularly to the assessment process and its results in reports and presentations to both internal and external audiences;
- share results with the leadership team, advisory boards, community and board of trustees.

Survey results

Overall, staff thought administrators were most successful at communicating results to the board of trustees (67%) and sharing results with advisory boards (63%). Administrators and professional staff rated every item higher than faculty. The items identified as needing the most improvement were administrators sharing results with the community (35%) and streamlining and simplifying meetings and reducing administrative obstacles to the assessment process (38%).

Appendix H highlights the results, challenges and strengths for this section. The few challenges identified by staff concerned increasing buy-in, participation, and understanding of administrators. As indicated by the positive comments in Appendix H, some of the success NWIC has had so far with the assessment process was due, according to a number of faculty and professional staff, to administrators' support (including financial incentives, time, resources, and food!). Faculty had additional positive comments about the administration, such as "the administrative staff stay very clear and timely with involving the instructional staff and is appreciative as well as respectful of the faculty's time." Three administrators commented on the importance of their "support," "commitment," and "care about the staff and student base."

One person revealed an interesting cultural difference concerning one of the items in the list — that of showing appreciation and thanks to faculty and staff. This individual indicated that

> in the old Coast Salish culture, it is nice when someone acknowledges a job well done — But we never ask for it or expect it. So when the 'thank you' comes — it truly comes from the heart.

This comment demonstrates that some of the criteria for a strong and effective assessment program at mainstream colleges may contradict some of the values in Native American cultures; however, as long as NWIC hires significant numbers of non-Native faculty, NWIC may have to recognize that many faculty and staff respond to positive encouragement and acknowledgement. Appendix H summarizes suggestions that staff raised in the survey as well as

actions that staff have taken or will take in response to each suggestion. Again, major suggestions concerned improving administrators' communication and awareness about assessment-related issues.

Faculty Members' Roles

Criteria

In order to have a successful assessment program, the assessment literature states the importance of faculty members

- remaining open-minded;
- responding in respectful, cooperative, and collaborative ways;
- driving the assessment process (with assistance from the assessment coordinator) and taking the lead in defining assessment measures and processes;
- creating meaningful assessment processes;
- taking ownership of assessment and embracing assessment as an intrinsically valuable developmental process whereby teaching and learning can be continually improved through evaluation, reflection, and identification of needs for change;
- increasing their educational focus on student learning;
- providing students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to practice skills;
- providing students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to receive feedback;
- using the assessment process and its results to improve student learning;
- receiving necessary opportunities, incentives, material resources and compensation for learning about and implementing assessment processes;
- receiving thanks for their assessment efforts and achievements publicly through institutional processes and practices.

Survey results

When asked to what extent faculty members have been successful throughout the assessment process in demonstrating or experiencing the above-mentioned qualities, the items rated the most successful by staff were faculty responding in respectful, cooperative, and collaborative ways (68%); increasing their educational focus on student learning (66%); driving the assessment process (with assistance from the assessment coordinator) and taking the lead in defining assessment measures and processes (67%); and creating meaningful assessment processes (66%). The items identified as being least successful were receiving necessary opportunities, incentives, material resources, and compensation for learning about and implementing assessment processes (47%); providing students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to receive feedback (48%); and using the assessment process and its results to improve student learning (48%). Professional staff mostly rated items at the beginning of the criteria list lowest and administrators generally rated items at the end of the list lowest. Faculty had the fewest *I don't know* responses for every item, which can be explained by the fact the faculty should have been the most informed because they were the most involved in the processes. Appendix I summarizes staff perspectives concerning the challenges and strengths. The main challenge highlighted was that of increasing participation of part-time, online, and independent learning faculty.

As indicated by the comments in Appendix I, faculty have also contributed significantly to the success of the assessment program. Interested and supportive faculty, who had a positive attitude and a deep commitment to the students and to the college mission and who took ownership of several aspects of the process, started the assessment momentum. According to one professional staff, "from what I have seen there has been a lot of pride in a diversification of teaching methods and opportunities for students to grow and become more confident in their self

and in their ability to learn." Another professional staff and an administrator noted, respectively, "the assessment efforts have really focused the energy of the faculty into a common goal" and "have been institutionalized." Furthermore, another administrator wrote, "the outcomes discussions…were lively and engaging, which showed me that the faculty and staff who participated are involved in a meaningful way." As a result of this process, one professional staff stated, "instructors are more focused on their students' learning this year."

Staff made various suggestions concerning the faculty's role in the assessment program. These suggestions and corresponding actions are summarized in Appendix I. Suggestions included increasing all faculty participation in the assessment process; continuing education and training about teaching, learning, and assessment best practices; and providing financial incentives to faculty to publish and to research about strategies to improve teaching and learning.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Process (Research Questions 1 and 2[18])</h3>

Process evaluation involves monitoring, documenting, and evaluating program activities including actions, designs, development, and implementation of the assessment process. I evaluated three processes, which are related to NWIC's assessment program: the assessment process; the embedding of assessment into college processes; and learning, teaching, and assessment approaches. A summary of these processes follows.

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[18] Research Question 1 is *What criteria are best used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context?* and Research Question 2 is *Which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1?*

Assessment Process

<u>Criteria</u>

Criteria that I used to evaluate the assessment process included determining the extent to which the assessment process has been successful in

- being streamlined and simplified so that instructors' time may be used effectively;
- being a flexible process that is sensitive to individual workloads and need;
- including employees from many segments of the college;
- originating within, and enriching, the college;
- resulting in a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the assessment coordinator and all staff;
- building cohesion, collaboration, relationships, and trust among staff through a consultative process;
- being conducted in a responsible and ethical manner;
- being useful, relevant, and meaningful to the tribal college community;
- educating administration, staff and faculty to improve their assessment skills;
- reporting results internally in an ongoing way so that the information can be used to improve student success and learning;
- being culturally appropriate;
- recognizing and legitimizing Indigenous knowledge and skills;
- contributing to tribal self-determination and knowledge;
- initiating meaningful conversations;
- creating a shared vision for the future of the college, based on common values;
- redirecting resources towards priorities outlined in the mission and goals;
- increasing the college's responsiveness to the needs of the community;
- improving the instructional capacity of the college as well as its public image;
- providing the basis for college planning and budgeting decisions;
- demonstrating accountability, the responsible use of limited resources, to the public.

<u>Implementation</u>

I undertook four major initiatives to educate staff and share results, about which faculty and staff have commented favourably:

(1) In September 2004, I created an assessment website that faculty and staff from all locations can access to share and post resources and reports (http://www.nwic.edu/faculty/assessment/assessment.htm).

(2) During the spring 2006 quarter, the vice president of instruction and I hosted a series of voluntary brown bag lunches and informational sessions where we reviewed the results of the Alumni Survey and the Student Success Report and then discussed what retention strategies could be implemented based on this information. An average of 15 faculty and staff attended these sessions. Informal participant feedback indicated that faculty and staff appreciated the sessions and found them to be useful.

(3) We planned extra assessment workshops and work sessions on faculty non-contract days. NWIC paid faculty extra for work done beyond the scope of their regular contracts.

(4) We devoted several of our Friday sessions to the assessment of student learning.

Three other initiatives that I implemented at faculty meetings had intermittent success during the 2004 – 2006 academic years: (1) We conducted most of the faculty meetings over interactive television so that instructors from off-campus locations could participate, thus connecting faculty to each other and creating a more cohesive and supportive teaching environment. (2) The meetings included a 5-minute presentation by an instructor who shared a best practice teaching technique with everyone. (3) The meetings included a presentation by the assessment coordinator who reported the results of current assessment efforts or best practices to assess student learning. Because faculty met inconsistently over the academic year, these initiatives had limited success.

Survey Results

Overall, staff thought the most successful aspects of the assessment process were that it resulted in a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the assessment coordinator and all staff (79%); it was useful, relevant, and meaningful to the tribal college community (77%); it initiated meaningful conversations (77%); and it was conducted in a responsible and ethical manner (75%). Staff reported the areas needing the most work were the assessment process recognizing and legitimizing Indigenous knowledge and skills (41%); including employees from many segments of the college (44%); and contributing to tribal self-determination and knowledge (44%), although 78% of professional staff indicated that the assessment program was successful or very successful at contributing to tribal self-determination and knowledge.

Four staff indicated the developmental nature of the assessment program and commented that it "is evolving into a useful program but has a lot of room for improvement" as "many of these results are not yet realized." "Progress is being made" as "the president has tried to get us to work toward use of data to make decisions." Appendix J overviews staff responses about the assessment process. The challenges discussed mainly concern lack of time, limited budgets, and the fact that other initiatives had to be done first (e.g., restructuring programs).

Several staff emphasized universal participation as being important as demonstrated by the following administrator's comments: "More of us need to be engaged in the process of assessment. There needs to be a higher profile of these activities." Many staff noted the "increasing participation," "hard work," "cohesiveness," "enthusiasm," "commitment," and "great collaboration among faculty" and staff as well as the "funding and administrative support" provided by the president and administrators for this "high priority" process. In addition, "from an off-campus perspective, the inclusion of the sites via interactive meetings" has been valuable.

Yet, the process is still a long way from being truly institutionalized. In the opinion of an

administrator, NWIC needs to

> build [the] assessment process more into the regular way of doing things at the college
> (i.e., institutionalize it more). Thus far, it has been treated more as a special initiative,
> requiring special funds…and faculty to work on it during non-class times.

Another administrator echoed that thought:

> If it [assessment] truly was institutionalized then there should be recommendations
> following each assessment or process, the impending changes would reflect a response to
> a negative or positive findings that could lead to a better institution and staffing and
> budget levels that reflected a solicited response.

In order to begin the process of institutionalizing assessment, one administrator

recommended that "the assessment process be the theme for this year's fall in-service session,

and to provide direction on the 06-07 action plan to attain goals." A professional staff had a

similar suggestion: "I would like to hear the leadership team do a campus wide in-service to kick

off each new quarter with a progress report on assessment (using interactive means)." Yet

another professional staff suggested NWIC "keep on working away and continue to provide

educational opportunities, including opportunities for faculty and staff to share their experiences

and teach each other."

Finally, with regard to planning, one administrator noted that the steps in the assessment

process could be improved by "actually strategizing a methodology to implement them, which

would mean taking everything through a successful reorganization and possibly new

understanding of what could really occur if the process was taken seriously."

Embedding Assessment in College Processes

In order to have a successful assessment program, the assessment of student learning

needs to be embedded in as many aspects of the college as possible including

- strategic planning;
- curriculum review;
- budgeting;
- program review;
- the First Year Experience (learning communities and cohorts);
- the college catalogue;
- college publications;
- the website;
- job descriptions and announcements;
- grading criteria;
- independent learning;
- service learning;
- the course evaluation process;
- the faculty peer review process;
- faculty meetings.

Implementation

NWIC has just started to embed assessment into some of its college processes. For

instance, initially, faculty built assessment into the First Year Experience program to a limited

degree, as students evaluated course outcomes in a course evaluation process that was specially

designed for the First Year Experience program. Furthermore, administrators have intentionally

included assessment measures in job descriptions; I have updated the college catalogue to

include an assessment and NWIC outcomes section; staff are restructuring the entire NWIC

website with more links to the assessment webpage; the assessment staff now write a regular *Assessment Corner* article in the student monthly newsletter; and the Curriculum Committee now requires that all new courses have developed outcomes and that all courses go through periodic review, which requires outcomes.

Survey Results

Overall, staff indicated that NWIC has been most successful in embedding assessment in the First Year Experience (77%), strategic planning (55%), the course evaluation process (55%), and the faculty peer review process (58%). NWIC has been least successful in embedding assessment in job descriptions and announcements (29%) and the NWIC website (28%). Administrators rated the website quite a bit lower than did professional staff and faculty. Faculty rated some items quite a bit lower than administrators and professional staff (especially the First Year Experience, independent learning, and faculty peer review). Appendix K presents the results, challenges, and strengths of embedding assessment in college processes. As one administrator indicates, the primary challenge has been that "budgeting at the college has not usually been done with a long term plan in mind. Thus, there have not been feedback mechanisms for determining the effectiveness of the previous year's choices and fine tuning the budget." Strengths include "staff dedication," staff commitment "to [the] overall mission," and the "intentional inclusion of assessment measures" into some components of the college.

Suggestions from the assessment survey about how to embed assessment in college processes and actions that staff have taken or will take in response to each suggestion are outlined in Appendix K. These suggestions focus on making a conscious effort to embed long-term planning, evaluation, and improvement into all college processes.

<u>Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Approaches</u>

<u>Criteria</u>

In response to assessment results, approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment may be adapted. For example, tribal colleges are moving in the direction of ensuring their students are learning and being assessed through

- meaningful, relevant and contextualized experiences;
- approaches traditionally used by tribal people, such as apprenticeships, observations, and practice;
- an integrated curriculum;
- an experientially grounded curriculum;
- a "place-based" curriculum;
- authentic approaches (e.g., self-reflecting and self-assessing, applying concepts to a relevant context, teaching material to peers, writing about a subject, and asking essential questions);
- a curriculum founded on traditional culture and knowledge;
- formative classroom assessment techniques (short, frequent, ungraded attempts to assess student learning) to provide immediate in-class feedback from students.

<u>Implementation</u>

In the words of an administrator, NWIC's successes in this area are due to "pioneering work, particularly TENRM [the Tribal Environmental and Natural Resources Management program] and other coherent learning community approaches to teaching and learning" that NWIC has adopted (e.g., the First Year Experience program, which is based on an integrated curriculum, has been institutionalized); to "grant funds that have built teaching and learning capacity (TENRM and TCUP)"; and to "faculty and administrators who have a vision for developing a tribal college in integrity with the needs of students and the methods of learning

and goals of the college in alignment with tribal ways." An instructor highlights the fact that there is now a "long term mandate to include tribal materials and to make educational materials fit the students" (e.g., "Natural Science courses that relate to place and take advantage of traditional concerns as the basis of learning"). NWIC is building capacity of the Coast Salish Institute and actively identifying, engaging, and hiring appropriate people who can advance the college's mission in the area of Native education. Another administrator states, "we are still finding our way as a tribal institution so some of this information and process is still being developed."

Survey Results

Overall, staff indicated that NWIC has been most successful in ensuring its students are learning and being assessed through meaningful, relevant, and contextualized experiences (57%). NWIC has been least successful in ensuring its students are learning and being assessed using approaches traditionally used by tribal people, such as apprenticeships, observations, and practice (26%); a curriculum founded on traditional culture and knowledge (33%); and formative classroom assessment techniques (short, frequent, ungraded attempts to assess student learning) to provide immediate in-class feedback from students (33%). Administrators rated many items lower than faculty and professional staff.

Appendix L overviews the results, challenges, and strengths for this section. The major challenge facing the faculty, who are predominately non-Native American, is that they struggle with the boundaries of appropriateness in incorporating culturally relevant and meaningful learning, teaching, and assessment approaches. Strengths include staff's increased consciousness, openness, and exposure to these innovative methods and to cultural conversations and values. Suggestions about improving learning, teaching, and assessment approaches and

corresponding actions are listed in Appendix L. Suggestions related to providing faculty with

"information regarding Native culture," offering "more formal teacher training," encouraging

faculty to share "teaching and learning best practices," hiring "more Native faculty," articulating

"with far greater clarity the vision and hence the outcomes of our teaching at NWIC," being clear

as to "who can and who can't do this work [cultural work]," and providing "the resources at the

extended campuses to insure these activities can be provided." NWIC faculty and staff are

continually reflecting upon their teaching and assessment approaches and striving to improve

student success.

Products (Research Questions 1 and 2[19])

The major products of the assessment program from 2002 until 2006 included the

following: developing college outcomes, cultural outcomes, and course outcomes initiatives;

developing a new online course evaluation method (evaluating course outcomes); conducting the

Community Needs Assessment, the Student Opinion Survey, the Alumni Survey (1990 - 2003

graduates), the Teaching and Assessment Methods Survey, the Institutional Wellness Survey and

dialogue, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the Faculty Survey of

Student Engagement (all of which provided baseline data); and tracking student enrollment data,

retention rates, graduation rates, and course completion rates. This was a remarkable

accomplishment for a small tribal college in such a short period of time. Rather than following

an assessment plan, the approach NWIC took was to advance in the most pressing direction at

any given moment and modify the course as needed. This approach resulted in an effective and

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[19] Research Question 1 is *What criteria are best used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context?* and Research Question 2 is *Which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1?*

efficient assessment product that included all three types of indicators. A timeline of the

products of the NWIC assessment program is represented in Figure 6.1.

The specific aspects of the *product* of the NWIC assessment program that are evaluated

in this section are its *effectiveness*, its *impacts*, and its *sustainability* (Stufflebeam, 2003c).

Generalizability, the final aspect of product evaluation, is discussed in the conclusion.

Figure 6.1 Time-line of Assessment Activities at NWIC (Products of the Assessment Program)

Direct indicators of student learning		Indirect indicators of student learning		Institutional data (all on going)	
2002 – 2003					
[Created a strategic plan]*	[Updated the mission statement]	Teaching / Assessment Methods Surveys	Student Opinion Survey	Student enrollment numbers and rates	Course completion numbers and rates
2003 – 2004					
[Restructured programs and degree requirements]	[Increased familiarity and support for mission (on going)]	Alumni Survey	Faculty peer review process (on going)	Graduation numbers and rates	
2004 – 2005					
Initiated NWIC competencies and outcomes initiative	Initiated course outcomes initiative	Community College Survey of Student Engagement	Faculty Survey of Student Engagement	Retention: one quarter, quarter-to-quarter, fall-to-fall	
2005 – 2006					
Started articulating a teaching and learning philosophy	Articulated cultural outcomes frameworks for students and faculty	Institutional Wellness Survey and process (ongoing)	Online course evaluation (on going)		

*   Items in brackets are prerequisites to developing college, program, and course outcomes
     (rather than products of the assessment program).

Effectiveness of Direct Indicators

This section, concerning the effectiveness of direct indicators, assesses the quality and significance of the direct indicators of student learning — including college, cultural, program, and course outcomes initiatives.

College Outcomes

Criteria

The assessment literature identifies certain steps that are important in the process of assessing student learning at the college level. These steps include

- articulating college outcomes (academic);
- articulating cultural outcomes;
- determining which courses will be used to assess all college outcomes;
- establishing indicators and standards to measure all college outcomes;
- creating the assessment tools;
- determining how the data will be collected;
- assessing students at entry and at exit;
- analyzing the information;
- sharing the results;
- designing administrative and communication systems to ensure the findings are incorporated into decision-making processes and used to refine policy and practice at the college, program, and course levels;
- educating students about the role of assessment in their education.

Implementation

The college outcomes assessment process evolved from feedback received from alumni who transferred to four-year colleges and from a general sense from faculty that NWIC has lacked standards and consistency in the past. Perhaps the most significant advancement in terms

of assessment has been the initial articulation, in the spring of 2006, of a set of six NWIC

competencies and their corresponding outcomes by faculty from all NWIC locations. The draft

set of outcomes is the following:

1. Cultural:[20] Students will demonstrate an understanding of…
   a. sense of place.
   b. what it means to be a People.

2. Written communication skills: Students will be able to…
   a. write standard English.
   b. write in a variety of text forms using various credible sources.

3. Oral communication skills: Students will be able to…
   a. apply effective presentation skills.
   b. apply interpersonal communication skills.

4. Technological skills: Students will be able to…
   a. use word processing software for communication.
   b. use spreadsheet software for communication, computation, and graphic data representation.
   c. use presentation software for communication.
   d. use the Internet for research.
   e. use e-mail for communication.
   f. use electronic library resources.

5. Quantitative skills: Students will be able to…
   a. propose solutions to and solve real-world problems by applying the correct numerical data.
   b. use analytical and critical thinking skills to draw and interpret conclusions.

6. Reading skills: Students will be able to…
   a. demonstrate understanding of readings.
   b. extend their vocabulary through reading.

In order to include more faculty from extended campuses in creating these competencies

and outcomes, we held meetings using interactive television; faculty followed-up with work

sessions using email. We derived the six competencies from the priorities tribal community

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[20] The cultural competency is described further in the *Cultural Outcomes* section of chapter 6.

members expressed during strategic planning. A set of rubrics is being created for each outcome and will be used to reinforce NWIC outcomes across the curriculum (see *Draft NWIC Rubrics* in Appendix R). Administrators provided faculty members who participated in the initiative with stipends for work they performed in addition to their regular responsibilities. As a result, this initiative has been supported and has resulted in greater collaboration and connection among faculty at all locations; furthermore, it has contributed to a more inclusive, enthusiastic, and student-focused learning environment.

Survey results

Overall, staff felt NWIC has been most successful at articulating broad college academic outcomes (62%). The least successful areas were educating students about the role of assessment in their education (4%); assessing students at entry and at exit (12%); and articulating cultural outcomes (24%). These results were not surprising given the fact that, as one instructor observed, "we have not yet implemented g thru j[21] [the items at the end of the criteria list]" and "there is a learning curve for most faculty in establishing learning competencies and outcomes." In fact, we have only really started. Evidence of success includes the creation of "course and college outcomes" and "the completion of the rubrics for competencies."

Appendix M presents the results, challenges, and strengths of the college outcomes initiative. The main limitations were those of time and that other processes needed to be in place first (e.g., developing the four-year degree, embedding formative and summative assessments into curriculum, articulating cultural outcomes). As one instructor put it,

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[21] The items at the end of the criteria list are the following: (g) assessing students at entry and at exit; (h) analyzing the information; (i) sharing the results; and (j) designing administrative and communication systems to ensure the findings are incorporated into decision-making processes and used to refine policy and practice at the college, program, and course levels.

there has been a lack of standards throughout the courses. This is being fixed by creating outcomes for the college and having faculty build them into the courses. It is clear that some students do not have skills to transfer successfully.

NWIC has never had a meaningful entry and exit assessment process for students and, in the opinion of one instructor, the current use of the

compass test[22] is minimally effective at this. There is no exit assessment. If we are headed to competency based instruction and assessment, we need to do much better.

Another instructor believes meaningful "pre and post tests...should be used to validate the quality of education of our students." Ultimately, the entire entrance testing process may be replaced by a more meaningful and relevant pre- and post-assessment process.

Appendix M presents the staff's suggestions about how to improve the college outcomes initiative and subsequent actions to each of the suggestions. Again, providing faculty with time to work together was a priority as was communicating with and including the extended campuses in the college outcomes initiative, as demonstrated by the comments of the following site staff:

As a Site Manager…the discussions in which I have participated have been meaningful and have helped me to understand and be involved in the development of a shared vision for the future of the college.

The process of assessment is very meaningful to our off-campus site to validate the reason why the Tribe provides the level of in-kind contribution through federal and non-federal funding matches to serve a strategic direction to improve the way of life for our society.

NWIC will continue to encourage as many faculty as possible to participate in this process for, as one instructor emphasized, "EVERYONE needs to be involved in competencies and outcomes (especially at such a small institution)." Articulating college academic outcomes and following through with the process requires a lot of time and attention. NWIC has only begun this process.

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[22] The *compass test* is NWIC's entrance test that identifies students' reading, writing, and math abilities.

Implementation

According to President Crazy Bull (2006a), NWIC faculty members are "engaged in a cutting edge process to design culturally based student outcomes" (p. 1). During July and August 2006, the Director of the Coast Salish Institute, with approximately 10 faculty and several students, discussed a philosophy of culturally relevant teaching and learning at NWIC, and, in September 2006, they drafted two student cultural outcomes:

(a) Students will demonstrate an understanding of a sense of place.

(b) Students will demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be a People.

The Director of the Coast Salish Institute is in the process of articulating what the expectations will be for these two outcomes. In order to assist faculty to better understand and appreciate cultural values, during this process, the Director of the Coast Salish Institute invited some non-Native faculty to appropriate cultural occasions, such as burials, and a long house. This process helped to bridge the gap between the Native and non-Native employees and provided them with an opportunity to collaborate toward the same mission. As NWIC clarifies its role in the future with regard to cultural aspects, it will start to assess and document its impact on students. In the meantime, NWIC is beginning to assist students to

- know their inherent tribal rights and understand why those rights are important;
- know their traditional ways of living (e.g., rituals, traditional practices, art, music, and dance);
- know about their past;
- know their elders;
- increase their level of tribal civic participation;
- understand the historical experience of Native Americans;
- speak their Native language;

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- understand contemporary Native issues;
- make healthy lifestyle choices.

One faculty member made a comment in the assessment survey that faculty have now acted upon. This instructor stated that "faculty need to know and understand these things before they can be part of instruction" and before we can have any cultural expectations of our students. In response to this general sentiment, in addition to focusing on student cultural outcomes, NWIC faculty have articulated a draft list of faculty cultural outcomes, similar to the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* section for educators (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1998). Table 6.1 outlines a draft of the initial list articulated in September 2006.

Table 6.1 Draft List of Faculty Cultural Outcomes

			Level of proficiency	
Criteria	Pre-Novice (1)	Beginning (2)	Developing (3)	Accomplished (4)

Outcome A: The faculty member demonstrates understanding of the roots and implications of assimilation and colonization.

Criteria	Pre-Novice (1)	Beginning (2)	Developing (3)	Accomplished (4)
History	Thinks "What's assimilation?" Thinks it has always been this way for everyone.	Knows the existence of the terms assimilation and colonization.	Can articulate accurate definitions of the words and give examples. Can enumerate a few key historical events from Greece to modern times leading to practices of colonization and assimilation.	Can clearly outline the historical events leading to the current relationship between Coast Salish and non-Coast Salish Peoples and Governments. Can explain why Indian people have varying degrees of assimilation.
Worldview	Is not aware of worldviews other than own.	Recognizes the existence of more than their own worldview.	Can describe Western (Euro-American) worldview and a few key differences with Coast Salish worldview. Can give examples of how this makes NWIC different from community colleges.	Can articulate the difference between acquired rights and inherent rights. Can clearly articulate how this understanding affects their teaching at NWIC. They can describe how their changing understanding has affected how they live.

Outcome B: The faculty member demonstrates understanding of tribal land ownership issues.

Criteria	Pre-Novice (1)	Beginning (2)	Developing (3)	Accomplished (4)
History	Has no idea of history of tribal land ownership issues.	Recognizes that "reservations" are different from traditional territories.	Can describe key events leading to current tribal land ownership situation.	Can explain the different types of land ownership in Coast Salish lands and explain their history.
Relationship to colonization	Does not see the connection between land ownership and assimilation and colonization.	Recognizes that there is a connection.	Can describe the connection between key historical events and worldview of colonization.	Can describe numerous significant current implications of the connection between history and land ownership.

Eventually it is expected that faculty will demonstrate these cultural outcomes.

Survey results

The staff's success rating of NWIC's documentation of its impact in assisting students through cultural activities ranged from 21% to 54%. (Note: This section asked about the success of the assessment of the activities, not about the success of the activities themselves). The most successful was documenting the impact of students' understandings of the historical experience of Native Americans (54%) and the least successful was documenting the impact of students' speaking their Native language (21%). Professional staff rated most items highest followed by administrators and then faculty.

Although nine staff clearly indicated that they did not "know of documentation of these activities," several individuals provided limited evidence of success in documenting NWIC's impact on students through these activities. For instance, one professional staff opined, "I think NWIC has been successful in that student enrollment is increasing — there is more interest." Appendix N summarizes the challenges and strengths of NWIC in documenting its cultural impact on students. The main challenge remains that there is little "agreement on what is culturally appropriate by Native staff, and how non-Native staff fit into the scheme."

In Appendix N, suggestions for improving the way NWIC documents the assessment of cultural priorities revolved around three main themes: increasing "student input," instituting curriculum review of cultural components, and continuing the "effort to recruit and hire Native faculty and staff." NWIC continues to struggle to move forward in these areas.

<u>Program Outcomes</u>

Criteria

Certain steps are outlined in the assessment literature that are important in the process of assessing student learning at the program level. These steps include

- articulating program outcomes;
- determining which courses, activities, or capstone experiences will be used to assess program outcomes;
- establishing indicators and standards (both qualitative and quantitative) to measure all program outcomes at key stages in the program;
- creating the assessment tools;
- determining how the data will be collected;
- assessing students at entry and at exit;
- analyzing the information;
- sharing the results;
- designing administrative and communication systems to ensure the findings are incorporated into decision-making processes and used to refine policy and practice at the program level;
- educating students about the role of assessment in their education.

Implementation

From 2003 to 2005, after the adoption of a mission statement that reflected the values of its community, NWIC re-evaluated, reviewed, and created its programs. NWIC restructured its programs, curriculum, and staff to more accurately reflect the direction of the strategic plan. For instance, administrators discontinued programs with few students registered and staff renewed their focus on a Native American studies two-year transfer degree. Administrators and faculty streamlined NWIC's programs and required courses and realigned its curriculum to reflect NWIC's updated mission. Due to this recent restructuring, we have not initiated a formal

program outcomes initiative. The next assessment cycle at NWIC will include this process.

From this process, NWIC hopes to create a community of faculty who understand best practices

in the development of program outcomes.

Course Outcomes

Criteria

The assessment of student learning at the course level involves the following steps:

- articulating course outcomes;
- establishing standards to measure these outcomes;
- creating assessment tools;
- using multiple assessment methods to assess outcomes;
- conducting the course assessments;
- analyzing the information;
- sharing the results;
- adjusting courses to improve learning;
- comparing the outcomes of different students in the same course over time;
- assisting students to understand and appreciate the relevancy of learning outcomes;
- educating students about the role of assessment in their education.

Implementation

Over the last two years, NWIC has initiated the lengthy and comprehensive process of

assessing student learning at the course level. In 2003, the course outcomes initiative initially

grew from the National Science Foundation Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP)

grant funding in which faculty developed outcomes for TCUP-funded courses. The course

evaluation forms for these TCUP-funded courses — most of which evolved to be First Year

Experience courses — included the evaluation of course outcomes. Faculty were so pleased with

the feedback about course outcomes they had received from students and that they used to

improve their courses that, two years later, we decided to extend the process to all courses offered at the college.

In the summer of 2005, NWIC faculty began the process of articulating learning outcomes for all courses using a specially developed course outcomes form (refer to Appendix S for an *Example of a Completed NWIC Course Outcomes Form*). All completed course outcomes forms are posted on the NWIC assessment website so that this information is accessible to all faculty at all locations. In order to include faculty from all locations, instructors are communicating with one another using email. This process will result in a consistent set of learning outcomes for each course regardless of the location or the mode of learning (i.e., independent learning, interactive television, face-to-face, online, etc.). The same course offered at different locations or taught using different modalities may be taught in various ways and may use different assessment strategies, but each course will have its own set of uniform learning outcomes. In addition, this process will facilitate course and program development and will inform students of the consistent standards and expectations of each course.

The results of this process will be used to improve student learning at all levels. In its October 2003 accreditation report (NWIC, 2003), NWIC indicated it assessed student achievement based on successful completion of courses. This method of assessing student learning is not sufficient, as the successful completion of a course in itself does not indicate what, if anything, the student has learned. By articulating learning outcomes for all courses and by developing a method to assess these outcomes, NWIC hopes to advance significantly the process of assessing student learning. Because of the struggles NWIC has experienced in the past, most faculty appreciate the value of articulating these standards and are supportive of this process. During this process, faculty have had insightful and thoughtful consultations; have

increased their collaboration with each other; have seen the power, relevance, and importance of what they were doing; have had meaningful results; and have been rewarded monetarily for their efforts. As a result, faculty response to the outcomes initiatives has been supportive. This support is critical in maintaining the momentum of the assessment process.

Survey results

Overall, staff felt that the most successful endeavour in the course outcomes initiative was articulating course outcomes (57%), and, generally, the response was less successful as they progressed down the list. This is not surprising given that NWIC is at the beginning of this process. By far the least successful endeavours in the course outcomes initiative were educating students about the role of assessment in their education (4%), comparing the outcomes of different students in the same course over time (11%), and assisting students to understand and appreciate the relevancy of learning outcomes (16%). For many of the questions, administrators indicated they did not know more frequently than faculty and professional staff (which might be anticipated given that administrators are farthest removed from the course outcomes initiative).

Appendix O provides a summary of results, challenges, and strengths regarding the course outcomes initiative. The most significant challenges are the physical distances among faculty and the limited time. At the same time, an administrator points out, "the faculty have made course outcomes a focus and believe they are working in the right direction." Appendix O summarizes suggestions that staff made to improve the course outcomes initiative and actions that staff have taken or will take as a result of these suggestions. Beyond improving communication and increasing participation, faculty would like time to work together, "time to research what others have done that might work at NWIC," "time to acclimate and hone our skill sets and thinking to make this a smooth function of our teaching," and time to develop "hands on

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courses that provide the students with situations that they can relate to" and that "will enhance the student's recognition of the course value and their potential role in the community." An extended site manager noted, "I would like to see workshops for off-campus faculty on how to revise course syllabi in ways that are more inclusive of the traditions and culture of their tribes."

One faculty stated,

I think that things are improving, but courses are still being designed backwards in many cases. Courses are designed first and then faculty try to figure out what outcomes are there as opposed to determining outcomes first and then designing the instruction around the outcomes.

Therefore, as a professional staff suggested, "more work needs to be done to help outcomes drive course and program revisions." Although "there is a lot of work to be done," many staff made comments such as "we are improving greatly with our institutional and course competency work." In the opinion of one extended campus manager, "course outcomes and all that it implies in the last academic year was a tremendous effort to attain desired level of success in such a short time."

<u>Effectiveness of Indirect Indicators</u>

<u>Criteria</u>

It is important that tribal colleges request feedback from their students, faculty, staff, and the community in order to improve student success. In order to accomplish this, surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups can be employed. Results of the surveys, interviews, or focus groups can be shared with all relevant individuals in the tribal college and larger communities. Student success can be improved based on feedback provided in the following types of surveys:

- course evaluations;
- student opinion survey;

- alumni survey;
- graduate survey;
- staff satisfaction survey;
- student engagement survey (exploring active student involvement in learning);
- needs assessment (community).

Implementation

In its October 2003 accreditation report (NWIC, 2003), NWIC indicated it would collect certain baseline data to be used for continuous broad-based planning and evaluation of student learning. NWIC went beyond its stated intentions and has conducted and used the following surveys in culturally appropriate ways across all extended campuses in order to establish baseline information for planning and decision making and to improve student success: A Teaching and Assessment Methods Survey (2003), where I surveyed instructors to determine which teaching and assessment strategies they were using (see Appendix B); a community Needs Assessment (2003), the results of which administrators used in strategic planning and to guide initiatives on campus (see Appendix T); a Student Opinion Survey (2003) (see NWIC-specific questions in Appendix U); an Alumni Survey (2004), which surveyed 1990 - 2003 graduates (see NWIC-specific questions in Appendix V); and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (2005). We developed locally some of the surveys, modified other standardized national surveys to include a set of NWIC-specific questions, and provided students with gift certificates upon completion of some of the longer surveys. We conducted many of these surveys while tribal college community members were laying the foundation for the college (i.e., during strategic planning and while creating new programs and a new direction for the college, etc.) and while we were developing the assessment process.

In addition, we created for these purposes several ongoing initiatives including a faculty review process (2004), an Institutional Wellness initiative (2005 to the present), and a new online course evaluation process (spring 2006). The online course evaluation process will facilitate prompt feedback of course evaluation responses to the faculty and will allow for longitudinal analysis of course evaluation data. We initiated this process in fall 2003 with NWIC's First Year Experience courses; NWIC is now in the process of updating all course evaluation forms across all campuses to include course-specific outcomes. In addition, faculty have updated other questions on the course evaluation forms to reflect cultural standards and current faculty and student priorities. An example of an NWIC course evaluation form is included in Appendix W. The assessment department conducts course evaluations for every course at the end of each quarter and reports results back to the faculty after they submit their grades.

In the spring of 2004, NWIC initiated an annual peer review process for instructors during which each instructor reviews a colleague. This process is enhancing communication and dialogue among faculty about ways to improve teaching and student learning.

Results from various assessment initiatives that the assessment department has conducted over the last couple of years, including the Alumni Survey, the Student Opinion Survey, and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, demonstrate how this information is being used to change programs, pedagogical approaches, and so forth. For instance, I held a voluntary meeting in May 2006 to discuss the results of the Student Opinion Survey. Eleven faculty and four professional staff attended. Staff generated many ideas for improving student success during this meeting including encouraging instructors to visit and send food (e.g., cookies) to their extended campus students; working more closely with student services staff; combining different modes of learning (i.e., online, face-to-face, interactive television, independent

learning); and using more online resources and texts (in order to reduce education costs for students). Staff made numerous suggestions regarding online courses (such as creating an orientation/introduction "course" for faculty who teach and students who take online courses); independent learning courses (such as creating an online bulletin board forum that is optional for independent learning students to support one another and paying independent learning instructors on par with regular faculty); co-curricular activities and programs (such as expanding the athletic program and other co-curricular activities and programs and linking participation in co-curricular activities with class attendance and grades); and class schedules (such as offering flexible class schedules for working students, experimenting with offering seminar over interactive television and, perhaps, at different times, and preparing students for the new school year well in advance). NWIC has already acted upon many of these suggestions.

Survey Results

According to staff, the most successful sources of improving student success were the Alumni Survey (52%) and course evaluations (52%) and the least successful were the Student Opinion Survey (27%) and Community College Survey of Student Engagement (29%). Between 32% and 48% of all staff did not know whether or not NWIC has been successful in improving student success based on feedback from each survey. These low ratings and the high percent of *I don't know* responses are expected, given that I just recently released the reports for the last two surveys. Consistently, professional staff responded the most positively for most items.

Appendix P summarizes the results, challenges, and strengths articulated by staff about using survey results to improve learning. One administrator elaborates upon some of the challenges: Until recently NWIC has not paid

much attention to course evaluations as tools for change. We have treated them as activities we do because we have to do them. We also have been inconsistent in completing student course evaluations. Part of the difficulty in using them as a tool for change is that we need to focus on faculty improvement in a very honest and direct way, which we haven't to date. We need to face the fact that our faculty must raise their own academic and teaching skills in order for the students to raise their skills to the levels we need. A general reason for lack of success in making change is that we are in the early stages of collecting and comprehending the data and it will take time to make profound changes in the curriculum and ways we serve students and communities.

As a result of this general sentiment, NWIC restructured the student course evaluation forms to include the evaluation of course-specific learning outcomes.

Appendix P lists suggestions for improving how NWIC surveys are conducted and about how to improve use of the results. The main suggestions revolved around creating a structured reporting mechanism and increasing use of results. Although it is clear that NWIC has not used survey results to the fullest extent possible (e.g., seven staff were "unaware of the results" of these surveys), "again, the college is in a learning phase" and is "generally improving" the way in which it "incorporates the data and information in decision-making processes." This is evident by the increase in "communication between Student Services and the students at the site" and by the staff "being mindful of the feedback" and having "a willingness to implement change." For instance, after reviewing the results of the Student Opinion Survey, one administrator stated that

a series of staff meetings allowed staff from different departments to strategize how to make students' experiences more pleasant and seamless, rather than bouncing students from one office to the next.

Furthermore, another administrator noted that following the reporting and discussing of the Alumni Survey results, "the college made a push to make certain that our graduates are fully prepared for the four year college experience. We are focusing on making certain that none of our students are…promoted" unless they deserve it "and that the quality of their NWIC

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education is more than competitive. This focus is as a result of direct feedback from graduates and shows a true dedication to serving our student population."

Feedback from these sources can be used to improve student success, "to make necessary changes to faculty, classes, or programs of study," and "to support faculty better in their teaching efforts." In order to be able to report the data back more effectively to staff and provide time to discuss how the results will be used, we are considering creating quarterly staff retreat days.

Effectiveness of Institutional Data

Criteria

One of the first steps a tribal college can take in its assessment process is to begin to track enrollment and completion patterns for different types of students, such as degree and certificate-seeking, non-degree-seeking, and ABE/GED students. In order to complete this task, the tribal college must enter the students' intentions into the database system, and it needs to create standardized definitions for calculating retention, graduation, and course completion rates (so they can look for trends in their data over time). Typical institutional data that can be tracked over time to improve student success include

- student enrollment data;
- retention rates;
- graduation rates and numbers;
- course completion rates and numbers;
- transfer data.

Implementation

In 2003, NWIC started to track enrollment and completion patterns for different types of students, such as degree and certificate-seeking, non-degree-seeking, and ABE/GED students. In addition, in the spring of 2005, NWIC created standardized meaningful definitions for calculating retention, graduation, and course completion rates. This information will be generated annually and will be used to gauge the effectiveness of various educational initiatives across locations.

Throughout the 2005-2006 academic year, the vice president for instruction and I organized optional biweekly informational meetings for all staff during which we presented back to the college community information about enrollment, retention, graduation, and course completion. Every session was well attended, included staff from the extended campuses via interactive television, and resulted in rich, meaningful conversations about how to improve student success. The fact that mostly professional staff and faculty attended these sessions might explain why they were more positive about how successful the college has been in using these data to promote student success. Finally, NWIC administrators are beginning to use the strategic plan performance indicators to document progress.

Survey Results

Administrators were least positive about NWIC's success in this area: between 0% and 25% of administrators thought NWIC has been successful in using these data to improve student success. Between 30% and 55% of faculty and between 38% and 71% of professional staff thought NWIC has been successful in using these data to improve student success.

As a result of the retention data, staff have modified certain systems at NWIC. For instance, according to one administrator,

all students now have a minimum of three contacts per quarter through advising and outreach. All degree or certificate seeking students have current credit evaluations and an education plan on file. All advisors log contact information so that others can view the information. A retention survey has been created and student development is the focus. Students are learning to manage their education experience and take ownership of their program.

Furthermore, another administrator states, "innovative approaches to teaching, such as the First Year Experience," have been successful. This administrator maintains that "retention rates and course completion rates show that these approaches work. Thus, we are putting more resources into these successful approaches." In one instructor's opinion, "NWIC has changed the way in which some courses are delivered" in order to improve retention rates. For instance, new hybrid classes are being developed that combine online instruction with more successful modes of learning such as interactive television or face-to-face.

Appendix Q summarizes the results, challenges, and strengths concerning the use of institutional data to improve the college and learning. In the opinion of one administrator, one of the main limitations is that staff "are not yet competent in the use of data-driven decision making or even in the analysis and distribution of data for consideration in making decisions." Appendix Q overviews (a) suggestions about how to improve the use of institutional data and (b) actions that staff have taken or will take in response to the suggestions. Again, staff recommended improving communication of institutional data results to all staff, students, community, and extended campuses. It was evident from many responses that staff are becoming aware of the trends of the data over time and are beginning "to use this information to improve student success." Staff cited the NWIC Assessment website as an important vehicle for posting reports and assessment-related information.

<u>Impact of the Assessment Program</u>

Overall, 31% percent of faculty, 40% of administrators, and 56% of professional staff rated assessment attempts at NWIC as being *successful* or *very successful*. Mostly everyone else rated the assessment attempts as being *somewhat successful* (one professional staff rated the efforts as being *minimally successful*). Nobody selected *not successful*. Seven percent responded *I don't know*.

<u>Use of Data (Retention Strategies)</u>

NWIC is not just creating a method to do assessment; it is creating a tribal college learning culture that is driven by a deep commitment to the ideals of continuous improvement in learning through the use of assessment strategies. The dedicated and highly qualified staff and faculty are instrumental to the success of the students. NWIC has initiated various retention strategies over the last couple of years — with the hope of increasing learning and student success. These are listed in Appendix X. I have evaluated a couple of these retention strategies to determine their effectiveness. For instance, I have reviewed the First Year Experience program annually over the last five years and, based on retention data, student feedback, and faculty feedback, faculty have made improvements to the curriculum to make it more cohort-based, place-based, integrated, and relevant to the students. NWIC's innovative approach to first-year college students has yielded promising results as data demonstrate significantly higher retention rates than for traditional approaches used in previous years.

In addition, new hybrid classes are being developed that combine online instruction with more successful modes of learning, such as interactive television or face-to-face. Faculty and administrators implemented this strategy as a result of retention data that indicated students are more successful when learning through these more interactive methods.

A final example of a retention strategy that NWIC has undertaken recently is the following: For years NWIC had adequate enrollment numbers but has had challenges retaining students. As a result, in 2006, NWIC hired a retention specialist to help increase retention. This individual is attempting to use multiple strategies and early intervention initiatives to actively retain students, such as calling students who are absent from classes and students who do not return the following quarter; creating orientation programs, mentoring programs, an online Early Alert System, faculty referral forms, and Friday brown bag lunches with faculty and advisors; updating class rosters; and improving faculty/staff communication. In addition, an outreach specialist is available throughout the day to deal with emergencies. By tracking retention rates over the next couple of years, NWIC will be able to determine what impact, if any, these efforts are having on retention.

Positive Impacts

Benefits of the assessment program that staff mentioned in the survey include improved communication about teaching and learning; enhanced discussions about cultural values and outcomes; increased consistency among all campuses; a more focused curriculum on essentials (culture, writing, speaking, etc.); a more unified vision; increased student learning; and access to baseline data. Specific responses of faculty, administrators, and professional staff regarding the positive impacts of the assessment program are listed below.

Faculty

Faculty noted a variety of positive impacts of the assessment program, related primarily to the NWIC and course outcomes initiatives, which, they said,

> provide clarity of outcomes, specific methods to reach outcomes, clarity of the relevance and application of coursework.

attempt to create a unified solution to the 'quirks' of this educational institution.

are positive and will only improve the overall academic program.

are great opportunities for faculty to share and learn together.

have given us an instructional vision and have brought faculty together for civil discourse.

help faculty evaluate their teaching and assessment methods.

Faculty observed the following:

Teachers are making syllabi more specific about material to be learned and the relationship to grades.

Students have a clearer sense of requirements.

Faculty are discussing grading issues.

Faculty meetings regarding the assessment program created deeper understanding of the value and goals.

Consistency and accountability make people more aware of the benefits that come from these types of tools for improvement.

I am teaching writing skills better. The course outcomes help me to stay focused and organized. I become clearer as to the essential learnings for my courses. I feel that we are working better and better together as a faculty.

In the long run, it will provide a way for all faculty and staff to focus on measurable outcomes. Students who graduate from NWIC will demonstrate a known set of skills and knowledge.

The assessment process provides "faculty teaching in the same disciplines" with a forum to "discuss outcomes and assessment methods"; it provides faculty with "exposure to multiple ways of teaching and assessing outcomes"; and it provides "specific outcome definitions for courses." Other positive results of the assessment program that faculty mentioned included improvements to the curriculum, "student assistance and counseling," the data gathering process, and the "First Year Experience cohorts."

The instructors had mainly positive comments regarding the direct impact of the assessment program on their work. Faculty reported that this process has kept "the goals and objectives clear and on track"; "improved course design and instruction"; improved "faculty discussion of issues"; increased communication about teaching and learning; "helped me to implement better course outcomes and direction of my course materials"; and has given instructors "clear objectives to incorporate into … course outcomes." One instructor reported the assessment process as having had an "enormous" impact and "becoming a far better instructor." Others appreciated the "extra money" they were compensated for doing additional assessment work.

Administrators

Several administrators echoed the positive responses of the faculty toward the NWIC outcomes and course outcomes initiatives as exemplified by the comments of one administrator: "The competencies discussions in which I participated were engaging and helped me focus on course outcomes at my site." These discussions help to "unify instruction," "adjust programs," "strengthen courses," make faculty "more conscientious about student learning and their educational goals," improve faculty, "improve faculty/student relations," make NWIC "accountable," and "give us more grounding in our Native heritage." By "working toward ongoing improvement," one person commented, "we are becoming who we say we are."

One administrator summarized the positive impacts of the assessment process and program, saying that it

> clarifies the instructional focus for the college; creates faculty cohesion; creates a structure for future academic course and program improvement; makes information about retention, assessment, and program development more readily available to staff and the public; and supports faculty development (as faculty learn more about why they are doing what they are doing and can then improve their teaching skills and methods).

Another administrator echoed these comments by stating the assessment process results in

> more informed faculty and administrators about the value of assessments and impact on student learning; a tool for defining course outcomes and measuring whether learning objectives were met; documentation for overall performance in courses and college-wide; and evidence to tribal communities and funders.

Finally, an administrator stated,

> I do believe we are working towards an effective program which will eventually be a key decision-making tool for the college. We really have not had enough time with the efforts to see the eventual benefits.

> Although four administrators indicated that the assessment process has had minimal to no

impact on their work, many administrators commented that the assessment process has had direct

impacts:

> It has helped me to think about curriculum development of the college as a whole (as an administrator). I understand assessment better and the link between assessment, program improvement, curriculum development and using assessment as a teaching tool.

> I think it's great. I always wondered how students could have passed English 101, 102 — get a job and they still couldn't write. In this administrative job, I don't really teach in the classroom anymore — but I love teaching. I've been reviewing the classes/courses I would like to teach again, and re-writing them with outcomes etc. I'm developing trainings and looking for the ways in which I can measure what students are learning.

> The competencies discussions have made me more aware of these matters in student learning and in choosing faculty and supporting faculty in their teaching.

Other administrators commented that the assessment process "helps us to identify the outcomes

for learning and teaching"; "assists in selecting priorities of resources"; focuses "on

improvement in meeting student needs"; is "useful in my decision making"; "made me aware of

gaps in institutional resources"; and lets "me notice all the areas it takes to produce a successful

student."

Professional staff

Professional staff noted that the positive impacts of the assessment program include improved "retention rates, instructor involvement," "service projects and activities, academic instruction and support, counseling and mentoring, and cultural and enrichment activities." Other positive impacts included "actually being able to see how our efforts are affecting our students"; "getting the institution to look in on itself in concrete ways instead of running on 'gut feeling' or reacting to situations"; improving "awareness of course outcomes and faculty development in this area"; discussing "curriculum and assessment issues," which "will result in better teaching"; providing "employees…a chance to talk to each other and get to know each other a little bit better"; using "technological means (i.e., interactive television, web-based) to either maintain or improve quality of service to tribal communities"; and helping NWIC to "get a snapshot of campus attitudes."

The professional staff report using assessment results a great deal and were also generally positive about the direct impact of the assessment process on their work: "The assessment process re-affirms data our off-campus site has been maintaining for tribal reporting purposes to our tribal community or federal agency"; it has helped "me with outreach and retention"; "I am able to focus on what needs to be changed, altered and possibly discarded"; "I have a better understanding of how the college works together. People have a better understanding of what we do in our department" and "everyone is on the same page."

Negative Impacts

The main negative impact of the assessment program mentioned by staff is stress on their limited available time. Referring to time constraints, one administrator noted, "I wouldn't call these necessarily negative impacts but rather the realities of carrying out such an initiative." This

same administrator mentioned that this initiative "costs institutional funds." Staff noted that the assessment work results in "extra pressure" and "more meetings" and is "repetitive," "complex," "time consuming and grueling work." "It often feels like it is taking away from work more directly related to immediate student needs" and "it is difficult to deal with on top of additional duties, but it is worth it." Other administrators and faculty expressed concerns that some "data will be ignored," that people will not realize "the potential of change or needed reorganization to eliminate negative impacts," that "non-Native people" may not be included "into the equation and be inclusive in our values for other cultures as well," that there might be a "lack of follow through and confusion as to how everyone is using the information" and that it is challenging for some people to remain positive. Furthermore, one of the professional staff noted, "sometimes in focusing on gathering numbers and measuring everything, it is possible to lose track of the intangibles, those successes that can't really be measured." Finally, five staff thought there were no negative impacts of the assessment program and process, and one administrator stated, "there is never a negative impact of an honest assessment. We do have to streamline, adjust and learn how to effectively use the information and better utilize the tools. These things come with time."

<div align="center">Sustainability</div>

The sustainability of NWIC's assessment efforts depends mostly on the funding and institutionalization of the assessment coordinator position and department. Now that this position is funded by NWIC and a basic assessment program is in place, the president and administrators at NWIC are committed to making NWIC a leader in tribal college assessment. This commitment is demonstrated by the fact that in October 2006, although under budget constraints, administrators created an institutional research department to complement the assessment department. Another important factor in sustaining this momentum is continuing the

process of educating and training faculty, administrators, staff, and students about formative

assessment and student learning, so that accountability is shared and assessment skills are

transferred to increase the capacity of the tribal college community to direct its own research

(National Science Foundation, 2002; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

In order to assist in this process, the NWIC assessment website

(http://www.nwic.edu/faculty/assessment/assessment.htm) continues to be maintained to provide

access to various teaching, learning, and assessment materials, reports, and data. The NWIC

assessment website is a working website for developing course outcomes and NWIC

competencies and outcomes. It provides a link to NWIC's course evaluation website, graduate

survey, and instructor peer review forms as well as to many reports and survey results. Finally, it

has an overview of an assessment educational presentation posted on it.

Furthermore, this thesis documents the assessment process, which provides a permanent

contribution to the assessment work at NWIC. A modified version will be distributed to all tribal

colleges to assist them with their assessment programs.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I overviewed the criteria that can be used to evaluate an assessment

program in a tribal college context (Research Question 1); identified elements of the NWIC

assessment program that are most and least successful (Research Question 2); and explored the

preconditions and other contextual factors contributing to the relative success or failure of

different elements of the NWIC assessment program (Research Question 3). I then presented the

positive and negative impacts of the assessment program on staff and explored issues concerning

the assessment program's sustainability. The final chapter will summarize these responses.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

The primary aim of this study was to advance theoretical and applied knowledge in the field of assessment within tribal colleges. This undertaking is noteworthy given that tribal colleges are vital to the development and future of Native American communities. This doctoral thesis demonstrates that assessment can be done in a tribal college context in a culturally appropriate and meaningful way, and it provides insights into how this can be approached.

I began the thesis by reviewing the history of Native Americans in higher education, providing an overview and critique of the emerging assessment movement in higher education, and discussing the general state and implications of assessment within the tribal college system. I then used a case study methodology to examine a specific assessment program that is being developed at NWIC. This case study provided insight into the specific challenges, as well as the most successful principles and practices, associated with assessment efforts in one tribal college. In this final chapter, I will provide summary responses to my three research questions:

(1) What criteria are best used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context?

(2) Which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1?

(3) What preconditions and other contextual factors contribute to the relative success or failure of different elements of the NWIC assessment program?

After responding to the three research questions, I will abstract from that case study, and from the broader historical and theoretical discussion preceding it, a set of elements that might assist other tribal colleges to develop their own assessment programs. Then, I will present implications for theory, policy, and practice and then conclude with a discussion of the limitations of this study and of future lines of inquiry that arise from it.

Response to Research Question 1 (Criteria)

In Research Question 1, I asked, *what criteria are best used to evaluate an assessment program in a tribal college context?* In order to evaluate the NWIC assessment program, I used criteria that were broadly organized into three categories: (a) the *inputs* into the assessment program, (b) the *processes* involving the assessment program, and (c) the *products* of the assessment program. My response to this research question is based on a literature review, participant-observation, and a survey of full-time staff.

Inputs

The inputs of a tribal college assessment program include (1) the plans and strategies and (2) the resources that go into developing the program. These inputs are essential to sustaining a healthy tribal college assessment program. To assess plans and strategies, several criteria may be used. Most importantly, for example, has the college created or updated its mission statement (made it clear and concise) and made certain that the staff is familiar with it and appreciates and supports the mission? Does the leadership know the history of the college and the tribal college and university movement? Has the college conducted an inclusive strategic planning initiative (which included tribal community members, all tribal college staff, and students)? Has it conducted an inventory of current assessment practices at the college and developed a systematic assessment plan, including direct indicators, indirect indicators, and institutional data (the assessment checklist in Appendix Y may be used as a guide for creating the assessment inventory and the assessment plan)?

As far as resources, the second input, are concerned, the college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it has a full-time assessment coordinator who is knowledgeable about assessment best practices and is sensitive to the cultural environment at the college; if it

provides funds for the administration of assessment-related tasks; if it provides an adequate enrollment database system and an effective data collection system; and if it hires a data administrator who is able to extract the data and create reports. The attitudes of the faculty and administrators are also crucial to success. Do its administrators support financially the assessment program; respond in respectful, cooperative, and supportive ways; collaborate with faculty and staff; provide visible advocacy and real material support for assessment; provide necessary opportunities, incentives, material resources, and compensation to faculty and staff for learning about and implementing assessment initiatives; solicit feedback, ideas, and input from staff and faculty and incorporate these suggestions into plans and decisions; streamline and simplify meetings and reduce administrative obstacles to the assessment program; show appreciation and thanks to faculty and staff for their assessment efforts and achievements publicly through institutional processes and practices; and refer regularly to the assessment program and its results in reports and presentations to both internal and external audiences? Finally, do the college's faculty remain open-minded; respond in respectful, cooperative, and collaborative ways; take ownership of assessment and embrace assessment as an intrinsically valuable developmental process whereby teaching and learning can be continually improved through evaluation, reflection, and identification of needs for change; provide students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to practice skills and to receive feedback in ways that are integrated, contextualized and experiential; and use the assessment program and its results to improve student learning?

Processes

Criteria that may be used to evaluate the processes of a tribal college assessment program fall into three categories. The first category concerns how the assessment program is carried out.

For example, to what extent is the process participatory, culturally appropriate, ongoing and formative, faculty-driven, streamlined and simplified, and useful, meaningful, and relevant to the tribal college community? Is it conducted in a responsible and ethical manner? Does the assessment process recognize and legitimize Indigenous knowledge and skills; contribute to tribal self-determination and knowledge; start with interested and supportive faculty and staff; include employees from appropriate segments of the college and students in their design; result in a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the assessment coordinator and all staff; build cohesion, collaboration, relationships, and trust among staff through a consultative process; educate administration, staff, and faculty to improve their assessment skills; report results internally in an ongoing way so that the information can be used to improve student success and learning; initiate meaningful conversations; create a shared vision for the future of the tribal college, based on common values; redirect resources towards priorities outlined in the mission and goals; increase the college's responsiveness to the needs of the tribal community; improve the instructional capacity of the college and its public image; provide the basis for college planning and budgeting decisions; and demonstrate accountability, the responsible use of limited resources, to the public?

The second category concerns the extent to which assessment is embedded in college processes. For example, is assessment embedded in curriculum review, budgeting, the First Year Experience program (learning communities and cohorts), the college catalogue, college publications, the website, job descriptions and announcements, and service learning?

The third category concerns the learning, teaching, and assessment strategies that are employed at the college. Do faculty use teaching and assessment strategies that include meaningful, relevant, and contextualized experiences? Do they incorporate elements

traditionally used by tribal people, such as apprenticeships, observations, and practice? Is the curriculum integrated, experientially grounded, "place-based," and founded on traditional culture and knowledge? Do faculty use authentic assessment and learning approaches (e.g., self-reflecting and self-assessing, applying concepts to a relevant context, teaching material to peers, writing about a subject, and asking essential questions) and do they employ formative classroom assessment techniques (short, frequent, ungraded attempts to assess student learning) to provide immediate in-class feedback from students?

<div align="center">Products</div>

Criteria that may be used to evaluate the products of a tribal college assessment program will measure the extent to which the college is executing assessment initiatives in three broad categories: (a) direct indicators of student learning (i.e., outcomes assessment), (b) indirect indicators of student learning (i.e., student's perceptions of their learning), and (c) institutional and community data (e.g., retention and community graduation rates).

To evaluate the first category, how well a tribal college is directly assessing student learning, the college can determine the extent to which it has created a method for assessing cultural, college, program, and course outcomes and for using the assessment results. More specifically, the tribal college can ask itself if it has articulated cultural, college, program, and course outcomes; included outcomes on syllabi; determined which courses will be used to reinforce and assess all cultural, college, and program outcomes at entry, midway, and exit; determined or created the activities, capstone experiences, projects, essays, or assignments in required courses that will be used to assess outcomes at entry, midway, and exit; developed course level rubrics for outcomes; educated students about the role of assessment in their education; assessed students at entry, midway, and exit for outcomes; analyzed the entry,

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midway, and exit assessment data; presented analysis to faculty, staff, and students and consulted on the results; used the data to improve and revise curriculum; and documented the process?

Regarding the second category, indirect indicators of student learning, the following criteria pertain. Does the college ask the students in surveys, focus groups, interviews, and so forth, about their experiences and learning at the tribal college? Does the college use this information to improve its services, programs, and curricula? More specifically, the tribal college is likely to have a successful assessment program if it gathers information about students' perceptions of their learning in an ongoing way, such as through course evaluations and graduate surveys and, occasionally, through student opinion, alumni, and student engagement surveys. Questions specific to tribal colleges may be appended to standardized national surveys to provide more meaningful and culturally relevant information.

Finally, there are the criteria that capture information related to the third category, institutional and community data. For example, to what extent does the college collect and use institutional and community data to improve its services, programs, and curriculum? The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it, for instance, tracks institutional data over time for different types of students (e.g., degree- and certificate-seeking, nondegree-seeking, and ABE/GED students). Data would include such things as student enrollment data (e.g., full-time equivalent numbers and Indian Student Count); retention rates (e.g., one semester, semester to semester, fall to fall, and fall to spring); graduation rates (3 or 4 year rates) and numbers of graduates; program completion rates and numbers; course completion rates and numbers by level of course (e.g., CEU, ABE/GED, 100+), by mode of learning (e.g., online, face-to-face), and by program; transfer data (e.g., from ABE to college-level and from the tribal college to four-year colleges), including comparisons of grades and retention data; and time to degree completion.

I am adding *community data* to the third category, *institutional data,* because community-level data can provide important information about the impact the college is having on its local tribal communities (i.e., community graduation rates).

Appendix Y, a *Checklist for Tribal College Assessment Programs,* provides a comprehensive list of criteria that can be used to evaluate a tribal college assessment program. In addition, this list of criteria, or suggested elements of an assessment program, may be used as a guide by tribal colleges to develop new assessment programs. The following schema, in Figure 7.1, summarizes the components of a tribal college assessment program.

Figure 7.1 Conceptual Model of the Components of a Tribal College Assessment Program
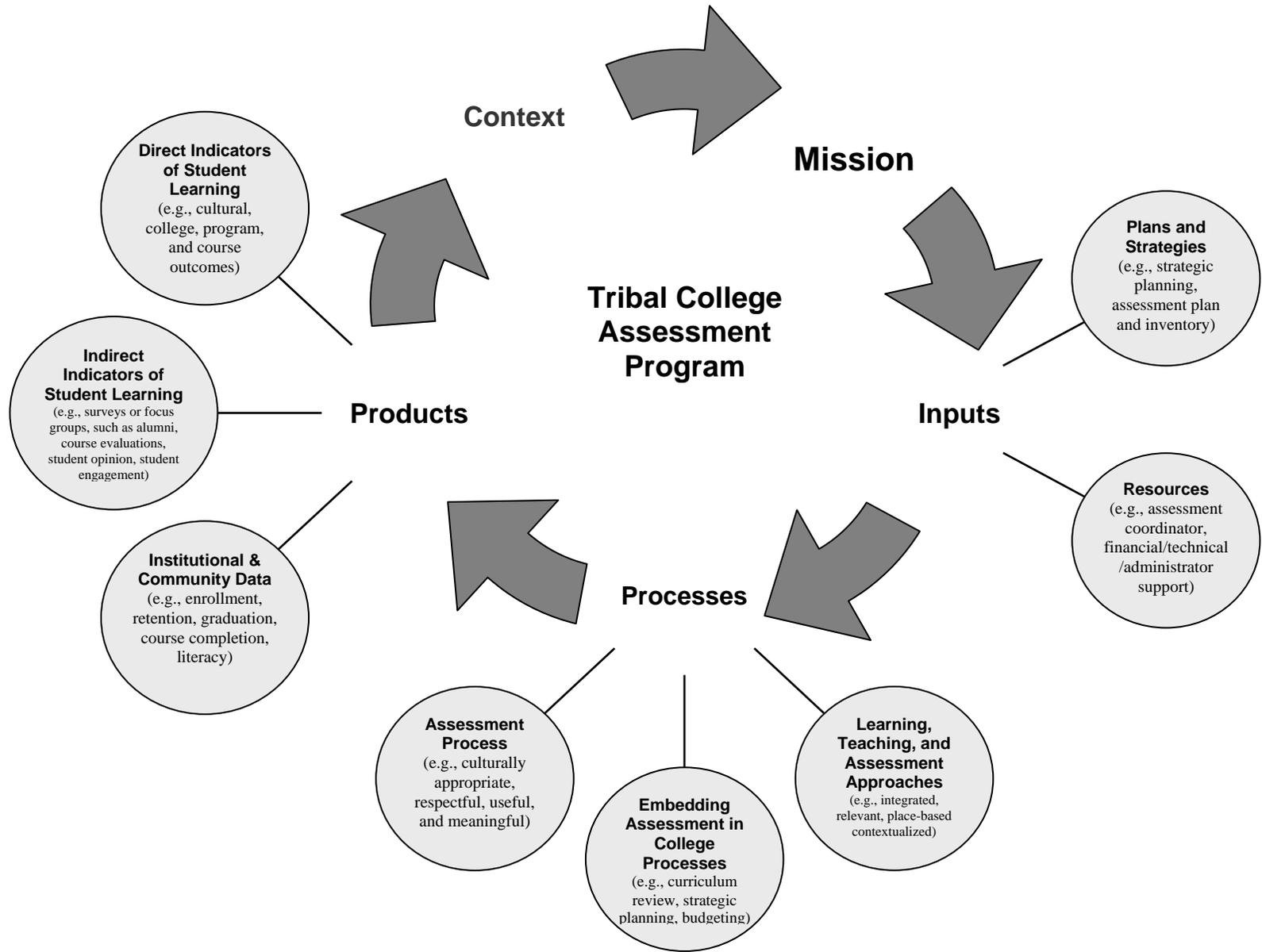
Response to Research Question 2 (Most and Least Successful Elements)

In Research Question 2, I asked, *which elements of the NWIC assessment program are most and least successful according to the evaluative criteria established in Research Question 1?* The response to this question is outlined below, also according to inputs, processes, and products and it is based on participant-observation and a survey of full-time staff.

Inputs

Overall, the inputs administrators invested in NWIC's assessment program — including the plans, strategy, and resources — were significant, and they were essential to its success. Aspects related to plans and strategy that were successful included that NWIC conducted an all-inclusive strategic planning initiative during which it articulated a clear mission statement (the mission statement focused on self-determination and knowledge). The staff corroborated my perspective when they rated the development of the mission statement as successful. Specifically, the president's vision, leadership, and efforts to update the mission statement and increase staff familiarity with, appreciation for, and support of the mission ranked high. Although most staff would agree that the strategic planning initiative was completed successfully, the least successful element concerning the plans and strategy was that the strategic planning initiative resulted in a complex plan, which makes it difficult to both tackle its goals and track its effectiveness. Fewer strategic initiatives with specific measures of success, focusing on specific priorities, would make the strategic plan more achievable and manageable. Although we did not have a formal assessment plan, we pursued an informed, systematic, yet flexible, approach to assessment, paying special attention to staff time constraints.

The most successful element of the assessment program was that the administration was supportive and provided sufficient resources, including financial, human, and technical resources to carry out the assessment work efficiently. For example, the administrators funded a full-time assessment coordinator and compensated faculty with stipends to work on assessment initiatives. Also, they provided sufficient funds to pay for other assessment-related work, such as offering students gift certificates to complete lengthy surveys. In addition, NWIC now has an adequate database system, an effective data collection system, and a data administrator who is able to efficiently extract data and create reports. This person, who administrators hired during the 2004 -2005 academic year, has been instrumental in the progress of extracting and using institutional data. Moreover, compared to reports of faculty participation at mainstream colleges, NWIC had a core group of faculty that was especially receptive and supportive. Finally, NWIC's dedicated, committed, and perseverant staff contributed significantly to the success of the assessment program.

<u>Processes</u>

<u>Assessment Process</u>

Staff also rated the manner in which we conducted the assessment program high in the survey. Specifically, the aspects of the assessment process that staff rated highest were that it was conducted in a responsible and ethical manner, resulted in a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the assessment coordinator and all staff, and resulted in a useful, relevant, and meaningful assessment program for the NWIC community. Faculty, administrators, and professional staff emphasized that just establishing a functional process, which keeps staff engaged and informed, has been a successful aspect of institutionalizing assessment at NWIC. In

addition, several staff viewed the assessment program as participatory (the process included staff from the extended campuses), flexible, and adaptable to the college's current needs and staff enthusiasm. Staff mentioned that the NWIC website, brown bag lunches, and faculty meetings (on interactive television) were effective tools for the distribution of information. Furthermore, staff mentioned the effective use of results, especially by the Center for Student Success staff, as instrumental in its success.

Staff made numerous suggestions, repeated throughout the survey, for improving NWIC's assessment process. Several of the recurring themes applied to the entire college: the need to improve communication among students, faculty (including online, site, and independent learning), professional staff, administrators, and tribal community members and to integrate the extended campuses in more college activities. Other themes related directly to the assessment process itself, such as the need to institutionalize assessment into the daily operations of the college; to educate and train staff and students about assessment and communicate its importance; to increase participation of students and appropriate staff; to plan and set goals; to improve access to results, report results back to the tribal college community, and discuss them in a timely, consistent, and effective way to ensure unified responses and goals; and to use this information systematically campus-wide to drive decision making.

Embedding assessment in college processes

Curriculum review has begun to effectively embed assessment into its procedures, as outcomes are required for all new, revised, and reviewed courses. Other college processes, such as strategic planning, budgeting, and college publications, are still working toward embedding assessment.

<u>Learning, teaching, and assessment approaches</u>

NWIC faculty are creating an environment where students are learning and being assessed in more meaningful and culturally suitable ways. For instance, instructors are experimenting with more integrated, place-based, relevant, and experientially grounded curricula. The First Year Experience program is the vehicle for many of these experiments. A significant challenge is that the non-Native American faculty struggle with the boundaries of appropriateness in incorporating culturally relevant and meaningful learning, teaching, and assessment approaches and content because there is not agreement about which cultural components are acceptable for non-Native faculty to teach; however, there is increased consciousness, openness, and exposure to innovative methods and to cultural conversations and values. NWIC faculty and staff are continually reflecting upon their teaching and assessment approaches and striving to improve student success.

<div align="center">Products</div>

<u>Direct Indicators of Student Learning</u>

Many staff expressed the view that mobilizing faculty to articulate college outcomes and to identify course outcomes have been, and continue to be, two of the most successful products of the assessment program. Staff disagreed about the level of success of cultural efforts. Whereas some staff were impressed with the degree to which discussions have advanced (especially recently), others were frustrated with how slow the progress has been. Although the college, course, and cultural outcomes initiatives are just evolving, the initial stages have been promising and over the next few years should yield meaningful results.

According to many faculty, the specific elements of the outcomes initiatives that need the most amount of work are designing the curriculum based on outcomes (rather than the other way around) and developing consistent and high academic standards. In addition, creating a program outcomes initiative and dealing with cultural issues — for example, teaching languages, hiring more Native American faculty, and determining cultural outcomes — are high priorities.

Indirect Indicators of Student Learning

Over the last five years, the practice of conducting surveys has been beneficial in that it has yielded baseline information for the college from which it can measure improvement over the next several years. Specifically, the Alumni Survey, the Student Opinion Survey, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the Community Needs Assessment, along with more NWIC-specific questions, have provided NWIC with meaningful information that initiates fruitful and insightful conversations and results in significant actions. Elements that still need improving are methods to transmit the information in a more timely and systematic fashion.

Institutional Data

Finally, collecting, analyzing, reporting, and sharing institutional data were effective. Some of this information is posted on the assessment website in a "Student Success" report, and it is used regularly by staff in many departments. Other institutional data reports provide administrators with information on which they base important decisions.

Reporting and using all assessment results in more timely and effective ways continues to be an issue. This concern should be resolved with the implementation of the 2007 – 2012 assessment plan (see Appendix A), which allocates sufficient time for accomplishing different

assessment initiatives and for reporting, using, and documenting the use of assessment results. In the following years, NWIC will consider tribal community data, such as college graduation and college attendance rates, to determine its impact on local communities.

Response to Research Question 3 (Preconditions and Contextual Factors)

In Research Question 3, I asked, *what preconditions and other contextual factors contribute to the relative success or failure of different elements of the NWIC assessment program?* My response to this research question is based on participant-observation, a survey of full-time staff, and document review. NWIC is typical of many tribal colleges in that it has extremely limited funding (with a significant portion of the funding coming from grants) and a largely non-Native American faculty (even though approximately 85% of its students are Native American). One factor that makes NWIC unique from other tribal colleges — and also creates many challenges — is that the majority of its students attend at its extended campuses, despite the fact that most of its resources are situated at the main campus. In the following section, I outline preconditions and contextual factors that contribute to the relative success of elements of the NWIC assessment program and discuss the generalizability of these factors to other tribal college contexts.

<u>Positive Factors</u>

Why is it that, contrary to expectations based on the experiences of larger colleges and universities where faculty frequently viewed assessment as an instrument of external control, faculty resisted minimally to the assessment program at NWIC? And from where did this level of faculty commitment, receptivity, and ownership spring? Several overarching preconditions and contextual factors contributed to the success of certain elements of the assessment program.

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Although initially the impetus for creating NWIC's assessment program came from external accreditation pressure, many staff mentioned, and I agree, that a significant reason NWIC has been successful is its staff's dedication and commitment to the college's mission — the self-determination of Native peoples and knowledge. Because outcomes-based assessment can be seen as a compromise tribal colleges have to make because they are embedded in a larger culture, some critics might expect tension between outcomes-based assessment and Native American worldviews; however, at NWIC, we did not experience this tension. This might have been because NWIC spent a long time developing its mission statement and then each staff applied the mission statement to his or her own work. Another factor might have been that the faculty was involved in defining their own standards to measure success and many therefore view the assessment program as a tool in the pursuit of NWIC's mission. The support of faculty might also be because NWIC tends to attract people who are not as motivated by traditional forms of financial incentives, status, and promotion as are mainstream faculty, but, rather, are committed to the mission of tribal colleges and the communities they serve. Moreover, NWIC's focus on teaching, rather than on research, results in a faculty whose primary focus is the success of their students. Many mainstream college assessment programs are undermined because of faculty incentives that frequently reward research more than excellence in teaching. Because the tribal college faculty are driving the outcomes initiatives, some faculty view the assessment program as a means to empower them and support their values and beliefs. On another note, although the adversarial relationship that exists between faculty and administrators at mainstream colleges is not as evident at NWIC, the fact that the assessment coordinator is on a faculty contract, and is not on an administrative contract or considered an outsider, is likely an additional advantage.

Another reason for the college's receptivity to assessment may be its faculty's and administrators' desire to create more consistent standards among extended campuses and modes of learning. Many faculty and staff view the assessment program as a tool in developing uniform and higher standards to improve student learning. In addition, the limited Native American curricular focus and content at NWIC was contradictory to its mission as a tribal college. In the assessment survey, staff mentioned their desire to see the curriculum being founded on cultural knowledge, values, and skills as being instrumental to the assessment program's success. Finally, the fact that NWIC is a smaller and relatively new institution may potentially put its assessment program in a better position to succeed compared to larger and more established colleges where change might be more difficult because of the heavily institutionalized and engrained traditions. Due to a combination of these dynamics, NWIC administrators had an interest and a willingness to invest in assessment.

Negative Factors

The following section outlines three preconditions and contextual factors that affect elements of the NWIC assessment program in unconstructive ways. First, like all institutions, NWIC's history has had an impact on its present state. According to staff, there has been a lack of communication among college departments and a lack of vision and leadership at the administrative level. This historical momentum has made it challenging to use assessment results to make data-driven decisions to improve NWIC's programs and services. Creating an annual review and planning process continues to be a challenge. These issues are compounded with the challenge of incorporating the extended campuses in main campus initiatives. As a result of sentiments like these, the NWIC administration is moving toward a model of personal,

department-level, and college-level accountability and staff seem to be receptive to this approach. Also, the administrators have initiated several initiatives to improve communication.

Second, including the extended campuses in all college initiatives has been an ongoing challenge because it is a long distance for the extended campus staff to travel to meetings and it is cumbersome to conduct all meetings over interactive television. Although the Lummi campus has made significant strides in many regards, clearly more attention and resources will be required in order to include extended campuses more fully in all college initiatives. Beginning in the 2007 - 2008 academic year, we intend on holding annual extended campus training about assessment-related issues.

Third, and finally, it has to be taken into account that the assessment program is in its infancy. Before it could be launched — let alone thrive — many other activities had to be accomplished first, such as restructuring academic programs, dealing with accreditation issues, hiring people to fill empty positions, and improving communication and leadership skills.

<div align="center">Generalizability</div>

Finally, there are limitations regarding the generalizability of the results. Although these results are probably generalizable to other small tribal colleges, which experience similar challenges and opportunities, these insights may not apply to larger mainstream colleges, whose focus tends to be more on research than on teaching, and older, well-established, mainstream colleges, which have deeply embedded traditions going back decades or centuries. On the other hand, these results may be generalizable to colleges whose faculty and staff are deeply committed to their college's mission and have a united purpose. I hope that the discussion in this chapter will help other tribal colleges determine for themselves how similar their context is to NWIC's context and, therefore, the extent to which these results are generalizable. Furthermore,

tribal colleges may want to use the guidelines outlined in Appendix Y as suggestions of elements that could be included in an assessment program and adapt them to their individual college's needs.

Implications of Research

Although the implications of this research for theory, policy, and practice are intertwined, for the sake of clarity, they are outlined separately below.

Theory

Indigenous educational theory suggests that transformative tribal college assessment programs should be characterized by Native American worldviews and knowledge, by relevance to tribal communities, by participatory and formative processes, and by respectful research protocols (Archibald, 1999, 2001; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Cajete, 1994; Castellano, 2000; Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Hampton, 1995b; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Menzies, 2001; L. Smith, 1999). This study affirms that these approaches to assessment are possible and are effective in tribal colleges. It also affirms that culturally appropriate assessment strategies can "measure" tribal college values and cultural priorities, as Swisher (1999) and Demmert (2005) recommend, and that assessment strategies can thereby advance processes of self-empowerment, self-determination, and decolonization among Native peoples (Battiste, 1995).

This study also affirms the relevance of critical educational theories that examine issues of power and control in assessment by interrogating the political and economic context and motives surrounding assessment practices (A. Wilson & Cervero, 1997; Forester, 1993; L. Smith, 1999). As Forester (1989) discusses, assessment can serve as an instrument of external control and faculty at many colleges and universities often experience or perceive assessment as

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an oppressive process. In the language of Indigenous educational theory, assessment can thus serve to extend historical processes of colonization; however, this study demonstrates that, by approaching assessment in a manner that is consistent with the normative framework articulated by the Indigenous educational theorists cited above, assessment can also serve as a means of self-empowerment and decolonization (Mentkowski et al, 2000; A. Wilson & Cervero, 1997). Assessment efforts in tribal colleges therefore need to anticipate these potentials and to structure assessment approaches accordingly, in order to avoid the former and ensure the latter.

For instance, Boyer (2003) suggests that tribal colleges can focus on the assessment of learning outcomes as a means of self-empowerment. Although, at first glance, outcomes-based assessment may seem inconsistent with Native American worldviews because it is often imposed by external forces and frequently excludes qualitative outcomes (A. Wilson & Cervero, 1997), this study demonstrates that outcomes-based assessment processes can empower tribal college community members by enlisting them as real partners in developing, reporting, and using assessment research. By defining and articulating their own culturally appropriate outcome measures, tribal colleges can clarify expectations for their students and arrive at a unified vision regarding their mission, values, and priorities. As NWIC President Crazy Bull (2006b) stated,

> we are especially excited about the work that we are doing regarding student outcomes. Defining student outcomes for tribal colleges and universities is much broader than defining citizenship and civic participation and academic skills. It is defining what it means to be a tribal person in a contemporary context. This is very challenging. For example, we debate the influences of Christianity on our languages and our religious practices, we discuss the implications of being mixed bloods – either multi-tribal or of mixed race, we explore land policy and the land tenure issues associated with heirship, we ponder what is traditional practice. (p. 5)

Elaborating on the implications of this work for self-empowerment and decolonization, Crazy Bull also stated,

as a result of our experience, Native people realize that teaching and learning are political acts. Teaching and learning are sources of and opportunities to engage political power that can have both intimate and far-reaching social and economic implications. Curriculum is not neutral – it is value-laden. The structure of schooling is not neutral – it too is laden with values and the practical application of belief systems. (p. 1)

This insight is consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) theory of class reproduction in which curriculum and pedagogy can function as a form of symbolic oppression that enforces the reproduction of existing power relations. According to Bourdieu (1986), dominant groups have the power to define what counts in educational systems, in ways that buttress their privileged social positions, through the unequal distribution of cultural capital and other means. In this context, Crazy Bull is referring to a counter-hegemonic strategy that employs assessment processes as a means of transforming the relations of power and dependency that resulted from the historical experience of colonization.

Finally, after evaluating NWIC's assessment program, I have come to the conclusion that the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Model developed by Daniel Stufflebeam (2003b) provides a useful framework for creating an assessment program in a tribal college context. Although many assessment programs typically focus their efforts on the end product, Indigenous research literature affirms that it is equally important to pay attention to the context of the assessment program, the inputs into the assessment program, and how the assessment program is carried out. Because the intention of the assessment program is to effect change in the tribal college community and the tribal community at large (i.e., the context), I propose that the products of the assessment program lead back to – and actually impact – the context, as is illustrated in Figure 7.2. Furthermore, articulating and revisiting the mission statement is a critical initial step in the development of a tribal college assessment program that should be emphasized in this framework.

Figure 7.2 Simplified Conceptual Model of the Components of a Tribal College Assessment Program

Context

Mission

Tribal
College
Assessment
Program

Products

Inputs

Processes
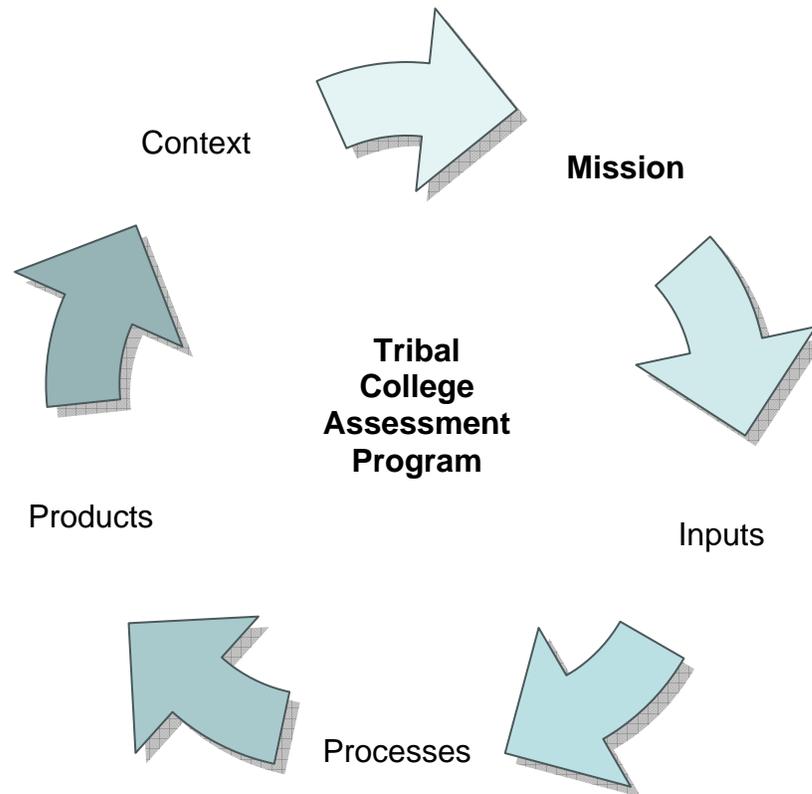
Many researchers have emphasized that a clear and concise mission statement can be an empowering tool (Banta, 1999; Boyer, 2003; Maki, 2004; Mentkowski et al., 2000; J. Nichols, 2002; Walvoord, 2004). My research suggests that, even more than at mainstream institutions, the key motivating force for creating an empowering assessment program is participation in the development of the mission statement and the dedication and commitment to that mission — which is related to the self-determination of Native peoples and the advancement of Native knowledge systems. Therefore, it is essential for tribal colleges to refine, value, and support their mission statements. By deriving from the mission statement their own standards to measure success, tribal colleges can view assessment programs as a means of pursuing their mission,

building local capacity, and regaining some of the autonomy and control that Native American communities lost during centuries of colonization.

<div align="center">Policy</div>

Assessment is not a one-time exercise or a quick-fix approach. In order to yield real and lasting results — to become an instrument of empowerment and to be effective — assessment programs must be sustained and developed over time, which requires president and administrative leadership and support because this support assures allocation of funds. Beyond the initial learning curve and initial implementation phase, an assessment program requires a culture of ongoing learning and reflexivity. It needs to remain relevant to changing priorities. It needs to remain flexible and adaptable to changing conditions. Moreover, it needs to gradually build upon its strengths over time. Strong tribal college assessment programs will take years to evolve. Developing a useful, relevant, and meaningful assessment program for a tribal college therefore requires patience, adaptability, commitment, and openness. There appear to be three main considerations related to policy at the tribal college administrative level to take into account in order to sustain assessment initiatives that result in meaningful products.

First, although administrators and faculty at all levels need to assume some degree of ownership over an assessment program, the complexity of the assessment program that spans an entire college requires some degree of central coordination. In this regard, the creation of an assessment coordinator position appears to be essential from the outset, and adequate financial support is required. Moreover, the assessment coordinator needs to be prepared and organized in order to create assessment programs that use the time and resources of the members of the tribal college community efficiently and effectively. If assessment programs are well thought out and

are presented in clear and simple terms, then not only will there be less likelihood of faculty and staff confusion or burnout but also greater receptivity.

A second factor in sustaining momentum is material support for the assessment work, especially for faculty, either through course release time, professional development stipends, or other incentives. During the initial stages in the development of an assessment program, a considerable investment in time and energy is required from faculty. Investing resources, including financial incentives for faculty, is key to the assessment program's success, especially in its early stages because these resources can enhance faculty ownership of the assessment program. Failure to provide such compensation will result in faculty resentment, which will undermine the efficacy of the program and jeopardize its long-term sustainability.

A third factor in sustaining momentum is an ongoing process of educating faculty, administrators, staff, students, and the community about assessment and student learning, so that accountability is shared and assessment skills are transferred to members of the tribal college community. It is essential that administrators regularly allocate time for assessment endeavours throughout the academic year. In addition, educating everyone about assessment can be accomplished through regular correspondence, workshops, emails, orientations, website postings, and meetings. Once assessment is embedded in college processes, like job descriptions and curriculum review, and tribal college community members become familiar with assessment terminology and supportive of the program, then some of the assessment program's initiatives can be sustained and certain responsibilities can be delegated, with less direction needed from the assessment coordinator.

Finally, at the outset of this process, discussions regarding cultural priorities of the college, including cultural outcomes, necessitate that all faculty, whether Native or non-Native,

demonstrate a basic understanding of the college's cultural priorities. In order to advance this

understanding, tribal college policies might evolve to encourage faculty who are not adequately

familiar with the culture to, for example, complete cultural courses, attend cultural workshops, or

participate in appropriate aspects of community life. This cultural training can ensure that

cultural priorities are not marginalized or forgotten in teaching, learning, and assessment

processes.

Practice

If someone from another tribal college approached me for practical advice regarding the

development of an assessment program at their college, what would I tell them? The

development of a successful assessment program requires a clear understanding of the nature and

purpose of assessment and the ability to impart that understanding to others in order to engage

them in supportive action. Unfortunately, the rapidly growing body of literature on assessment is

characterized by inconsistent use of terminology and even widespread confusion and

disagreement about the nature and purpose of assessment. This makes it difficult for a

newcomer to navigate the vast body of literature, let alone persuade others of the value of

assessment and, hence, implement collaborative assessment strategies that engage administrators,

faculty, and students in effective ways. Based on the research outlined in this study, the

following explanation attempts to cut through the fog that currently enshrouds assessment by

outlining it in simple terms that can be used to inform and engage others.

Assessment uses methods of applied research to improve a college's mission-related

performance — particularly concerning student learning. These methods of applied research

focus on two types of assessment indicators: (a) *direct indicators of student learning,* which

require that students demonstrate learning outcomes through, for example, essays, capstone

projects, course-embedded assessments, internships, and presentations and (b) *indirect indicators of student learning,* which ask students to reflect on their learning through, for example, student satisfaction surveys, interviews, or focus groups or course evaluations. Complementing direct and indirect indicators of student learning, *institutional and community data* do not necessarily indicate student learning but do reflect the overall condition and effectiveness of the college and may include institutional data such as retention and graduation rates, course completion rates, and enrollment trends, and community data such as college graduation rates. Figure 7.3 provides an overview of the products of a tribal college assessment program.

Figure 7.3 Examples of Products of a Tribal College Assessment Program
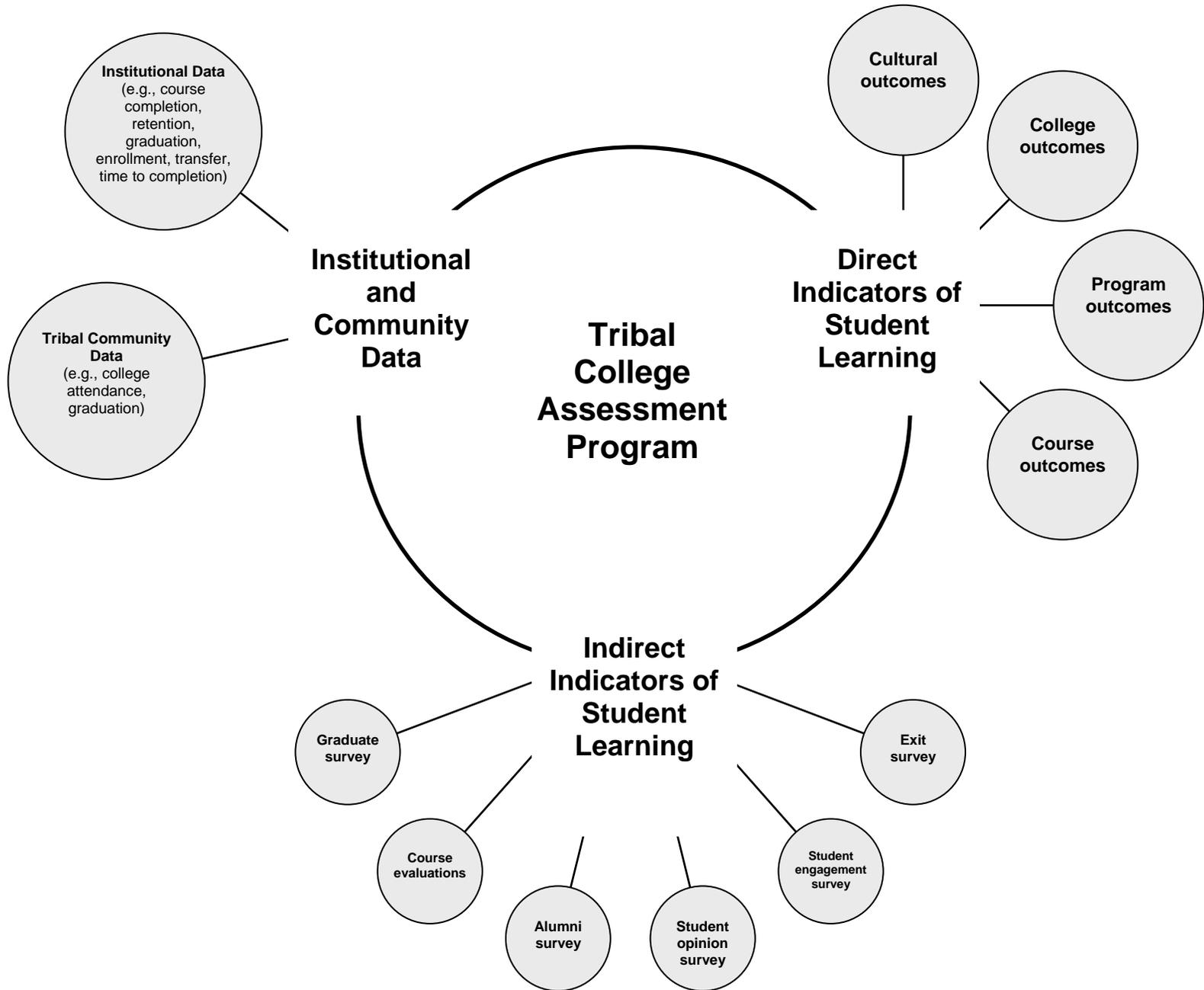
I mentioned earlier that tribal colleges can adapt mainstream approaches to assessment or create new approaches. Practical adaptations of assessment approaches overviewed in Figure 7.3 may include, for example, developing cultural outcomes and determining how students and/or faculty/staff will achieve them.[23] They may include appending culturally appropriate and locally relevant questions to standardized surveys[24] or they may include creating new surveys from scratch.[25] Alternatively, they may include tracking three- or four-year college graduation rates (rather than typical two-year rates), which take into account the extra responsibilities and challenges many tribal college students face.[26] As this discussion suggests, a well-implemented assessment program can focus on and advance efforts to develop culturally appropriate and empowering tribal college programs. If this connection is understood, the desire to develop culturally appropriate and empowering tribal college programs can, in turn, generate momentum and enthusiasm for the assessment program.

Each of the elements, summarized in Figure 7.3, is developed at the college, program, and course levels. Also, as initially suggested by Boyer (2003), tribal colleges may wish to assess these indicators at the wider tribal community level by, for example, determining the impact of the tribal college on local tribal communities. Table 7.1 summarizes this basic framework and suggests specific activities that can be pursued at the course, program, college, and tribal community levels to both directly and indirectly measure student learning. In addition, it suggests institutional data to gauge institutional effectiveness and tribal community data to gauge the overall effect of the tribal college on the host or sponsoring tribal community. This

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[23] See the *Draft List of NWIC Outcomes* in chapter 6, in the *College Outcomes* section, and see Table 6.1, the *Draft List of Faculty Cultural Outcomes*.

[24] Refer to examples of culturally relevant questions in Appendix U, *Student Opinion Survey – Extra Questions* and Appendix V, *Alumni Survey – Extra Questions*.

[25] See Appendix B, *Survey of Teaching and Assessment Methods*, and Appendix T, *Needs Assessment*.

[26] See the *Student Success Report* posted on the NWIC assessment website (http://www.nwic.edu/faculty/assessment/assessment.htm).

information can then be used to improve student learning, institutional performance, and the college's impact. In a comprehensive assessment program, every cell in Table 7.1 would ideally contain at least one activity. According to the CIPP model outlined in chapter 5, these activities represent the *products* of the assessment program. Note that this first attempt at assessment by NWIC did not consider the impact on the tribal community (as this information currently is difficult to obtain), but in the future it will do so.

In addition to these products, a successful assessment program requires that attention be paid to the *inputs* (i.e., plans, strategies, and resources) and *processes* (i.e., how the assessment program is conducted; the extent to which assessment is embedded in college processes; and the teaching, learning, and assessment strategies the college adopts). As mentioned earlier, Appendix Y, a *Checklist for Tribal College Assessment Programs*, outlines these inputs, processes, and products and elaborates specific strategies associated with each of them.

The overview presented in this section (i.e., practical implications of the research), combined with the checklist in Appendix Y, presents the fundamentals of assessment clearly and concisely, in a manner that would have been valuable to me in the early stages of my assessment work at NWIC. This overview and the checklist should prove valuable to other tribal colleges when they attempt to implement their own assessment programs under conditions of limited resources and assessment expertise.

Table 7.1 Examples of Activities at Each Level of a Tribal College Assessment Program

Type of indicator	Level			
	Tribal community	College	Program	Course
Direct indicators of student learning (outcomes assessment)	• update and/or increase familiarity and support for mission • tribal community outcomes (e.g., number of Native language speakers; improving tribal leadership qualities)	• update and/or increase familiarity and support for mission • develop and implement cultural outcomes • develop and implement college outcomes	• develop and implement program outcomes	• develop and implement course outcomes
Indirect indicators of student learning (surveys, focus groups, interviews)	• survey tribal employers (e.g., determine whether graduates are entering the workforce with appropriate skills)	• graduate survey (ongoing) • faculty peer review (ongoing) • student opinion survey (cyclical) • alumni survey (cyclical) • student engagement survey (e.g., Community College Survey of Student Engagement and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement) (cyclical)	• graduate survey • student exit survey	• course evaluations (include evaluation of outcomes)
Institutional and community data (rates and numbers)	Track … • college attendance • college graduation	Track… • student enrollment • graduation (3 or 4 year rates) • retention (one quarter, quarter to quarter, fall to spring, fall to fall) • transfer • performance after transfer • time to degree completion	Track… • student enrollment • retention • graduation • time to program completion	Track… • student enrollment • course completion

Limitations of the Study

When considering the specific results outlined in the previous chapter, as well as the more general conclusions outlined above, it is important to recognize the limitations of this study, which are discussed below.

First, my being an insider to the organization and knowing the staff who responded to the survey could certainly have swayed their responses. In order to minimize this likelihood, survey responses were anonymous. Being an organizational insider probably did have one positive effect — that of increasing the buy-in to the survey and therefore increasing the response rate.

Second, being a participant-observer, my recorded observations may have been selective, and I could have manipulated events and biased the report, thereby jeopardizing construct validity. In addition, I may have presented the survey responses in selective and biased ways. To minimize this problem I had several people — including the president, the vice president of instruction, the dean of academics, several faculty members, an administrator, and a member of the Institutional Review Board — review this thesis. I incorporated their ideas and suggestions into the thesis. I used information from documents, such as accreditation reports and student survey results, to balance my opinions.

Third, as I pointed out in chapter 5, case studies typically do not collect empirical data that lend themselves to statistical analysis, and this was true of a good portion of the data collected in the assessment survey (this issue relates to external validity). Because the NWIC assessment program is in its infancy and is constantly evolving, the primary intent of the quantitative sections was to provide baseline information so that, in the future, NWIC would have the option of delivering a shorter version of the survey in hopes of documenting progress (perhaps before its next accreditation review). In fact, several staff even suggested repeating a shorter version of this survey in a year to see if they know more about assessment at that time and to reinforce the direction the assessment program is heading. On this theme, an

administrator suggested using the assessment survey as a tool to increase awareness of NWIC's instructional priorities. This supports my initial intention for this survey, which was to serve as both an evaluation tool (to evaluate NWIC's assessment program) and an educational tool (to educate staff about assessment and the future direction of the assessment program at NWIC). Again, because NWIC's assessment program is so new, many of the elements of the assessment program have not been developed, so we would expect those elements to receive low ratings; therefore, I focused the analysis and my attention on the narrative responses.

Fourth, initially I was intent on conducting interviews to more deeply explore specific issues that arose from the survey; however, because the response rate was so high and the responses were so comprehensive, I saw no need to conduct interviews. Although reducing the number of data collection methods provides less triangulation and may limit internal validity, construct validity, and external validity, it is unlikely that significantly better information would have resulted with additional interviews because the survey responses were so thorough. Given that the survey already took staff a significant amount of time to complete, and given that we have such limited resources, conducting additional interviews with several individuals would have consumed more of their valuable time for possibly little benefit.

Fifth, originally my intention was to include students in the design of the assessment program; however, after consulting with the vice president of instruction and other administrators, it became clear that their preference was first to establish a unified vision among the faculty and staff and later to include students in the process. Additionally, they pointed out that many of the staff were either past or present NWIC students. In the 2007 – 2008 academic year, NWIC will be establishing its first cohort of bachelor's degree students. In order to develop research skills in these upper level students, we hope to engage some of them in the assessment program as research assistants, in service learning capacities, or through work study or internship opportunities.

Finally, although it is not a limitation, it is important to be aware that there was a relatively heavy weighting in the survey responses of administrators. I was interested in the opinions of all full-time staff and also wanted to educate them about assessment. Because NWIC has so many part-time faculty (most of whom have not been involved in the assessment work up until this point), it has a fairly large ratio of administrators to full-time faculty. In order to be clear, I identified who made each of the narrative comments and presented the quantitative data broken down by position.

Although there were several limitations to this research, I maximized reliability by following case study protocol. For instance, I identified the case (NWIC); developed explicit research questions with data collection methods for each (see Table 5.1); identified the audience as being the tribal college community, the NWIC community, and my doctoral thesis committee; outlined field procedures and criteria for interpreting the results; reflected constantly upon the research practices and adjusted them accordingly; left individuals in the report anonymous; used databases to organize the survey data, narrative responses, documents, and notes; and had participants who were involved in the case study review drafts of the report.

Suggestions for Future Research and Work

Boyer (2003) suggested that tribal colleges focus their assessment efforts on the mission statement, learning outcomes, larger campus community, cultural outcomes, wider tribal community, and communities beyond the reservation. This doctoral thesis explores more specifically what each of these means and contributes to theory development in this area by bringing insights from Native American theory to the practice of assessment. Within this framework, work still needs to be done in several areas:

    a.   developing more meaningful assessment strategies to measure cultural outcomes;

b. developing more culturally appropriate assessment strategies to assess academic outcomes;

c. developing more measures of the impact of tribal colleges on local tribal communities, especially for cultural and prosperity goals;

d. determining evaluation approaches that are appropriate in tribal colleges;

e. reviewing and adjusting the suggested guidelines for tribal college assessment programs (see Appendix Y) as the theory and thinking evolve.

Finally, it is essential that tribal colleges share their assessment-related successes with all tribal colleges so that they can learn from each other. Tribal colleges are beginning to do this. A tribal college assessment workshop took place at Haskell Indian Nations University in June 2006, where approximately 30 individuals from tribal colleges across North America attended and shared ideas and resources about assessment and retention strategies. This workshop has become an annual event where tribal colleges share their assessment best practices. In addition, assessment-related articles can be published in the Tribal College Journal so that successes and challenges can be conveyed. Sharing efforts, resources, and approaches to assessment is critical for the advancement of teaching, learning, and assessment in tribal colleges.

Concluding Remarks

Assessment remains a theoretically underdeveloped practice in higher education — especially in a tribal college context. By attempting to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of mainstream assessment, on the one hand, and the theory and practice of Native American research and education, on the other, this research documents a case study in assessment program development and demonstrates that assessment can be adapted to the cultural context in tribal colleges and conducted in valuable and meaningful ways. Also, it demonstrates that progressive assessment frameworks developed in tribal college contexts can anticipate and address concerns that derive from critical educational theory regarding issues of

power and control in assessment and the political and economic context and motives surrounding assessment practices. This model derives from an inclusive, relational, formative, and process-oriented theory of assessment that is informed by critical concerns regarding the exercise of administrative power and control. This culturally appropriate and critically informed framework represents a significant development in the otherwise theoretically impoverished field of assessment — with the ultimate goal of improving learning, including the transmission of cultural values, in tribal colleges.

The unique mission of tribal colleges — with their focus on self-determination — provides them with substantial motivation to succeed in their assessment efforts, with the ultimate goal of improving student learning and success. NWIC demonstrates that with the new emphasis on learning outcomes, tribal colleges indeed have an opportunity to re-define their own measures of success and, therefore, their own curricular and pedagogical values and approaches, in more culturally appropriate ways.

Elements of this model should be adaptable to other contexts, including colleges that are looking for progressive alternatives to conventional assessment approaches. Within a Native American context, most importantly, this model supports Castellano's (2000) hope that Indigenous knowledge will one day resume its place as the basis of decision making and social order in Native American communities. Decolonization and self-determination are principal goals in Native American communities throughout this continent. In some small measure, this model advances these goals by bringing a Native American voice to post-secondary assessment.

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APPENDIX A SECTION OF THE NWIC ASSESSMENT PLAN (DRAFT) (2007 – 2012)

Introduction

In January 2004, based on a Regular Fifth Year Interim Evaluation Report and visit, NWIC received continued recognition as an accredited two-year college. At that time, the Commission recommended that NWIC "*should work to ensure that all components of the campus embrace a culture of continuous improvement focused on the assessment of student learning* (Policy 2.2 — Educational Assessment)." With the support of the faculty and administration, and based on its culture and values, NWIC has moved deliberately to create the beginnings of an integrated campus culture focused on student learning, retention, and graduation by having clearly established learning outcomes. The staff is working hard in many areas and levels to ensure that the entire college embraces the new organizational norm of continuous improvement that begins with student learning. NWIC is systematic in its thinking and also recognizes that change is an organic process that requires time and attention at multiple levels at the same time. For this reason, the college has initiated action in many areas, as demonstrated in its assessment report (2002 – 2006) and this assessment plan (2007 – 2012).

The first phase of NWIC's assessment program, from 2002 until 2006, involved collecting and analyzing baseline data and initiating major processes, including course outcomes, college outcomes, and cultural outcomes initiatives. The 2006 – 2007 academic year was devoted primarily to reporting of past assessment initiatives and planning for the following five years. NWIC has created a formal assessment plan — with goals — for the next assessment phase. The second phase, from 2007 until 2012, maintains the ongoing and cyclic processes that were initiated in the first phase and focuses on the following priorities: setting up procedures to report results back to the tribal college community in a more timely, consistent and ongoing way; reflecting upon and using the information to improve student learning; emphasizing cultural values and knowledge; developing cultural outcomes and meaningful assessment strategies; increasing student, faculty, staff and administrator participation; educating students about the mission of the college and the role of assessment in their education; creating a cycle of surveys and reports; and developing a program outcomes initiative. The assessment plan is divided into three sections: *inputs, processes* and *products*.

Inputs

Now that NWIC has updated its mission statement, it is focusing on increasing its staff's familiarity with, appreciation of, and support for the mission. It is anticipated that by doing these things, NWIC will be in a better position to accomplish its mission.

Plans and Strategy

Item	Action / Goal	Result in 2006 Assessment Survey*	Goal for 2012 Assessment Survey*
Mission	❑ increase staff familiarity with and appreciation and support of the mission	4.1	4.1+
Assessment Plan	❑ implement the 2007 – 2012 assessment plan	Not applicable	Successful
	❑ ensure the assessment plan is in line with the goals of the strategic plan	Not applicable	Successful
	❑ determine whether NWIC has followed through with suggestions from the 2006 assessment survey	Not applicable	Successful
	❑ conduct a shorter version of the Assessment survey in 2012 and compare results to those in 2006	Successful	Successful

* 1=Not successful; 2=Minimally successful; 3=Somewhat successful; 4=Successful; 5=Very successful

Item	Action / Goal	Result in 2006 Assessment Survey*	Goal for 2012 Assessment Survey*
Director of Assessment	❐ continue funding a full-time Director of Assessment	Successful	Successful
Financial Support	❐ continue providing funds for the administration of assessment-related tasks (e.g., for the administration of surveys and additional faculty salaries for completing extensive assessment work during non-contract times)	Successful	Successful
Technical support	❐ continue providing an adequate enrollment database system and an effective data collection system	Successful	Successful
	❐ continue funding a data administrator who is able to extract the data from the system and create reports	Successful	Successful
Administrators: NWIC encourages administrators to…			
	❐ respond in respectful, cooperative, and supportive ways	3.6	4.0
	❐ collaborate with faculty and staff	3.4	4.0
	❐ streamline and simplify meetings and reduce administrative obstacles to the assessment process	2.9	4.0
	❐ provide visible advocacy for assessment	3.6	4.0
	❐ provide necessary opportunities, incentives, material resources, and compensation for learning about and implementing assessment processes	3.3	4.0
	❐ show appreciation and thanks to staff and faculty	3.5	4.0
	❐ solicit feedback, ideas, and input from staff and faculty and incorporate these suggestions into plans and decisions	3.4	4.0
	❐ use the assessment results to make decisions	NA	4.0
	❐ refer regularly to the assessment process and its results in reports and presentations to both internal and external audiences	3.4	4.0

Item	Action / Goal	Result in 2006 Assessment Survey*	Goal for 2012 Assessment Survey*
Faculty:	NWIC encourages faculty members to…		
	❏ remain open-minded and respond in respectful, cooperative, and collaborative ways	3.7	4.0
	❏ take ownership of assessment and embrace assessment as an intrinsically valuable developmental process whereby teaching and learning can be continually improved through evaluation, reflection, and identification of needs for change	3.6	4.0
	❏ provide students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to practice skills in ways that are integrated, contextualized and experiential	3.6	4.0
	❏ provide students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to receive feedback in ways that are integrated, contextualized and experiential	3.5	4.0
	❏ use the assessment process and its results to improve student learning	3.5	4.0

* 1=Not successful; 2=Minimally successful; 3=Somewhat successful; 4=Successful; 5=Very successful

Processes

Three processes related to the assessment program will be maintained and evaluated:

1. The assessment process;

2. Embedding assessment in college processes;

3. Teaching, learning, and assessment approaches.

Assessment Process

Action	Result in 2006 Assessment Survey*	Goal for 2012 Assessment Survey*
NWIC is developing assessment processes that…		
❏ are culturally appropriate	3.5	4.0
❏ recognize and legitimize Indigenous knowledge and skills	3.3	4.0
❏ contribute to tribal self-determination and knowledge	3.3	4.0
❏ start with interested and supportive faculty and staff	Successful	4.0
❏ are faculty-driven (with assistance from the Director of Assessment)	3.8	4.0
❏ are streamlined and simplified so that instructors' time may be used effectively	3.5	4.0
❏ include employees from appropriate segments of the college	3.2	4.0
❏ result in a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the Director of Assessment and all staff	4.1	4.2
❏ build cohesion, collaboration, relationships, and trust among staff through a consultative process	3.7	4.0
❏ are conducted in a responsible and ethical manner	4.1	4.2

Action	Result in 2006 Assessment Survey*	Goal for 2012 Assessment Survey*
❒ are useful, relevant, and meaningful to the tribal college community	4.0	4.0
❒ educate administration, staff, and faculty to improve their assessment skills	3.5	4.0
❒ report results internally in an ongoing way so that the information can be used to improve student success and learning (i.e., through meetings, reports, website, email)	3.4	4.0
❒ initiate meaningful conversations	3.8	4.0
❒ create a shared vision for the future of the tribal college, based on common values	3.6	4.0
❒ redirect resources towards priorities outlined in the mission and goals	3.6	4.0
❑ increase the college's responsiveness to the needs of the tribal community	3.4	4.0
❒ improve the instructional capacity of the college as well as its public image	3.5	4.0
❒ provide the basis for college planning and budgeting decisions	3.6	4.0
❑ demonstrate accountability, the responsible use of limited resources, to the public	3.5	4.0

* 1=Not successful; 2=Minimally successful; 3=Somewhat successful; 4=Successful; 5=Very successful

Embedding Assessment in College Processes

Action	Result in 2006 Assessment Survey*	Goal for 2012 Assessment Survey*
NWIC will embed assessment throughout college processes, such as…		
❐ strategic planning	3.7	4.0
❐ curriculum review	3.5	4.0
❐ budgeting	3.3	4.0
❐ program review	3.4	4.0
❐ the First Year Experience	3.8	4.0
❐ the college catalogue	3.2	4.0
❐ college publications	3.1	4.0
❐ the NWIC website	3.0	4.0
❐ job descriptions and announcements	3.0	4.0
❐ grading criteria	3.2	4.0
❐ service learning	3.5	4.0

* 1=Not successful; 2=Minimally successful; 3=Somewhat successful; 4=Successful; 5=Very successful

Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Approaches

Action	Result in 2006 Assessment Survey*	Goal for 2012 Assessment Survey*
NWIC ensures students are learning and being assessed using…		
❑ meaningful, relevant and contextualized experiences	3.7	4.0
❑ approaches traditionally used by tribal people, such as apprenticeships, observations, and practice	2.9	4.0
❑ an integrated curriculum	3.3	4.0
❑ an experientially grounded curriculum	3.3	4.0
❑ a "place-based" curriculum	3.4	4.0
❑ authentic approaches (e.g., self-reflecting and self-assessing, applying concepts to a relevant context, teaching material to peers, writing about a subject, and asking essential questions)	3.4	4.0
❑ a curriculum founded on traditional culture and knowledge	3.1	4.0
❑ formative classroom assessment techniques (short, frequent, ungraded attempts to assess student learning) to provide immediate in-class feedback from students	3.1	4.0

* 1=Not successful; 2=Minimally successful; 3=Somewhat successful; 4=Successful; 5=Very successful

Products

The *products* of the assessment program that will be maintained and evaluated are…

1. Direct Indicators of Student Learning (Outcomes)
   a. NWIC outcomes
      i. Academic outcomes
      ii. Cultural outcomes (students)
      iii. Cultural outcomes (faculty)
   b. Program outcomes
   c. Course outcomes
2. Indirect Indicators of Student Learning (Surveys)
3. Institutional and community data (e.g., enrollment, retention, graduation, transfer data; college graduation, and attendance rates)

Figure A.1 Products of the NWIC Assessment Program
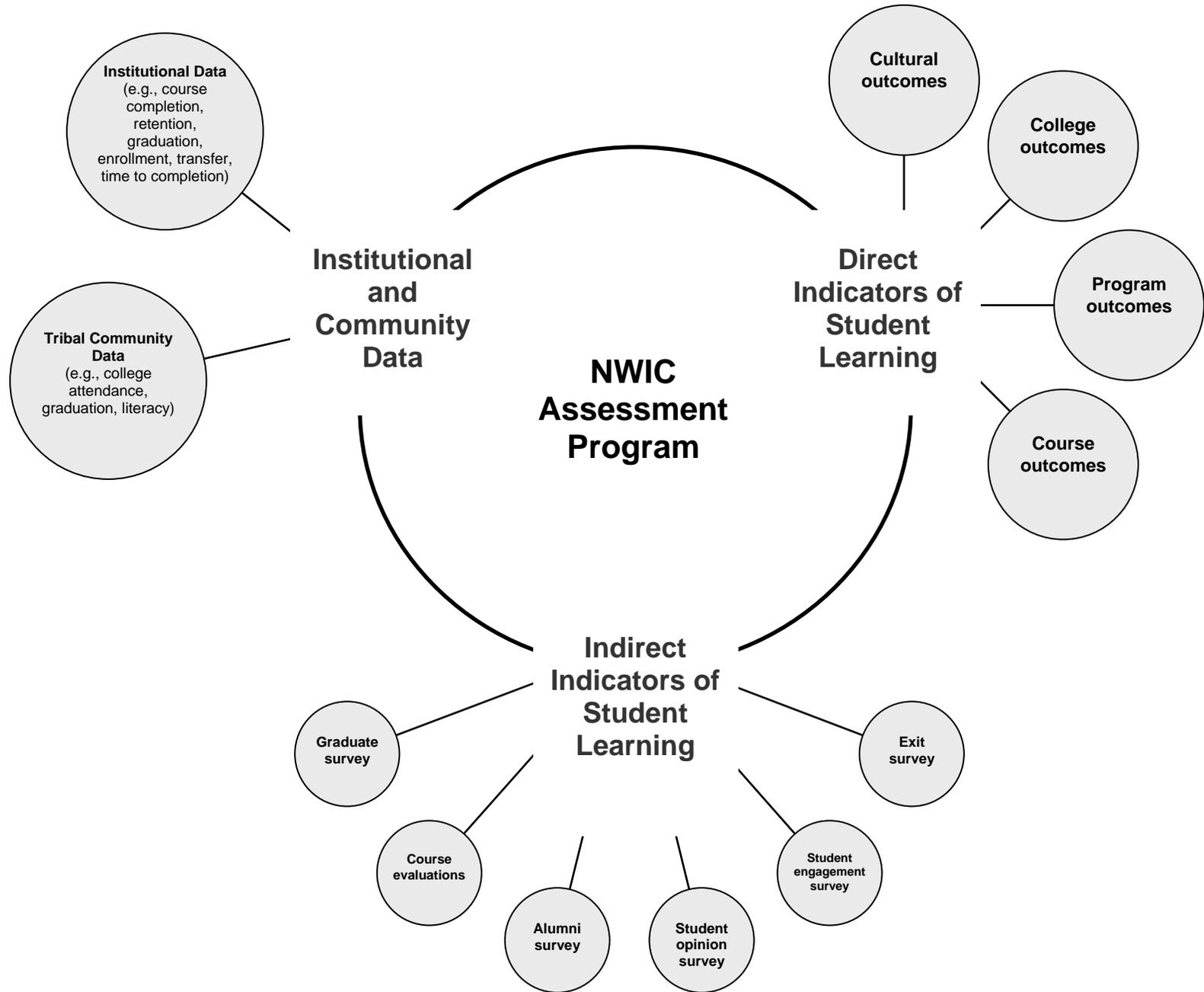
1. Direct Indicators of Student Learning (Outcomes)

NWIC Outcomes

Over the next five years, NWIC will revise its broad college outcomes; continue to articulate cultural outcomes; develop rubrics; determine which courses will be used to assess all college outcomes; establish indicators and standards to measure all college outcomes; create the assessment tools; determine how the data will be collected; assess students at entry and at exit; analyze the information; share the results with the tribal college community and wider tribal community; design administrative and communication systems to ensure the findings are incorporated into decision-making processes and used to refine policy and practice at the institutional, program, and course levels; and educate students about the role of assessment in their education.

For instance, in the 2007 – 2008 academic year, faculty will choose one of the competencies and determine exactly how it will be assessed. By the following year, this competency and its outcomes will be assessed, reviewed and updated and the curriculum and approaches will be adjusted according to the results. This process will repeat annually. In each of the following years, an additional competency will be assessed, reviewed, and updated and the curriculum and approaches will be adjusted according to the results. The following figure overviews the general process, including both developing and implementing the college outcomes initiative. In addition, this basic approach will be utilized for the cultural outcomes, program outcomes, and course outcomes initiatives.

Figure A.2 Steps in the Development and Implementation of the Outcomes Initiatives

Development of the Outcomes Process

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│     Articulate competency       │
│  and corresponding outcomes     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│         Develop rubric          │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Determine courses that will assess outcomes │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Determine activities/assignments that will │
│ assess outcomes at entry, midway, and exit │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   Include outcomes on syllabi   │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```

Implementation of the Outcomes Process

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   Assess students at entry, midway, │
│       and exit for outcomes     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│     Analyze the entry, midway,  │
│     and exit assessment data    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Present analysis to faculty and students │
│     and consult on the results  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Use the data to improve and revise curriculum │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Document the process; create an assessment report │
│ about how the data was used to improve learning │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```

Academic outcomes assessment plan

NWIC will…	Baseline # of competencies (Dec. 2006)	Goal (# of competencies)				
		2007 – 2008	2008 – 2009	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011	2011 – 2012
	#	#	#	#	#	#
a. articulate college competencies (comps) and outcomes	5 (draft)	1	2	3	4	5
b. develop course level rubrics[27]	5 (draft)	1	2	3	4	5
c. determine which courses will be used to reinforce and assess college outcomes at entry, midway, and exit (curriculum map)	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. determine or create the activities, experiences, projects, essays, or assignments in required courses that will be used to assess college outcomes at entry, midway, and exit	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. attach anchor papers for each level of the rubric scale	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. include college outcomes on syllabi (draft and revisited)	Draft outcomes on some syllabi (59/183 [32%] of college-level courses)	40% of course syllabi	55% of course syllabi	70% of course syllabi	85% of course syllabi	100% of course syllabi
g. assess students at entry, midway, and exit for outcomes	0		1	2	3	4
h. analyze the entry, midway, and exit assessment data	0			1	2	3
i. present analysis to faculty and students and consult on the results	0			1	2	3
j. use the data to improve and revise curriculum[28]				1	2	3
k. document the process;[29] create an assessment report about how the data were used to improve learning	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
l. educate students about the role of assessment in their education	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[27] Refer to Table 3.2 for an example of a rubric.

[28] Refer to Table 3.8 for an example of a program assessment plan.

[29] All of chapter 6 is an example of an *Assessment Report* (also, see Table 3.8 for an example of a program assessment plan).

Cultural outcomes (students) assessment plan

NWIC will…	Baseline # of outcomes (Dec. 2006)	Goal (# of outcomes)				
		2007 – 2008	2008 – 2009	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011	2011 – 2012
	#	#	#	#	#	#
a. articulate cultural outcomes	2 (draft)[30]	1	2	3	4	5
b. develop course level rubrics	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. determine which courses will be used to reinforce and assess cultural outcomes at entry, midway, and exit (curriculum map)	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. determine or create the activities, experiences, projects, essays or assignments in required courses that will be used to reinforce and assess cultural outcomes at entry, midway, and exit	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. attach anchor *descriptions* for cultural outcomes for each level of the rubric scale	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. include cultural outcomes on syllabi (draft and revisited)	0	40% of course syllabi	55% of course syllabi	70% of course syllabi	85% of course syllabi	100% of course syllabi
g. assess students at entry, midway, and exit for cultural outcomes	0		1	2	3	4
h. analyze the entry, midway, and exit assessment data	0		1	2	3	4
i. present analysis to faculty, staff, and students and consult on the results	0			1	2	3
j. use the data to improve and revise curriculum	0			1	2	3
k. document the process; create a report of the assessment of cultural outcomes	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

---

[30] Students will demonstrate competency regarding (a) "sense of place" and (b) what it means "to be a People."

Cultural outcomes (faculty) assessment plan

NWIC will…	Baseline # of outcomes (Dec. 2006)	2007 – 2008	2008 – 2009	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011	2011 – 2012
	Goal (# of outcomes)					
	#	#	#	#	#	#
a. articulate faculty cultural outcomes	2 (draft)[31]	1	2	3	4	5
b. develop rubrics	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. include cultural outcomes in employment contracts and on assessment website	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
d. determine how faculty will learn cultural outcomes	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. create the activities, experiences, or readings that will be used to assess cultural outcomes	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. assess staff at entry and after			1	2	3	4
g. analyze the information			1	2	3	4
h. present analysis to faculty and staff and consult on the results				1	2	3
i. use the data to improve and revise activities	0			1	2	3
j. document the process; create a report of the assessment of faculty cultural outcomes	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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[31] The faculty demonstrates understanding of (1) the roots and implications of assimilation and colonization and (2) tribal land ownership issues.

Program Outcomes

NWIC has been involved in a process of restructuring its programs and degree requirements as well as articulating NWIC, cultural, and course outcomes. It is now at a point where it can start articulating broad program outcomes. The process will include the following steps: articulating program outcomes; determining which courses will be used to assess program outcomes; establishing indicators and standards to measure all program outcomes; creating the assessment tools; determining how the data will be collected; assessing students at entry and at exit; analyzing the information; sharing the results; designing administrative and communication systems to ensure the findings are incorporated into decision-making processes and used to refine policy and practice at the program level; and educating students about the role of assessment in their education.

Program outcomes assessment plan

		Goal (# of programs)				
NWIC will…	**Baseline # of programs (Dec. 2006)**	**2007 – 2008**	**2008 – 2009**	**2009 – 2010**	**2010 – 2011**	**2011 – 2012**
	#	#	#	#	#	#
a. articulate program outcomes	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. develop course level rubrics for program outcomes	0		1	2	3	4
c. determine which courses will be used to assess program outcomes at entry, midway, and exit	0		1	2	3	4
d. determine or create the activities, capstone experiences, projects, essays, or assignments in required courses that will be used to assess program outcomes at entry, midway, and exit	0		1	2	3	4
e. attach anchor papers for each level of the rubric scale	0		1	2	3	4
f. include program outcomes on syllabi for required program courses (draft and revisit)	0		1	2	3	4
g. assess students at entry, midway, and exit for outcomes	0			1	2	3
h. analyze the entry, midway, and exit assessment data	0				1	2
i. present analysis to faculty and students and consult on the results	0				1	2
j. use the data to improve the program and revise curriculum	0				1	2
k. document the process; create a report indicating how the data were used to improve programs	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

NWIC has started articulating course outcomes. In this next phase of its assessment efforts, NWIC will begin establishing standards to measure these outcomes; creating assessment tools; using multiple assessment methods to assess outcomes; conducting the course assessments; analyzing the information; sharing the results; adjusting courses to improve learning; comparing the outcomes of different students in the same course over time; assisting students to understand and appreciate the relevancy of learning outcomes; and educating students about the role of assessment in their education.

Course outcomes assessment plan

NWIC will…	Baseline % of 183 college-level courses (Dec. 2006)	Goal (% of college-level courses)				
		2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
a. articulate course outcomes	32	40	55	70	85	100
b. develop course level rubrics	0	15	30	45	60	75
c. include course outcomes on syllabi	32	40	55	70	85	100
d. determine or create the activities, experiences, projects, essays, or assignments that will be used to assess the outcomes	0	15	30	45	60	75
e. attach anchor papers for each level of the rubric scale	0	15	30	45	60	75
f. assess students at the beginning, midway, and end of the course for outcomes	0	15	30	45	60	75
g. analyze the assessment data	0	15	30	45	60	75
h. use the data to improve and revise curriculum and to improve learning	0				10	20
i. share the results with faculty (occasionally)	0				10	20
j. compare the outcomes of different students in the same course over time	0				5	10
k. document the process	0				5	10
l. educate students about role of assessment in their education	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

2. Indirect Indicators of Student Learning (Surveys)

NWIC will continue administering annual faculty peer reviews and its Institutional Wellness process. It will initiate a process of surveying current graduating students at the college and program levels. Also, it will continue with the quarterly online course evaluation process. In addition, it will initiate a cycle of administering the Teaching and Assessment Methods, Student Opinion Survey, the Alumni Survey, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement approximately once every five years. The emphasis for all of this work will be on reporting back results to the community and using the information to improve the college and student learning.

Cyclical Surveys Assessment Plan

		Goal				
Survey	**Baseline data**	**2007 - 2008**	**2008 - 2009**	**2009 - 2010**	**2010 - 2011**	**2011 - 2012**
Student Opinion Survey (ACT with NWIC-specific questions)	Spring 2003		Conduct survey	Report and use results (document)		
Alumni Survey (ACT with NWIC-specific questions)	Winter 2004 (1990–2003 graduates)			Conduct survey (2000 – 2007 graduates)	Report and use results (document)	
Community College Survey of Student Engagement	Winter 2005				Conduct survey	Report and use results (document)
Faculty Survey of Student Engagement	Winter 2005				Conduct survey	Report and use results (document)
Assessment Survey	Summer 2006					Conduct survey

Ongoing Surveys Assessment Plan

		Goal				
Survey	**Baseline data**	**2007 - 2008**	**2008 - 2009**	**2009 - 2010**	**2010 - 2011**	**2011 - 2012**
Online course evaluations	The online course evaluation process is set up.	Course evaluations will be conducted quarterly. Feedback will be provided to faculty upon submission of grades. Course outcomes will be tracked over time by spring 2010.				
	No system is in place.	Faculty will complete a form annually in June that asks how they changed their courses based on student feedback (course evaluations); this can be built into the faculty evaluation process.				
Faculty peer review	Process has been in place for 4 years.	The process will be better documented.				
Faculty evaluation process	Periodic reviews are in place.	A full evaluation of new faculty will occur during their first year. An evaluation of continuing faculty will occur every 3 years.				
Graduate survey	No system is in place.	Develop a system with Student Services staff.				

Survey Goals: Community College Survey of Student Engagement (Winter 2010)

Benchmark[32]	2005 NWIC Baseline	2005 Small Colleges (Comparison Group)	2005 Difference	Action	Goal 2010: Difference
Active and collaborative learning	52.8	50.9	2.0	• articulated a teaching and learning philosophy and discussion • initiated the college outcomes initiative, which will require students to make more class presentations (4b)	3.0+
Student effort	51.0	51.0	0.0	• initiated the college and course outcomes initiatives, which are formally establishing the standards for each course and the expectations for graduation • increasing standards (i.e., 4e. coming to class without completing readings or assignments)	1.0+
Academic challenge	45.9	50.2	-4.3	• initiated the college and course outcomes initiatives	O+
Student-faculty interaction	66.0	52.0	14.0		10.0+
Support for learners	59.4	52.1	7.3		7.3+

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[32] See in-depth descriptions for each benchmark on the next page.

Active and collaborative learning includes the following: Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaborating with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with the kinds of situations and problems they will encounter in the workplace, the community, and their personal lives. The score is based on the following items. Students…

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions;
- Made a class presentation;
- Worked with other students on projects during class;
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments;
- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary);
- Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course;
- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.).

Student Effort: Students' own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will successfully attain their educational goals. The score is based on the following items. Students…

- Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in;
- Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources;
- Came to class without completing readings or assignments;
- Number of books read on own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment;
- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, or other activities related to program);
- Frequency of use of peer or other tutoring;
- Frequency of use of skill labs;
- Frequency of use of computer lab.

Academic Challenge: Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Ten survey items address the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the standards faculty members use to evaluate student performance. The score is based on the following items. Students…

- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations;
- Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory;
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways;
- Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods;
- Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations;
- Using information read or heard to perform a new skill;
- Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or book-length packs of course readings;
- Number of written papers or reports of any length;
- The extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at NWIC;
- Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying.

Student-Faculty Interactions: In general, the more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning. The score is based on the following items. Students…
- Used email to communicate with an instructor;
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor;
- Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor;
- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class;
- Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on performance;
- Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework.

Support for Learners: Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relationships among different groups on campus. The score is based on the following items. Students…
- Providing the support you need to help you succeed at NWIC;
- Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds;
- Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.);
- Providing the support you need to thrive socially;
- Providing the financial support you need to afford your education;
- Frequency of use of academic advising/planning;
- Frequency of use of career counseling.

3. Institutional and Community Data

NWIC will continue to track student enrollment numbers and rates, graduation numbers and rates, and retention rates (including one quarter, quarter to quarter and fall to fall) at the college and program levels. It will continue to track course completion numbers and rates. In addition, it hopes to start tracking transfer numbers and rates as well as success after transfer information. Again, NWIC will focus on reporting and reflecting upon the data and using the information to improve student learning. The data is subdivided into institutional data and community data.

Institutional Data Assessment Plan

Type of Data	Details	More Specific Data	Units	Baseline (2005 – 2006)	Goal (2% increase / year)					
					2006 – 2007	2007 – 2008	2008 – 2009	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011	2011 – 2012
Enrollment Numbers (Fall)	**Indian Student Count (ISC)**		**#**	**595**	**607**	**619**	**631**	**644**	**657**	**670**
	Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	**Overall**	**#**	**787**	**803**	**819**	**835**	**852**	**869**	**886**
		Lummi	#	296	302	308	314	320	327	333
		Tulalip	#	87	89	91	92	94	96	98
		Colville	#	51	52	53	54	55	56	57
		Swinomish	#	30	31	31	32	32	33	34
		Port Gamble	#	28	29	29	30	30	31	32
		Nez Perce	#	25	26	26	27	27	28	28
		Muckleshoot	#	23	23	24	24	25	25	26
Course Completion Rates (Fall Quarter)	**By mode of learning for credit courses above 100 level:** The % of successful completion enrollments of credit courses 100 level and above	**Overall**	**%**	**67**	**68**	**70**	**71**	**73**	**74**	**75**
		Off-campus (face-to-face)	%	81	83	84	86	88	89	91
		Lummi campus (face-to-face)	%	70	71	73	74	76	77	79
		ITV	%	65	66	68	69	70	72	73
		Independent learning	%	47	48	49	50	51	52	53
		Online	%	29	30	30	31	31	32	33

					Goal (2% increase / year)					
Type of Data	Details	More Specific Data	Units	Baseline (2005 – 2006)	2006 – 2007	2007 – 2008	2008 – 2009	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011	2011 – 2012
	By level of course: The % of successful completion enrollments at each level	**Overall**	**%**	**62**	**63**	**65**	**66**	**67**	**68**	**70**
		CEU	%	67	68	70	71	73	74	75
		Credit courses 100 level and above		67	68	70	71	73	74	75
		ABE / GED	%	61	62	63	65	66	67	69
		Credit courses below 100 level	%	47	48	49	50	51	52	53
Retention Rates	**One quarter (fall quarter for degree / certificate seeking students)**	Of students who attempted one or more credits in a quarter, the % who completed one or more credits in that quarter	**%**	**83**	**85**	**86**	**88**	**90**	**92**	**93**
	Quarter to quarter (fall to winter quarter for degree / certificate seeking students)	Of students who completed one or more credits in a quarter, the % who completed one or more credits the following quarter	**%**	**63**	**64**	**66**	**67**	**68**	**70**	**71**
	Fall to fall (for degree / certificate seeking students)	Of students who completed one or more credits one fall quarter, the % who completed one or more credits the following fall quarter	**%**	**29**	**30**	**30**	**31**	**31**	**32**	**33**
Graduation	**Numbers**	AAS (DTA)	#	27	28	28	29	29	30	30
		AST	#	0	1	2	4	8	12	16
		ATA	#	4	4	4	4	4	4	5

Type of Data	Details	More Specific Data	Units	Baseline (2005 – 2006)	Goal (2% increase / year)					
					2006 – 2007	2007 – 2008	2008 – 2009	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011	2011 – 2012
		1 or 2 year certificate	#	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	3-year rate (fall)	**Overall**	**%**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**13**	**13**	**13**	**14**
		Lummi	%	19	19	20	20	21	21	21
		Off campus	%	9	9	9	10	10	10	10
Transfer to Four-year Institutions	**Grades**			Not Available	Start tracking this information.					
	Retention			Not Available	Start tracking this information.					
Report the data				None	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Document how the data are used to improve programs and student learning				None	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Community Data Assessment Plan

Type of Data	Details	More Specific Data	Units	Baseline (2005 – 2006)	Goal					
					2006 – 2007	2007 – 2008	2008 – 2009	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011	2011 – 2012
Literacy rates				Identify which data will be used to determine the impact of NWIC on the tribal communities it serves						
College graduation										
College attendance										

APPENDIX B SURVEY OF TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS (2003)

Please complete one of these sheets for each course you teach this quarter, attach a syllabus to it and return them by Friday January 10th. Thank you!

Date: _____ Instructor: _____

# of Credits: _____ Course: _____

1. Please list all the methods you currently use to teach the material in this class:

% of Course Time (must add to 100%)	Teaching Method
	Lecture
	Tutoring / One-on-One / Advising
	Computer / Internet / Email
	Lab
	Seminar / Discussion
	Shop / Studio
	Experiential Learning / Field Studies
	Demonstrations
	Group Projects / Cooperative Learning
	Independent Projects
	Role plays
	Textbook
	Internship
	Other:

2. Please list all the ways you currently determine whether students are learning the material:

% of Grade (must add to 100%)	Assessment Method
	Test/exam/quiz/homework: Multiple choice
	Test/exam/quiz/homework: Fill-in-the-blank
	Test/exam/quiz/homework: Short answer
	Test/exam/quiz/homework: Essay
	Test/exam/quiz/homework: Problem-solving
	Student presentations (oral / public speaking)
	Projects
	Portfolios
	Demonstrations
	Observation / anecdotal records
	Self-evaluation
	Attendance / participation
	Other written assignments (research or term papers, essays, journal writing, summaries, story writing, reports)
	Other:

3. (i) Is this course culturally enriched with Native American (NA) materials?
❑ Primarily NA material   ❑ Some NA material   ❑ Minimal / no NA material

(ii) How is this course customized to meet the needs of Native American (NA) students?
❑ NA presenters   ❑ Other: _____   ❑ Not applicable

4. Does the NWIC Catalog designate this course as a Writing Enriched course?   Yes / No

5. How do you incorporate technology into your course?
❑ Word processed assignments   ❑ Email   ❑ Not applicable
❑ Internet (i.e., research)   ❑ Other: _____

APPENDIX C NWIC ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Assessment Survey
Northwest Indian College

We are trying to improve the institutional assessment program at Northwest Indian College. In order to do this, we are requesting input from the president, vice presidents, full-time faculty, administrators, and professional staff in this evaluation. We would like this effort to be completed before NWIC faces re-accreditation this coming academic year.

To show appreciation for your time and effort, you will receive a $10 gas card upon completing the survey.

This survey asks for your feedback about NWIC's assessment work. Your responses to this survey will be used to evaluate Northwest Indian College's assessment program. The purposes of this evaluation, and we hope its benefits, are (1) to improve NWIC students' success, retention and learning (2) to improve NWIC's assessment program (3) to educate staff about assessment (4) to inform NWIC's upcoming — and future — accreditation review and report (5) to assist other tribal colleges with their assessment programs and (6) to form the basis of Anne Marie Karlberg's doctoral thesis.

The survey will take about 60 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. Completion of the survey will indicate you have consented to participate. You may refuse to take the survey without any penalty. You are also free to not answer any question, without penalty.

After exiting the survey, you have the ability to re-enter it and to provide additional responses. Respondents who return later to an incomplete survey will be taken to the point that they left off.

We have minimized any potential harm to people who complete the survey by keeping all survey responses confidential. The web-based software used to conduct the survey does not connect your name with your responses. We have minimized any potential harm to NWIC, such as inaccurate interpretations, by having knowledgeable NWIC individuals involved in the analysis of the data.

Your feedback is valuable so please be candid with your responses.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Anne Marie Karlberg [(360) 392-4255, amkarlberg@nwic.edu]. If you have any concerns about the survey, please contact Dave Oreiro, Chair of the NWIC Institutional Review Board [(360) 392-4249; doreiro@nwic.edu].

Thank you in advance for taking the time to provide your feedback.

Anne Marie Karlberg

This survey addresses the time period between 2003 and the present.

(i) Please indicate your position at NWIC
- ☐ full-time faculty
- ☐ administrator (includes president and vice presidents)
- ☐ professional staff (i.e., advisor, recruiter, etc.)
- ☐ other

The following assessment projects and processes have been initiated at NWIC.

(ii) Mission statement: It is important to tie all assessment efforts to the mission of the college.

NWIC's mission is "Through education, Northwest Indian College promotes Indigenous self-determination and knowledge."

	Level of Success					
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know

To what extent has NWIC been successful or unsuccessful during the past three years in

a. updating its mission statement ....☐$_1$.......☐$_2$.......☐$_3$.......☐$_4$.......☐$_5$......☐$_6$
b. increasing your familiarity with the mission ....☐$_1$.......☐$_2$.......☐$_3$.......☐$_4$.......☐$_5$......☐$_6$
c. increasing your appreciation of the mission ....☐$_1$.......☐$_2$.......☐$_3$.......☐$_4$.......☐$_5$......☐$_6$
d. increasing your support for the mission.........................☐$_1$.......☐$_2$.......☐$_3$.......☐$_4$.......☐$_5$......☐$_6$
e. accomplishing the mission...☐$_1$.......☐$_2$.......☐$_3$.......☐$_4$.......☐$_5$.......☐$_6$

f. Why do you think NWIC has been unsuccessful or successful in accomplishing any of these activities?

_____

_____

g. How could NWIC better accomplish any of these activities?

_____

_____

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Types and levels of assessment information

There are three main types of assessment information (or indicators of student learning):

1. Indirect indicators (surveys, interviews or focus groups): ask students to reflect on their learning (e.g., such as graduate or student satisfaction surveys or course evaluations).

2. Direct indicators (assessment of learning outcomes): require students to demonstrate their learning at the college, program and course levels (e.g., using essays, capstone projects, presentations, etc.).

3. Institutional data (rates): do not indicate student learning but do reflect the overall condition and effectiveness of the college (e.g., such as retention and graduation rates, and enrollment trends).

Furthermore, **assessment information may be gathered at three levels** (the examples below are of direct indicators):

1. College level: where students are assessed with regard to a set of general education or college outcomes upon entry and upon graduation;

2. Program level: where students demonstrate their learning of program outcomes through capstone experiences; and

3. Course level: where students are evaluated on their short-term learning of course outcomes.

Assessment programs try to use a combination of direct indicators, indirect indicators, and institutional data at the college, program, and course levels.

(iii) Institutional data (rates): NWIC has started to track enrollment and completion patterns for different types of students, such as degree and certificate-seeking students, nondegree-seeking students, and ABE/GED students. In addition, during the past year NWIC has created standardized definitions for calculating retention, graduation, and course completion rates.

To what extent has NWIC been successful or unsuccessful in improving student success (e.g., through its programs and services) based on the following information:

	Level of Success					
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know
a. student enrollment data	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
b. retention rates	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
c. graduation rates and numbers of graduates	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
d. course completion rates and numbers	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
e. transfer data	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$

h. Why do you think NWIC has been unsuccessful or successful in improving student success (e.g., through its programs and services) based on this information?

_____

_____

i. How could NWIC better use this information to improve student success (e.g., through its programs and services)?

_____

_____

Indirect indicators (surveys, etc.): Over the last 3 years, NWIC has requested feedback from its students, faculty, staff and the community in order to improve student success. The results of the surveys are posted on the Assessment website.

	Level of Success				
1	2	3	4	5	6
Not	Minimally	Somewhat		Very	I Don't
Successful	Successful	Successful	Successful	Successful	Know

To what extent has NWIC been successful or unsuccessful in improving student success (e.g., through its programs and services) based on feedback provided in the following surveys:

a. Needs Assessment (2003) ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$ ......$\square_6$

b. Student Opinion Survey (2003) ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

c. Alumni Survey (2004) ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

d. Institutional Wellness Survey (2005)....................$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

e. Community College Survey of Student
    Engagement and the Faculty Survey of Student
    Engagement (exploring active student
    involvement in learning) (2005) ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

f. Course evaluations (online) ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$ ......$\square_6$

g. Why do you think NWIC has been unsuccessful or successful in improving student success (e.g., through its programs and services) based on this feedback?
    _____
    _____

h. How could NWIC better use this information to improve student success (e.g., through its programs and services)?
    _____
    _____

(iv) NWIC outcomes: The following are steps in the process of assessing student learning at the college level. NWIC has begun this process.

			Level of Success			
1	2	3	4	5	6
Not Successful	Minimally Successful	Somewhat Successful	Successful	Very Successful	I Don't Know

To what extent has NWIC been successful or unsuccessful in

a. articulating broad academic outcomes ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

b. articulating cultural outcomes..............................$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

c. determining which courses will be used to assess
all college outcomes...$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

d. establishing indicators and standards to measure
all college outcomes...$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

e. creating the assessment tools ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

f. determining how the data will be collected ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

g. assessing students at entry and at exit.................$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

h. analyzing the information ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

i. sharing the results ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

j. designing administrative and communication
systems to ensure the findings are incorporated
into decision-making processes and used to refine
policy and practice at the college, program, and
course levels...$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

k. educating students about the role of assessment in
their education..$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$ ......$\square_6$

l. Why do you think NWIC has been unsuccessful or successful in accomplishing these steps?
_____
_____

m. How could NWIC better accomplish any of these steps?
_____
_____

(v) Course outcomes: The following are steps in the process of assessing student learning at the course level. NWIC has begun this process.

	Level of Success					
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know

To what extent has NWIC been successful or unsuccessful in

a. articulating course outcomes...............................$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

b. establishing standards to measure these outcomes$\square_1$ ......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

c. creating assessment tools ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

d. using multiple assessment methods to assess
   outcomes ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

e. conducting the course assessments ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

f. analyzing the information ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

g. sharing the results ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

h. adjusting courses to improve learning ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

i. comparing the outcomes of different students in
   the same course over time....................................$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

j. assisting students to understand and appreciate the
   relevancy of learning outcomes ....$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

k. educating students about the role of assessment in
   their education...$\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

l. Why do you think NWIC has been unsuccessful or successful in accomplishing these steps?

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_____

m. How could NWIC better accomplish any of these steps?

_____

_____

(vi) Cultural activities: To what extent has NWIC been successful or unsuccessful in *documenting* **its impact in assisting students to…**

*Note: This question is asking about the success of the assessment of the activities, not about the success of the activities themselves.

	Level of Success					
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know
a. know their tribal inherent rights and understand why those rights are important	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
b. know their traditional ways of living (e.g., rituals, traditional practices, art, music, dance)	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
c. know about their past	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
d. know their elders	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
e. increase their level of tribal civic participation (e.g., voting)	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
f. understand the historical experience of Native Americans	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
g. speak their Native language	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
h. understand contemporary Native issues	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
i. make healthy lifestyle choices	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$

j. Why do you think NWIC has been unsuccessful or successful in documenting its impact on these activities?

_____
_____

k. How could NWIC improve how it documents any of the above activities?

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_____

(vii) Faculty members: To what extent have faculty members been successful or unsuccessful throughout the assessment process in

	Level of Success					
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know

a. remaining open-minded .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

b. responding in respectful, cooperative, and collaborative ways .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

c. driving the assessment process (with assistance from the assessment coordinator) and taking the lead in defining assessment measures and processes .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

d. creating meaningful assessment processes .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

e. taking ownership of assessment and embracing assessment as an intrinsically valuable developmental process whereby teaching and learning can be continually improved through evaluation, reflection, and identification of needs for change .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

f. increasing their educational focus on student learning .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

g. providing students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to practice skills .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

h. providing students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to receive feedback ...... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

i. using the assessment process and its results to improve student learning .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

j. receiving necessary opportunities, incentives, material resources and compensation for learning about and implementing assessment processes ..... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

k. receiving thanks for their assessment efforts and achievements publicly through institutional processes and practices .... $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ ...... $\square_3$ ...... $\square_4$ ...... $\square_5$ ...... $\square_6$

l. Why do you think any of the above items have been unsuccessful or successful?

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m. How could any of the above items be improved?

_____

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(viii) Administrators: Throughout this assessment process, to what extent have administrators been successful or unsuccessful in

	Level of Success					
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know

a. responding in respectful, cooperative, and
supportive ways .... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

b. collaborating with faculty and staff .... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

c. providing visible advocacy as well as real material
support for assessment .... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$ ....$\square_6$

d. showing appreciation and thanks to faculty and
staff .... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

e. soliciting feedback, ideas, and input from staff
and faculty and incorporating these suggestions
into plans and decisions .... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

f. streamlining and simplifying meetings and
reducing administrative obstacles to the
assessment process .... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

g. referring regularly to the assessment process and
its results in reports and presentations to both
internal and external audiences .... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

h. sharing results with the NWIC leadership team ... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

i. sharing results with advisory boards.................... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

j. communicating results to the community .... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

k. communicating results to the board of trustees..... $\square_1$.......$\square_2$.......$\square_3$.......$\square_4$.......$\square_5$.......$\square_6$

l. Why do you think any of the above items have been unsuccessful or successful?

_____

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m. How can any of the above items be improved?

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_____

(ix) The Assessment Process: To what extent has the assessment process been successful or unsuccessful in

		Level of Success				
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know
a. being streamlined and simplified so that instructors' time may be used effectively	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
b. being a flexible process that is sensitive to individual workloads and need	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
c. including employees from many segments of the college	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
d. originating within, and enriching, the college	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
e. resulting in a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the assessment coordinator and all staff	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
f. building cohesion, collaboration, relationships, and trust among staff through a consultative process	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
g. being conducted in a responsible and ethical manner	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
h. being useful, relevant, and meaningful to the tribal college community	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
i. educating administration, staff and faculty to improve their assessment skills	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
j. reporting results internally in an ongoing way so that the information can be used to improve student success and learning	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
k. being culturally appropriate	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
l. recognizing and legitimizing Indigenous knowledge and skills	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
m. contributing to tribal self-determination and knowledge	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
n. initiating meaningful conversations	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
o. creating a shared vision for the future of the college, based on common values	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
p. redirecting resources towards priorities outlined in the mission and goals	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
q. increasing the college's responsiveness to the needs of the community	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
r. improving the instructional capacity of the college as well as its public image	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
s. providing the basis for college planning and budgeting decisions	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
t. demonstrating accountability, the responsible use of limited resources, to the public	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$

u. Why do you think any of the above items have been unsuccessful or successful?

_____

_____

v. How can any of the above items be improved?

_____

_____

(x) College processes: To what extent has NWIC been successful or unsuccessful in embedding the assessment of student learning in the following aspects of the college?

	Level of Success					
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know
a. strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. curriculum review	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. budgeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. program review	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. the First Year Experience (learning communities and cohorts)	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. the college catalogue	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. college publications	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. the website	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. job descriptions and announcements	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. grading criteria	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. independent learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. service learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
m. course evaluation process	1	2	3	4	5	6
n. faculty peer review process	1	2	3	4	5	6

o. Why do you think NWIC has been unsuccessful or successful in embedding the assessment of student learning in any of the items?

_____

_____

p. How can the assessment of student learning be better embedded in any of the above items?

_____

_____

(xi) Retention Strategies: NWIC has implemented the following new initiatives over the last several years with the hope of increasing student learning, retention and success.

To what extent do you think each of these initiatives has improved student learning, retention or success?

		Level of Success				
	1 Not Successful	2 Minimally Successful	3 Somewhat Successful	4 Successful	5 Very Successful	6 I Don't Know

a. offering an athletic program .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

b. expanding other co-curricular activities and organizations (e.g., drama, AIHEC competitions) $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

c. incorporating the Family Education Model .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

d. instituting the First Year Experience (integrated classes and cohorts) .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

e. providing strategic planning updates/reviews .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

f. initiating service learning .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

g. offering student internships .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

h. offering student research opportunities .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

i. instituting the first year seminar .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

j. adding a tutoring center .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

k. establishing faculty academic advisors .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

l. implementing the Institutional Wellness initiative $\square_1$ ...... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

m. increasing faculty / student service collaboration with the student clubs .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

n. incorporating educational site students and faculty into Lummi main campus activities .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

o. encouraging instructors at Lummi to visit their site students .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

p. offering multiple modes of learning (e.g., online, interactive television, independent, face-to-face, etc.) .... $\square_1$ .... $\square_2$ .... $\square_3$ .... $\square_4$ .... $\square_5$ .... $\square_6$

q. Please list any other initiatives not listed above that NWIC has implemented over the last three years to improve student learning, retention and success.

_____

_____

(xii) Learning, teaching and assessment approaches: To what extent has NWIC been successful or unsuccessful in ensuring its students are learning and being assessed through

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="6" align="center">Level of Success</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>1
Not
Successful</td><td>2
Minimally
Successful</td><td>3
Somewhat
Successful</td><td>4
Successful</td><td>5
Very
Successful</td><td>6
I Don't
Know</td></tr>
<tr><td>a. meaningful, relevant and contextualized experiences</td><td>☐1</td><td>☐2</td><td>☐3</td><td>☐4</td><td>☐5</td><td>☐6</td></tr>
<tr><td>b. approaches traditionally used by tribal people, such as apprenticeships, observations, and practice</td><td>☐1</td><td>☐2</td><td>☐3</td><td>☐4</td><td>☐5</td><td>☐6</td></tr>
<tr><td>c. an integrated curriculum</td><td>☐1</td><td>☐2</td><td>☐3</td><td>☐4</td><td>☐5</td><td>☐6</td></tr>
<tr><td>d. an experientially grounded curriculum</td><td>☐1</td><td>☐2</td><td>☐3</td><td>☐4</td><td>☐5</td><td>☐6</td></tr>
<tr><td>e. a "place-based" curriculum</td><td>☐1</td><td>☐2</td><td>☐3</td><td>☐4</td><td>☐5</td><td>☐6</td></tr>
<tr><td>f. authentic approaches (e.g., self-reflecting and self-assessing, applying concepts to a relevant context, teaching material to peers, writing about a subject, and asking essential questions)</td><td>☐1</td><td>☐2</td><td>☐3</td><td>☐4</td><td>☐5</td><td>☐6</td></tr>
<tr><td>g. a curriculum founded on traditional culture and knowledge</td><td>☐1</td><td>☐2</td><td>☐3</td><td>☐4</td><td>☐5</td><td>☐6</td></tr>
<tr><td>h. formative classroom assessment techniques (short, frequent, ungraded attempts to assess student learning) to provide immediate in-class feedback from students</td><td>☐1</td><td>☐2</td><td>☐3</td><td>☐4</td><td>☐5</td><td>☐6</td></tr>
</table>

i. Why do you think any of the above approaches have been unsuccessful or successful?

_____
_____

j. How can any of the above approaches be improved to enhance student learning, retention and success?

_____
_____

k. How can NWIC approach any aspect of assessment, learning and teaching in a more culturally appropriate and meaningful way?

_____
_____

(xiii) Overall Successes / Challenges: Overall, NWIC's assessment attempts have

- ❒ not been successful
- ❒ been minimally successful
- ❒ been somewhat successful
- ❒ been successful
- ❒ been very successful
- ❒ I don't know

a. Overall, which elements of the assessment program at NWIC have been most successful?
   _____

   What factors contribute to this success?
   _____

b. Overall, which elements of the assessment program at NWIC have been least successful?
   _____

   What factors contribute to the lack of success?
   _____

(xiv) Impacts:

a. Please list the positive impacts of the assessment program.
   _____
   _____

b. Please list the negative impacts of the assessment program.
   _____
   _____

c. What has been the impact of the assessment program on your work?
   _____
   _____

d. What other comments, ideas or suggestions do you have to improve the assessment program at NWIC or any of the areas mentioned in this survey?
   _____
   _____

Thank you so much for your time and input!

For more information about Northwest Indian College's assessment initiatives and details about most of the topics mentioned in this survey, please visit the NWIC Assessment webpage at **http://www.nwic.edu/faculty/assessment/assessment.htm**.

NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE

2522 Kwina Road, Bellingham, Washington 98226-9217
(360) 676-2772   Fax (360) 738-0136

May 24, 2006

NWIC Institutional Review Board
FWA # 00003979

Anne Marie Karlberg
Institutional Assessment and Research Coordinator
Northwest Indian College
2522 Kwina Road
Bellingham, WA 98226
360-392-4255   amkarlberg@nwic.edu

Re: NWIC IRB Review of # 6-03 "**NWIC Institutional Assessment Survey**" - (Submission Date: May 15, 2006)

Dear Anne Marie Karlberg:

On May 24, 2006, the NWIC IRB reviewed, by its expedited procedure, your response dated May 23, 2006 to the IRB's conditions for your research protocol. The IRB approved your protocol updated with your response.

The NWIC IRB's approval has several provisions and requirements.

o   This approval is valid until **May 23, 2007**, the annual review date for your project. (All protocols must be reviewed and re-approved by the IRB every 365 days or less.)

o   If your project will extend beyond May 23, 2007, you must obtain continuation re-approval by the NWIC IRB **prior to that date**. You should apply to the NWIC IRB for continuation approval at least three (3) months before that date. The "Continuing Review Form" is available from the NWIC IRB.

o   You must report to the NWIC IRB any proposed changes in the research protocol prior to implementing them, and must not implement those changes until the IRB has approved them. The NWIC IRB handles most requests for such proposed changes by its expedited review procedure.

o   If the project has any adverse or untoward event, or receives a complaint, you must report it immediately to the NWIC IRB. Please report it by telephone and letter to me -- and by e-mail to: Dave Oreiro (Chair, 360-392-4249, doreiro@nwic.edu); Rose James (Co-Chair, 206-543-6297, rdjames@u.washington.edu); and William Freeman (Human Protections Administrator, 360-392-4284, wfreeman@nwic.edu).

o   You must meet all written and verbal assurances and commitments made by you in the protocol, or to tribal or other communities, or to the NWIC or other institutions (e.g., reporting results, review of publications and presentations, storage of data).

The NWIC IRB appreciates your interest in providing the benefits of research to the NWIC and to Northwest American Indian and Alaskan Native individuals and communities. If you have any questions, please contact me at 360-392-4249 or doreiro@nwic.edu.

Sincerely yours,

Dave Oreiro, Chair NWIC IRB

cc: Rose James, Co-Chair
          reviewers - Dave Oreiro, William Freeman
          File

UBC

The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services and Administration
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	DEPARTMENT	NUMBER
Andres, L.C.	Educational Studies	B06-0405

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT

CO-INVESTIGATORS:

Karlberg, Anne Marie, Educational Studies

SPONSORING AGENCIES

TITLE :

Institutional Assessment in a Tribal College Context: A Case Study of Northwest Indian College

APPROVAL DATE	TERM (YEARS)	DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:
JUN 1 4 2006	1	May 16, 2006, Cover letter / Questionnaires / June 12, 2006, Email message

CERTIFICATION:

The application for ethical review of the above-named project has been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.
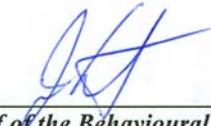
Approved on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board
by one of the following:
Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair,
Dr. Susan Rowley, Associate Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures

APPENDIX F SUMMARY OF CLOSED-ENDED ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESPONSES

Rating scale: 1=*Not successful*; 2=*Minimally successful*; 3=*Somewhat successful*; 4=*Successful*; 5=*Very successful*

 # who responded: after having removed *I don't knows* and those who did not respond to the question (of 47 total)

Indicator (overall success)	Question	# who responded (47 total)	% who selected *successful* (4) or *very successful* (5) (with *I don't knows* and no responses removed)				Mean rating
			Faculty (15)	Admin. (22)	Prof. Staff (10)	Overall (47)	
2. Mission statement (4.0): The extent to which NWIC has been successful in…	a. updating mission	39	86%	84%	83%	85%	**4.2**
	b. increasing familiarity	47	80%	86%	80%	83%	**4.2**
	c. increasing appreciation	47	73%	73%	80%	74%	**4.0**
	d. increasing support	47	87%	77%	80%	81%	**4.1**
	e. accomplishing mission	42	54%	55%	67%	57%	**3.6**
3. Institutional data (3.1): The extent to which NWIC has been successful in improving student success based on the following feedback…	a. enrollment data	35	55%	24%	71%	43%	**3.4**
	b. retention rates	36	42%	13%	38%	28%	**2.9**
	c. graduation rates and numbers	34	40%	25%	50%	35%	**3.2**
	d. course completion rates and numbers	33	30%	0%	43%	18%	**2.9**
	e. transfer data	30	44%	14%	43%	30%	**3.1**
4. Indirect indicators (3.3): The extent to which NWIC has been successful in improving student success based on feedback provided in the following surveys…	a. Needs Assessment	26	29%	31%	33%	31%	**3.3**
	b. Student Opinion Survey	26	25%	23%	40%	27%	**3.3**
	c. Alumni Survey	31	44%	57%	50%	52%	**3.5**
	d. Institutional Wellness Survey	29	29%	44%	50%	41%	**3.2**
	e. Community College Survey of Student Engagement and Faculty Survey	24	25%	23%	67%	29%	**3.3**
	f. Course evaluations (online)	31	56%	44%	67%	52%	**3.3**
5. Direct Indicators —	a. articulating academic outcomes	42	71%	61%	50%	62%	**3.8**

| Indicator (overall success) | Question | # who responded (47 total) | % who selected *successful* (4) or *very successful* (5) (with *I don't knows* and no responses removed) | | | | Mean rating |
			Faculty (15)	Admin. (22)	Prof. Staff (10)	Overall (47)	
College outcomes (3.1): The extent to which NWIC has been successful in…	b. articulating cultural outcomes	42	14%	28%	30%	24%	**2.8**
	c. determining which courses	35	33%	31%	57%	37%	**3.3**
	d. establishing standards	37	38%	53%	57%	49%	**3.5**
	e. creating assessment tools	40	50%	65%	33%	53%	**3.5**
	f. determining how data will be collected	31	40%	62%	25%	45%	**3.3**
	g. assessing at entry and exit	33	10%	14%	11%	12%	**2.5**
	h. analyzing results	28	44%	33%	29%	36%	**3.1**
	i. sharing results	36	27%	31%	33%	31%	**3.0**
	j. designing communication systems and using results	35	30%	29%	38%	31%	**2.8**
	k. educating students	28	11%	0%	0%	4%	**2.4**
6. Direct indicator — Course outcomes (3.1): The extent to which NWIC has been successful in…	a. articulating course outcomes	37	54%	60%	56%	57%	**3.7**
	b. establishing standards	35	38%	33%	57%	40%	**3.4**
	c. creating assessment tools	35	23%	57%	38%	40%	**3.3**
	d. using multiple assessments	27	11%	36%	57%	33%	**3.2**
	e. conducting assessments	35	18%	40%	44%	34%	**3.3**
	f. analyzing results	25	67%	50%	75%	60%	**3.5**
	g. sharing results	32	18%	38%	38%	31%	**3.1**
	h. adjusting courses	26	33%	18%	33%	27%	**3.1**
	i. comparing outcomes over time	18	0%	17%	25%	11%	**2.6**
	j. assisting students to understand	25	13%	20%	14%	16%	**2.7**
	k. educating students about the role of assessment	25	0%	0%	13%	4%	**2.4**
7. Cultural aspects (3.2): The extent to which NWIC	a. knowing inherent tribal rights	38	25%	47%	56%	42%	**3.2**
	b. knowing traditional ways	37	17%	29%	38%	27%	**2.9**

Indicator (overall success)	Question	# who responded (47 total)	% who selected *successful* (4) or *very successful* (5) (with *I don't knows* and no responses removed)				Mean rating
			Faculty (15)	Admin. (22)	Prof. Staff (10)	Overall (47)	
has been successful in documenting its impact in assisting students in…	c. knowing past	38	27%	44%	56%	42%	**3.3**
	d. knowing elders	36	18%	24%	50%	28%	**2.9**
	e. increasing level of tribal civic participation	35	18%	24%	71%	31%	**3.0**
	f. understanding historical experience	39	33%	61%	67%	54%	**3.5**
	g. speaking Native language	39	17%	22%	22%	21%	**2.5**
	h. understanding contemporary Native issues	39	33%	39%	56%	41%	**3.3**
	i. making healthy lifestyle choices	39	23%	22%	38%	26%	**3.0**
8. Faculty's role (3.6): Throughout the assessment process, the extent to which the faculty are…	a. remaining open-minded	37	50%	71%	44%	57%	**3.7**
	b. responding in respectful ways	38	73%	73%	50%	68%	**3.8**
	c. driving assessment process	36	64%	75%	50%	67%	**3.8**
	d. creating meaningful assessment processes	35	69%	64%	63%	66%	**3.8**
	e. taking ownership	37	64%	63%	29%	57%	**3.6**
	f. increasing educational focus on learning	38	73%	67%	50%	66%	**3.9**
	g. providing students with various opportunities to practice skills	35	69%	43%	75%	60%	**3.6**
	h. providing students with various opportunities to receive feedback	33	62%	23%	71%	48%	**3.5**
	i. using assessment to improve learning	31	58%	36%	50%	48%	**3.5**
	j. receiving compensation	30	43%	60%	33%	47%	**3.3**
	k. receiving thanks	32	47%	60%	57%	53%	**3.5**
9. Administrators' role (3.4): Throughout the assessment process, the	a. responding in respectful ways	36	33%	63%	63%	53%	**3.6**
	b. collaborating with faculty/staff	35	31%	50%	63%	46%	**3.4**
	c. providing visible advocacy	36	38%	65%	67%	56%	**3.6**

Indicator (overall success)	Question	# who responded (47 total)	% who selected *successful* (4) or *very successful* (5) (with *I don't knows* and no responses removed)				Mean rating
			Faculty (15)	Admin. (22)	Prof. Staff (10)	Overall (47)	
extent to which administrators are…	d. showing appreciation	33	29%	77%	83%	58%	**3.5**
	e. soliciting feedback	37	36%	44%	57%	43%	**3.4**
	f. streamlining meetings	32	25%	50%	38%	38%	**2.9**
	g. referring to results	33	18%	67%	57%	48%	**3.4**
	h. sharing results with NWIC leadership team	22	33%	73%	60%	59%	**3.5**
	i. sharing results with advisory boards	16	25%	75%	75%	63%	**3.6**
	j. communicating results to community	20	25%	36%	40%	35%	**2.9**
	k. communicating results to board of trustees	15	25%	75%	100%	67%	**3.5**
10. Assessment process (3.6): The extent to which the assessment process is…	a. being streamlined	37	64%	36%	67%	54%	**3.5**
	b. being flexible	37	43%	38%	50%	43%	**3.4**
	c. being inclusive	36	36%	44%	56%	44%	**3.2**
	d. originating within NWIC	37	64%	71%	67%	68%	**3.7**
	e. resulting in respectful relationship between assessment coordinator and staff	38	75%	88%	70%	79%	**4.1**
	f. building cohesion	37	67%	56%	67%	62%	**3.7**
	g. being conducted in ethical way	40	79%	76%	67%	75%	**4.1**
	h. useful and meaningful	39	69%	81%	80%	77%	**4.0**
	i. educating staff	39	46%	53%	67%	54%	**3.5**
	j. reporting results	37	42%	35%	63%	43%	**3.4**
	k. being culturally appropriate	31	56%	36%	75%	52%	**3.5**
	l. legitimizing Indigenous knowledge	29	33%	33%	63%	41%	**3.3**
	m. contributing to self-determination	32	33%	29%	78%	44%	**3.3**
	n. initiating meaningful conversations	39	79%	75%	78%	77%	**3.8**
	o. creating a shared vision	40	50%	41%	67%	50%	**3.6**
	p. redirecting resources	32	33%	62%	60%	53%	**3.6**
	q. increasing college's responsiveness	32	33%	40%	63%	44%	**3.4**
	r. instructional capacity	29	25%	54%	63%	48%	**3.5**

| Indicator (overall success) | Question | # who responded (47 total) | % who selected *successful* (4) or *very successful* (5) (with *I don't knows* and no responses removed) | | | | Mean rating |
			Faculty (15)	Admin. (22)	Prof. Staff (10)	Overall (47)	
	s. providing basis for planning and budget decisions	27	50%	54%	63%	56%	**3.6**
	t. demonstrating accountability	27	57%	50%	50%	52%	**3.5**
11. College processes (3.4): The extent to which assessment is embedded in the following college processes…	a. strategic planning	31	57%	60%	44%	55%	**3.7**
	b. curriculum review	30	50%	44%	50%	47%	**3.5**
	c. budgeting	23	75%	31%	50%	43%	**3.3**
	d. program review	23	33%	38%	57%	43%	**3.4**
	e. First Year Experience program	30	44%	92%	89%	77%	**3.8**
	f. catalog	28	38%	27%	44%	36%	**3.2**
	g. publications	25	60%	33%	25%	36%	**3.1**
	h. website	32	56%	7%	33%	28%	**3.0**
	i. job descriptions	24	60%	18%	25%	29%	**3.0**
	j. grading criteria	30	30%	33%	38%	33%	**3.2**
	k. distance learning	29	13%	64%	57%	48%	**3.6**
	l. service learning	24	57%	64%	67%	63%	**3.5**
	m. course evaluations	33	50%	57%	56%	55%	**3.6**
	n. faculty peer review process	24	40%	70%	75%	58%	**3.6**
12. Retention strategies (3.5): The extent to which the following retention strategies have improved student learning, retention, or success…	a. athletic program	41	50%	57%	88%	61%	**3.7**
	b. co-curricular activities	41	54%	65%	75%	63%	**3.8**
	c. Family Education Model	29	40%	31%	50%	38%	**3.1**
	d. First Year Experience program	36	55%	50%	67%	56%	**3.7**
	e. strategic plan updates	35	30%	31%	56%	37%	**3.1**
	f. service learning	34	33%	65%	60%	53%	**3.5**
	g. internships	40	85%	63%	88%	75%	**4.0**
	h. research opportunities	33	78%	65%	57%	67%	**3.9**
	i. first year seminar	35	67%	67%	75%	69%	**3.9**
	j. tutoring center	37	40%	45%	57%	46%	**3.5**
	k. faculty academic advisors	32	36%	36%	14%	31%	**3.1**
	l. institutional health initiative	33	33%	35%	29%	33%	**3.1**
	m. student clubs	37	50%	78%	71%	68%	**3.8**

Indicator (overall success)	Question	# who responded (47 total)	% who selected *successful* (4) or *very successful* (5) (with *I don't knows* and no responses removed)				Mean rating
			Faculty (15)	Admin. (22)	Prof. Staff (10)	Overall (47)	
	n. sites	39	31%	29%	22%	28%	**2.8**
	o. faculty visit sites	37	46%	25%	50%	38%	**3.1**
	p. multiple modes of learning	43	54%	80%	70%	70%	**4.1**
13. Learning, teaching, and assessment approaches (3.3): The extent to which NWIC has been successful at ensuring its students are learning and being assessed through…	a. meaningful, relevant, and contextualized experiences	35	58%	43%	78%	57%	**3.7**
	b. approaches traditionally used by tribal people	35	27%	27%	22%	26%	**2.9**
	c. an integrated curriculum	40	50%	24%	44%	38%	**3.3**
	d. an experientially grounded curriculum	38	54%	25%	33%	37%	**3.3**
	e. a place-based curriculum	37	55%	35%	44%	43%	**3.4**
	f. authentic approaches	33	42%	43%	57%	45%	**3.4**
	g. a curriculum founded on traditional culture and knowledge	36	40%	29%	33%	33%	**3.1**
	h. formative classroom assessment techniques	28	40%	29%	33%	33%	**3.1**
14. Overall (3.4)	a. overall assessment attempts	42	31%	40%	56%	40%	**3.4**

APPENDIX G MISSION STATEMENT

The success rating was based on the overall mean of responses and excluded *I don't know responses* for each section. A mean score of 1.0 – 1.5 was considered *not successful*; 1.6 – 2.5 was considered *minimally successful*; 2.6 – 3.5 was considered *somewhat successful*; 3.6 – 4.5 was considered *successful*; and 4.6 – 5. 0 was considered *very successful*. Given that NWIC has just created its assessment program and has not yet embarked on many of these initiatives, the primary purpose of this rating is to compare to future survey results

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Successful (4.0): NWIC updated its mission statement (2003) and is increasing staff's familiarity with and appreciation and support of the mission	• "divided camps regarding what is Indigenous knowledge; fear of sharing Indigenous knowledge to those not Lummi or traditional; divided camps in providing leadership around these issues; divided camps within the Tribal Government and NWIC" • "lack of clarity and cohesion between college departments…primarily instruction and student services, and…a lack of leadership at the administrative level…historical momentum has made it difficult to change directions and use assessment information in an honest and direct manner to improve the functioning of the college" • "lack of an institution-wide process for annual review and planning for improvement" and a "lack of face-to-face discussions of these matters at the site level" • "the college not being ready to move forward together" • "many of the staff and faculty don't have the capacity to fulfill this mission; many don't understand or have never had the opportunity to understand Indian self determination" • "not enough emphasis and support for inclusion of cultural teaching and learning through collaborative efforts; lack of community involvement on campus although there are some guest speakers in classes from time to time (more emphasis seems to be on cultural arts and crafts)" • "not everyone has accepted the mission to be a tribal college" • "inner conflict within the College" • limited community involvement • we need to "define self determination for tribal members" • Friday meetings: it is challenging to complete work in fewer hours in week	• articulated a "clear," "brief," "understandable," mission statement that "encompasses an immense vision" and is "easier to memorize," "to be familiar" with, and to "articulate to others" • "vision and leadership" of the president and "openness of the administration"; "it takes a lot of hard work to achieve the mission and to build a common understanding of a shared vision" • Friday workshops/all staff meetings: These activities have helped NWIC to stay "on track to make the Mission really happen" and "give us the opportunity to review the college's mission on an institutional and individual basis. This seems to lead to increased familiarity, which in turn hopefully leads to increased appreciation and support. The more we talk about it (in a directed manner), hopefully we begin to realize how each of us contributes to accomplishing it"; the meetings are "great for communications and networking"; "communication has improved dramatically campus wide!" • all staff perseverance: "committed staff and their relationship to our students" • focus on self-determination and knowledge: NWIC promotes "Indigenous self-determination and knowledge of its culture to students"

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• have "fewer but more vision/goal oriented Friday meetings"	→ continued having all-staff activities on Friday mornings → are evaluating and improving Friday activity structure
• focus on accomplishing the mission	→ aligned new and existing educational programs with the strategic plan → developed and implemented an action plan for the strategic plan → created college-wide team projects to implement the strategic plan → are developing departmental and staff work plans linked to the strategic plan
• improve communication among staff (continue with Institutional Wellness initiative): 　• review "with departments their specific part in meeting the mission" 　• advertise the mission more systematically by including "the mission statement on course outcome forms and Curriculum Committee course forms as reminders of our mission" 　• continue to collaborate between departments: "The First Year Experience is a good example…the students get more support in the classroom and out of class when academic affairs and student services collaborate" 　• list "the criteria for accomplishing the mission in terms that can be understood, followed, and evaluated"	→ analyzed 2006 Institutional Wellness Survey results and created an action plan → continued Friday activities focusing on president and staff communication and staff skills development → are improving administrator skills by developing high performance teams

Suggestions	Actions
• "follow, adhere and implement policies that support the mission" • communicate "what we are currently doing that contributes to the accomplishment of our mission and what we will do in the future" • continue with "more positive steps towards team building, communication, and follow through" • continue to "dialogue within the NWIC administration team to come to agreement regarding this mission statement and within tribal communities and government" • continue to "move forward with the college's strategic plan" • continue to "further address some of the college dysfunction to make us more successful"	
• improve communication with NWIC's extended campuses	→ increased awareness of sites → structured inclusion of site staff (e.g., interactive television meetings, emails, committees, groups) → advocated for site recognition and inclusion
• improve communication with tribal communities (e.g., create an elder's advisory council, pay family groups to participate, improve marketing)	→ conducted dialogues and focus groups with communities → are building capacity of the Coast Salish Institute → are increasing visibility through public relations network
• improve communication with students about NWIC's mission	→ held regular student body-president meetings → included mission in student recruitment materials and publications
• deal with cultural issues: there is no accepted shared cultural authority	→ articulated shared tribal college culture by the president

Suggestions	Actions
(identity) so some faculty and staff don't feel like they have control over cultural aspects	→ are sharing faculty and all staff cultural experiences
	→ are building capacity of the Coast Salish Institute
	→ are developing faculty and student cultural outcomes and a teaching and learning philosophy
• increase number of Native faculty	→ are attempting to identify and hire Native American faculty
• continue "faculty work toward identifying tribal values upon which to base certain curriculum decisions and orientation for new faculty" and developing and implementing "a Tribal College Faculty orientation 'process'"	→ are developing faculty and student cultural outcomes and a teaching and learning philosophy
• produce "an annual report on the strategic plan"	→ The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research is developing and disseminating an internal report of progress on strategic plan initiatives.
	→ The President's Office is developing and disseminating an annual report for broad distribution highlighting progress on the strategic plan.

APPENDIX H ADMINISTRATORS' ROLES

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Somewhat successful (3.4): administrators for the most part were supportive	• "need more buy-in" • "participation by administration, VPs and the administrative team has been minimal" • "the general administration…has simply not understood what we were doing"	• positive support: "the administration has been really good in supporting us [the faculty] through this process. They see it as important for faculty and for the students as a way to increase success." • "instructional administration has been very supportive and positive" • "high level of administrative buy-in" • "support," "commitment," and "care about the staff and student base"

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• improve communication with and report results to staff, extended campuses, students, and the community	→ continued with Institutional Wellness dialogue and Friday sessions to improve communication and leadership skills → the president meets periodically with staff, students
• communicate the importance of assessment ("community education"): "administrators should make it clear that all staff should respond to assessment issues when developing processes and procedures" and should "institutionalize a more formal process so that everyone knows what is being done and is expected to support it"	→ the assessment coordinator works directly with administrators about assessment as it pertains to their work → the president communicates the importance of assessment to staff, faculty, and administrators
• streamline meetings (use time more wisely)	→ trained administrators on conducting effective meetings
• go through "data driven decision-making training" and use data to drive decisions	→ will develop structures that require data to be used in decision making
• attend assessment presentations and "review progress on assessment activities with faculty"	→ invited appropriate administrators to assessment meetings
• provide "money to faculty to do research on strategies that improve teaching and learning"; "encourage publication through incentives"	→ will create faculty work groups to focus on teaching and learning → will create faculty development work plans that focus on improving teaching and learning and on research → will inform faculty abut the availability of funding
• "publicly recognize significant contributions through the Dean and VP of Instruction"	→ will recognize publicly faculty accomplishments by administrators
• make an "annual presentation to the Board of Trustees"	→ continued annual presentation by vice president of instruction to the Board of Trustees
• have "quarterly luncheons with students to share [assessment] work"	→ will organize student meetings with assessment coordinator

APPENDIX I FACULTY MEMBERS' ROLES

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Successful (3.6): faculty for the most part were supportive	• "everyone has not participated on campus who should be involved" • it is difficult to engage part-time, online, and independent learning faculty in the process	• positive support: "Faculty have shown a real interest in assessment and its usefulness because they are sincerely interested in student learning. Some faculty provide an incentive to others to participate through their leadership." • significant level of "faculty buy-in" and faculty seem "to have a willingness to embrace this process and have it work" • funds were available to pay faculty to work on prolonged assessment projects during non-contract days

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• include more "part-time, independent learning, and … online faculty"	1. continued to encourage part-time faculty to participate (through financial incentives) 2. will continue moving forward with receptive faculty
• provide faculty money "to publish through incentives"; provide money to "faculty to do research on strategies that improve teaching and learning"	3. will educate faculty about opportunities and support to research and publish
• continue "education, training, discussion and sharing" with all faculty concerning learning, teaching, and assessment methods	4. will continue regular meetings with faculty
• continue "the focus" and have "clear goals"	5. will articulate clear assessment goals in the 2007 – 2012 Assessment Plan

APPENDIX J ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Successful (3.6): NWIC has been working toward having an effective assessment process that is culturally appropriate, meaningful and relevant	• lack of time • "getting faculty and staff continually involved. We don't have the dollars to provide time and incentive to staff to get fully informed. This hampers the effort. A more robust budget, especially for faculty, would obviously help." • "a lot of other things had/have to be done first" (e.g., re-structuring programs)	• Friday meetings (helped with "shared vision") • effective use of results (i.e., Center for Student Success) • "assessments seem to be used to make improvements at NWIC" • "clarity in presentations of the importance of these tasks" • started the process with interested, receptive and supportive faculty • useful assessment workshops and presentations • brown bag lunches • assessment website • faculty meetings on interactive television • extra faculty pay • just establishing "an excellent process" • "maintaining momentum, and keeping everybody engaged, involved, and informed"

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• institutionalize assessment; "emphasize its importance to all groups"	→ budgeted faculty pay for assessment → are embedding assessment into college processes → are providing ongoing assessment education → will ask administrators to expect staff to use assessment frameworks → will incorporate assessment tasks into Friday meetings
• increase participation, communication, assessment-related education, reporting and planning with extended campuses, administrators, students and the community; "NWIC needs a structured process for reporting information — one that is timely and accessible"; include more of the "administration, VPs and the administrative team" and students	→ structured meetings and invited appropriate people → continued ongoing assessment education → are sharing reports on the assessment website → are conducting regular workshops to share information on interactive television → will share results with communities → will make assessment presentations to students → will hire students to aid in assessment-related tasks and processes (e.g., attending meetings, etc.) → will continue brown bag lunches
• "the extended campus sites need to be more central to the entire planning and assessment process"; have more of "the meetings on ITV [interactive television] for extended campus participation" and provide "more travel funds for site managers to be able to attend meetings"	→ are providing money for traveling → are conducting regular workshops to share information on interactive television
• "The use of culture and language needs to be a guiding principle. We need to hire the right people for this work."	→ are attempting to identify and hire Native American faculty and staff → are building capacity of the Coast Salish Institute → will develop and implement NWIC cultural outcomes and program cultural outcomes
• use "this assessment survey as the tool to build strong awareness and understanding of the measures the institution is striving to attain"	→ will conduct a modified version of this survey in 2001

APPENDIX K EMBEDDING ASSESSMENT IN COLLEGE PROCESSES

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Somewhat successful (3.4): The assessment of student learning is starting to be embedded in various aspects of the college Comments: "there has been a great improvement in almost all aspects of embedding assessment in different areas"; staff "see and hear things that show it is having positive effects," such as "the favorable feedback from students"	• "Budgeting at the college has not usually been done with a long term plan in mind. Thus, there have not been feedback mechanisms for determining the effectiveness of the previous year's choices and fine tuning the budget. Most of the other aspects that are minimally successful (catalog, website, course evaluations) are because they have not been developed with assessment and improvement in mind. Assessment of the strategic plan has not been successful because the details necessary to implement and assess it were never developed…The actual assessment on an annual basis is still far from successful for several reasons. One is that the ongoing assessment process isn't institutionalized. The other reason is that the assessment process often gets shortcut for political reasons."	• "staff dedication"; "shared vision" • commitment "to overall mission" • "intentional inclusion of assessment measures in the job descriptions" • "the assessment of the First Year Experience… assessment has been built into the program"

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• "improve college catalogues and publications"	→ updated the catalogue (an assessment and NWIC outcomes section has been added to the college catalogue)
• make the assessment website more accessible to students	→ the entire NWIC website is being restructured with more links to the assessment webpage → the assessment website has been updated and has been more widely publicized
• "incorporate assessment into curriculum review and development"	→ the Curriculum Committee now requires that all new courses have well-developed outcomes → periodic course reviews require outcomes
• "post the results of assessments"; "provide more and timely results"	→ results are posted on the website → implementation of the assessment plan will allow reasonable timelines for analysis and dissemination
• "expand into publications and public communications as much as we have with in-house activities such as curriculum planning"; "articulate assessment in the appropriate document (as in faculty contracts, procedure manuals)"	→ will coordinate and educate public relations and development and student services to ensure assessment is incorporated in publications
• "create an assessment newsletter in-house and provide updates to administrators and the Board"	→ are publishing short articles in the student monthly newsletter → will publish an annual summary of assessment activities and results to administrators, the board, staff and students
• "make it a part of each administrator's and exempt manager's 'work plan'"; "incorporate" assessment "into daily job and class routines"; "do it and develop a habit and culture of assessment and improvement at the college"	→ will include appropriate and relevant assessment activities into all staff work plans → will continue regular communication and education between the assessment coordinator and different groups

Suggestions	Actions
• "review the Strategic Plan and incorporate the present direction into the plan"	→ will coordinate the assessment process with strategic planning tracking
	→ will coordinate assessment activities with the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research
• embed assessment in grading criteria	→ create outcomes for all courses
	→ require outcomes on all course syllabi
	→ require outcomes in all Curriculum Committee courses reviews
	→ will continue the course outcomes initiative

APPENDIX L LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Somewhat successful (3.3): NWIC is moving in the direction of ensuring its students are learning and being assessed through innovative approaches.	• "difficulty in getting the course of the college to change" • "NWIC was built on a standard American educational model (mentored by and modeled after Whatcom Community College); NWIC was administered by either non-Natives who didn't understand why a tribal college would be different or Natives who were not grounded in their own identity and traditional educational practices (this is changing with [the president] but the administration is still very unclear about this process)." • "NWIC faculty were and are mostly non-Native or Native people who dilute their heritage by not being grounded in it" • "Traditional approaches and place based are not used by the faculty — probably not understood by them…There aren't enough people here who know and believe in the original concept of what it means to be a People and what it means to be a tribal college." • "everyone has not participated. Those who have participated are doing better." • "the diversity of Tribal needs makes curriculum development difficult" • "The faculty definitely don't understand what it means to be from this place. They are always trying to bring people from 'somewhere else' to the campus."	• "pioneering work, particularly TENRM and other coherent learning community approaches to teaching and learning" • "grant funds that have built teaching and learning capacity (TENRM and TCUP)" • "faculty and administrators who have a vision for developing a tribal college in integrity with the needs of students and the methods of learning and goals of the college in alignment with tribal ways" • "more and more of our faculty and staff are being given opportunities to learn about 'cultural values'" • there is now a "long term mandate to include tribal materials and to make educational materials fit the students" (e.g., "Natural Science courses that relate to place and take advantage of traditional concerns as the basis of learning") • the "conscientiousness of the instructional staff" • the "involvement of the students in the community" • "we are successful in those classes where the faculty adopt these approaches and own them"

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• "develop a 'new employee orientation' manual that gives clear & informative information regarding Native culture"	→ are updating the faculty handbook → are revising hiring practices to incorporate capacity of staff to advance the college's mission and vision → are developing a learning and teaching philosophy and a cultural outcomes initiative → will develop a faculty website, a faculty orientation process and faculty evaluation processes to include evaluation of staff capacity to advance the college's mission and vision
• "offer more formal teacher training to those faculty that haven't had any"; "training teachers on methodologies should continue"; "make better use of teaching and learning best practices"; "faculty should be talking and working together to share what they do in the classroom so that we can learn from one another"; apply these teaching, learning and assessment approaches in all courses	→ continued teaching, learning, and assessment workshops (held regular ongoing teaching and learning brown bag lunches)
• "encourage more cooperative learning… (find ways for students to help one another)"; "have the students who have been successful come back and tell their stories to First Year Experience students to inspire them to stay the course"	→ hired NWIC graduates to be student tutors → will embed best practices into courses → will formalize student research partnerships and student mentoring relationships
• "articulate with far greater clarity the vision and hence the outcomes of our teaching at NWIC"	→ continued implementing outcomes initiatives
• "hire the appropriate people — faculty and administrators — who understand and can shepard in that vision"; hire "more Native faculty"	→ are identifying and hiring appropriate Native American faculty who can advance the college's mission and vision
• "solicit input from Native American	→ are building capacity of the Coast Salish Institute

Suggestions	Actions
faculty, administration, staff and especially students"; involve "the elders in more of the classes" and as "tutors and mentors"; "access more cultural resource people and materials"	to identify and engage appropriate people who can advance the college's mission in the area of Native education
• develop a curriculum that is based on traditional approaches; "include more traditional ceremonies, apprenticeships, etc."; provide more resources to learn traditional approaches and place-based learning	→ "We are still finding our way as a tribal institution so some of this information and process is still being developed" → are identifying needs and creating structures to implement them (through the Coast Salish Institute, curriculum, budgeting)
• "understand the culture"	→ will develop and offer experiential learning for staff
• be clear as to "who can and who can't do this work [cultural work]. Everyone who works at the college needs to know how they fit in to the process."	→ will engender understanding of NWIC mission and vision → will build capacity of staff to respond to needs and mission of NWIC
• "we need to have the resources at the extended campus to insure these activities can be provided"	→ are identifying and hiring appropriate Native American faculty who can advance the college's mission and vision → will engage with tribal education directors and other tribal resources to support increased resources at the sites
• "integrated curriculum is needed… A curriculum based on traditional culture"	→ institutionalized the First Year Experience program, which is based on an integrated curriculum → will explore and articulate what an integrated curriculum means for NWIC and implement it
• "use a holistic approach focusing on our students strengths, one of which is spirituality"	→ NWIC recognizes and supports the whole identity of students and staff → are building structures that support the belief that curriculum is everything that happens to a student while at NWIC (including instruction, student services)

Suggestions	Actions
• "recognize the value of communication with the Tribes themselves as well as polling students and alumni will diversify the potential audience"	→ conducted and will continue to conduct ongoing dialogues with communities about their needs → are developing four-year programs based on this feedback → are enhancing advisory committees to provide ongoing input
• "keep assessing students as to how well culturally our material is being presented"	→ are continuing to articulate and assess outcomes
• "give absolute guidelines. Everything still seems so vague."	→ created an assessment plan for 2007 – 2012 → will educate staff about the direction of assessment at NWIC → will develop staff work plans
• "provide the students with ongoing opportunities to connect with the campus and its community"	→ are developing service learning → are incorporating the Family Education Model
• "work on the divided camps, control and political agenda"	→ are building capacity and advancing the college's mission and vision

APPENDIX M COLLEGE OUTCOMES INITIATIVE

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Somewhat successful (3.1): NWIC has started the process of assessing student learning at the college level; articulated a draft set of college outcomes; started articulating a teaching and learning philosophy based on Native ways of knowing	• lack of time • other processes need to be in place first (e.g., developing the four-year degree, embedding formative and summative assessments into curriculum, articulating cultural outcomes) • "redesigning curriculum based on outcomes" • "holding high academic standards"	• good communication (through the "NWIC website and through lunch meetings") • "faculty were paid for doing this work" • NWIC hired one person to "develop and implement the assessment process," to "organize the data," to coordinate "the design of assessment tools and guide the faculty to design outcomes" • "bringing faculty together to develop college-wide competencies and to articulate course outcomes"

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• improve the NWIC website	→ are updating the NWIC website
• add "READING as a 6th competency"	→ added "Reading" as a 6th competency
• "enforce the outcomes"	→ will report the actual learning outcome results (i.e., list outcomes, assessment criteria and procedure, assessment results, use of results) in the next assessment report
	→ will increase buy-in of faculty and administrators
• "educate the students about the role of assessment in their education"	→ will publish assessment articles in the monthly student newsletter
	→ will organize regular student meetings to share assessment results and receive feedback
	→ will include students in the assessment process development
• continue communicating and "sharing the information and advocating for its use in analysis and decision making"; increase "buy-in" and participation	→ will continue the college outcomes initiative
• faculty need time to work together; continue "with the Friday in-services" and "informational meetings" but "schedule those times for faculty and staff to work on specific tasks related to assessment and improvement of programs"	→ science faculty time is scheduled for curriculum development for the four-year Native Environmental Science degree
	→ will empower faculty initiative
• develop "an effective orientation"	→ will include sections about assessment in the faculty handbook
	→ will educate staff about resources posted on the assessment website
• "assess how other tribal colleges have completed this task"	→ researched how other tribal colleges have approached college outcomes (NWIC is one of the first tribal colleges to articulate college outcomes)
• include the extended campuses	→ outcomes will be broad enough to include all people
	→ will create structures for access including extended face-to-face meetings, interactive television, etc.

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Somewhat successful (3.2) NWIC has started the process of articulating faculty and student cultural outcomes; NWIC started articulating a teaching and learning philosophy based on Native ways of knowing	• there is little "agreement on what is culturally appropriate by Native staff, and how non-Native staff fit into the scheme." • "Culture seems to be an awkward topic for most. How can we assess if people can't talk about what it means?" • "It all seems very confusing still. As an educator, what should I know, what should I teach, what should I participate in?" • "We need to be clear ourselves what we want our students to learn before they leave us and then work to fulfill our goals without fear of stepping on toes." • "This is a very complex issue. Again, divided camps of what is culture, or fear of sharing it, or not knowing what it is due to assimilation all contribute to this… Language has not been promoted as a requirement for graduation. Students are hungry for this but continue to find road-blocks, due to divided camps on campus. Native American courses that have been taught in the past are not well developed or inclusive with other courses or faculty. It will take a special instructor to bridge the gap."	• "NWIC is finding itself as a tribal institution and I think the results of the last couple of years of work combined with the focused initiative on cultural outcomes and cultural integration will demonstrate results in the future." • NWIC is embedding these activities in courses, the First Year Experience program seminars, and in "student leadership and clubs," which "are becoming more successful as agents of change." • Student participation in these activities is documented in the NWIC newsletter and local newspaper. • "The depth of Native American studies provided is definitely having an impact on the Native student association with their identity as Indigenous" and, as "for the non-Native students," it is resulting in "an increased appreciation of the Native community in which they chose to reside or work." • "I'm also impressed with the Natural Science courses that relate to place and take advantage of traditional concerns as the basis of learning." • Through "raising awareness of these issues" and initiating meaningful work sessions focused on culture, teaching, and learning during the summer of 2006, NWIC is moving in the right direction. • "The work put forward to enhance and add depth to cultural competency as well as to help every student on an individual level as circumstances indicate — this is where the success is." "We have the activities, we see the benefits," so now we just have to figure out how to document and assess it.

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• increase "student input" (e.g., create a capstone project; conduct student surveys or focus groups either "at the end of the required NWIC courses" or at the beginning and end of their NWIC time)	→ are developing the outcomes initiatives with entry and exit "tests" → are implementing a graduate survey to receive feedback from all graduating students
• "interview key community members with strong cultural and traditional teachings as well as educators about what cultural competency outcomes should be"; "involve experienced Native American professionals to assist faculty in incorporating Native perspectives and cultural competencies" in their individual courses	→ will articulate cultural outcomes internally → will take articulated cultural outcomes to community members for feedback
• improve communication "within the Lummi and college community"	→ conducted dialogues and focus groups with communities → are building capacity of the Coast Salish Institute → are increasing visibility through public relations network
• continue the "effort to recruit and hire Native faculty and staff"; "In the absence of Native American faculty," one administrator suggested that "faculty efforts" be supported "to bring in Native experts" and "we need to have the 'speakers of the language' paid to be here"	→ are attempting to identify and hire Native American faculty and staff → are building capacity of the Coast Salish Institute → will develop and implement the NWIC cultural outcomes initiative
• institute "curriculum review with adequate substantiation that an instructor knows what they are teaching" and "possibly have a Cultural Review process that documents what has been or will be taught to students"; "every course at NWIC should have Native American cultural content"	→ are developing and implementing the NWIC cultural and academic outcomes initiatives
• "names and lists of participants" in community service and activities can be better recorded	→ will try to record all participant names

APPENDIX O COURSE OUTCOMES INITIATIVE

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Somewhat successful (3.1): NWIC has initiated the assessment of student learning at the course level	• physical distance among faculty • "this process is long and difficult" • "shortage of time" • "everyone is not on board" • "requires a fundamental shift in most courses, and therefore changes in course curriculum" and as a result "many faculty are unsure how to accomplish these goals"	• "the faculty have made course outcomes a focus and believe they are working in the right direction" • faculty commitment • "good leadership… The systems that" were "set up for developing the NWIC outcomes last June allowed faculty to be productive and pleased with the products. We have been able to incorporate them into our syllabi and teaching this year, and the encouragement helped us to articulate our individual course outcomes and move everything forward."

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• continue "education, discussion and sharing information" and communication; post "results online" or have "a weekend retreat"	→ posted course outcomes on the assessment website; created an online course evaluation process, which evaluates specific course outcomes
• "requires a fundamental shift in most courses, and therefore changes in course curriculum"; use course outcomes "to drive the design of the courses"	→ will use the assessment plan to communicate a coherent picture about how outcomes drive the curriculum and use it to evaluate programs and courses
• involve site faculty, perhaps through "a series of institutional meetings to discuss these matters, one at each site"	→ the assessment coordinator will try to plan a meeting at each site for local instructors
• "focus on use and reporting" and "more follow-up with" the assessment coordinator "on how we analyze collected data and use it to improve outcomes"	→ articulated steps and a timeline in the assessment plan
• "continue to provide compensation to faculty for completion and revision of outcomes and help in adjusting courses to implement change that will improve learning"; give "faculty… release time from teaching if we want other things done"	→ are compensating faculty for extra time and work
• "communicate the importance of their [student] involvement"	→ will publish articles in the monthly student newsletter about assessment → will organize regular student meetings to share assessment results and receive feedback → will include students in the development of the assessment process

APPENDIX P INDIRECT INDICATORS

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Somewhat successful (3.3): NWIC conducted the following surveys: Teaching and Assessment Methods (2003), Needs Assessment (2003), Student Opinion (2003), Alumni (2004), Community College Survey of Student Engagement and Faculty Survey (2005). Several ongoing initiatives were created including an online course evaluation process (spring 2006), a faculty review process (2004), and an institutional wellness initiative (2005 – present).	• synthesis of results into a coherent picture • lack of a structured reporting mechanism and way to share results • use of results to improve NWIC's ability to fulfill its mission	• most surveys had good response rates • good communication between extended campuses, faculty, student services, and administrators • surveys included NWIC-specific questions • these surveys have provided NWIC with baseline data • "We are starting to really pay attention to the feedback we are receiving and thinking about what it means. The awareness itself is important as a first step in change." • "Student Services and other departments are using this information to improve" and to "make decisions on programs, policies and procedures." Also, "information is used by leadership in developing priorities for use of resources, planning, and making improvements."

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• institutionalize "an annual process for reviewing assessment data in setting short and long term goals"; conduct surveys on regular cycles; use survey data to make informed decisions; "better use of" survey data, such as transfer student experiences and "course evaluations, will help us achieve a higher standard"; incorporate "these survey results with our strategic plan"	→ created an assessment plan for the next cycle with short and long-term goals → created a regular survey cycle within the assessment plan
• "motivate people to respond"	→ will continue to provide incentives to encourage higher response rates
• "increase the awareness of the faculty, staff, [students] and community about the data and discuss ways it can be used (this is already begun through meetings and the website)"; continue with "the briefings to inform more people"; "keep making the information transparent"	→ all staff and students will be invited to information sharing sessions; sessions will be conducted on interactive television
• brief "the administrative and leadership team and directors and having them incorporate data in their work plans and department goals — maybe have the President require"; create an "open forum with the administrative team, student services and faculty"	→ will plan ongoing briefings and forums for the entire college and for select groups
• use the information as "baseline data to develop improvement strategies"	→ will use survey results as baseline data in NWIC's assessment plan
• "strategize how to address problematic areas together, engage students who are willing and interested in participating, and offer incentives to those willing to support activities toward problem solving"	→ will distill out results (action-areas), share results, document use of results and reassess per assessment plan

APPENDIX Q INSTITUIONAL DATA

Results, Challenges, and Strengths

Results	Challenges	Strengths
Somewhat successful (3.1): NWIC is tracking institutional data — such as student enrollment, retention, graduation, and course completion — over time to improve student success	• staff "are not yet competent in the use of data-driven decision making or even in the analysis and distribution of data for consideration in making decisions" • "it is difficult to access information quickly as the data for main campus, off-site and distance learning is not readily available without interpretation sometimes" • the assessment website is difficult for students to find • "The main deterrents are history and momentum: the college has a momentum from the past that takes time to alter. We have done things in certain ways and it takes time for faculty and staff to do things in new ways. Some people need to either change their ways of doing things or else leave the college as it evolves."	• biweekly informational sessions in spring 2006 for all staff, which were devoted to "understanding the importance of data to the success of the institution" • we are beginning "to use this information to improve student success" • inclusion of site staff • improved coordination among student services, enrollment services, instruction, the administration and the assessment coordinator to share data and reports in meaningful ways • assessment website for communicating results • "we are actually keeping track" • "our ability to access and use statistical data on our students is getting better"

Suggestions and Actions

Suggestions	Actions
• improve communication of results to all staff, students, community, and extended campuses (e.g. "monthly meetings," improve website access)	→ are sharing reports on the assessment website and updating the NWIC website → will structure meetings and invite appropriate people → will continue ongoing assessment education → are conducting regular workshops to share information on interactive television → will share results with communities → will make assessment presentations to students
• "incorporate cultural understanding"	→ are using a culturally appropriate framework for collection and interpretation of institutional data
• "focus on those interventions that are successful"	→ continued First Year Experience program → modified advising and outreach → re-evaluated and restructured academic programs → instituted the Family Education Model → are developing new hybrid classes that combine online instruction with more successful modes of learning such as interactive television or face-to-face
• identify "baseline data" to be used "for improvement strategies"	→ identified baseline data and incorporated it into the assessment plan
• "learn to use data to inform strategies for program services and to set individual and departmental goals"	→ created an assessment plan for the next cycle with short and long-term goals

Suggestions	Actions
	→ are developing departmental and staff work plans linked to the strategic plan
• start to track transfer data	→ are beginning to track transfer data to four-year colleges
• "create better ways to improve transitions of students from ABE/GED to developmental to college to transfer to higher levels"	→ included in instructional division work plan (therefore it makes it a priority) → beginning to track transfer data to four-year colleges → identifying students at each transition point and track their retention and success after transfer
• assist students to "understand the value and usefulness of the information provided"	→ identify and share results pertinent to students
• end "late registration periods"	→ initiated the "Jumpstart" program (a way of working with late entry students to prepare them for the next quarter and to not lose them) → send postcards to all students → student services communication with students increased student compliance with registration deadlines
• provide "information to identify student issues, barriers, or problems early"; track attendance more effectively	→ retention team created several tools for discovering and intervening with problem student situations (i.e., early warning system)

APPENDIX R NWIC RUBRICS

Written Communication Rubric (Draft)

Criteria	Level of Proficiency			
	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
Outcome a: The student writes standard English				
1. Idea and Content	Writes with unclear purpose or central theme. Does not clearly define or support position on topic. Uses limited or disconnected details that disrupt the unity of the paper.	Partially focuses on topic with minimal or no support of position. Writing is basic, too general for the reader to develop a clear understanding.	Maintains clear focus throughout the paper with sufficient appropriate details indicating awareness, knowledge, and insight.	Writes clearly and with focus; relevant details support the central theme.
2. Organization / Structure	Writes with organization that is unclear or inappropriate to the thesis; lacks transitions between ideas.	Writes with some signs of logical organization; may include abrupt or illogical shifts and ineffective flow of ideas. Makes few transitions between ideas.	Supports thesis and purpose through organization and paragraphing; most transitions are appropriate, but sequence of ideas may need improvement. Reiterates introductory elements in conclusion.	Provides clear introduction and reinforcing conclusion. Orders writing logically with effective transitions, providing sufficient information in the appropriate places.
3. Voice	Writes without personality. Shows lack of commitment to topic, connection to the audience and to the purpose. Evokes no emotion in reader.	Writes without revealing own personality; writing is cautious. Commitment to topic, and connection to the audience and to the purpose are limited. Writing evokes limited emotion in reader.	Writes so that own personality pokes through; confidence and feeling fade in and out. Commitment to the topic is apparent, and connection to the audience and to the topic are appropriate. The writing evokes some emotion in the reader.	Writes expressing own personality, with confidence and feeling. Individual, powerful commitment to the topic is obvious, as are strong connections to the audience and to the purpose; evokes strong emotion in the reader.
4. Word choice	Chooses nonspecific or distracting words that limit meaning. May include slang and colloquialisms.	Chooses ordinary words using adequate verbs, nouns, adjectives, and phrases.	Chooses correct words that result in clarity.	Chooses interesting, specific and accurate words that contribute to communicating the writer's purpose.

	Level of Proficiency			
Criteria	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
5. Sentence Fluency	Writes sentences containing unnecessary words that detract from the meaning. Constructs sentences that lack variety in beginning, length, and structure, and that lack rhythm and pattern when read aloud.	Writes sentences containing some unnecessary words but with fairly clear meaning. Provides some variety in sentence beginning, length and structure that follow a predictable pattern and rhythm when read aloud.	Includes words that are necessary for clear meaning. Varies beginning, length, and structure of sentences, which sound smooth and rhythmic when read aloud.	Correctly and creatively uses full variety of sentence structures. Sentences invite expressive reading.
6. Writing Conventions: Grammar / Spelling / Usage / Punctuation	Writes with a minimal grasp of standard writing conventions; numerous errors impair readability.	Writes with a basic grasp of the standard writing conventions; occasional errors may impair readability.	Writes with a good grasp of standard writing conventions: capitalization is proper; punctuation is smooth and enhances meaning; spelling and grammar are essentially correct.	Writes with a strong grasp of the standard writing conventions; all conventions are properly applied.
7. Presentation / Formatting	Produces writing that looks untidy and does not follow basic formatting rules (e.g. margins, headers & subheaders).	Produces writing that looks fairly neat but violates some formatting rules.	Produces writing that looks neat but violates one or two formatting rules.	Produces clean, neat, and easily read document in which the form and presentation of the text enhance the written message.
Outcome b: The student writes in a variety of text forms using various credible sources				
1. Audience Awareness	Shows little or no awareness of the audience or of the text form's requirements.	Writes as a novice attempting to please an expert.	Meets reader's needs with some skill, but is not consistently successful.	Writes in an individual, compelling, and engaging way, showing an awareness of and respect for the audience, and for the purpose of writing.
2. Citation	Neglects important sources. Overuses quotations or paraphrases, which substitute for writer's own ideas. May use source material without acknowledgement.	Uses relevant but limited and similar sources and/or the skillful combination of sources. Uses quotations and paraphrased text that may be too long and/or inconsistently referenced.	Uses sources to support, extend, and inform, but not to substitute for writer's own development of ideas. Does not overuse quotes, but may not always conform to required style manual.	Cites bibliographic information in assigned format. Combines material from a variety of sources, including personal observation, scientific data, and authoritative testimony.

Oral Communication Rubric (Draft)

Criteria	Level of Proficiency			
	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
Outcome a: The student applies effective presentation skills				
1. Content and theme	Does not present ideas, theme, evidence for ideas, or clear transitions. Speaker presents minimal knowledge of subject. Conclusion does not reinforce the presentation.	Presents ideas, theme, evidence for ideas and underlying logic to a limited degree, with somewhat unclear transitions. Speaker provides some knowledge of subject with a conclusion that only slightly reinforces the presentation.	Presents obvious ideas and theme, and evidence that generally supports presented ideas with underlying logic and clear transitions. Speaker provides substantial knowledge of subject with a conclusion that reinforces the presentation.	Speaker provides logical presentation with consistently clear ideas and theme, evidence supporting presented ideas, and clear transitions. Speaker provides extensive knowledge of subject with a conclusion that reinforces the presentation.
2. Engagement	Presents language that is seldom clear, with minimal credibility, in a way that barely engages the listener(s).	Presents language that is generally clear, with an introduction and credibility that often engage the listener(s).	Presents language that is clear, with an introduction, credibility, and relevance that engage the listener(s).	Presents consistently clear language, a profoundly engaging introduction, credibility, and a high degree of relevance that engage the listener(s).
3. Presentation	Uses modulation and projection that are inappropriate for the audience size and setting; visually engages few listeners; uses gestures that are not congruent with issues of emphasis, and marginally demonstrates self-confidence.	Uses modulation and projection that are somewhat appropriate for the audience size and setting; visually engages some listeners; uses some gestures that are congruent with issues of emphasis, and demonstrates developing self-confidence.	Uses volume, modulation, and projection that are appropriate for the audience size and setting; visually engages most listeners; uses gestures that are congruent with issues of emphasis, and demonstrates self-confidence.	Uses consistently appropriate volume, modulation, and projection for the audience size and setting; visually engages all listeners consistently; uses consistently congruent gestures for issues of emphasis, and consistently demonstrates self-confidence.

	Level of Proficiency			
Criteria	**Beginning (1)**	**Developing (2)**	**Accomplished (3)**	**Exemplary (4)**
Outcome b: The student applies effective interpersonal communication skills				
1. Assertiveness	States position using marginally assertive skills, occasionally demonstrating self-confidence.	States position using some assertive skills, generally demonstrating self-confidence.	States position using assertive skills, frequently demonstrating self-confidence.	Consistently states position using first person assertive communication skills and consistently demonstrates self-confidence.
2. Attentiveness	Pays attention to few non-verbal and verbal cues; provides little validation, and provides no or few responses that show sensitivity and empathy.	Pays some attention to non-verbal and verbal cues; provides some validation, and provides some responses that show sensitivity and empathy.	Pays frequent attention to non-verbal and verbal cues; provides frequent validation, and frequently responds with sensitivity and empathy.	Pays consistent attention to non-verbal and verbal cues; consistently provides validation, and consistently responds with sensitivity and empathy.
3. Social Mores	Provides few respectful responses to individuals; occasionally conducts self with dignity and consideration for others, and observes few basic verbal and non-verbal social protocols.	Generally responds respectfully to individuals; generally conducts self with dignity and consideration for others, and observes some basic verbal and non-verbal social protocols.	Responds respectfully to individuals; conducts self with dignity and consideration for others, and observes basic verbal and non-verbal social protocols.	Consistently responds respectfully to individuals; consistently conducts self with dignity and consideration for others, and consistently observes basic verbal and non-verbal social protocols.
4. Cultural Diversity	Occasionally demonstrates a willingness to understand and participate in a multicultural society.	Generally demonstrates a willingness to understand and participate in a multicultural society.	Demonstrates a willingness to understand and participate in a multicultural society.	Consistently demonstrates a willingness to understand and participate in a multicultural society.

Computer Skills Rubric (Draft)

Criteria	Level of Proficiency			
	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
Outcome a: The student uses word processing software for communication				
Word processing (e.g., MS Word)	Produces a basic word-processed document with minimal (default) formatting.	Produces a word-processed document, such as a basic class report, an informal letter, or resume, using basic formatting tools (e.g., fonts, spacing, indents, margins, and spellchecking).	Produces a word-processed document that is formatted to the standards of a second-year university research paper (using MLA format).	Produces a word-processed document that is publication-quality (using, for example, galley templates, expanded formatting and automatic footnoting).
Outcome b: The student uses spreadsheet software for communication, computation and graphic data representation				
Spreadsheets (e.g., MS Excel)	Produces a basic spreadsheet file with minimal (default) formatting.	Produces a spreadsheet file using basic formatting tools (text, cells, rows, columns and sheets formatting).	Produces a spreadsheet file using extended quantitative tools (such as using quantitative formulae).	Produces a spreadsheet file that is presentation quality using expanded program capabilities (e.g., generating graphics from data, and exporting contents to ancillary programs such as word-processing, database management)
Outcome c: The student uses presentation software for communication				
Presentations (e.g., MS PowerPoint)	Produces a basic presentation file with minimal (default) formatting.	Produces a presentation file with basic text formatting.	Produces a presentation file using extended formatting tools (with digital image formatting, e.g., graphs, pictures, etc.).	Produces a presentation file that is publication quality using expanded program capabilities (e.g., adding animation, audio, video, etc.).
Outcome d: The student uses the Internet for research				
Internet searches	Navigates the Internet.		Uses a variety of resources (e.g., online databases, encyclopedias, dictionaries) to search for and retrieve data that are relevant to the assigned task.	
Outcome e: The student uses Email for communication				
Email	Sends, receives and replies using email.		Uses email to send and receive attachments.	
Outcome f: The student uses electronic library resources for research				
Electronic library resources	Uses basic electronic library resources.		Uses advanced electronic library resources for research.	

Quantitative Skills Rubric (Draft)

	Level of Proficiency			
Criteria	**Beginning (1)**	**Developing (2)**	**Accomplished (3)**	**Exemplary (4)**
Outcome a: The student proposes solutions to and solves real-world problems by applying the correct numerical data				
1. Identification of formulas	Identifies the appropriate formula(s) to perform the necessary computation(s).	Performs the computation(s).	Applies the computation(s) to solving the real-world problem.	Applies most appropriate, accurate, complete and concise solution to the problem.
2. Solution of problems	To a limited degree, selects proper numerical data to solve real-world problems.	Selects proper numerical data in multiple situations, and reduces some numerical data to apply to the problem.	In most situations selects proper numerical data to solve real-world problems.	Selects proper numerical data to solve any real-world problem.
Outcome b: The student uses analytical and critical thinking skills to draw and interpret conclusions				
1. Problem recognition	Recognizes that there is a problem to be solved.	Lists or recognizes a variety of components of the problem.	Describes or sketches the problem and its components.	Formulates a clear description of the problem with a breakdown of its components.
2. Collection and analysis of data	Identifies and collects data appropriate to a problem.	Provides explanation, context and rationale for data.	Uses statistics in the analysis of data.	Data identification, collection and statistical analysis are appropriate to the problem and best support the conclusion(s).
3. Evaluation of solutions and drawing conclusions	Gathers assessment information about the proposed solution(s).	Evaluates at least one proposed solution.	Analyzes and evaluates all assessment information, and proposes at least one possible solution.	Selects and justifies a solution to the problem, states conclusions, and describes any limitations that require further research.
4. Interpretation of graphical and tabular data	Interprets graphical and tabular data.	Infers that a solution to a question can be formulated based upon the interpretation of the data.	Infers the correct solution from the data, and then compares data from chart with empirical calculations.	Performs advanced analysis and bases solution to problem(s) on correct solution inferred from the graphed data.

Reading Skills Rubric (Draft)

Criteria	Level of Proficiency			
	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
Outcome a: The student demonstrates understanding of readings				
1. **Differentiates important information from details**	Identifies at least one main point and 0-1 details in a 5-paragraph article.	Identifies most of the main points and some details in a 5-paragraph article.	Identifies all of the main points and several details in a 5-paragraph article.	Identifies all of the main points and details in a 5-paragraph article.
2. **Differentiates facts from opinions**	Correctly categorizes 1 of 4 statements as fact or opinion.	Correctly categorizes 2 of 4 statements as fact or opinion.	Correctly categorizes 3 of 4 statements as fact or opinion.	Correctly categorizes 4 of 4 statements as fact or opinion.
3. **Summarizes material read**	Has great difficulty summarizing the article.	Summarizes some of the article accurately, but misunderstands other portions.	Uses 3-5 sentences to summarize most of the article.	Uses only 1-3 sentences to summarize the essence of the article.
4. **Identifies major writing forms/ genres**	Correctly identifies 1-2 of 5 writing form samples.	Correctly identifies 3 of 5 writing form samples.	Correctly identifies 4 of 5 writing form samples.	Correctly identifies 5 of 5 writing form samples.
5. **Recognizes bias in writing**	Identifies 1 of 4 examples of bias in 2 writing samples.	Identifies 2 of 4 examples of bias in 2 writing samples.	Identifies 3 of 4 examples of bias in 2 writing samples.	Identifies all examples of bias in 2 writing samples.
6. **Reads aloud**	Reads haltingly without appropriate emphasis, with some pronunciation errors after pre-reading once.	Reads OK with some appropriate emphasis and pronunciation after pre-reading once.	Reads fluently with appropriate emphasis and pronunciation after pre-reading once.	Reads fluently with appropriate emphasis and pronunciation without pre-reading.
Outcome b: The student extends own vocabulary through reading.				
1. **Infers meanings of unknown words from contexts, roots, prefixes and suffixes**	Correctly infers meanings of 1 of 4 unknown words in a selection.	Correctly infers meanings of 2 of 4 unknown words in a selection.	Correctly infers meanings of 3 of 4 unknown words in a selection.	Correctly infers meanings of all unknown words in a selection.
2. **Finds definitions, pronunciations, synonyms and antonyms using a dictionary / thesaurus**	Correctly defines 1 or 2 of 5 words with no synonyms or antonyms.	Correctly defines 3 of 5 words with few synonyms and antonyms.	Correctly defines 4 of 5 words with synonyms and antonyms.	Correctly defines all words with synonyms and antonyms.

APPENDIX S EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED NWIC COURSE OUTCOMES FORM

Before completing this form, please refer to the *Instructions for Completing the Course Outcomes Form.* Please submit this form electronically to amkarlberg@nwic.edu. All hand-outs and instructions are posted on the NWIC assessment website at http://www.nwic.edu/faculty/assessment/assessment.htm.

Last date this form was updated or edited	September 14, 2006
Course Number (e.g., ENGL 101)	ECED 104
Course Name (e.g., English Composition I)	Program Management and the Child Development Associate
List all instructor(s) who participated in creating and approved these course outcomes (please consult with at least one other person)	
List the main textbooks, readings or other resources used in this course (including title, year and publisher)	1. Essentials for CDA's Working with Young Children 2nd ed. (2004) Council for Professional Recognition 2. Creative Curriculum for Preschool (2003) *or* Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers (2002) 3. Diane Trister Dodge and others. Teaching Strategies. 4. CDA Assessment Packet for appropriate setting and age group.

A. NWIC outcomes: From the *List of NWIC Outcomes*, select the *most* important outcomes you *assess* in this course (at least **one** NWIC outcome must be chosen).

NWIC outcomes: As a result of this course, the student will be able to…	Instructional Activities: How will students master this outcome? (e.g., solving problems, group activity)	Assessment/Evaluation Strategies: How will you measure this outcome? (e.g., student presentations, essays)
Written communication skills: 2a. Write standard English	Individual writing assignments.	Short answers to weekly assignments Discussions postings in WebCT Essays
Computer skills: 4a. use word processing software for communication.	Attaching Word documents to email	Essays

B. Course outcomes: In order of priority, list the *most* important other learning outcomes for this course that you **assess** (a maximum of 8).

Other course outcomes: As a result of this course, students will be able to…	Instructional Activities: How will students master this outcome? (e.g., solving problems, group activity)	Assessment / Evaluation Strategies: How will you measure this outcome? (e.g., student presentations, essays)
Develop at least three tools to use in establishing or improving communicative and cooperative relationships with volunteers, substitutes, and other staff (cooks, etc.).	Written plan for communications with sub/volunteers & support staff.	Written plan, communications reports
Organize and use three kinds of records, one method to organize classroom materials and supplies, and one method for contacting other agency resources.	Redesign of floor plan to organize space and materials. Develop a typical Lesson plan Create or describe improvements to record keeping systems	Floor plan Lesson plan includes preparations and materials required Appropriateness and completeness of record keeping system.
Examine at least one ethical dilemma and propose a full solution that causes least harm and most good while considering the perspectives of at least four stakeholders.	Select and examine scenario, critique, propose solutions based on Code of Ethics. Compare with classmates. Discuss on line.	Student writings, discussions. Complete an appropriateness of solution to scenario.
Select and implement at least two strategies for continued education and professional development for themselves.	Select from and create plan of action for 2 of the following: (1) Personal inventory for behavioral change (use the CDA Advisor's observation instrument); (2) Interview a professional; (3) Join a professional organization; (4) Engage in ongoing listening partnerships	Student descriptions of strategies and plan of action
Advocate in at least one way for children and/or the Early Childhood profession.	Select an advocacy activity, engage in it at least once, and write about the experience.	Student writing. Agency partner's response
Demonstrate their competence in all 13 Functional Areas for the CDA Assessment	Read the Advisors Observation instrument. Arrange for and be observed by their advisor. Have Advisor send Verification form to instructor.	Student writing. Advisor's verification of observation completion.
Apply for CDA Assessment	Complete collection of parent questionnaires; make final revisions to autobiography and to the 6 Statements of competence; finalize the Professional Resource File collection.	Photocopy of the Assessment Application. 6 final essays, plus autobiography.

Northwest Indian College is planning for the future. In order to think about the future, it is important to determine the needs of the community and the goals of the individual tribal members. Your thoughtful responses will provide vital information in determining the future direction of the college. Hy'shqe

1. **Tribal Affiliation:** _____

2. **Gender:** M / F

3. **Age Group (please circle one):** 15-18   19-25   26-49   50+

4. **Relationship to Northwest Indian College (please check all boxes that describe you):**
   - ❑ Community Member
   - ❑ Tribal Employee
   - ❑ Council Member
   - ❑ Employer
   - ❑ NWIC Student
   - ❑ Prospective student
   - ❑ NWIC Graduate
   - ❑ NWIC Staff
   - ❑ NWIC Faculty
   - ❑ Other: _____

5. **Name of Educational Site or city or town closest to you (check one):**
   - ❑ Colville
   - ❑ Jamestown S'Klallam
   - ❑ Lower Elwha
   - ❑ Lummi
   - ❑ Makah
   - ❑ Muckleshoot
   - ❑ Nez Perce
   - ❑ Nisqually
   - ❑ Nooksack
   - ❑ Port Gamble
   - ❑ Puyallup
   - ❑ Olympia
   - ❑ Quinault
   - ❑ Samish
   - ❑ Seattle
   - ❑ Skokomish
   - ❑ SPIPA
   - ❑ Spokane
   - ❑ Suquamish
   - ❑ Swinomish
   - ❑ Tacoma
   - ❑ Tulalip
   - ❑ Upper Skagit
   - ❑ Vancouver, WA
   - ❑ Yakama
   - ❑ Other: _____

6. **Tribal Colleges can benefit their communities in different ways. Which 5 ways do you believe would most improve the quality of life in your <u>community</u>?**
    Please check <u>5</u>.
   - ❑ Adult Basic Education / GED preparation / High school completion
   - ❑ Cultural arts and enrichment
   - ❑ Economic development and small business assistance
   - ❑ Economic and personal finance education
   - ❑ Health and wellness
   - ❑ Higher education: 2 year degree
   - ❑ Higher education: 4 year degree
   - ❑ Improve reading level of tribal members
   - ❑ Job or technical training
   - ❑ Native language restoration
   - ❑ Parenting education & family wellness
   - ❑ Personal interest courses
   - ❑ Natural resource protection
   - ❑ Provide leadership and problem-solving for community improvement
   - ❑ Tribal Studies
   - ❑ Upgrade job skills
   - ❑ Other: _____

7. Programs of Study:
Which five (5) of the following programs do you think would most benefit you and your community? *(Note: Each **major category** below is followed by several examples.)*

Please check 5.

☐ .. **Accounting**

☐ .. **Adult Basic Education:** GED preparation, college preparation

☐ .. **Agricultural Studies:** plant science, animal science, traditional plants, trade development

☐ .. **Aquaculture/Fisheries**

☐ .. **Business Administration:** entrepreneurship, financial and business management

☐ .. **Childcare Provider**

☐ .. **Communication:** journalism, multi-media

☐ .. **Computer Training and Applications:** software training

☐ .. **Computers:** repair, maintenance and networking

☐ .. **Construction Trades:** carpentry, pipe fitting, plumbing

☐ .. **Education:** early childhood ed., teaching assistant (k-12), Native teacher preparation (k-12)

☐ .. **Health Professions:** medical office, nursing assistant, community health education, nutrition, environmental health

☐ .. **Hospitality Management:** gaming, tourism, customer service, food services, hotel management

☐ .. **Humanities:** art, drama, English, literature, music, philosophy

☐ .. **Human Services:** chemical dependency counseling, counseling, social work

☐ .. **Law Enforcement:** corrections, probation, public safety, security

☐ .. **Legal Studies:** paralegal, pre-law

☐ .. **Native American Studies:** art, culture, history, language

☐ .. **Natural Resources Management:** environmental studies

☐ .. **Office Professions:** clerical

☐ .. **Parenting Education and Family Development**

☐ .. **Science:** biology, chemistry, physical anthropology, physics

☐ .. **Social Sciences:** cultural anthropology, history, political science, psychology, sociology

☐ .. **Tribal Administration:** public and tribal management

☐ .. **Other (please list any other vocational or academic interests):**

_____

_____

Technology:

There is a current trend in education toward offering classes on the Internet. Please answer the following questions to help us determine if this is an option for our students.

8. Do you have a computer at home?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No [If no, please go to question #10]

9.   If you have a computer at home, do you also have Internet access at home?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

Additional Comments:

10. What does Northwest Indian College do well?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. How could Northwest Indian College better serve your community?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Other comments or suggestions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. May we contact you for further ideas or information?
    ❑ No   ❑ Yes: Name: _____
                                         Phone: _____
                                         Email: _____

Thank you for your input!

APPENDIX U STUDENT OPINION SURVEY — EXTRA QUESTIONS (2004)

We would like more information about your experiences this year at Northwest Indian College so that we can improve the college. Please record your responses to the following 30 questions in "Section V—Additional Questions" on the computerized form.

1. At which NWIC Site are you currently taking courses?

A. Lummi	E. Nisqually	I. Skokomish
B. Makah	F. Nooksack	J. Suquamish
C. Muckleshoot	G. Port Gamble	K. Swinomish
D. Nez Perce	H. Quinault	L. Other

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.
  (Check one for each line)

	Extent of Agreement					
Advising	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does Not Apply
2. My advisor provides the help I need to select courses necessary to complete my <u>degree</u> program	A	B	C	D	E	F
3. My advisor helps me cope with academic difficulties (i.e., poor grades, adding and dropping courses, etc.)	A	B	C	D	E	F
Financial Aid						
4. I found it easy to communicate with the financial aid counselors	A	B	C	D	E	F
5. I understand the academic requirements and standards expected of me to keep my financial aid	A	B	C	D	E	F

6. Which ONE of the following best describes your financial need to work while attending NWIC?
    A. **I do not need to work** to meet my schooling and/or basic living expenses
    B. **I must work part-time** to meet my schooling and/or basic living expenses
    C. **I must work full-time** to meet my schooling and/or basic living expenses

	Extent of Agreement					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does Not Apply

Cultural

7. At NWIC, I have been provided opportunities to learn more about myself as a Native person .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

8. My classes/experiences at NWIC have provided me with the opportunities to learn more about my Native culture .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

9. My experiences at NWIC have prepared me to contribute to my tribal community .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

10. I have a deeper awareness of the contributions of Native people to western society .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

11. NWIC staff and employees create a 'sense of belonging' for students .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

12. NWIC staff and employees are equally supportive of all racial/ethnic groups .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

College Impressions

13. NWIC has helped me meet the goals I came here to achieve. .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

14. NWIC welcomes and uses feedback from students to improve the college .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

15. Through my experiences at NWIC, I have developed a sense of purpose, value, and meaning .... A .... B .... C .... D .... E | F

College Contribution	Extent of Agreement					Does Not Apply
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	

Northwest Indian College has contributed significantly to my…

16. Intellectual growth (i.e., acquiring knowledge, skills, ideas, concepts, analytical thinking)	A	B	C	D	E	F
17. Personal growth (i.e., developing self-understanding, self-discipline, and mature attitudes, values and goals)	A	B	C	D	E	F
18. Social growth (i.e., understanding others and their views, adapting successfully to a variety of social situations)	A	B	C	D	E	F
19. Preparation for future study	A	B	C	D	E	F
20. Preparation for a career	A	B	C	D	E	F

Outcomes: My classes at Northwest Indian College helped me to…

21. Write more effectively	A	B	C	D	E	F
22. Speak more effectively	A	B	C	D	E	F
23. Read with greater speed and better comprehension	A	B	C	D	E	F
24. Use computers (i.e., email, the Internet, Word, etc.) more effectively	A	B	C	D	E	F
25. Understand and apply math concepts and statistical reasoning	A	B	C	D	E	F
26. Appreciate the fine arts, music, literature, and the humanities	A	B	C	D	E	F
27. Apply scientific knowledge and skills	A	B	C	D	E	F
28. Learn principles for improving my physical and mental health	A	B	C	D	E	F
29. Develop problem-solving skills	A	B	C	D	E	F
30. Learn to think clearly and reason	A	B	C	D	E	F

Thank you for your input!

APPENDIX V ALUMNI SURVEY — EXTRA QUESTIONS (2003)

Please comment on these questions in the following space:

A. Please describe your most positive experience at NWIC.

B. What was the most important thing you learned while at NWIC?

C. If there was one thing about NWIC you could change, what would that be?

D. What most helped you to complete your degree or certificate at NWIC?

E. If you transferred to another college or university after attending NWIC:

    (a) What challenges did you experience in the transfer process?

    (b) How could NWIC have made your transfer easier?

    (c) Please list all the colleges and universities you attended after NWIC, the program you worked on, the degree or certificate you worked towards, whether you graduated, the years you attended, and your GPA:

College or University Attended (i.e., Western Washington University)	Program (i.e., Education)	Degree or Certificate (i.e., Bachelor of Education)	Did you graduate? (circle one)	Years Attended (i.e., 1999-2001)	
			Yes / No		
			Yes / No		
			Yes / No		
			Yes / No		
			Yes / No		

F. In what ways did NWIC prepare you well for work or further education?

G. In what ways could NWIC have prepared you better for work or further education?

H. What have been your accomplishments, both professional and personal, since graduating from NWIC? (i.e., promotions, jobs, degrees, recognitions, awards, children, honors, other achievements, etc.)

I. What is your email address? _____

31. At which NWIC site did you take most of your courses?

M. Lummi campus	Q. Nisqually	U. Skokomish
N. Makah	R. Nooksack	V. Suquamish
O. Muckleshoot	S. Port Gamble	W. Swinomish
P. Nez Perce	T. Quinault	X. Other

32. Which of the following family responsibilities did you have while attending NWIC (please choose all of those that apply)?

   A. Care of children
   B. Care of parents or other relatives
   C. I did not have to care for anyone while attending NWIC
   D. Other: _____

33. (a) In addition to your classes, which of the following activities did you participate in while attending NWIC? Please choose all of those that apply.

   A. Campus jobs
   B. Clubs (i.e., AISES, etc.)
   C. Conferences
   D. Internships
   E. Practicums
   F. Community volunteer service (outside of NWIC)
   G. Community service as a part of a NWIC course (service-learning)
   H. Cultural activities
   I. Sports
   J. Student government
   K. Other: _____

   (b) How did these experiences enrich your college experience and your life today?

34. Have either your mother or your father attended NWIC?

   A. Mother only
   B. Father only
   C. Both mother and father
   D. Neither mother nor father

35. Where do you currently work? Please choose all that apply.

Tribal Organization:	*Non-Tribal organization:*
A. On reservation	C. On reservation
B. Off reservation	D. Off reservation

   E. I do not currently work

36. Where would you prefer to work? Please choose all that apply.

Tribal Organization: *Non-Tribal organization:*

      A. On reservation   C. On reservation

      B. Off reservation   D. Off reservation

      E.   Not applicable. Please explain: _____

37. As an alumnus, in which of the following ways would you like to be involved with NWIC? Please choose all of those that apply.

      A. Organizing extra-curricular activities   F. Contributing financially

      B. Organizing cultural activities   G. Guest lecturing / speaking

      C. Organizing an alumni organization   H. Serving on the Board of Trustees

      D. Being involved in committee work   I. Other: _____

      E. Coaching   J. I am not able to participate at this time

Please comment:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

	Extent of Agreement				
College Contribution	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Does Not Apply**

NWIC has contributed significantly to my...

38. Intellectual growth (i.e., acquiring knowledge, skills, ideas, concepts, analytical thinking).	A	B	C	D	E
39. Personal growth (i.e., developing self-understanding, self-discipline, self-respect, self-esteem, and mature attitudes, values and goals).	A	B	C	D	E
40. Social growth (i.e., understanding others and their views, adapting successfully to a variety of social situations).	A	B	C	D	E
41. NWIC has helped me meet the goals I came there to achieve.	A	B	C	D	E
42. Through my experiences at NWIC, I developed a sense of purpose, value, and meaning.	A	B	C	D	E

Outcomes

Outcomes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does Not Apply

My classes at NWIC helped me to…

43. Learn more about my Native culture. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

44. Be aware of the contributions of Native people to western society. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

45. Use computers (i.e., email, the Internet, Word, etc.) more effectively.............A.........B.........C.........D E

46. Understand and apply math concepts and statistical reasoning. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

47. Appreciate the fine arts, music, literature, and the humanities. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

48. Apply scientific knowledge and skills.............A.........B.........C.........D E

49. Develop problem-solving skills. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

50. Learn to think clearly and reason. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

College Contribution

My experience at NWIC has prepared me for…

51. my future studies. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

52. my future career. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

53. everyday life.............A.........B.........C.........D E

54. contributing to society in general.............A.........B.........C.........D E

55. contributing to tribal society.............A.........B.........C.........D E

56. life-long learning. .............A.........B.........C.........D E

Thank you for your input!

APPENDIX W AN EXAMPLE OF AN NWIC COURSE EVALUATION FORM

ECED 104 (Early Childhood Education: Program Management and the CDA)

Introduction: This questionnaire provides you with an opportunity to evaluate your course and instructor. The results will be used to assess the effectiveness of this course and to improve it. This evaluation is anonymous and results will not be given to your instructor until after grades have been turned in.

Instructor: _____

Quarter (circle one): Fall Winter Spring Summer

Year: 200___

I am located at…
- ❒ Colville
- ❒ Lummi
- ❒ Muckleshoot
- ❒ Nez Perce
- ❒ Port Gamble
- ❒ Swinomish
- ❒ Tulalip
- ❒ Other:
- _____

Most of this class was taught…
- ❒ Face-to-face
- ❒ Independent learning
- ❒ ITV
- ❒ Learning contract
- ❒ Online
- ❒ Other:
- _____

On average, I spent ___ hours each week studying or doing assignments for this class (outside of class time).
- ❒ Less than 1 hour
- ❒ 1-2 hours
- ❒ 3-4 hours
- ❒ 5 or more hours

I attended this class…
- ❒ Always
- ❒ Most of the time
- ❒ Less than half the time

Course and Instructor	Extent of Agreement					Does Not Apply
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1. The material in this course relates well to my everyday experience	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
2. The course material makes good connections to tribal and Native American topics	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
3. This course makes good connections to the material in my other courses.	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
4. The instructor demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒

5. The instructor encouraged students to
    ask questions and participate ....☐.............☐.............☐.............☐.............☐   ☐

6. The instructor was accessible for
    individual help and office hours ....☐.............☐.............☐.............☐.............☐   ☐

7. The instructor was knowledgeable,
    well-prepared and made good use of
    class time..☐.............☐.............☐.............☐.............☐   ☐

8. The course met my initial expectations
    and needs..☐.............☐.............☐.............☐.............☐   ☐

9. As a result of this course, I feel a
    greater sense of personal and tribal
    cultural identity ....☐.............☐.............☐.............☐.............☐   ☐

10. I would recommend this course to
    others..☐.............☐.............☐.............☐.............☐   ☐

11. Please comment about any of the above items:
    _____

Comments

12. The most valuable lessons I learned in this class are…

    _____
    _____

13. What I liked best about this course and instructor are…

    _____
    _____

14. To do well in this course, the greatest challenges I faced were...

    _____
    _____

15. My suggestions for improving or changing this course are...

    _____
    _____

16. I think the instructor could improve this course by...

    _____
    _____

17. My other comments about this course or instructor are...

    _____
    _____

Learning outcomes

This section lists outcomes that were identified on your course syllabus. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. (Check one for each line)

	Extent of Agreement				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

NWIC Outcomes: As a result of this class, I am better able to...

a. write standard English .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

b. use word processing software for communication .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

Course Outcomes: As a result of this class, I am able to...

c. develop at least three tools to use in establishing or improving communicative and cooperative relationships with volunteers, substitutes, and other staff (cooks, etc.) .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

d. organize and use three kinds of records, one method to organize classroom materials and supplies, and one method for contacting other agency resources .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

e. examine at least one (1) ethical dilemma and propose a full solution that causes least harm and most good while considering the perspectives of at least four (4) stakeholders. ... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

f. select and implement at least two strategies for continued education and professional development for myself .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

g. advocate in at least one way for children and/or the Early Childhood profession .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

h. demonstrate my competence in all 13 Functional Areas for the CDA Assessment .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

i. apply for CDA Assessment .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐ .... ☐

Thank you for taking the time to complete this course evaluation form!

APPENDIX X NWIC RETENTION STRATEGIES

Approaches

- offering multiple and hybrid modes of learning (e.g., online, interactive television, independent, face-to-face)*
- offering student internships*
- instituting the First Year Experience*
- offering student research opportunities*
- instituting the first year seminar*
- incorporating the Family Education Model
- initiating service learning
- adding a tutoring center
- establishing faculty academic advisors
- increasing faculty / student service collaboration with the student clubs
- incorporating educational sites, students, and faculty into Lummi main campus activities
- encouraging instructors at Lummi to visit their site students
- "implementing new programs and courses of interest to students, such as robotics; offering key courses at alternate times to meet differing student needs (evenings, weekends)"
- offering "workforce training as a ladder to higher level academic programs"
- adding mid-term grades
- instituting "search and rescue type approaches to working with at-risk students (currently called the Retention Team)"
- emphasizing "field trips" and "work study"
- offering "language," educational "cultural events and community service activities," "instructor/advisor meetings," and "career services"
- hiring "a full time Outreach Specialist," who is available throughout the day to deal with emergencies and "very professional advisors, recruitment, and retention specialists and support staff" in student services
- calling students who are absent from classes and students who do not return the following quarter
- creating orientation programs, mentoring programs, an online Early Alert System, faculty referral forms, and Friday brown bag lunches with faculty and advisors
- updating class rosters
- improving faculty/staff communication

Co-Curricular Activities

- expanding other co-curricular activities, clubs, and organizations (e.g., drama, American Indian Higher Education Consortium competitions)*

- offering an athletic program*

- creating a monthly student newspaper

- creating a "Booster Club for the Athletics Department"

- encouraging "student presentations or attendance at professional conferences such as SACNAS, Language of Spirit, etc."

Institutional

- providing strategic planning updates/reviews

- implementing the Institutional Wellness initiative

- building a new main campus (including a student residence and "affordable daycare")

* initiatives that staff identified as being successful in descending order

APPENDIX Y CHECKLIST FOR TRIBAL COLLEGE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

This section provides a comprehensive list of elements that may be used to evaluate a tribal college assessment program. This list may also be used as a guide by tribal colleges to develop new assessment programs, as this appendix proposes elements of an assessment program — broken down by inputs, processes and products. The items marked with an asterisk (*) are considered essential.

Inputs

Plans and Strategy

Mission statement:* The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it…
- ❑ creates or updates its mission statement (make it clear and concise);
- ❑ increases staff's familiarity with and appreciation and support of the mission (e.g., by ensuring staff know the history of the college and the tribal college and university movement);
- ❑ begins accomplishing its mission.

Strategic planning initiative: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it…
- ❑ conducts an inclusive strategic planning initiative (include tribal community members, all tribal college staff, and students).

Assessment inventory: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it…
- ❑ conducts an inventory of current assessment practices at the college (this assessment checklist may be used as a guide).

Assessment plan: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it…
- ❑ develops a systematic assessment plan (including direct indicators, indirect indicators, and institutional data) or proceeds in the most obvious and necessary direction (where faculty or staff have the most enthusiasm and where it is guaranteed to be successful).

<u>Resources</u>

Assessment Coordinator:* The college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it…
- ❑ hires a full-time assessment coordinator who is knowledgeable about assessment best practices and sensitive to the cultural environment at the college.

Financial support: The college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it…
- ❑ provides funds for the administration of assessment-related tasks (e.g., conducting surveys, faculty salaries for completing complex and time-consuming assessment work during non-contract times, paying students to complete long surveys, etc.).

Technical support: The college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it…
- ❑ provides an adequate enrollment database system and an effective data collection system;
- ❑ hires a data administrator who is able to extract the data and create reports.

Administrators: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if its administrators…
- ❑ support financially the assessment program
- ❑ respond in respectful, cooperative, and supportive ways;
- ❑ collaborate with faculty and staff;
- ❑ provide visible advocacy for assessment;
- ❑ provide necessary opportunities, incentives, material resources, and compensation for learning about and implementing assessment initiatives;
- ❑ solicit feedback, ideas, and input from staff and faculty and incorporate these suggestions into plans and decisions;
- ❑ streamline and simplify meetings and reduce administrative obstacles to the assessment program;
- ❑ show appreciation and thanks to faculty and staff;
- ❑ use the assessment results to make decisions;
- ❑ refer regularly to the assessment program and its results in reports and presentations to both internal and external audiences (i.e., leadership team, advisory boards, tribal community, and board of trustees).

Faculty members: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if its faculty…
- ❑ remain open-minded and respond in respectful, cooperative, and collaborative ways;
- ❑ take ownership of assessment and embrace assessment as an intrinsically valuable developmental process whereby teaching and learning can be continually improved through evaluation, reflection, and identification of needs for change;
- ❑ provide students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to practice skills in ways that are integrated, contextualized, and experiential;
- ❑ provide students with numerous, varied, and meaningful opportunities to receive feedback in ways that are integrated, contextualized, and experiential;
- ❑ use the assessment program and its results to improve student learning.

<center>**Processes**</center>

Assessment processes: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it creates assessment processes that…

- ❑ are participatory;
- ❑ are formative (ongoing);
- ❑ are culturally appropriate;
- ❑ recognize and legitimize Indigenous knowledge and skills;
- ❑ contribute to tribal self-determination and knowledge;
- ❑ start with interested and supportive faculty and staff;
- ❑ are faculty-driven (with assistance from the assessment coordinator);
- ❑ are streamlined and simplified so that instructors' and staff's time may be used effectively;
- ❑ include employees from appropriate segments of the college;
- ❑ include students in their design;
- ❑ result in a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the assessment coordinator and all staff;
- ❑ build cohesion, collaboration, relationships, and trust among staff through a consultative process;
- ❑ are conducted in a responsible and ethical manner;
- ❑ are useful, relevant, and meaningful to the tribal college community;
- ❑ educate administration, staff and faculty to improve their assessment skills;
- ❑ report results internally in an ongoing way so that the information can be used to improve student success and learning (i.e., through meetings, reports, a website, email);
- ❑ initiate meaningful conversations;
- ❑ create a shared vision for the future of the tribal college, based on common values;
- ❑ redirect resources towards priorities outlined in the mission and goals;
- ❑ increase the college's responsiveness to the needs of the tribal community;
- ❑ improve the instructional capacity of the college as well as its public image;
- ❑ provide the basis for college planning and budgeting decisions;
- ❑ demonstrate accountability, the responsible use of limited resources, to the public.

Embedding assessment in college processes: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it embeds assessment throughout college processes, such as…

- ❑ strategic planning;
- ❑ curriculum review;
- ❑ budgeting;
- ❑ program review;
- ❑ the First Year Experience program (learning communities and cohorts);
- ❑ the college catalogue;
- ❑ college publications;
- ❑ the website;
- ❑ job descriptions and announcements;
- ❑ grading criteria;
- ❑ service learning.

Learning, teaching, and assessment approaches: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it creates an environment where students are learning and being assessed using…

- ❑ meaningful, relevant, and contextualized experiences;
- ❑ approaches traditionally used by tribal people, such as apprenticeships, observations, and practice;
- ❑ an integrated curriculum;
- ❑ an experientially grounded curriculum;
- ❑ a "place-based" curriculum;
- ❑ authentic approaches (e.g., self-reflecting and self-assessing, applying concepts to a relevant context, teaching material to peers, writing about a subject, and asking essential questions);
- ❑ a curriculum founded on traditional culture and knowledge;
- ❑ formative classroom assessment techniques (short, frequent, ungraded attempts to assess student learning) to provide immediate in-class feedback from students.

Products

Tribal colleges may begin this process at any point in the following list. The key is to start at a point where faculty or staff are enthusiastic and supportive and that will provide successful and meaningful results. Once one project is carried out successfully and people see positive results, they will be more optimistic for future assessment endeavours. In addition, it is essential to start small and simple and, if possible, to select one item from each indicator (i.e., direct indicators, indirect indicators, and institutional data).

Direct Indicators Of Student Learning

College outcomes (for students and / or faculty and / or staff) (ongoing): The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it encourages instructors to…
- ❑ articulate broad college academic outcomes;
- ❑ develop course level rubrics;
- ❑ determine which courses will be used to reinforce and assess college outcomes at entry, midway, and exit (e.g., use a curriculum map);
- ❑ determine or create the activities, experiences, projects, essays or assignments in required courses that will be used to assess college outcomes at entry, midway, and exit;
- ❑ attach anchor papers for each level of the rubric scale;
- ❑ include college outcomes on syllabi;
- ❑ assess students at entry, midway, and exit for outcomes;
- ❑ analyze the entry, midway, and exit assessment data;
- ❑ present analysis to faculty, staff, and students and consult on the results;
- ❑ use the data to improve and revise curriculum;
- ❑ document the process (i.e., complete an assessment report about how the data were used to improve learning);
- ❑ educate students about the role of assessment in their education.

Cultural outcomes (for students and / or faculty and / or staff) (ongoing): The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it encourages instructors to…

- ❑ articulate cultural outcomes;
- ❑ develop course level rubrics;
- ❑ determine which courses will be used to reinforce and assess cultural outcomes at entry, midway, and exit (e.g., use a curriculum map);
- ❑ determine or create the activities, experiences, projects, essays or assignments in required courses that will be used to reinforce and assess cultural outcomes at entry, midway, and exit;
- ❑ attach anchor descriptions for cultural outcomes for each level of the rubric scale;
- ❑ include cultural outcomes on syllabi;
- ❑ assess students at entry, midway, and exit for cultural outcomes;
- ❑ analyze the entry, midway, and exit assessment data;
- ❑ present analysis to faculty, staff, and students and consult on the results;
- ❑ use the data to improve and revise curriculum;
- ❑ document the process (i.e., complete an assessment report about how the data were used to improve learning).

Program outcomes (ongoing): The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it encourages instructors to…

- ❑ articulate program outcomes;
- ❑ develop course level rubrics for program outcomes;
- ❑ determine which courses will be used to reinforce and assess all program outcomes at entry, midway, and exit (e.g., use a curriculum map);
- ❑ determine or create the activities, experiences, projects, essays, or assignments in required courses that will be used to assess program outcomes at entry, midway, and exit;
- ❑ attach anchor papers for each level of the rubric scale;
- ❑ include program outcomes on syllabi for required program courses;
- ❑ assess students at entry, midway, and exit for outcomes;
- ❑ analyze the entry, midway, and exit assessment data;
- ❑ present analysis to faculty and students and consult on the results;
- ❑ use the data to improve the program and revise curriculum;
- ❑ document the process (i.e., complete an assessment report about how the data were used to improve learning and programs);
- ❑ educate students about the role of assessment in their education.

Course outcomes (ongoing): The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it encourages instructors to…

- ❑ articulate course outcomes;
- ❑ develop rubrics;
- ❑ include course outcomes on syllabi;
- ❑ determine or create the activities, experiences, projects, essays or assignments that will be used to assess the outcomes;
- ❑ attach anchor papers for each level of the rubric scale;
- ❑ assess students at the beginning, midway, and end of the course for outcomes;
- ❑ analyze the entry and exit assessment data;
- ❑ use the data to improve and revise curriculum and to improve learning;
- ❑ share the results with faculty (occasionally);
- ❑ compare the outcomes of different students in the same course over time;
- ❑ document the process;
- ❑ educate students about the role of assessment in their education.

<u>Indirect indicators of student learning</u>

Surveys, focus groups, interviews (with tribal college specific questions): The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it gathers information about students' perceptions of their learning, for example through…

- ❑ Course evaluations (may ask students to rate how well they mastered course learning outcomes in the course evaluation) (ongoing);
- ❑ Student opinion surveys (every couple of years);
- ❑ Staff satisfaction surveys (every couple of years);
- ❑ Faculty peer review or faculty/staff evaluations (ongoing);
- ❑ Graduate surveys (ongoing of current graduating students);
- ❑ Alumni survey (of students who graduated several years ago) (every five years);
- ❑ Student engagement surveys, such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (exploring active student involvement in learning) (every five years).

<u>Institutional and Community Data</u>

Institutional data: The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it tracks information for different types of students over time (e.g., degree and certificate-seeking students, nondegree-seeking students, and ABE/GED students), such as…

- ❑ student enrollment data (e.g., full-time equivalent numbers and Indian Student Count);
- ❑ retention rates (e.g., one quarter/semester,[33] quarter to quarter[34] or semester to semester, fall to fall,[35] and fall to spring);
- ❑ graduation rates[36] (3 or 4 year rates) and numbers of graduates;
- ❑ program completion rates and numbers;
- ❑ course completion rates[37] and numbers by level of course (e.g., CEU, ABE/GED, 100+) and by mode of learning (e.g., online, face-to-face) and by program;
- ❑ transfer data (e.g., from ABE to college-level and from the tribal college to four-year colleges), including comparisons of grades and retention data;
- ❑ time to completion.

Community data: The tribal college can track tribal community data over time, such as…

- ❑ college graduation rates;
- ❑ college attendance patterns.

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[33] NWIC's one quarter retention rate definition is the following: Of students who attempted at least one credit in a quarter, the percent that completed at least one credit that quarter.

[34] NWIC's quarter to quarter retention rate definition is the following: Of students who completed at least one credit in a quarter, the percent that completed at least one credit the following quarter.

[35] NWIC's fall to fall retention rate definition is the following: Of students who completed at least one credit one fall quarter, the percent that completed at least one credit the following fall quarter.

[36] NWIC's 3 year graduation rate definition is the following: Of first-time degree-seeking students taking 12 or more college-level credits the first fall quarter, the % who graduated within 3 years.

[37] NWIC's course completion rate definition is the following: The percent of successful completion enrollments.

APPENDIX Z COVER LETTER FOR THE NWIC ASSESSMENT SURVEY

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies
Mailing address:
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: 604-822-5374
Fax: 604-822-4244
http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca

Institutional Assessment in a Tribal College Context:
A Case Study of Northwest Indian College

Principal Investigator:
Lesley Andres
Educational Studies
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z4
lesley.andres@ubc.ca
604-822-5286

Co-Investigator:
Anne Marie Karlberg (PhD Candidate)
Educational Studies
1749 Emerald Lake Way
Bellingham, WA 98226
amkarlberg@nwic.edu
360-392-4255 (work)
360-738-9902 (home)

Background
Northwest Indian College (NWIC) is trying to improve its institutional assessment process and program. Most NWIC employees have been involved in some way in the assessment work; therefore, the input of full-time faculty, administrators and professional staff is requested to evaluate NWIC's institutional assessment efforts before it faces re-accreditation this coming academic year.

Study procedures
You are being invited to complete this questionnaire, which will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. This questionnaire asks for your feedback about NWIC's institutional assessment work over the past three years. Your responses to this questionnaire will be used to evaluate NWIC's assessment process and program.

Purposes and benefits
The purposes of this study, and we hope its benefits, are (1) to improve NWIC students' success, retention and learning, (2) to improve NWIC's institutional assessment process and program, (3) to inform NWIC's accreditation review and report, (4) to assist other tribal colleges with their assessment processes and programs, and (5) to form the basis of my (Anne Marie Karlberg's) doctoral thesis.

Risks
We have minimized potential harm to people who complete the questionnaire by ensuring responses are kept confidential. None of the questions in the questionnaire asks for personal identification information; also, no names mentioned by participants will be revealed. Furthermore, the web-based software used to conduct the questionnaire protects confidentiality. We have minimized any potential harm to NWIC, such as inaccurate interpretations, by having several knowledgeable NWIC individuals involved in creating the questionnaire and in analyzing, interpreting, presenting and reporting the results.

Ongoing use of data
The data will be kept by NWIC in an anonymous form and will be used for ongoing accreditation and longitudinal institutional assessment research.

Confidentiality
Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. The anonymized data will be kept in a locked office and will be password protected on a computer hard drive. Only my PhD committee, the NWIC Vice President of Instruction, and I, Anne Marie Karlberg, will have access to the anonymized data. Individuals will not be identified by name in any reports.

Contact for information about the study
If you have any questions about the questionnaire, please contact Anne Marie Karlberg [(360) 392-4255, amkarlberg@nwic.edu].

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects
If you have any concerns about your rights or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Consent
Your participation is voluntary. Completion of the questionnaire will indicate that you have consented to participate. You may refuse to complete this questionnaire without any penalty. You are also free to not answer any questions, without penalty.

Your feedback is valuable so please respond candidly. Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Anne Marie Karlberg   Dr. Lesley Andres