



# **Strategic Enrollment Management Assessment**

## **AACRAO Consulting Report for Northern Oklahoma College**

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## Project Overview

AACRAO Consulting was engaged by Northern Oklahoma College (NOC) to conduct an assessment of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) processes and strategies, including a review of current recruitment and retention processes, strategies, and existing plans. The goal of the consultation is to provide recommendations for addressing gaps in services, and enhancing practices and processes where needed in consideration of NOC's efforts to ensure SEM practices and strategies are aligned with best practices as the College prepares for future SEM planning. Recommendations will be provided in consideration of the institution's unique history, culture and environment, the College's national recognition by the Aspen Institute, and in consideration of NOC's Complete College America goals when appropriate. Project deliverables will consider all three campuses and their individual needs, although one comprehensive SEM assessment will be provided. Deliverables include:

- ⇒ Evaluation of current short-term and long-term enrollment goals and potential limitations that could potentially impede meeting enrollment goals.
- ⇒ A review of the application of best practices in SEM, including strategies, practices and policies, and the application of such practices by NOC. Provide recommendations for if or how practices and policies can be augmented or enhanced to contribute to student success, including:
  - Organization of SEM structures and staffing at NOC.
  - Customer service to students.
  - Professional development of NOC staff.
- ⇒ A review of SEM strategies including recruitment and retention plans and strategies; including how to develop retention and recruitment plans that are supported by data and incorporate the use of metrics.
- ⇒ An assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of Strategic Enrollment Management policies and services.
- ⇒ Identify opportunities and provide recommendations for recruitment communication and marketing plans and timelines that will resonate with the target student populations.



- ⇒ Assess the coordination of marketing materials and their use in recruitment efforts.
- ⇒ Make recommendations for implementing or enhancing a successful student admissions funnel system that effectively and efficiently moves a student from prospective status seamlessly to a confirmed enrollment.
- ⇒ Evaluation of the use of electronic/virtual student services and technology to support related internal business processes.

### Pre-Visit Activities

A phone conference with Dr. Rick Edgington was held on March 8, 2016, establishing the outline of the three-day visit in April. Dr. Edgington also provided pre-visit information electronically.

### On-Site Visit

A campus visit on April 11, 12, and 13, 2016, included scheduled interviews with a wide variety of staff, faculty (department chairs) and students, as listed in Appendix A. Several materials, including a large packet of marketing materials, were provided onsite. In addition, several follow-up e-mails and phone calls were exchanged for the purposes of clarification.

The campus visit demonstrated that NOC has a competent and enthusiastic staff and faculty who are interested in supporting student success and institutional effectiveness.



## Executive Summary

Northern Oklahoma College's position in its region is strong, and its role as a land grant institution offers unique advantages and opportunities, particularly in funding. With locations in Tonkawa, Enid and Stillwater, as well as participation in a University Center in Ponca City, the provision of online coursework and concurrent enrollment options for high school students, NOC provides a wide variety of educational opportunity. Partnerships with Oklahoma State University and Northwest Oklahoma State University are further evidence of NOC's commitment to educational access and degree attainment for regional residents.

Like many institutions, NOC is facing a shifting environment in regional demographics<sup>1</sup> and in funding. Figure 1 illustrates one aspect of NOC's enrollment picture for the past twelve Fall semesters. It is worthwhile to note that this picture is slightly better than the picture for community colleges in Oklahoma as a whole<sup>2</sup>, and for all community colleges in the nation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to US Census figures, the area around the Tonkawa campus is experiencing a decline in population with declines in persons under the age of 18. Other counties that are considered to be in NOC's service area have been experiencing some growth. <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/40071>

<sup>2</sup> The following website provides enrollment data for all Oklahoma community colleges from 2005-06 to 2014-15, indicating the average enrollment change in those ten years was a negative 1.4%, while NOC stood at a positive 3.3%. <http://www.okhighered.org/studies-reports/enrollment/Trends/10-yr-comparison-annual-hc-0506-1415.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The National Student Clearinghouse provides data indicating continuous losses in nationwide community college enrollment since 2011. <https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/CurrentTermEnrollment-Fall2015.pdf>

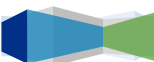
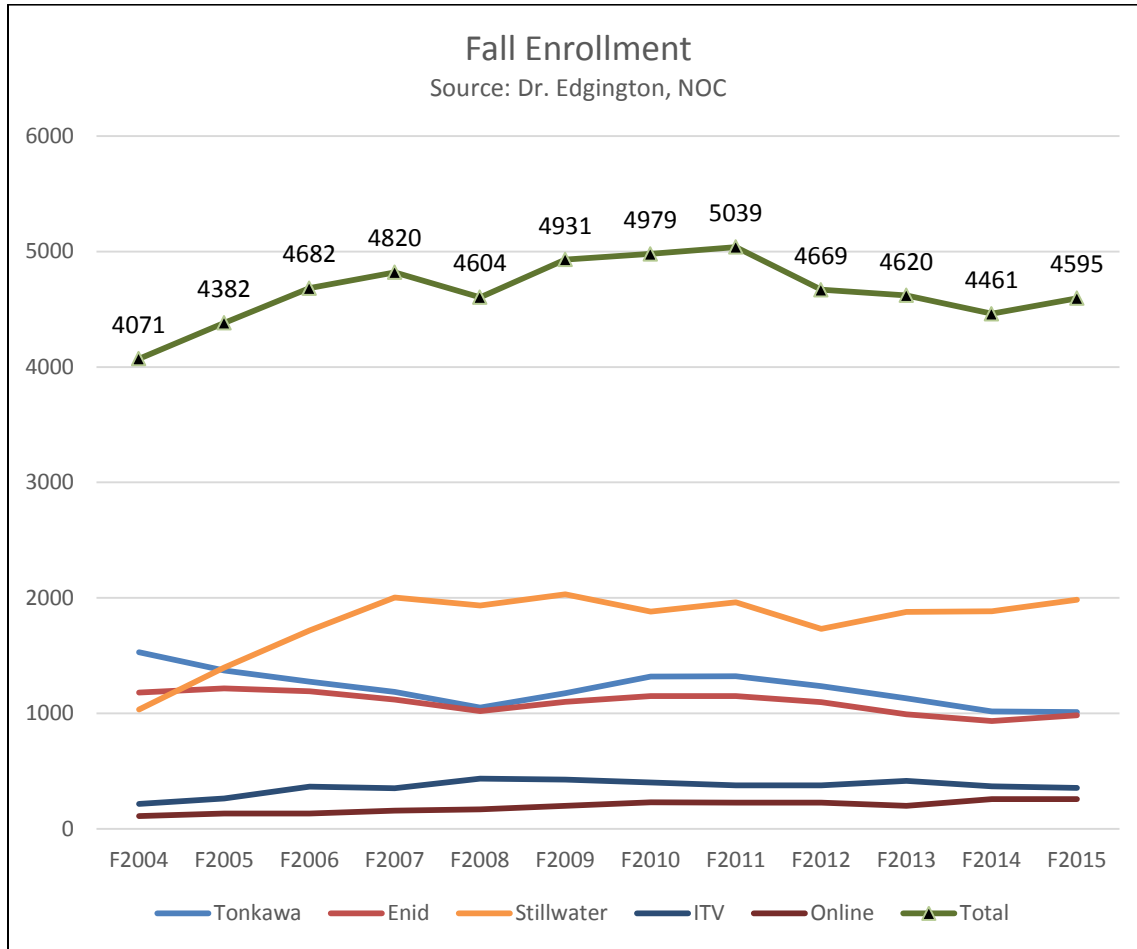


Figure 1. NOC Fall Semester Enrollment History



Each of NOC's locations is different in whom they serve and in the programs offered, thus affecting enrollment trends and planning. Stillwater enjoys the benefits of being in a significant population pocket, as well as being attractive to prospective and current Oklahoma State University (OSU) students who plan to continue their education at OSU. Enid has a larger population base than Tonkawa and benefits from the nearby partnership with Northwest Oklahoma State University. Tonkawa has the most comprehensive set of academic programs and student life offerings, and is the home for most administrative services. Each campus hosts a different profile of ethnic diversity. There is growth capacity in all three campus locations.



The enrollment at the University Center in Ponca City, through the Education Centers, and Online also present different age and ethnic diversity profiles, and have some growth capacity.

Addressing perceived challenges to institutional success, as well as opportunities, NOC's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan outlines numerous objectives relevant to attracting, retaining and graduating students, and in diversifying income. Some of the highlights of NOC's initiatives are reverse transfer processes, boot camps, fast-track and co-requisite/paired remedial courses, development of new certificate and degree programs, a well-defined branding initiative, enhancing co-curricular student life, utilization of Early Alert and retention specialists, and expanding efforts to obtain grants. However, those related to enrollment management have not yet been incorporated into a focused SEM Plan that can more effectively coordinate and guide efforts toward specific enrollment goals.

Interviews with staff, faculty and students over a three-day period in April, 2016, yielded a number of consistent themes which will be further described in the section headed "Observations". Chief among them are a need for stronger consideration of data to inform decision-making, more plan-ful approaches to new student outreach, prospective and current student communication, marketing coordination, goals for enrollment mix, and a fresh look at the advising process and other operational services.

### **Summary of Recommendations:**

Each of the recommendations below are more fully described further in this document.

Relevant resources will be provided in the Appendices.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

- A: Establish a SEM planning structure.
- B: Develop a SEM plan.
- C: Expand data collection and analysis.
- D: Improve the recruitment and admission processes.
- E. Refine retention strategies.
- F: Strengthen advising processes.
- G: Strengthen international student processes and services.
- H: Review the tuition payment schedule.
- I: Continue website improvements.

## Observations

### Strengthening Planning for Enrollment Impact

At the outset of this project, NOC leaders indicated that they need to strengthen their planning efforts. During the visit, it became apparent that while the College's Strategic Plan is a well-used instrument, those College processes that impact enrollment are not as coordinated, collaborative and strategic as they could be, especially in a climate of declining resources. Since College leadership expresses a desire and a capacity to grow and expand appeal to a wider population, focused planning and implementation is needed. Some examples of where strong collaborative planning would lead to improved implementation and improve effectiveness are:

- ⇒ Coordinating outreach strategies to desired populations.
- ⇒ Strengthening connections with those who are prospective and admitted students, combined with better utilization of the Admissions Module.



- ⇒ Defining strategic priorities for institutional advancement and student success, differentiated from daily operational improvements.
- ⇒ Increasing marketing collaboration to ensure maximum impact of prospective student touch points.

In sum, though staff and departments have a sense of what they are going to do and processes that they follow, those plans are more tactical in nature and are not fully driven by an analysis of what is of strategic importance and how those efforts can be more efficient and effective by collaborative planning and coordination. With no plan, there is no assessment and renewal. With no strategic priorities, resources may be inadequately scattered.

### **Identifying an Outreach (Recruitment) Plan**

Because outreach efforts and marketing/advertising materials (both printed and electronic) are co-dependent, it is important to look at that relationship. Though NOC's outreach personnel and marketing staff "work well together", their efforts appear to focus primarily on pursuing the high school student market through fairs, high school visits, and the on-campus Northern Exposure event. The Viewbook is indicative of that focus, with photos primarily of traditional-age college students. Outreach to older students occurs, such as with Ladies' Nights, but receives less overall attention. Outreach to Native Americans appears to be well-developed, but approaches to other special populations appear to be less coordinated.

High School and College Relations staff and the Native American Advisor are enthusiastic about their work in reaching prospective students. They share information on their external visits in order to coordinate their coverage and collaborate on some events. Each has a general plan for visiting high schools, representing the College at fairs, and, in the case of tribal outreach, working with tribal contacts and colleagues to reach the Native American youth and adult populations.



Outreach efforts are joined by the Financial Aid Office, which also sends personnel to high schools for financial aid information events and reinforces the College's commitment to ensuring student support and financial affordability. Faculty, too, engage in activities that attract students, particularly to the Fine Arts, Agriculture, and Communications programs.

Current discussions with OSU to share information about students who may be denied admission to OSU but may be good candidates for NOC could be productive.

The Marketing staff work on outreach efforts as well, scheduling Ladies' Night participation and ads, for example. They also produce materials useful in outreach and promotion of events. The website assures that event information is accessible. Notwithstanding the plan that marketing staff follow in terms of producing materials for a calendar of events, the messages and information of the publications are not fully synchronized with some of the expressed interests in reaching out to and attracting "non-traditional" students. For example, neither the website nor publications appear to provide pertinent content in the Spanish language.

Comments by staff pointed to two other concerns: 1) "How do I know what is effective?" and 2) "Should we be trying to attract students from greater distances?" Both comments indicate the absence of comprehensive outreach planning.

The work that is currently done follows some established patterns and quite likely also takes advantage of ideas and opportunities as they pop up. But there appears to be no actual outreach plan that brings together the overall strategy to impact new student enrollment at the three College sites (and University Center at Ponca City, Education Centers and online programming), as well as details of the strategies that outline everyone's roles and responsibilities. The benefits of such planning would enable an assessment of efficiency and effectiveness, as well as serve as a platform for assessing and integrating new avenues of outreach. Planning also provides a basis for estimating costs for the design of outreach



activities throughout the year with a commitment of funds to support the planned and approved activities; ad hoc activities are vulnerable to funding restrictions.

Outreach planning has several purposes: 1) Supporting the vision and mission of the College, 2) Building awareness among target populations, 3) Providing helpful guidance as to a prospective student's fit with the College, 4) Providing navigational information, referral, and support for prospective students as they proceed from initial interest to enrollment, 5) Supporting educational influencers, such as high school counselor, parents, elders, funding authorities, and 6) Collaboration with other College entities (locations, programs) to promote coordinated services related to prospective students, such as financial aid, residence life, and marketing materials and messages. NOC's activities in outreach seem to be aligned with some of these purposes, but a clearly articulated plan is lacking.

### **Identifying a Communications Plan**

A student communications plan should span the NOC student experience, stretching from prospective students to alumni. Well-developed communications plans improve the institution's competitive position, help students move through the admissions funnel, and enhance current student satisfaction.

Though there are some mailings to segments of prospective and admitted students, there is not a specific plan to fully utilize the prospective and admitted student databases and to continuously and intentionally drive materials, content, and personalized messages to those prospective and admitted students at key times. A well-utilized student database is strongly linked to implementing an effective communications plan.

High School and College Relations staff report that they use ACT names, and names from fairs and school visits, to populate their prospective student database. Following the input of those names into the database, the data is extracted and those prospective students are sent a



packet. This past year this packet also included the postcard for Northern Exposure, whereas in prior years that postcard was sent separately. This prospective student database also is mined for mailing good candidates information about the PLC scholarship. In general, mailings are not personalized, which does not reinforce the type of individual attention that is core to the student experience at the College.

After this activity it appears that the prospective student database lies fallow without, for example, follow-up with prospective students who do not apply for admission. And, there appears to be little or no follow-up with admitted students after they receive their admission letter. This lack of follow-up is puzzling, since it is a well-accepted standard that follow-up is important in establishing a connection with students who have demonstrated interest in a college. This situation could have three origins: 1) Understanding of the capabilities of the student database for communication purposes could be inadequate; 2) The task of follow-up communication is not assigned as a specific responsibility; or 3) Communication using regular postal service mail may be seen as too expensive. Otherwise, it is evident that some follow-up occurs through personal contact as outreach personnel continuing to do external visits and events as well as respond to phone calls, e-mail and campus visits.

There is currently no data on the yield from prospect to admit, or from admit to enrollee. An examination of such data would provide context for considering what type of follow-up, and the timing of the follow-up, would be beneficial.

The website can also bring in prospective student inquiries through an online "information request form" found at <http://www.noc.edu/request-information-enid>. Oddly, it takes three clicks to find this form, and can only be found by clicking on "Recruitment Coordinators", which is not intuitive. Most colleges will place a prospective student contact link on the front page, or on the first "new student" page. Others include a link on all academic program pages since this is often one of the places students go to early in their college search process.



Financial Aid is often a source of prospective student contacts by virtue of FAFSA applications that are directed to NOC. Other offices on the campuses may also be the recipients of prospective student names, but there does not appear to be significant coordination for the purposes of follow-up of these contacts.

The College does employ strategies in phone follow-up of current students who are eligible to re-register for an upcoming term but have not done so. This effort is productive, but it is also ad-hoc. Faculty may also pursue contacts with their advisees.

The Alumni Relations office has developed ways to collect graduating and former student data, and connect with those students.

Related to this topic is the question of determining the most effective and efficient modes of communication for prospective, admitted, new, current and former students. NOC has options between and among the student's personal e-mail, MyNOC, Blackboard, social media, and printed material, but the effectiveness and cost of these different approaches seems to be an important question.<sup>4</sup> Interviews with current students raised a host of comments about their reactions to messages from the College. Most of the comments indicated that students do not like receiving e-mail or texts about sports events and results or other types of extra-curricular messages; this causes them to ignore messages as a whole. They would prefer messages that are "important", that is, related to their enrollment. These comments do not form a full survey, of course, but they may indicate that College leaders may want to dig deeper into the students' communication preferences.

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<sup>4</sup> Communication can take several forms, including printed material. E-mail, texting, and phone calls can be considered, though printed material in the mail enables parents of traditional age students to see it, more so than electronic communication. In terms of communications with prospective students, it is often a question of effectiveness vis a vis cost. The opportunity to boost a yield rate by at least 1-2% may result in tuition income that offsets the cost of the outreach/communication effort.



In sum, a strategy for encouraging and informing students has not been planned within an all-College framework. Some offices are pursuing some actions, but NOC could benefit from assessing its opportunities and measuring the resources needed to pursue whatever level and mode of communication that strengthens the connection between students and NOC.

### **Marketing Materials and Planning**

The College has a wide array of good quality student recruitment focused marketing publications (e.g., Viewbook, program brochures) which emphasize the new brand (“Life Changing”). Many of these publications appeal to traditional students, though there is, for example, a brochure aimed at single parents for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Marketing does not currently support any marketing activities or materials to reach international students or immigrant parents in their native language.

The Marketing department also engages in other marketing activities, including billboards, internet advertising, web site, social media and direct mail. Marketing metrics are not fully utilized, which results in the College being unable to estimate the relative effectiveness of its various marketing approaches.

The brand is well protected and compliance is generally good, though the Marketing staff report that they are still "policing" desktop productions on all campuses.

Marketing meets monthly, has strong linkages to the Printing staff and works to coordinate its publication and advertising services with Enrollment Management staff. Such coordination represents positive steps, but it seems to fall short of coordinated strategic thinking about how publications support enrollment goals. For example, the relationship between the images used in publications and the interests of the College in enrolling a more diverse student body seems unanswered. With few exceptions (such as the Maverick Move-In Weekend postcard), the actual diversity of the College - in terms of the enrollment of underrepresented students that is



currently about 20-25% of the total enrollment - is not represented in visual images. The website is consistent in its branding appearance and contains needed information as well as a high-quality 360-degree visual tour of the Enid and Tonkawa campus sites, but does not provide messages or images that motivate users to see themselves at NOC. There are very few images on the NOC website, no easy linkages to the values offered by the different campus sites, and, as mentioned before, no "one-click" way to submit an inquiry. A College "app", which has been on the waiting list for three years, would enhance marketing and student satisfaction.

Marketing appears to be active and to function well, but its contribution to student enrollment would be enhanced by inclusion and participation in overall enrollment planning with stakeholders to assure a coordinated approach that makes use of multiple perspectives.

### Strengthening Enrollment Related Operations for Enrollment Impact

The College implements several processes aimed at supporting student success. A review of the Strategic Plan Updates indicates active commitment to activities such as advising and Early Alert. Interviews during the site visit emphasized the work that goes into such activities.

In light of the College's interest in strengthening its enrollment and providing quality service, several observations may help College leaders to fill some of the gaps in implementing these programs:

- ⇒ Early Alert and retention follow-up
- ⇒ The advising process.
- ⇒ Use of the degree audit system.
- ⇒ The tuition payment process.





## Early Alert and Retention Follow-up

The use of early alerts is an important part of a college student retention system. It permits institutions to reach students at times when their student success can be enhanced. Colleges that have fully implemented early alerts are more likely to maximize student retention and reinforce a student success culture on campus.<sup>5</sup>

The College has a well-developed Early Alert system that, when used, leads to enhanced student satisfaction, success and retention. The Early Alerts submitted by instructors go to the retention specialists, coaches, advisors, and the students themselves. The new International Coordinator is slated to receive them. The Native American Advisor does not receive Early Alerts.

The College is still considering the potential of convincing all faculty to utilize the Early Alert system. In this, the College is not alone; it is a common dilemma on many campuses. It is, however, important that more faculty make use of the Early Alert system if NOC is to reach its enrollment goals. Faculty and staff buy-in is often contingent on communication and feedback, ease of use of the system, and demonstrating the effect on retention (and thus the budget).

The College has made a significant and exemplary investment in deploying retention specialists who utilize a variety of tactics to reach out to students and get them on the path to success. The effectiveness of these specialists can only be increased as faculty and other key non-academic support staff increase their participation in sending early alerts.

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<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive case study see:

<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:3lrrfHBiVRAJ:www2.ed.gov/documents/college-completion/beyond-retention-supporting-student-success.doc+&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>



## The Advising Process

Figure 2. Academic Advisory System.

### ACADEMIC ADVISORY SYSTEM

Northern Oklahoma College has an enrollment system that allows for continuous enrollment opportunity throughout the summer months. The student's initial enrollment is organized so that the student and the academic advisor have sufficient time to explore at length educational opportunities available to the student. During the summer enrollment period, a few selected faculty and staff members function as enrollment counselors. Once the student has declared an academic objective, the student will be assigned to a permanent faculty graduation advisor. The assigned faculty academic advisor will have education and experience in the field and can best serve the student in helping him/her attain his/her educational goal.

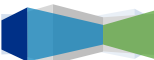
Source: Student Handbook 2015-16

The statement in Figure 2, found in the Student Handbook, does not quite match the process described during the onsite visit.

The process of advising new students ostensibly relies on faculty, but is often delivered by counselors and enrollment staff due to the periodic unavailability of faculty. While staff may certainly be capable of advising, the process does not seem smooth. The manner of providing advising to new students - by either faculty or staff - as part of the registration process is different at each College site.

A variety of statements during the three-day onsite visit indicate some dissatisfaction with a system that relies on faculty to advise students, when those same faculty are not always available, particularly during breaks. At the same time, there is criticism when staff attempt to serve the students when faculty are not available.

There are also concerns about the information that is available to advisors when students, particularly new students, present themselves for advising. A number of comments concerned the inability to "see" certain types of information in the student record, such as some holds. And, there may be some times when advisors do not have online access to the class schedule during the early days of registration.



There also appear to be some issues concerning the advisor's ability to help students plan their class schedule when there is previous college work. Official credential evaluations for transfer credit are not done until the third week of the semester, or later, which places the burden on the advisor to interpret the student's hand-carried copy of their official transcript for the purposes of advising the students about requirements that he/she has already met when mapping out the courses the student should take that term. The subsequent official evaluation could contradict that advisor's best estimate, causing problems for the student. This appears to happen with some frequency, given the number of comments made about it.

An advisor hold is placed on every student's record once a semester's registration period has closed, the purpose of which is to disable each student's ability to register for the next term without seeing an advisor. When students see an advisor, the hold is removed so that registration can be done. The advisor may keep the hold off during the remaining time until registration closes so that a student can add/drop at will, or may put the hold back on if the advisor feels it necessary to require advisor contact every time a student considers an add/drop.

Among the functions of the advisor-advisee meeting is to complete a "trial study" which is the planned class schedule for the student. When that is done, the advisor may then register the student at that moment, or the student can take the trial study to the registration area for input. Or, the student could, as long as the advisor hold is "off", use the online registration system later on at home.

All of this points to a position that the College has taken, which is to require the intervention of an advisor prior to each semester's registration. As they address student retention and success issues, many community colleges in the United States are developing intrusive enrollment processes, such as this, that require regular or periodic student interaction with an advisor. With that commitment comes a responsibility to assure a smooth system. In interviews with



students, they seem tuned-in to the need to meet with their advisor, and some expressed experiences that indicated consistent faculty (or coach) guidance. Others provided examples of shifting from one advisor to another, depending on who was available. Some described having received poor advice about what courses to take.

The advising environment appears to be different on each of the three sites: Tonkawa, Enid and Stillwater. (Interviews did not include a close look at online and concurrent student enrollment processes.) With different programs and a different array of faculty, each handles the roles of staff and faculty in their respective advising roles differently, such as Stillwater's consideration of scheduling advisor coverage during registration times. This may be problematic for students who take coursework at more than one location.

College leaders appear to be aware of some of the gaps and conflicts in the advising system. One step that has been taken to support advising is the production of an Advising Handbook. Resolution is needed, however, in clarifying the roles of faculty and staff in advising, in providing appropriate coverage during registration periods, and in utilizing the information and tools for advising.

Technology is currently available to incorporate wait listing into course registration; this option exists either within the current registration software, or is added through separate purchase. Efficient wait list systems can greatly impact students' ability to enroll in required or preferred courses.

### **Use of the Degree Audit System**

Advising processes are usually supported by an automated degree audit system, which helps students and their advisors check the student's adherence to program requirements, showing completed requirements and requirements yet to be fulfilled. Degree audit systems show the applicability of transfer credit, and usually allow notes to be made that might record special



agreements or advice to students regarding their continued course planning. Degree audit systems also support "if-then" scenarios, allowing students to see how their courses would be used for different degrees.

The College's degree audit system is not used by the faculty, who instead use a separately devised and unsharable spreadsheet of degree requirements. This could, and probably does according to some comments, result in advising inconsistencies which may impact course selection and time to graduation. Furthermore it requires manual updating every year as degree program requirements change.

As described above, the process of applying transfer credit to the student's record affects advising. Currently, new students only get advice based on an unofficial evaluation, done by either staff or faculty who may or may not have a perfect understanding of the potential equivalencies. While it is considered a best practice to inform a transferring student of his or her advanced standing prior to enrollment, it may not be possible for NOC to do this. In that case, use of the degree audit system, where many equivalencies are already built in, could at least go a long way to addressing the issue.

### **Tuition Payment Process**

Currently, students are informed that enrollment fees are due by 5pm on the first day of the semester, and are considered past due thereafter if unpaid. Once registered and informed of the tuition and fees, students are not sent a bill; the information is, however, available in their MyNOC account.

The refund period extends to the end of the second week of the semester. Students who are unpaid as of the last day of the semester are assessed an additional 10% late fee. Students can avoid the late fee by filing for and accepting financial aid a week before the end of the semester. Students who do not drop during the refund period and who are still unpaid by the



end of the semester have a debt to the College of the entire balance, and their record is put on hold. The College may instigate a Tax Warrant and/or a collections process as it does now. The College is carrying a very significant amount of unresolved debt.

While this does appear to be a fairly common approach<sup>6</sup> to tuition payment in a number of colleges and universities in Oklahoma, it is worth noting that this process creates some issues for seat management, for student access, for helping the College collect tuition from students who sit in seats for which they have not paid, and for placing students in an awkward position if they happen to be unsophisticated about the importance of paying in a timely way.

The College does allow instructors to notify the registration office if a student is a "no-show" and should be dropped within the two-week refund period. This saves the no-show student from owing money if he/she had been unpaid, and provides a refund to those who did pay. But for the unpaid student perhaps registered in several classes, it remains a problem if one or more of the instructors do not notify the registration office that the student is a no-show.

Dropping a student within the first two weeks of the semester, or even maintaining an unpaid student in a class, undercuts the ability of the College to fill that seat with a paying student. Comments during the onsite visit indicate that there are times when classes fill and students still want to enroll in them, and may even need that class to fill a final requirement. As the College works with a limited budget, where the number of sections offered relates to

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<sup>6</sup> *Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Policies and Procedures:*

4.18. Collection of Tuition and Fees. Tuition and fees are due prior to the first day of class. Each institution shall establish and publish a deadline when tuition and fees are payable, after which payment may be subject to a late charge. Late payment will require payment in full as well as be subject to late payment charges in an amount determined and published by the institution. G. Refunds of Tuition and Fees. The refund policy for tuition and fees collected from students at institutions shall be as follows 1. Withdrawals and Changes of Enrollment. Changes in schedules and complete withdrawals from the institution during the defined add/drop period will result in full charges for courses added and full credit for courses dropped. No refunds will be made after the add/drop period for that session.

<http://www.okhighered.org/state-system/policy-procedures/2013/Chapter%204-2013%20final.pdf>



anticipated fill-rates takes a lot of planning, it may be worthwhile to adjust the payment deadlines.

### Using Data for Planning and Decisions

NOC is already in the midst of strengthening its data processes. The talents of Kathleen Otto, the experience of Dr. Rick Edgington, the efforts of the Assessment Committee, the consistency offered by the online application, the current capacities of the student information system, the interest of NOC leadership in making informed decisions, existing state reports, and the various features of the existing FactBook, surveys and reports are just some of the positive aspects already in place.

Some ordinary aspects of data collection which impact enrollment management are not yet in place, though. NOC participates in the National Student Clearinghouse<sup>7</sup>, but has not yet taken full advantage of reports that could be useful in assessing student interests and outcomes. For example, the Clearinghouse could provide data on the destinations of admitted students who did not enroll, and on transfer destinations of students no longer enrolled. Information provided by the Clearinghouse would greatly help the College in better understanding student mobility in its region, which could open opportunities to address enhancements to academic policies, student services and academic program design.

The College has developed some portions of what would typically be an environmental scan, such as regional demographics and a business and industry profile, but other institutional analyses of other impacts, such as international student trends, marketplace competition, K-12 grade progressions, and a granular analysis of student attrition/retention trends are not available. This gap will need to be closed before finalizing an enrollment plan.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/>



In assessing data reports available to the consultants during this project, there are indications that NOC could benefit from better coordination of data reports and data entry. For example, enrollment reports in the FactBook and from Dr. Edgington do not agree; this may be due to different counting methods or census dates. And, as mentioned earlier, the lack of consistent use of the degree audit system contributes to incomplete data for advising uses. Comments during interviews indicate that data availability is generally improving, but the time spent on analysis is lagging. The FactBook could be improved by adding narrative paragraphs that summarize the story that the tables and charts are telling, thus supporting further analysis. NOC does not utilize a data governance<sup>8</sup> and/or data stewardship<sup>9</sup> model of any type, which could support a stronger data analysis environment. As noted during interviews, NOC has added the Institutional Research position only recently, and demonstrates potential to evolve into a more productive data environment.

### Identifying Enrollment Mix

NOC's Strategic Plan indicates interest in increasing student enrollment through enhancing "recruitment efforts as well as retention and graduation rates." Interview comments support that goal. Furthermore, College leaders express a strong interest in broadening their appeal to their diverse populations. This desire springs from a strong desire to serve their communities, as well as a realistic appraisal of the changing nature of the population the College serves. Success in that endeavor also impacts the College's financial outlook.

### **Serving Under-represented Populations**

In terms of the enrollment of domestic underrepresented groups, NOC's service area population has its best prospects in Native American, African American and Hispanic residents.

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<sup>8</sup> For further insight, see: <http://er.educause.edu/articles/2013/12/speaking-the-same-language-building-a-data-governance-program-for-institutional-impact>

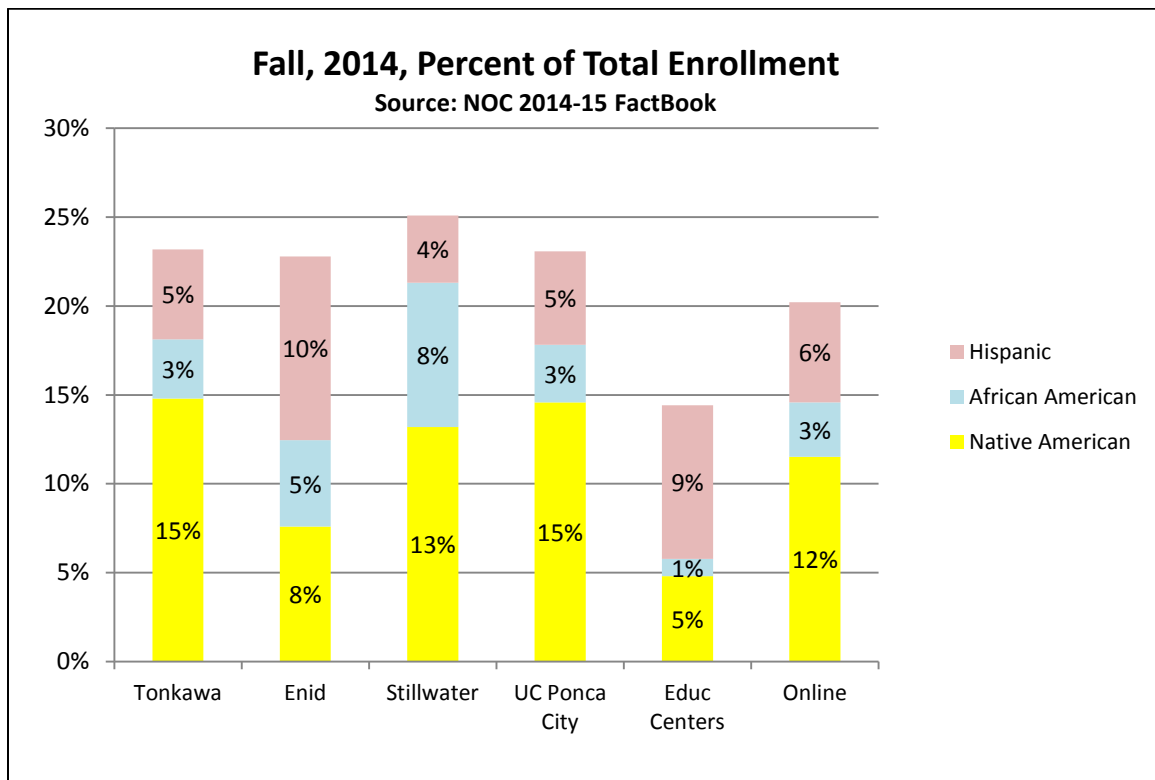
<sup>9</sup> For an example, see: <https://www.pcc.edu/about/policy/electronic/info-trustee.html>





The enrollment of students in those groups are generally referred to as a percentage of the total enrollment. However, the enrollment varies throughout NOC's locations and modes of delivery, as seen in Figure 3. During the site visit, when staff and faculty addressed their interests in serving NOC's communities, the interest was not expressed in a way that seemed to recognize the different patterns of enrollment that might be a reflection of the demography of the communities themselves, as well as NOC's different program opportunities and modes of delivery.

**Figure 3: Diversity Enrollment**



NOC is an American Indian and Alaska Native-Serving Institution. According to NOC's FactBook, 12% of students in Fall 2014 were Native American. The College employs a Native American Advisor and Recruiter who has established relationships with tribal leaders and education



offices, as well as Title VII counselors in local schools. She also has responsibility for Native American events, the Northern Thunder student club, and advising and retention services. As described in interviews, there are at least six tribes in the College's service area.

While the percentage of Native American enrollment at NOC is similar to, or exceeds, the percentage in the various counties in the service area population, staff report that the retention rate of Native American students is low. Institutional Research reports that for the Fall 2012 cohort, 25% of the Native American students did not attend after the first semester.

African American students comprise about 6% of NOC's enrollment, which exceeds the overall percentage in most of the service area counties. Institutional Research reports that for the Fall 2012 cohort, 25% of the African American students did not attend after the first semester.

Hispanic students also comprise 6% of NOC's enrollment, which seems to fall below the overall profile of the service area. Institutional Research reports that for the Fall 2012 cohort, 15% of the Hispanic students did not attend after the first semester.

The College's Strategic Plan, and the comments of many staff and faculty during the site visit, consider adult learners to also be an underrepresented group. According to the FactBook, students age 25 and older comprise 21% of the enrollment.

This data certainly does not paint the full picture, though what it does indicate is some real complexity in the question of whom to serve and how. The complexity deepens as one considers the very different nature of each site. On the surface, it is easy to identify several factors that may currently affect NOC's ability to appeal to a wider array of students: the lack of Spanish-language publications and on the website<sup>10</sup>, minimal ethnic diversity in the staff and faculty, a strong emphasis in the College image as a place for young people, and limited

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<sup>10</sup> It is likely that Spanish language publications would be more useful to the parents of prospective students, since trends indicate that the Hispanic youth are more likely to have a better command of the English language than their parents. But parents can be influential in educational planning.



outreach strategies for non-traditional populations (with the exception of outreach to Native Americans). The College is currently pursuing evening and online classes as a strategy to appeal to adult learners, and Stillwater is considering weekend events to respond to working adults. It is very worthwhile to note that outreach is not the whole answer. The academic offerings and the mode of delivery, and academic support and retention services can make or break a decision to enroll and stay enrolled.

The appointment of a Diversity Officer, the presence of a Native American Advisor and Recruiter, and the existence of a Diversity Council provide opportunities to gather more data and consider options.

### **International student goals and services**

College leadership expressed a strong interest in gaining guidance that will enable them to manage their international student program and support the students.

NOC has apparently enrolled students from a variety of countries for a number of years; many of these students have been largely attracted by NOC's athletic programs. Recently NOC has collaborated with Oklahoma State University (OSU) to enroll international students who wish to attend OSU, but are not yet ready. Specifically, NOC now works with the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) and enrolls a large number of Saudi students. This rather sudden influx has presented challenges. Most frequently mentioned are concerns about providing an English language program and language tutoring, though there are also concerns about managing the application and enrollment process and the integration of these students with domestic students and student life. The Tonkawa and Stillwater sites appear to be the focus of most concern. This situation may become more complex if OSU expands their recruitment to include other areas in the Middle East and Korea and seeks the collaboration of NOC.



The recent addition of a new position, Diversity Officer and Coordinator of International Students, can go a long way to addressing these issues. Academic Affairs, though, needs to weigh in with decisions about providing an appropriate English language program.

In general, the combination of "Diversity" and "International" issues in one position needs to be very carefully managed. International students typically do not consider themselves to be a part of the diversity issues we deal with in the United States. Their needs and interests are very different, and the requirements related to the processing of their applications, the identification of appropriate admission criteria, the interpretation of academic transcripts, and the management of visa compliance need undivided attention.

On the other hand, interviews during the site visit more or less defined NOC's "diversity" interests as improving service to, and retention of, Native Americans and Hispanics, in particular, as well as other regional populations, such as the Marshallese. An additional theme, as expressed in the Strategic Plan and in some interviews concerns the capacity of the College to respond to diversity issues through such avenues as faculty and staff hiring, knowledge and appreciation of different cultures within our society, marketing and outreach strategies, etc. These different perspectives may offer some initial insight into the need to respect the oversight entailed when combining the concepts of "diversity" and "international" issues.

The interest of NOC in actively attracting international students seems ambiguous, and should be clarified. The College's Strategic Plan includes a few references to Study Abroad, global learning, and enabling students to "succeed in a competitive global environment". But there is no reference to any interest in internationalizing the college experience through the enrollment of international students. In other words, the current energy being devoted to meeting the opportunities initially provided by collaboration with SACM and OSU is not aligned with the College's Strategic Plan, unless it is seen as falling under the general goal of focusing on revenue through higher enrollment, which is not a sufficient reason.



A review of the College's website for international student application, admission and support, is not particularly welcoming, and is confusing with four different webpages (for NOC and for each site) that say the same thing. It also includes some inappropriate links to such topics as financial aid, and recruitment coordinators - items not relevant to international students. This may be another signal that the College needs to resolve its position on enrolling international students. While NOC may or may not decide to use some level of recruitment strategy, as opposed to simply receiving applications that come to it, it is worthwhile to consider how international students feel about NOC from the moment of possible interest or referral through to their actual enrollment, and to their retention and satisfaction.

Colleges that develop a commitment to "global engagement" or otherwise may expand institutional interests in internationalizing their programming often create an umbrella for their international student programs, study abroad and curricular initiatives. It is not apparent that NOC has these intentions, but it would not be amiss to discuss possible linkages between the growing international student program and NOC's successful Global Education Program.

### **Serving First Generation Students**

The College serves a large number (approximately 58%) of first generation students across its various student populations. Differing retention and graduation rates for student subgroups (e.g., African American, Hispanic, Native American, adult learners) may be impacted by so many students being first generation. Data is not available on this possible linkage.

The College has a wide array of supports available to first generation students. Some of these include intrusive academic advising, a solid financial aid program, online application processes and wide-ranging academic and student support services (e.g., Tutoring Center, Computer Labs, Testing Centers, and Writing Labs). Small class sizes and a 17:1 student-faculty ratio also greatly enhance the success of first generation students.



Even though there is considerable support for first generation students, many we spoke with indicated that there is much left to do to more fully support the academic and co-curricular needs of first generation students.<sup>11</sup>

## Operational Considerations

### **Transfer Credit Policy**

Federal policy, as well as accreditation standards, require that colleges publish their transfer credit policy online. NOC is in compliance, but college leaders may want to consider improving how their policy is stated.

Information on the NOC webpage titled "Transfer Guide"<sup>12</sup> describes the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education policy for two-year degree transfer to the four-year universities. This is helpful, but there is more to transfer credit policy than that.

The 2015-16 College Catalog, page 10, states the following:

#### **POLICY ON TRANSFER CREDIT**

When a student is admitted to NOC, his or her transcripts are evaluated for transfer credit. NOC recognizes transfer credit from U.S. regionally-accredited associations. Students must provide official transcripts from every school they have attended. Failure to acknowledge and submit transcripts from all schools attended may be considered academic fraud and might result in a student's expulsion from the institution.

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<sup>11</sup> Too often, enrollment management is addressed only through recruitment and marketing strategies, thus missing the myriad of other factors that influence student enrollment. SEM planning, in fact, stresses the importance of assessing (and planning for) an instructional program mix that attracts and retains students and by encouraging faculty efforts in supporting student access and success. That said, though, open door institutions may find that strengthening resources that build appropriate academic and social support (e.g. student services, advising, early alert, tutoring, supplemental instruction) will have significant impact on student retention and success. For an interesting discussion on this perspective, see <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15216.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.noc.edu/transfer-guide>



A student's academic advisor, in consultation with the division chair, will determine how and if transfer credits can count toward degree requirements and which hours do count. For in-state institutions contributing to the state transfer matrix, course equivalency is determined by that matrix. Courses taken at a non-accredited school, or one whose accreditation is not recognized, will require submission of course descriptions and syllabi for possible credit. These documents might also be required for other in-state transfer decisions when a course is not listed on the state transfer matrix nor on internal transfer guides for partner institutions.

This is certainly an acceptable general statement, but there is no further detail that would, as a best practice, be considered part of a transfer credit policy. A transfer credit policy should include such rules as the College's position on minimum grade for a transferable course, acceptance practices for CLEP, AP, IB, military training, and prior learning, as well as articulation agreements. While the College may have statements to this effect in different parts of their website or catalog, they should all be included under one "transfer guide".

### **Campus Way-Finding**

The Tonkawa site in particular demonstrates attention to campus signage, and hosts a very accessible information center in the Vineyard Library and Administration building, but does not offer any specific direction for persons new to campus (such as prospective students and families) to a "Welcome Center"<sup>13</sup> or "Admissions and Registration" area. This is an observation that could be applied to all sites.

### **Campus Communication**

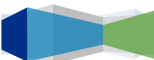
Conversations revealed in a variety of ways some gaps in inter- and intra-campus communication. Comments included reference to unexpected changes in Compass score guidelines, allowances for students to register in courses where the prerequisite had not been met, knowledge of outreach efforts

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<sup>13</sup> The A.D. Buck Museum Welcome Center on the Tonkawa campus is not designed to welcome prospective students, per se!



The College operates with regard to communications as if it was a single campus. It is, however, a decentralized multi-location institution. Consideration should be given to how it can enhance communications in key enrollment areas so that more faculty and staff have up-to-date information on College operations.





## Recommendations

The following recommendations stem from observations made during the three-day visit, and in reviewing additional materials.

### Recommendation A: Establish a SEM Planning Structure.

#### A.1. Establish a SEM Planning Committee.

College leaders are clear in the need for more focused planning to guide their enrollment management. The following narrative and recommendations, as well as several appendices, provide a detailed response.

Two-year colleges tend to utilize a committee or task force structure to support their SEM

Planning. NOC has a Retention Committee, which on many campuses is a subset of an overall SEM committee, but not a SEM Committee per se. Dr. Edgington is the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Registrar, and thus has some oversight of enrollment services and reporting and a strong working relationship with Dr. Pamela Stinson, Vice President for Academic Affairs. Since SEM needs linkage between student and enrollment services and academic affairs, this provides a starting point for NOC.

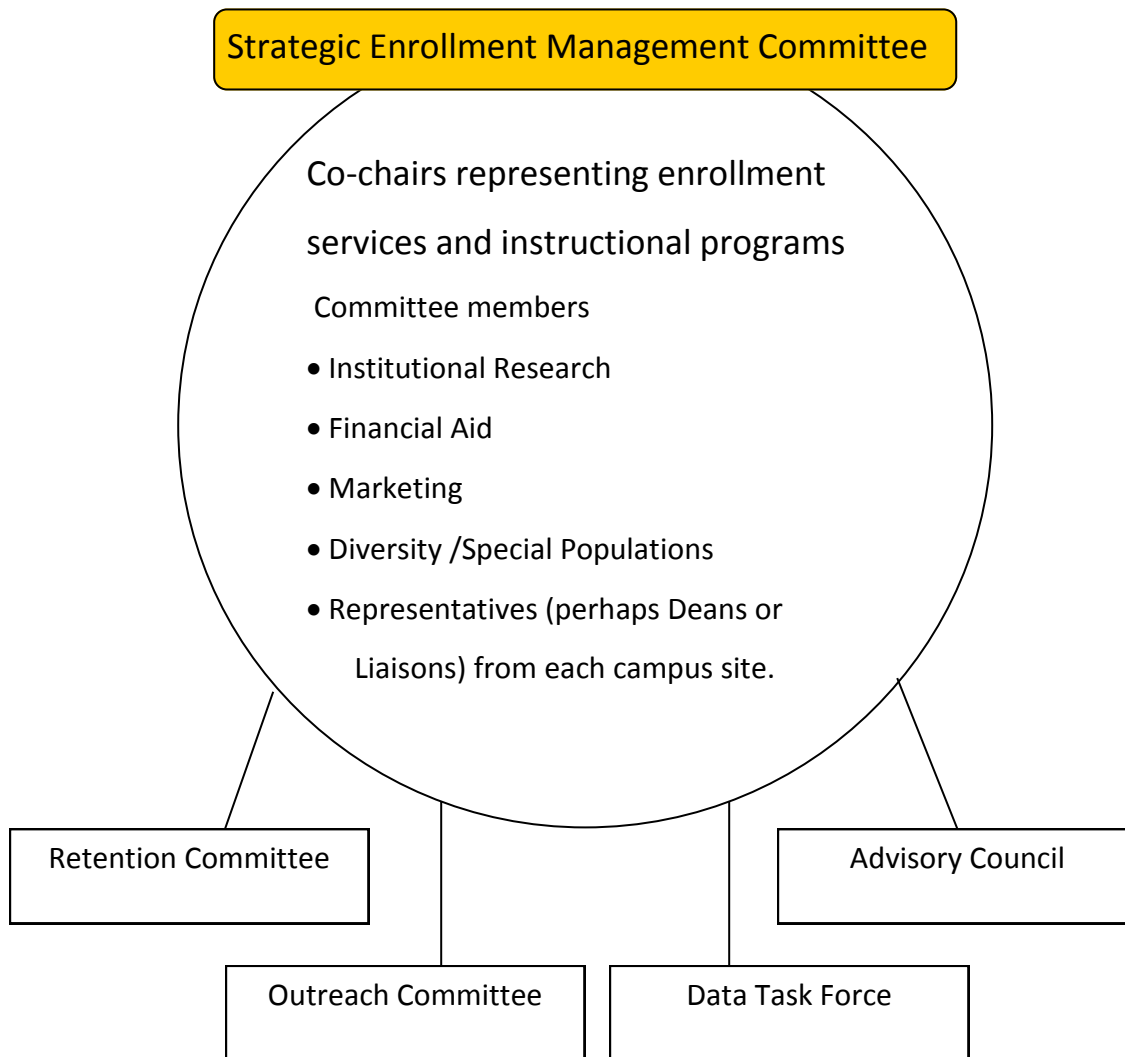
If a committee or task force structure is deemed best for NOC, appointing Dr. Edgington and Dr. Stinson as co-chairs would be advisable. Executive leadership strengthens the planning. At a minimum, other members should include Institutional Research, Financial Aid, Marketing, Native American Outreach, and representatives (perhaps Deans or Liaisons) from each campus

**Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)** is a comprehensive and coordinated process that enables a college to identify enrollment goals that are allied with its mission, its strategic plan, its environment, and its resources, and to reach those goals through the effective integration of administrative processes, student services, curriculum planning, and market analysis.



site. Community colleges often strive for representation from every sector, but that can lead to a committee that is too bulky. A viable model is to create a smaller, focused oversight SEM Committee where the members are also responsible for a sub-committee, such as Outreach, Retention, Student Life, and Instructional programs. SEM Committees also often refer to an occasional SEM Advisory Council (or other existing broadly representative body) to assure representative input and critiques. A model may look like that seen in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Suggested SEM Committee Model



Consideration of this model, or a variation, needs to keep in mind the critical importance of instructional leadership and faculty involvement in the SEM process.

A college needs to consider its particular culture, climate, and existing structure in order to decide what SEM structure fits best. And, for NOC's immediate purposes, it is best not to get too stuck on structure at the expense of action. Start with a committee structure with a membership that can get to work, and nurture its evolution.

### **A.2. Provide a "Presidential Charge".**

Concurrent with a decision about the structure of a SEM Committee, the SEM Committee needs an explicit Presidential Charge that outlines the purpose of the committee, expected outcomes, and desired timeline(s). It may include the names of appointed members. This provides the Committee with accountability and authority.

In terms of accountability, agendas for the President's Administrative Council meetings should include regular reports from the SEM Committee, and may include recommendations for action by the Administrative Council to implement one or more strategies.

In providing a Presidential Charge, the President could consider a campus-wide announcement or meeting that informs the campus of the authority of this committee, and describes the rationale for its importance. While it may be no secret that the College is addressing enrollment options as well as funding issues, it may be timely to provide data and information that gets all campus members updated and on the same page.

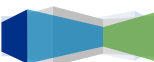
SEM can be a change agent within a college. It has long been recognized that SEM structures and strategies are sensitive to campus culture, but increasingly it appears that a SEM focus - because of its goals to affect enrollment - will affect a campus culture. Continuous open communication can support the cultural change that SEM can bring. (Barnes and Bourke, 2015)



**A.3. Place the SEM structure within the constellation of other planning and decision-making structures.**

Ideally, the NOC Strategic Plan is the pole star for a number of key areas of college operations insofar as those areas should develop their division's plans by taking their cue from the Strategic Plan's directions. Appointment of a SEM Committee places it in the constellation of other important planning functions of the College that revolve around the Strategic Plan. An example is seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: College Planning Functions



It is important to realize that the interaction between the SEM planning process and the Strategic Plan is a two-way street. Both inform each other as they continue to assess and adjust to the short-term and long-term opportunities and challenges facing the College.

The SEM Plan also has a very strong relationship to the other plans. For example, strategies for improvement in outreach should be seen in the Academic Plan, the Student Services Plan, the Communications Plan, and the SEM Plan, and ultimately the Budget Plan since enrollment affects income and expenses.

**Recommendation A: Establish a SEM Planning Structure.**

A.1. Establish a SEM Planning Committee.

A.2. Provide a "Presidential Charge".

A.3. Place the SEM Structure Within the Constellation of Other Planning and Decision-Making Structures.

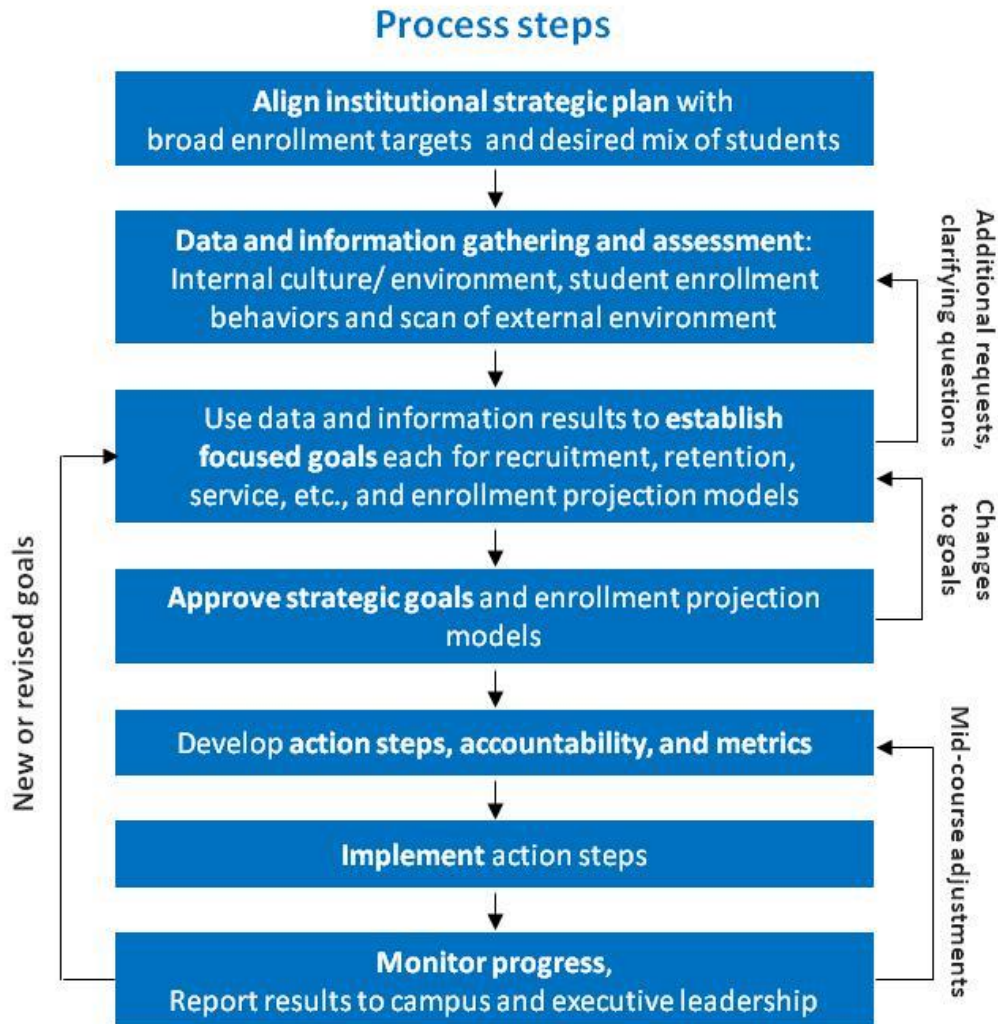
**Recommendation B: Develop a SEM Plan.**

Many of the typical "parts" of SEM are in place at NOC. For example, the College has a detailed Strategic Plan, and the Institutional Research Director and Dr. Rick Edgington demonstrate significant capacity to generate data and reports.

The next step for NOC is to follow a more disciplined approach to planning, implementation, communication and assessment. Figure 6 provides a visual conceptualization of the process.



Figure 6: SEM Planning Process Steps



This process can be applied at NOC. While there is no single recipe for a SEM Plan, the following steps should be considered. Extensive detail is provided in response to the request for specific guidance.



### **B.1. Assure alignment with the Strategic Plan.**

Notwithstanding the observation that all the goals of the current NOC Strategic Plan lead to institutional and student success, there are two goals that have a direct impact on enrollment planning: "Enhance recruitment efforts as well as retention and graduation rates" and "Cultivate and maintain partnerships to inform and improve academic decisions, enrich student experiences, and support regional needs". If NOC's Strategic Plan represents its priorities in applying resources to meet these and other goals in the Plan, then the SEM planning process should support those goals.

### **B.2. Develop an inventory of current programs related to supporting enrollment and student success.**

This task will not only get everyone on the same page in understanding what NOC staff and faculty are currently doing, especially at the different sites, but it will also produce a helpful reference during the SEM process.

### **B.3. Develop an environmental scan that includes internal and external data.**

Appendix C provides background for the benefits of conducting an environmental scan, and suggests some websites for scans done by other colleges. Reviewing other scans provides ideas about the topics that may be relevant to NOC.

In brief, the development and utilization of an environmental scan sets a standard that SEM decision-making will be informed by data and information, and it promotes forward thinking.

### **B.4. Develop an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges (SWOT) using the Environmental Scan, then use that analysis to identify the *issues* facing the College.**



This SWOT analysis will be a significant basis for identifying the SEM action plan and it will also inform your decision about selecting Key Enrollment Indicators, discussed later.

Through a SWOT analysis the stories the data reveal need to be translated into issues. At this point, the SEM Committee is making sense of the data and information and forming those issues that require attention.

On the one hand, this task is straightforward: collect and analyze data that helps the committee (and the College) discern its challenges and opportunities, its strengths and weaknesses vis a vis enrollment

management. On the other hand, the outcomes of an environmental scan analysis and the issues it reveals can point to directions that might not be fully aligned with the College's Strategic Plan. A case in point is the opportunity to attract and enroll international students; where does that fit? Colleges often find that an active SEM planning process informs the institutional Strategic Plan, just as the Strategic Plan informs the SEM directions. The key word here is "strategic". Though a plan is not particularly useful if it is too fluid, there needs to be recognition that the environment is rarely static, that opportunities and challenges arise, and that adjustments in plans may need to be considered.

**What is an "issue"?** It is an informed statement that poses a situation in such a way that demands a response. It is formulated through an examination of data and information. It serves as the rationale for action.

Some examples from other colleges:

- "The progression of students from our developmental program to college-level programs has been declining."
- "The College's District population will not significantly change, however the composition of the population in just XYZ County may change in terms of age, ethnicity, and income. That change will occur in tandem with and be driven by change in the regional economy as hospitality and tourism are forecast to account for approximately 20 percent of the region's share of economic activity by 2020."
- "The demand for wrap-around student services will increase. That demand is driven by external forces, such as regulations and funding formulas, and the College placing value and focus on equity, access, and opportunity for all students."
- "Undocumented youth are graduating from high school and cannot afford tuition, fees and books. They comprise a growing proportion of the high school population."





Environmental scanning and analyzing the issues it raises are iterative processes. A data task force, referenced in a following recommendation will find its work to be ongoing.

**B.5. Invite stakeholders to a focused workshop** to illuminate the data and issues and ask for their insights.

Outcomes of this activity are two-fold: it promotes campus communication as well as yields further information for your SEM planning.

**B.6. Begin action planning.**

Using the data and input from stakeholders and the SWOT issues formulation, place the issues into one of three sets:

- ⇒ Primary, aligned with the Strategic Plan, where addressing the issue(s) requires significant response and may result in high positive impact.
- ⇒ Secondary, may be addressed at a daily level and/or within current resources and structures.
- ⇒ Parking Lot, where the issues need to be watched.

Prioritize the Primary and Secondary issues. The more focused the better in order to reduce the sense that the SEM Plan is going to only produce more "flurries of activities". Prioritization will include consideration of institutional capacity to address the issues.

This is a critical moment in SEM Planning. Intelligent and committed people, such as those found on college campuses, have no shortage of ideas of how to improve this program or that service. Those ideas will be popping out all through SEM Planning. This is the point where disciplined work needs to be done by looking hard at the data and information and discerning what is really rising to the top as issues that need to be resolved to strengthen institutional and student success.



### **B.7. Prepare a draft of strategies, objectives and suggested tactics.**

Select one, two or three of the top primary issues; keep these tight and avoid assigning dozens of small tactics if a large impactful tactic could be implemented instead. If the secondary issues do not drain focus from the primary issues and concomitant strategies, assign tactics and objectives to them.

Describing issues, strategies, objectives and tactics as short-term and long-term may also be effective, particularly in the case of low-hanging fruit. Alternatively, recognizing some objectives and tactics more as "daily operational improvements" and others as truly impactful larger-scale initiatives helps in understanding where priorities and resources lie.

### **B.8. Seek approval from the Executive leadership.**

With their review, proceed or tweak strategies and tactics, as outlined in the draft. As mentioned above, the SEM Committee report should be a regular agenda item for the Administrative Council. At this stage, it is important to gain buy-in for the SEM Plan.

### **B.9. Create a written plan.**

Now is the time to create a written plan based on feedback from the Executive leadership that identifies the issues, the response/strategy, the objectives, the goal, the tactics, the timeline, resources, the locus of responsibility, and the assessment process. Included in the written plan are the data that describe current status and the desired goal relevant to the issues, strategies and objectives.

In addition, it is helpful to identify Key Enrollment Indicators (KEIs), quite similar to Key Performance Indicators which often form part of strategic planning assessment processes. KEIs may be different from the more detailed progress indicators that are specific to, say,



intervention strategies for students transitioning from developmental coursework to college-level. Key Enrollment Indicators help to see the large effect, such as:

- ⇒ Number of new student applications
- ⇒ Tuition income
- ⇒ Enrollment headcount and credit hours
- ⇒ Retention, using an definition of relevance to NOC

Key Enrollment Indicators are general snapshots of enrollment health. Each college/SEM Committee decides what KEI's are most relevant to them.

College leaders have already reviewed some SEM Plans from other colleges, which may help in visualizing this outcome.

#### **B.10. Invite stakeholders to a focused workshop to discuss implementation.**

Establishing a SEM ethos and campus commitment requires transparent communication. A workshop is an opportunity to disseminate information, and an opportunity to listen. It can be accompanied by a short report circulated through e-mail.

#### **B.11. Follow an ongoing review and assessment process.**

Continue bi-weekly meetings, short or longer, to stay on top of data and progress. Designate a timeline for updating the Environmental Scan. Assure regular communication with the campus. Adjust the tactics as needed.

Through the planning process, it may be helpful to invite colleagues from around campus who may have special perspectives to join one or more meetings, or assist with providing information to the committee.



These recommendations are summarized below. In print, they may make some logical sense, but the execution can be challenging when there are so many other converging and emerging responsibilities to which the members of a campus community must attend. Frankly, it is up to the leaders of the SEM Committee to "keep their eye on the prize". Toward this end, a calendar for these SEM Planning Steps is suggested in Appendix B.

One of the challenges in enrollment management planning is the perception that everything requires extra funding. Indeed, this may be the case at NOC as some strategies and tactics are selected. Alternatively, taking a comprehensive view of the institution might open the possibility of re-deploying resources and/or transforming current policies and processes at negligible cost; doing so is an example of identifying strategies that are so impactful that the need to implement them outweighs the difficulties of re-deployment and transformation. An example may be the consolidation of two or three programs/services (and thereby the consolidation of staff and budget) and the assignment of new functions to the new program/service.

Funding concerns also play into the timing of SEM Committee decisions. In the case where there may be budget impacts, those recommendations need to be discussed before the budget calendar of the institution grinds into gear.



### **Recommendation B: Develop a SEM Plan.**

- B.1. Assure alignment with the Strategic Plan.
- B.2. Develop an inventory of current programs related to supporting enrollment and student success.
- B.3. Develop an environmental scan that includes internal and external data.
- B.4. Develop an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges (SWOT) using the Environmental Scan, then use that analysis to identify the issues facing the College.
- B.5. Invite stakeholders to a focused workshop to illuminate the data and issues and ask for their insights.
- B.6. Begin action planning.
- B.7. Prepare a draft of strategies, objectives and suggested tactics.
- B.8. Seek approval from the Executive leadership.
- B.9. Create a written plan.
- B.10. Invite stakeholders to a focused workshop to discuss implementation.
- B.11. Follow an ongoing review and assessment process.

### **Recommendation C: Expand Data Collection and Analysis.**

Data collection and analysis are among the very first steps in a Strategic Enrollment Management process, and it is timely for NOC to strengthen data collection and analysis.

#### **C.1. Appoint a small Cross-functional Data Task Force.**

The purpose of the Data Task Force is to identify and produce the type of data that would expand NOC's ability to consider its enrollment future and strategies. As noted in "Observations", NOC does not operate with any type of data governance/stewardship model. The recommendation for a cross-functional data task force is the first step toward this insofar as such a group enables the College to collectively learn more about its capacity and needs to both manage and use data to inform decision-making.



- ⇒ The Task Force should be charged by the President and held accountable for progress.
- ⇒ NOC could consider members in the Cross-functional Data Task Force to include representatives from: Institutional Research, Registrar, Information Technology, Academic Affairs, Financial Aid, Finance, Retention, and Stillwater and Enid sites. In sum, representatives who themselves are responsible for data generation and integrity. A chair or co-chairs should lead the Task Force.
- ⇒ One or more of the Data Task Force members may be part of the SEM Committee. And, as described in Figure 4, the Data Task Force has a responsibility to serve the SEM Committee.
- ⇒ The work of this Task Force should include identifying where data is kept in the institution. Who has data, and what is the content of that data, e.g. student records, financial and scholarship data, advising records, early alert notifications, student accounts, immunization records, etc.? Who has access to the various types of data? This helps to identify data stewards (those responsible for data collection and integrity) and data silos.
- ⇒ The Task Force should study data governance and data stewardship models as a precursor to a possible future recommendation to College leadership to adopt such models at NOC.

The Task Force should produce, on an ongoing basis, quantitative and qualitative data that informs the work of the SEM Committee. This is an iterative process, often progressing from obvious areas of interest to wider and deeper considerations as knowledge accumulates. Typically this takes the form of a regular environmental scan. For examples of environmental scans, see Appendix C. Suggestions for data collection that should get the process started can be found in Appendix D.

Though this recommendation serves the purposes of supporting enrollment planning, such a Task Force obviously supports other College planning and decision-making functions.

### **Recommendation C: Expand Data Collection and Analysis.**

C.1. Appoint a small cross-functional data task force.



## **Recommendation D: Improve the Recruitment and Admission Processes.**

This recommendation runs the risk of prematurely defining elements of the SEM planning process since it offers possible solutions that should not be determined before the assessment of data and the prioritization of issues and resources. The caveat, therefore, is that these recommendations may be used for short-term improvements while wider-ranging initiatives are considered in the SEM process.

While the College follows reasonable methods of reaching and attracting students, there are unfulfilled opportunities to do better.

### **D.1. Develop a college-wide outreach plan.**

- ⇒ Convene stakeholders in prospective student outreach activities, such as High School College Relations Coordinators, Native American outreach, Career Tech Center coordinator, TANF staff, faculty in Agriculture, Fine Arts and Communications, Marketing, (and Upward Bound and Gear Up staff if allowed by the grant program) to discuss their mutual interests, experiences, plans and resources for the coming year. Use as much data as possible to inform this discussion, particularly some of the data suggested in Appendix D.
- ⇒ Develop a written shared plan for what will be done, by whom, when, how, and the resources needed.
- ⇒ Seek review and approval by College leadership, particularly for the purpose of clarifying resources.

### **D.2. Related to that outline, identify strategic follow-up of prospective student contacts.**

- ⇒ Learn how the Poise software can be used to "mine" the prospective students in that database and communicate with them. (Currently, that module is underutilized.)
- ⇒ After the original packet of information is sent to a prospective student contact, determine the next contact, and the next one after that. Determine appropriate content or purpose for the contact, such as notification of opportunities to take a tour, to meet an advisor, to register, to apply for residence hall. Contact may be by phone, by e-mail, or by mail. Current students could phone prospective students and offer a welcome.



- ⇒ For admitted students in the database, follow-up after the letter of admission. Again, determine appropriate content and purpose. For example, admitted students can be reminded of the steps to registration, or can be sent a welcome postcard from the President.
- ⇒ These steps should be incorporated in the college-wide outreach plan.

### **D.3. Utilize all College contact points.**

- ⇒ Determine how other offices can add to the prospective student database. For example, can the Financial Aid Office provide names of students who have applied for financial aid, but who have not yet applied for admission? Do faculty receive prospective student contacts that can be forwarded for input into the database?

#### **Recommendation D: Improve the Recruitment and Admission Processes.**

- D.1. Develop a college-wide outreach plan.
- D.2. Related to that outline, identify strategic follow-up of prospective student contacts.
- D.3. Utilize all College contact points.

### **Recommendation E: Refine Retention Strategies.**

NOC is exemplary in its focus on retention through Retention Specialists and an Early Alert system. The resources devoted to deploying Retention Specialists deserve full utilization by faculty and staff.

Two recommendations as a result of this consultation may already be on the minds of College leadership.

#### **E.1. Increase faculty buy-in.**

- ⇒ Dr. Edgington cited a notable reduction in students on probation and warning, which he considers the result of early intervention. Such a result should be shared with the College community to motivate more involvement.





- ⇒ Strengthening communication between faculty and the Retention Specialists - seeing them as a team - may support more buy-in.

## **E.2. Assess who is receiving the Early Alerts.**

Assess how the various follow-up interventions are productive or not. Learn from each other.

- ⇒ The Native American Advisor should receive the Alerts.

### **Recommendation E. Refine Retention Strategies.**

E.1. Increase faculty buy-in.

E.2. Assess who is receiving the Early Alerts.

## **Recommendation F: : Strengthen Advising Processes.**

Since advising services are one of the chief drivers of student success, NOC should consider improving the processes that enable them.

A review of the Updates to the College's Strategic Plan, as well as information gained in interviews, indicates College faculty and staff are rather continually in the process of adjusting advising services. Nonetheless, advising services - which in the literature is seen as a critical factor in student success - need an intensive review and renewal.

### **F.1. Convene a Cross-functional Advising Task Force.**

The purpose of this task force is to consider the current system and make recommendations for college-wide improvements. Considerations might include:

- ⇒ Clarify the College's advising policy and implementation strategies.
  - What are the intended purposes and outcomes of advising?
  - Who is required to see an advisor and when, and why?



- Who are the empowered advisors?
  - How is training and availability assured?
  - What is the mode of advising? (In-person, phone, e-mail?)
  - What are the exceptions? (How might advising policy and implementation be different for UC Ponca City students, for online and evening students, for each campus?)
  - How are students informed of their responsibilities in the advising process?
- ⇒ Continued emphasis on training sessions, including discussions of holistic approaches to student academic guidance.
  - ⇒ Identification of key qualitative and quantitative data elements that measure advising loads, that forecast anticipated periods when advising is most needed, and that capture frequent advising mistakes that should be addressed. (The degree audit program should also be studied to determine if it also offers a future semester course planning map, which helps NOC schedule planners anticipate course demand.)
  - ⇒ Identify potential at-risk students and include strategies for advisor follow-up of such students.

## **F.2. Incorporate staff advisors in the advising model.**

Given that staff already provide some advising to new students, particularly when faculty are unavailable, the advising system could be readily improved by recognizing the capacity of the Counselors, Retention Specialists, Assistant Registrars and High School/College Relations Coordinators and providing them with appropriate training. Possible models to consider are:

- ⇒ Staff and faculty work as partners in advising new students. Continuing students are assigned a faculty advisor in their "major".
- ⇒ An Academic Advising Center is established and relies on permanent professional staff advisors who may also have other responsibilities (e.g. retention, counseling). Faculty serve primarily as mentors.



### **F.3. Fully implement the degree audit system.**

The degree audit system should be clarified and uniformly adopted as the single mode for faculty and staff advisors for conducting course planning and monitoring program progress. Advising faculty and staff should have universal access. Access to other key portions of the student record, such as the scanned transcripts, as they relate to student advising could also be universally accessible.

#### **Recommendation F: Strengthen Advising Processes.**

- F.1. Convene a Cross-functional Advising Task Force.
- F.2. Incorporate staff advisors in the advising model.
- F.3. Fully implement the degree audit system.

### **Recommendation G: Strengthen International Student Processes and Services.**

Enrollment of international students brings with it special obligations, particularly the obligation to provide services and educational programming appropriate to the international students who are admitted, and the obligation to maintain compliance with the U.S. Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVIS) requirements. With that in mind, the following recommendations should be considered:

#### **G.1. Implement English language programs.**

Consider implementing English language support for international students throughout their studies at NOC. Specifically, provide several levels that prepare students for college level courses, as well as accessible and appropriate tutoring options for persons whose first language is not English. Most colleges and universities in the U.S. establish a tuition and fee rate for such programs that enable them to be self-sustaining.



## **G.2. Pursue program Improvement.**

The Diversity Officer and Coordinator of International Students, with support from the campus community, should explore how to best implement international student success best practices in light of the increase in enrollment. Some of the issues that should be addressed are:

- ⇒ Assessment of current admission criteria and deadlines to determine if they are appropriate.
- ⇒ Assuring quality and compliance in the inquiry, application and admission processes, and in monitoring the visa status of enrolled students.
- ⇒ Assuring appropriate and timely review of transcripts in the application process and the award of transfer credit if applicable.
- ⇒ Assuring culturally appropriate support services to international students.
- ⇒ Improving the website to be more welcoming as well as more informative about the international student experience at NOC, particularly differentiating the campus sites.<sup>14</sup>

## **G.3. Consider relationship with Global Education.**

College leadership should consider the relationship between the international student program and Global Education, perhaps finding mutual goals and support services.

## **G.4. Promote professional development.**

College leadership should commit to the professional development of the Diversity Officer and Coordinator of International Students through attendance at NAFSA and/or AACRAO conferences.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Some diverse examples may be found at:  
<https://www.kirkwood.edu/international>  
[http://www.nwacc.edu/web/lss\\_internationaladmissions/](http://www.nwacc.edu/web/lss_internationaladmissions/)  
<http://www.greenriver.edu/international.htm>



## **G.5. Review NOC's commitment to international student enrollment.**

NOC is already in the middle of a significant international enrollment, so the forgoing recommendations need serious consideration. Predicting trends in international enrollment, particularly when a college is passive in its recruitment stance, is difficult. But if NOC continues to collaborate with OSU's international enrollment strategies, then NOC can anticipate growth. Further growth could possibly occur through "armchair recruiting" and/or the use of agents. College leadership needs to have an internal conversation about its interests in international student enrollment.

### **Recommendation G: Strengthen International Student Processes and Services.**

- G.1. Implement English language programs.
- G.2. Pursue program Improvement.
- G.3. Consider relationship with Global Education.
- G.4. Promote professional development.
- G.5. Review NOC's commitment to international student enrollment.

## **Recommendation H: Review the tuition payment schedule.**

The following offers a counterpoint to the current tuition payment schedule. The purpose of this proposal is to invite consideration of how the current tuition payment rules affect student behavior, institutional work-arounds, seat management, and income.

### **H.1. Change the payment deadline.**

⇒ Continue early registration.

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.nafsa.org/Connect\\_and\\_Network/Engage\\_with\\_a\\_Community/NAFSA\\_Regions/Region\\_III/](http://www.nafsa.org/Connect_and_Network/Engage_with_a_Community/NAFSA_Regions/Region_III/)  
<http://www.aacrao.org/aacrao-solutions/international-education-services/ies>



- ⇒ Early registrants must pay the tuition, or have the tuition covered by financial aid, scholarships or third party payers, by 30 days prior to the first day of class, e.g. July 15, or December 15, etc.
- ⇒ Unpaid early registrants are dropped from their classes and notified by postcard that they may re-register online. (This implies that the Advisor Hold is "off".) Offer advisor assistance.
- ⇒ Registrants during the 30 days before classes begin, must pay, or have the tuition covered by financial aid, scholarships or third party payer, by the Monday before classes begin, or they will be dropped.
- ⇒ Unpaid early registrants are dropped from their classes and notified by postcard that they may re-register online. (This implies that the Advisor Hold is "off".) Offer advisor assistance.
- ⇒ Registrants during the week before classes, and the first few days of the first week, must pay at time of registration, or they will be dropped.

## **H.2. Monitor filled and open classes.**

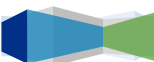
- ⇒ Full classes will have openings when unpaid students are dropped.
- ⇒ The option to carry a waitlist for full classes is an aid to filling seats.

## **H.3. Make a commitment to communicate with students regarding their payment status.**

Given the fact that so many NOC students are first generation, they may need more prompting regarding their payment obligations. Provide students with a copy of the class schedule and the tuition and fees owed when they register in person. Send at least one reminder to unpaid students.

### **Recommendation H: Review the Tuition Payment Schedule.**

- H.1. Change the payment deadline.
- H.2. Monitor filled and open classes.
- H.3. Make a commitment to communicate with students regarding their payment status.



## **Recommendation I: Continue website improvements.**

It is obvious that work has gone into the website, especially in its adherence to the brand and the standardized format. The following are suggestions for continued improvement that may add some support to prospective student interests.

### **I.1. Accessible prospective student inquiry connection.**

Place a button or tab on the front page that directs the user immediately to make an inquiry - perhaps titled "Contact Us" via the information request form found at <http://www.noc.edu/request-information-enid>. (Why is it tagged with Enid?) The APPLY NOW button on the front page provides a good example.

### **I.2. Add photos.**

Consider adding photos to the website to liven it up. Assure diversity in the photos.

### **I.3. Insert some Spanish language content.**

Consider adding relevant content in Spanish, perhaps on the Future Students page and on the Financial Aid page. For an example, see

<http://www.vvc.edu/>

<https://www.pima.edu/espanol/index.html>



#### **I.4. Amplify program descriptions.**

The "Academic Degree" list only clicks through to the degree sheet. It could be more informative to add some information about what makes the major or department special. Some examples are:

<http://www.everettcc.edu/programs/bat/accounting/>

<http://www.northark.edu/academics/areas-of-study/agriculture/index>

#### **Recommendation I: Continue website improvements.**

- I.1. Develop accessible prospective student inquiry connection.
- I.2. Add photos.
- I.3. Insert some Spanish language content.
- I.4. Amplify program descriptions.





## All Recommendations

### **Recommendation A: Establish a SEM Planning Structure.**

- A.1. Establish a SEM Planning Committee.
- A.2. Provide a "Presidential Charge".
- A.3. Place the SEM Structure Within the Constellation of Other Planning and Decision-Making Structures.

### **Recommendation B: Develop a SEM Plan.**

- B.1. Assure alignment with the Strategic Plan.
- B.2. Develop an inventory of current programs related to supporting enrollment and student success.
- B.3. Develop an environmental scan that includes internal and external data.
- B.4. Develop an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges (SWOT) using the Environmental Scan, then use that analysis to identify the *issues* facing the College.
- B.5. Invite stakeholders to a focused workshop to illuminate the data and issues and ask for their insights.
- B.6. Begin action planning.
- B.7. Prepare a draft of strategies, objectives and suggested tactics.
- B.8. Seek approval from the Executive leadership.
- B.9. Create a written plan.
- B.10. Invite stakeholders to a focused workshop to discuss implementation.
- B.11. Follow an ongoing review and assessment process.

### **Recommendation C: Expand Data Collection and Analysis.**

- C.1. Appoint a small Cross-functional Data Task Force.

### **Recommendation D: Improve the Recruitment and Admission processes.**

- D.1. Develop a college-wide outreach plan.
- D.2. Related to that outline, identify strategic follow-up of prospective student contacts.
- D.3. Utilize all College contact points.



**Recommendation E: Refine Retention Strategies.**

- E.1. Increase faculty buy-in.
- E.2. Assess who is receiving the Early Alerts.

**Recommendation F: Strengthen Advising Processes.**

- F.1. Convene a cross-functional advising task force.
- F.2. Incorporate staff advisors in the advising model.
- F.3. Fully implement the degree audit system.

**Recommendation G: Strengthen International Student Processes and Services.**

- G.1. English Language Programs.
- G.2. Program Improvement.
- G.3. Relationship with Global Education.
- G.4. Professional development.
- G.5. Review NOC's commitment to international student enrollment.

**Recommendation H: Review the Tuition Payment Schedule.**

- H.1. Change the payment deadline.
- H.2. Monitor filled and open classes.
- H.3. Make a commitment to communicate with students regarding their payment status.

**Recommendation I: Continue Website Improvements.**

- I.1. Accessible prospective student inquiry page.
- I.2. Photos.
- I.3. Spanish language content.
- I.4. Program descriptions.



## Closing and Next Steps

Thank you for the opportunity to work with Northern Oklahoma College on this project. Staff and faculty interaction prior to and during the onsite visit was exceptionally helpful and informative. The interest and general competence of the NOC's staff is quite evident, and is a valuable ingredient in moving forward.

It is AACRAO Consulting's mission to provide subject matter expertise and to transfer knowledge so that institutions can meet their enrollment goals. If needed and preferred, AACRAO Consulting can provide ongoing expertise to help facilitate these changes.



## Appendix A: Interview Schedule and Participants

	<b>Monday, April 11</b>	<b>Tuesday, April 12</b>	<b>Wednesday, April 13</b>
8am	President & Rick	Travel to Enid	Office tour
9am	Executive Team	Faculty	Recruiters
10am	Walk around	Staff	Retention Specialists
11am	Financial Aid/Scholarships	Students	Students
12pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch (Exec. Team)
1pm	Marketing/Webmaster	Travel to Stillwater	
2pm	Faculty	Faculty	
3pm	Staff	Division Chairs	
4pm	Academic Affairs/IR	Students	
5pm		Return to Tonkawa	



## Appendix B: Calendar for a SEM Planning Process

Preparation	<p>President has issued a call to action and a SEM Committee Charge by announcement or by a campus meeting.</p> <p>President appoints members of the SEM Committee.</p> <p>President appoints a Data Task Force.</p> <p>Both the Data Task Force and SEM Committee need to be ready to take action.</p>
Preparation (B.3.)	<p>Chair or Co-Chairs of the SEM Committee meet with the Data Task Force, discussing the type of information that will inform SEM planning.</p> <p>Utilizing the list in Appendix D as a starting point, or some similar list, the Data Task Force starts to work on an Environmental Scan.</p>
Meeting 1 (B.1.) (B.2.)	<p>First meeting of the SEM Committee.</p> <p>Review the Charge.</p> <p>Review NOC's Strategic Plan and discuss SEM's fit with enrollment aspects of the Plan. Identify key points in the Strategic Plan that may be aligned with enrollment planning.</p> <p>Update Committee on the Data Task Force.</p> <p>Assign each appropriate member the task of bringing an inventory of their division's or unit's current activities/initiatives designed to affect enrollment on post-it-notes. (Name of activity, brief description, taskmaster, funding source, timeline.) The goal is to identify what is already being done.</p>
Meeting 2 (B.2.)	<p>Post the post-it notes on a wall or white board and use a group activity to organize by similarity. Assign someone to collate and print the inventory. (Circulate the inventory before the next meeting.)</p>



Meeting 3 (B.2.) (B.3.)	<p>Review the inventory. Tweak, if necessary. Assign task to someone to produce the list and use it as a reference item during the planning process.</p> <p>Focus on completing an Environmental Scan.</p> <p>Include the Data Task Force in this meeting, or at least its leaders. Discuss their current progress on data collection and analysis. Provide input to the Data Task Force as to other questions that may need to be answered with some data. Ask that findings be forwarded to the SEM Committee on an ongoing basis for the next four weeks.</p> <p>During this discussion, SEM Committee members may be able to volunteer data and information that they have.</p>
	<p>Note: The Environmental Scan does not need to be a dissertation. It needs to be a cogent collection of internal and external data items and information that are the basis of understanding the College's current dynamics and that illuminate the possible challenges and opportunities that face the College. Don't get stuck on perfection. Do your best and be ready to use what you find and move on. As the SEM process continues, you will dig deeper and be able to fine-tune.</p>
Meeting 4 (B.3.)	Review available data and discuss a cogent analysis. Summarize.
Meeting 5 (B.3.)	Review available data and discuss a cogent analysis. Summarize. Are there any additional areas that need investigation? If so, connect with the Data Task Force.
Meeting 6 (B.3.)	Review available data and discuss a cogent analysis. Summarize.
Meeting 7 (B.3.)	Collate the data and analyses, review. Summarize. Are there any additional areas that need investigation? If so, connect with the Data Task Force
Meeting 8 (B.3.) (B.4.)	Using a group activity, review the summaries of data to date. Develop an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges (SWOT) using the Environmental Scan and inventory information. Then use that analysis to identify the <i>issues</i> facing the College, and concurrently, the Key Enrollment Indicators.
Meeting 9 (B.4.)	Discuss the findings of the last meeting and fine-tune. Begin to generate prioritized issues.



Meeting 10 (B.4.) (B.5.)	<p>Gain consensus on prioritized issues.</p> <p>Ask a volunteer to develop a presentation that summarizes the various data findings and the prioritized issues.</p> <p>Note: These are issues, not solutions. You are outlining what needs to be addressed, not talking about solutions. Yet.</p> <p>Plan a large group meeting of all College stakeholders.</p>
Meeting 11 (B.5.)	<p>Hold a workshop with the College community, focused on SEM work to date, including findings and the current list of prioritized issues. Ask for input.</p> <p>Note: Some of the input may indicate the need for more or different data. The Data Task Force needs to stand ready to follow-up.</p>
Meeting 12 (B.6.)	<p>Integrate the input from the workshop and any new data.</p> <p>Begin action planning. Using the data and input from stakeholders and the SWOT issues formulation, place the issues into one of three sets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Primary, aligned with the Strategic Plan, where addressing the issue(s) requires significant response and may result in high positive impact.</li> <li>⇒ Secondary, may be addressed at a daily level and/or within current resources and structures. These tend to be operational adjustments.</li> <li>⇒ Parking Lot, where the issues need to be watched.</li> </ul> <p>Prioritize! Prioritization will include consideration of institutional capacity to address the issues.</p>
Meetings 13 & 14 (B.6.) (B.7.)	<p>Continue the work of Meeting 12 and finalize the issues.</p> <p>Design strategies, objectives and suggested tactics, selecting one, two or three of the top Primary issues. Keep these tight and avoid assigning dozens of small tactics if a large impactful tactic could be implemented instead.</p> <p>If the Secondary issues do not drain focus from the Primary issues and concomitant strategies, assign tactics and objectives to them.</p>
Meeting 15 (B.8.)	<p>Finalize the work of Meeting 14. Produce a summary and prepare to seek approval from the Executive leadership to proceed, or to tweak strategies and tactics.</p>
Meeting 16 (B.9.)	<p>Using the already described strategies, objectives and tactics, and incorporating feedback from Executive leadership, create a written plan that identifies each issue, the response/strategy, the objectives, the goal, the tactics, the timeline, resources, the locus of responsibility, and the assessment process. This may be a small work group task that is then presented to the whole committee.</p>



Meeting 17 (B.10.)	Invite stakeholders to a focused workshop to discuss the plan and implementation.
Ongoing (B.11.)	Implement! Follow an ongoing review and assessment process. Continue bi-weekly meetings, short or longer, to stay on top of data and progress. Designate a timeline for updating the Environmental Scan. Assure regular communication with the campus. Adjust the tactics as needed.





## Appendix C: Environmental Scanning

It is helpful to think of an environmental scan as a **filter**.

Data and information is collected from both internal and external sources on a variety of topics. The websites listed below provide a good sample of the kinds of data and information that go into a Scan. The list can be long.

The goal is to review the different pieces of data, to make linkages, and to filter what appears to be most relevant to the challenges and opportunities that the College is facing now, and on the horizon. Then, use a narrative that summarizes and tells the stories revealed by the data.

All the data and information is there, but the scan filters out the "noise" and puts the data into perspective. The narrative scan, backed up by data, enables the community to understand and use the information more readily.

Environmental scans are living documents. They must be updated at least annually. Doing so keeps the College's eye on changing dynamics that affect College decisions and planning.

The following are examples of very extensive scans, and may provide some ideas for some topics that may be relevant to NOC.

<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/strategicplanning/downloads/scan14.pdf>

<http://www.swic.edu/environmental-committee/>

Click on the report

[http://goforward.harpercollege.edu/about/leadership/planning/pdf/harper\\_env\\_scan\\_9may2014\\_final.pdf](http://goforward.harpercollege.edu/about/leadership/planning/pdf/harper_env_scan_9may2014_final.pdf)

<https://alamo.edu/district/planning/env-scan2014/>



## Appendix D: Data Collection Suggestions

NOC already has data, but there are some significant gaps. The following list provides some obvious first steps in filling some gaps, and is best viewed as a way to get started.

- a) Extract the data on students who applied for Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 who did not enroll, and request a report from the Clearinghouse as to where those students are attending (if anywhere) and what their major is. This adds insight into the options prospective students are considering and is the beginning of a competitive analysis. It may be possible to manually match that with their previous high school, if appropriate, to provide further insight as to what NOC messaging might be for some high schools.
- b) Extract the data for students who attended NOC for 2014-15, but not 2015-16, and request a report from the Clearinghouse to determine if they are attending other institutions, and their major. Then, match that report back to NOC data and determine who is leaving, and at what credit standing. For those who are not attending another institution, and who appear to still have an opportunity to complete at NOC, follow-up.
- c) Look deeply into student attrition profiles. Who is leaving earlier than they should, and when? Consider sorting by age, gender, ethnicity, major, site, online, full-time, part-time, GPA, number of credits, living in residence hall or not, commuting from a distance, first generation, on financial aid or scholarship, athletes, etc. The IPEDS retention data does not provide enough detail. Where could NOC affect retention with a significant impact?
- d) Conduct an analysis of yield from inquiry to applicant and from applicant to enrollee. The reference to “inquiry” is to those names in the Poise databases, for example, of ACT scores, contacts at fairs and high schools, etc.
- e) Analysis of yield from students who had their ACT scores reported to NOC.
- f) Compare the names of students who have their FAFSAs submitted to NOC but who have not applied for admission. Follow-up with those students.
- g) Produce a weekly report of accumulating applications to assess flow and impact on advising and registration system. (That is, applications for Fall first week of January, second week of January, third week of January, etc.)



- h) Dive into NOC's regional demographics. In terms of populations NOC wishes to serve, where are they? What is their age range? What is their educational attainment level? What are their anticipated opportunities and constraints?
- i) Study the profile of NOC's online enrollment. Does it suggest gaps, opportunities?
- j) Conduct an analysis by appropriate school district of the enrollment in lower grades, to gain a sense of the size of the graduating classes in your service area in the next several years. Use this knowledge to inform some enrollment projections.
- k) Summarize the anticipated effects of Prior Prior Year (PPY) for financial aid, and other projections for scholarship and other aid sources. How might PPY affect the cycles of outreach, application and admission?<sup>16</sup>

NOC's FactBook produces information along these lines and some of this information is very appropriate for a FactBook. An environmental scan, however, introduces information about the world outside the campus that offers both challenges and opportunities the College needs to consider. After pursuing the suggestions above, the Data Task Force should address itself to such topics as marketplace competition, workforce trends, state and national government regulatory trends, state and national benchmarks, technology trends, socio-economic indicators, and topics suggested by the recent Ecosystems report.

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<sup>16</sup> See: "Is your campus ready for the 2017-2018 FAFSA?" <http://www.aacrao.org/resources/resources-detail-view/is-your-campus-ready-for-the--2017-2018-fafsa->



## Appendix E: International Student Considerations

Students from abroad are increasingly choosing to study at American colleges and universities. Currently, 886,052 enroll at U.S. colleges and universities (Institute of International Education 2014). Further, enrollments are growing. Between 2012/13 and 2013/14, international student enrollments grew by 8.1 percent in the U.S. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projects that the number of international students will more than double by 2020 (OECD 2014).

The College needs to assure that its growing number (increased from 18 to 133 in the past five years) of international students are supported to reach their educational objectives while enrolled at NOC. This will require the College to pay more attention to the international student success factors. Some of the most discussed factors include: English proficiency, studying in a postsecondary academic program for which they have experience at the high school level, reliable financial support, cultural adjustment, social support, and the availability of a strong support person.

The recent addition of the Diversity Officer and Coordinator of International Students should be instrumental in helping the College to provide some of the academic and non-academic support international students require. We are, however, concerned that these are often separate roles. By combining them into a single position in this way, there may not be ample time for this individual to complete all of the essential duties and responsibilities contained in the position description, which could result in international students not receiving some of the support they need. This will require close monitoring.

College admission requirements for international students require applicants whose native language is not English to present proof of English proficiency in the form of a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score (paper-based, 500; computer-based, 173; Internet-based,



61). They also permit the College to enroll students on a conditional basis if the applicant has scored lower than the required score and has studied at an approved English language school for a minimum of 12 weeks after taking the TOEFL, Students who arrive with this level of English proficiency will need additional English language support throughout their studies at NOC. Many best practices are available to guide institutional efforts including support in the following areas: academic advising, academic integrity, employment, finances, health and wellness, immigration, residence life, social and cultural, and transition support. AACRAO will be publishing in June 2016 its updated *The International Guide: A Resource for international Education Professionals*, which includes a chapter authored by Dr. Clayton Smith on international student success.



## Appendix F: Best Practices for Integrating International and Domestic Students

In the interests of encouraging NOC to reflect on the integration of international students on campus, the following excerpt is provided from "Seeking Best Practices for Integrating International and Domestic Students", published in 2014 by the University of Minnesota Advisory Group, and found at

[https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/14\\_integration\\_best\\_practices\\_overall.pdf](https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/14_integration_best_practices_overall.pdf)

“There have been some observations and questions raised as to whether international students are receiving American degrees or American educations. When we look out our windows and onto the campus, do we see students moving in parallel tracks, sharing a common physical space, but with limited overlap in their academic, social, and personal lives?

UMTC recently participated in the International Student Barometer (ISB). When UMTC international students were asked on the survey about their one greatest challenge, they indicated forming friendships outside their culture (this was selected over language, housing, culture shock, and other challenges). When it comes to the issue of friendship, the concerns of international students at UMTC are not unique. The research most referenced during my discussions on integration was Elisabeth Gareis’ study finding “more than one in three foreign students in a new survey say they have no close U.S. friends, and many wish they had more.”

Another CIC institution, the University of Wisconsin’s International Student Services, also conducted a survey that found “the biggest concern for international students is ‘making friends with Americans.’”

This begs the question, how would domestic students articulate their desire to form friendships outside their cultures? Would it be equally salient to domestic students as it is to international students? A Chronicle article states, “Some educators worry that they have not done enough to



prepare American students for their new classmates. If universities don't act more aggressively, they worry, cultural clashes could flare up on their campuses."

Neil Harrison, a senior research fellow at the University of the West of England found in a study "most domestic students described interaction with international students as anxiety-causing" with "particular barriers around language ... importance of insular cultural artifacts ... and strong fear of causing offence. ... As a result, domestic students tend to unthinkingly avoid intercultural interaction."

Yet another source, research done by the Global Perspective Institute, found that "U.S. students are far less likely to intentionally involve people from other cultural backgrounds in their lives."

This confirms perceptions among many international educators, as well as empirical research that highlight a lack of interest in cross cultural engagement among U.S. students. This reinforces our belief that it must be the responsibility, not only of individual students, but also of the institutions serving them, to create environments that deliver on the promises made in terms of the benefits of campus diversity and internationalization."

Fanta Aw, president of NAFSA, observed "administrators can't assume that 'real engagement will happen by osmosis' when American and foreign students are brought together on the same campus." This engagement is important not only in terms of social relations, but also the educational aspirations that institutions hold for their students, as observed by ACE, "It is by maintaining this focus and ensuring that all students, regardless of the type of institution they attend, have opportunities to develop international competence, that U.S. higher education will best be able to fulfill its obligation to prepare students to live, work, and succeed in the globalized world of the 21st century." (Pages 11 and 12)



## Appendix G: Summary of Student Comments

The consultants met with students in Tonkawa, Enid and Stillwater. Comments in quotes are direct quotes from those students. Other comments are paraphrased. The location is noted for some comments to add context.

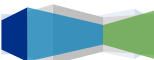
These comments are added for interest. They do not constitute any valid or reliable survey.

- ⇒ Online classes are well liked. "Convenient."
- ⇒ Many students agreed that they find the Student Success Center very, very helpful. (Stillwater)
- ⇒ "Faculty are usually flexible and many help outside of class."
- ⇒ Several students noted the helpfulness of faculty help outside of class, particularly extra study sessions and/or study groups.
- ⇒ "Tutor labs are really helpful."
- ⇒ What needs improvement? (Tonkawa Campus): HVAC in the residence halls. Gym could use some new equipment.
- ⇒ Some students said they would like their own clubs. Apparently this was tried earlier, with no significant participation. (Stillwater)
- ⇒ "The office gets really crowded. It is hectic in the hallway, too." (Stillwater)
- ⇒ "It is a lot harder than I thought it would be. There are so many distractions."
- ⇒ They do not use the website very much, but appear to know they can get facts from it. They do use MyNOC. They agreed that posters around campus, TV in the cafeteria, and word of mouth are valuable communication methods. (Tonkawa)
- ⇒ "We get too much e-mail."
- ⇒ "I like e-mail for communication that is serious. Instagram for fun."
- ⇒ One student noted that more diversity on campus is needed, but his primary point was diversity in type of student's background. He feels that almost everyone comes from a small town and that narrows perspectives.
- ⇒ Words to describe NOC: Helpful, low cost.
- ⇒ "PTK really motivates me."
- ⇒ "At first I was excited to come here, but by the second day I was scared. Now I love being here."





- ⇒ Why did you choose NOC? "Faculty are really helpful. My family came here and told me good things about it." "Great college to start off...affordable...it's the next step after high school." "My friends said great things about it."
- ⇒ "We need more choices [in the cafeteria]. Too many carbs and sugars."
- ⇒ One student raised the observation (and the others agreed) that it is a problem if there is only one faculty member in a discipline; if you do not "get along" with that instructor's teaching style you are in trouble if you have to take that class.
- ⇒ Use multiple advisors (in academic area).
- ⇒ Add a football or volleyball team.
- ⇒ "Web site needs to be updated."
- ⇒ Food hours are not compatible for athlete schedules.



## Appendix H: Resources

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