

**Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities**

**National College of Natural Medicine**

**Portland Oregon**

**Year One Review Report**

**Spring, 2011**

A Confidential Peer-Evaluation Report Prepared for the Northwest Commission of Colleges and  
Universities

**Year One Review Report**  
**National College of Natural Medicine**  
**Portland, Oregon**  
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## **Evaluation Committee**

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## **Introduction**

On behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the Evaluation Committee conducted a review of the Standard One Report of the National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM). The committee reviewed the reports from the Comprehensive Evaluation Report conducted in April, 2010, the Commission recommendations to the National College of Natural Medicine in its letter dated July 27, 2010, the NCNM Standard One Report and the institutional catalog.

The report was thoughtfully prepared and appropriate for a Year One Report. It was comprehensive in approach in addressing Standard One and provided responses as requested by the Commission to the NWCCU recommendations following the Comprehensive Evaluation Report in 2010.

Since the request to write an executive summary of Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3 was a late addition to the guidelines for this report, the institution is encouraged to follow the guidelines released 3/2/11 in its next report to the NWCCU.

## **Standard 1.A Mission**

The currently approved mission statement for National College of Natural Medicine is focused and provides a clear direction for the institution. It was reviewed and formally reaffirmed by the NCNM Board of Directors in January, 2005. It appears in their catalog, on the website and in the alignment model developed in 2008 to guide institutional decision making and communication.

“To educate and train physicians and practitioners in the art and science of natural medicine.”

Currently, National College of Natural Medicine offers a first professional doctoral degree (Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine), two first professional master degrees (Master of Science in Oriental Medicine, Master of Acupuncture), one graduate degree (Master of Science in Integrative Medicine Research) and a postgraduate Certificate in Botanical Medicine. In addition, several certificates are included within the above mentioned degree programs. The institution is pursuing the development of a future Bachelor of Science (BS) degree completion program .

In the fall of 2010 the institution began discussing a potential change to the mission statement that reflects its future offering of a BS degree completion program and expanded research activities.

“To educate and train physicians, practitioners, and pre-professionals in the art, science, and research of natural medicine.”

In February, 2011, the Board of Directors invited continued review and discussion of the proposed mission statement by its constituencies and is expected to consider the change at its June, 2011 meeting. The proposed revisions are meant to communicate the anticipated expansion of the mission.

The National College of Natural Medicine has identified indicators and acceptable thresholds of mission fulfillment for the current mission statement. However, the indicators of mission

fulfillment, as stated, are a combination of indicators that are derived from the mission statement and others that are indicators of resources and capabilities. For example, indicators such as graduation rates and licensure pass rates relate directly to the educational mission of the institution. Other indicators such as deferred maintenance and cash reserves relate more to the capacity and resources of the institution than the overall fulfillment of the articulated educational mission. Moreover, if the institution adopts the proposed mission statement, it should consider whether revisions to the indicators and acceptable thresholds are needed to reflect changes in the mission. A holistic interpretation of the essence of mission fulfillment by the institution would guide articulation of the indicators of mission fulfillment and the corresponding acceptable thresholds.

Compliment: The mission statement is concise and provides clear focus to the institution.

## **Standard 1.B Core Themes**

The institution appears to have adapted their prior operational planning model that focuses on people, programs, facilities and finances to the core themes model. While it provides a contextual framework for planning and implementation, as currently stated the core themes do not interpret the educational mission statement of the college and should be restated in a way that they clearly communicate the essence of the mission.

While the restatement of the core themes will require restatement of the objectives, the current objective statements are broadly defined, supported by multiple measurable outcomes for which multiple institutional indicators are identified. The institution should develop more narrowly tailored objectives for which specific indicators of achievement are identified. Prioritizing objectives and indicators of achievement for the core themes will allow the institution to focus its efforts in core theme planning and assessment.

NCNM should focus on identifying meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement for each objective. In some cases the broadly stated objectives do not have an indicator of achievement for all aspects of the objective. For example, objective one for the core theme “people” is stated as:

“Diversity: Recruit and retain a diverse and highly qualified student body, staff, faculty and board.”

While there are fourteen institution indicators identified for this objective, there is no indicator for measuring the “highly qualified” component of this objective. In addition, there are other indicators that concentrate on accomplishment of enabling action steps rather than direct evidence of achievement of the objective. In addition, the institution should consider focusing on a smaller, more reasonable number of indicators that measure achievement of the objective.

## Addendum

### Review of Responses to Recommendations in Comprehensive Report, 2010

[The Recommendations below refer to the Standards in force at the time that the Recommendations were written in 2010]

*Recommendation 2 – The College conducts annual assessments and has begun to collect institutional data more systematically. In order to achieve its mission and goals, the College should develop a more comprehensive approach to measuring institutional effectiveness and using data for institutional improvement. The Committee recommends that NCNM refine and expand its evaluation efforts to include multiple inputs for determining success in achieving its mission and goals, particularly with regard to direct evidence of student learning, assessment of student needs and adequacy of library and information resources (Standards 2.B.1, 3.B.1, 3.B.6, and 5.E.1; Policy 2.2)*

Response - National College of Natural Medicine continues to make progress in assessing direct measures of student learning, assessment of student needs and adequacy of library and information resources. The institution has completed several targeted studies such as impact of prerequisite courses on student success and the relationship of cultural climate to student success. New examinations are being designed for assessing academic preparation prior to the clinical experience and clinical competence at the completion of the clinical experience. Moreover, learning outcomes are being refined at the program and course level and appropriate assessment tools identified to measure achievement of the learning outcomes.

*Recommendation 3 - In response to financial challenges during the last several years, NCNM has made adjustments to faculty and staff workloads, while salaries have remained flat, even for those personnel who have received promotions. As noted in the College's Self-Study, such actions have resulted in a misalignment between institutional policy and practice. The Committee recommends that the administration take appropriate and timely steps to ensure that workload, promotion and salary practices are equitable and consistent with stated College policies (Standards 4.A.3, 4.A.4 and 6.C.8; Eligibility Requirement 7).*

Response - Faculty and staff promotion and salary actions are now consistent with college policy. This was corrected in the 09/10-budget cycle.

*Recommendation 5 - Although NCNM has recently consolidated its academic and clinical operations into a single campus, there is at present no facilities master plan. The Committee recommends that NCNM move expeditiously to include all appropriate constituent groups in developing a campus master planning process that will allow the College to achieve its long-term goals (Standard 8.C).*

Response - National College of Natural Medicine has launched a three year master planning process targeted for completion and board approval in June, 2012. The Board of Directors approved a three year critical path for creation and funding of a 20 year master plan in November, 2009. A new manager of

master planning facilities project and a planning consulting firm were hired in April, 2010. The new manager and the consulting team are working with a College Planning Team and engaging internal and external stakeholders to achieve established benchmarks in the master planning process. Initial benchmarks have been achieved and the process appears to be progressing towards its anticipated completion next year.

## **Commendations and Recommendations**

Recommendation 1: The institution should review the appropriateness of its indicators for the fulfillment of its educational mission, identify indicators that individually manifest the essential element of its mission and collectively encompass the mission. Standard 1.A.2

Recommendation 2: The institution should identify core themes that are essential elements of its educational mission. For each core theme, a reasonable number of focused objectives should be established and meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement should be articulated. Standards 1.B.1 & 1.B.2