

Peru State College Self-Study Report

**Prepared for the November 2011
Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality
Institution Site Visit**

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History of Peru State College

Peru State College is Nebraska's oldest college, founded in 1867, the year Nebraska became a state. The College was originally formed as the Nebraska State Normal School and was the third teacher education institution west of the Missouri River. Over its long history, Peru State College has undergone program restructuring, name changes, and changes in governance. It has evolved from a normal school to a Carnegie Classification of Master's Colleges and Universities (larger graduate programs) institution. However, two characteristics have remained constant: the beautiful campus setting at the edge of the rolling Missouri River bluffs and the College's commitment to offer high quality, affordable education to every high school graduate with a desire to attend.

Peru State College is a member institution of the Nebraska State College System and governed by the Nebraska State College Board of Trustees. Other member institutions are Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska, and Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska. The Board of Trustees has seven members, six of whom are appointed by the Governor of Nebraska to six-year terms with legislative approval. The Nebraska Commissioner of Education serves as an ex officio member. The Governor also appoints annually a nonvoting student board member from each of the three state colleges. The Board of Trustees holds public meetings five to eight times a year. The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving salary and benefits for all system employees, reviewing instructional courses and programs offered by the colleges, establishing system-wide policies, tuition and fees, inspecting the physical properties of the state colleges to assure they are maintained appropriately, and approving degrees awarded by the colleges.

The College is supported by a private non-profit foundation. The Peru State College Foundation was created in 1962 and exists for the purposes of raising funds and other resources for the benefit of the College and facilitating alumni relations for the College. Although the Peru State College Foundation is a separate legal entity from the College, it submits an annual report to the Nebraska State College Board of Trustees. Additionally, the College is required to report annually the revenues it receives from the Peru State College Foundation.

During the past ten years the College has experienced significant changes in its leadership. The College's former president, Dr. Ben E. Johnson, retired in 2008. Dr. Johnson had served the College since 1999, and had guided the College out of a tumultuous period when it appeared that the College might be closed or relocated by the State of Nebraska. By the time of the 2001 comprehensive visit, under the direction of Dr. Johnson and his leadership team, the College emerged from uncertainty and set a positive course for the future. Since then, the College has recorded increasing student enrollments, enhanced online programs, significant State-funded construction projects, and major growth in gifts to the Peru State College Foundation.

Upon Dr. Johnson's retirement in 2008, the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State College System appointed Dr. Stan Carpenter to serve as interim president while a national search was conducted to identify a permanent president. At that time, Dr. Carpenter was also serving as the Chancellor of the Nebraska State College System. In 2009 the College hired Dr. Daniel Hanson to serve as its 33rd president.

In 2009 and 2010, an additional retirement and reorganization resulted in the appointment of two new vice presidents for the College in the areas of administration/finance and enrollment/student

affairs. The Peru State College Foundation also appointed a new executive director in 2010.

With new senior leadership in place, the College embarked on a process of self-evaluation in preparation for both the development of a new strategic plan and for purposes of continued accreditation. During the 2009/10 academic year, President Hanson conducted a stakeholder survey that collected impressions and comments from a wide array of College constituents, including students, staff, faculty, administration, alumni, and members of the community. President Hanson also met with constituents in small groups to hear their opinions, concerns, and ideas for the future direction of the College. The information collected from the survey and meetings served as a starting point for the College's accreditation self-study process which began formally in the fall of 2009.

Peru State College's Accreditation and Responses to Major Concerns Raised by Previous Teams

This section of the report sets forth the accreditation history of the College and the response of the College to the major concerns raised by previous consultant-evaluator teams of the Higher Learning Commission.

College Accreditation

Peru State College is a charter member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and has been continuously accredited by the Association since 1915. Additionally, as early as 1918, the College was a member of the teacher education accrediting agencies that became the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The most recent affirmation of NCATE accreditation occurred in 2008. The College is currently accredited at the master's degree-granting level as an institution offering bachelor's degrees and two Master of Science degrees. It is a member of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the American Council on Education. The College is also a charter member of the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education. The College's most recent Higher Learning Commission comprehensive evaluation was in 2001.

A focused visit in 2005 reviewed the College's efforts in the areas of extended campus programs and assessment of student learning. In connection with the focused visit, the College also sought approval of a Change Request to offer its degree programs through online delivery. The 2005 consultant-evaluator team determined that the concerns about the integration of the delivery of off-campus programs into the basic operations of the College had been addressed, and no Commission follow-up was recommended on that issue. The Commission approved the College's Change Request thereby authorizing the College to offer online program delivery for all of its academic programs.

On the issue of assessment of student learning, the 2005 consultant-evaluator team determined that while progress had been made in that area, further organizational attention was required. Thus, the Commission directed the College to submit a progress report by September 1, 2008, evidencing the College's success in systematically reporting assessment data, the changes made based on that data, the assessment of online programs, the integration of assessment results in program review, and a plan for periodic review of the assessment plan itself. The College submitted its report which was accepted by the Commission on September 9, 2008. No further action was required until the 2011 comprehensive evaluation.

Responses to Major Concerns Raised by Previous Teams

On the recommendation of the 2001 comprehensive visit evaluation team, The Higher Learning Commission mandated a focused visit in 2005 to review "the integration of the delivery of off-campus programs into the basic operations of the College and the progress made in the implementation of a program to assess student learning."

The primary concerns of the 2001 comprehensive visit consultant-evaluators related to budgeting for and control of extended campus operations. The College addressed these concerns by making an explicit allocation of appropriate budget resources to extended campus operations and by assigning control of extended campus courses to the academic deans. Academic deans now select and supervise instructors for online courses, control through the shared governance process the content of the courses, and coordinate appropriate advising activities for distance education students.

Following the 2005 focused visit, the consultant-evaluator team determined that the College's evidence sufficiently demonstrated that the concern about the integration of the delivery of off-campus programs into the basic operations of the College had been addressed, and no Commission follow-up was recommended on that issue.

On the issue of assessment of student learning, the team determined that "evidence demonstrates that while progress has been made in this area, further organizational attention is required in this area of focus." The team recommended a progress report on the implementation of the assessment plan by September 1, 2008, indicating the institution's "success in systematically reporting assessment data, the changes made based on that data, the assessment of online programs, the integration of assessment results in program review and a plan for periodic review of the assessment plan itself." Peru State College submitted a progress report dated August 28, 2008, which detailed the College's progress to that time in addressing the 2005 team's concerns.

The 2008 progress report described the steps taken by the College to implement a comprehensive assessment system. The system includes creation/selection and administration of assessment instruments to measure student performance and outcomes, student perceptions, and other College performance factors. The system includes regular analysis of assessment data and use of such data in planning, policy formulation, and operations. The College has been able to maintain institution-wide momentum in this important area. Assessment, institutional enhancement activities, and related outcomes are described in detail later in this report, but College officials are most proud of the turnaround in the 6-year graduation rate, from 23% for August 2007, which was 13 points lower than the peer average at the time, to a rate of 37% for August 2010, which was one point higher than the peer average rate.

By letter dated September 9, 2008, Commission staff accepted the College's progress report. After summarizing the significant points in the report, the staff concluded:

It is clear from the progress report that Peru State [College] has developed an effective assessment program that is relatively easy to administer and yet provides significant and valuable data as a basis for program revision and enhancement.

Peru State College is mindful of The Higher Learning Commission's continuing concerns with effective assessment of student learning. The College's ongoing efforts to improve assessment are evaluated in the chapter on Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching in this report.

Distinctive Attributes and Enhancements

Peru State College has a distinct combination of attributes that combine to serve our main constituency – students – particularly well. For more than 140 years the College has been well-known for the quality of its teacher preparation programs, and word is spreading regarding strengths in business, criminal justice, and the arts and sciences. On-campus students enjoy studying in a quiet, safe and beautiful environment. Historically referred to as the Campus of Thousand Oaks, the Peru Campus is a designated arboretum site recognized in 2009 with the Affiliate Excellence Award from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. Following are just a few other examples of what sets the College apart.

- **Strong Academics.** It is not just the case that Peru State faculty members are well qualified academically, or that they have actually done what they teach, it is the fact that they do teach as much as possible. Release time is rare and usually reserved for substantial projects that benefit students. Courses are not taught by graduate assistants. Experienced professionals are hired to supplement the ranks of tenure-track veterans. Academic programs are thoughtfully designed and periodically evaluated to balance the theoretical with the practical and to maximize relevance. Students report being very satisfied with their academic experiences.
- **Personal Relationships.** With around 1,000 students taking on-campus classes, there is a personal touch at Peru State College that can be difficult to experience at larger institutions. The student-to-faculty ratio and advising loads support interactivity and relationship building. Opportunities for involvement and leadership are more readily accessible, such as the opportunity for undergraduate students to work directly with faculty on service, research and creative projects.
- **Accessibility.** Admission requirements are flexible enough to allow people with varying degrees of college preparation the opportunity to pursue higher education. Equally important, transfer and prior learning credit policies are designed to facilitate degree progress without artificial barriers or lost credits.
- **Flexibility.** Students are able to complete the most popular degrees online, mix on-campus and online courses, or take advantage of the 2+2+1 schedule (Fridays can be optional for most students) to meet their specific needs, accelerate their studies, or take advantage of internship and employment opportunities.
- **Value.** Perhaps the College's greatest competitive advantage is the quality of the educational experience relative to the cost. The College offers degree and residence experiences that are among the most affordable in the country. Given that many Peru State College students are first-generation college attendees from rural communities, cost is a significant factor. Affordability for non-resident students wishing to study on campus has been enhanced by the One Rate, Any State program, which allows non-residents to attend at Nebraska resident rates. Online students benefit from our cost advantage as well, which is sizeable compared with most bachelor degree granting alternatives.

The past ten years can be characterized as a period of strong enrollment growth, as well as a period of constant evaluation and innovation for Peru State College. The results have been impressive.

Below are some of the latest developments that illustrate Peru State College's commitment to continuous improvement through innovation and a renewed focus on engagement.

Rebirth of the Honors Program

In fall 2006, the College's honors program experienced a renaissance. In the new program, to better prepare participating students for the rigors of honors study, a special college orientation course was developed. Over the course of their academic careers, program participants complete an additional 12 credit hours, which includes a two-course sequence of study. The latter requirement promotes in-depth analysis and understanding of a given interdisciplinary topic. Honors courses are designed to be among the most engaging on campus with contemporary and exotic themes serving as fodder for simulation exercises and other unique experiences. The most motivated students can graduate with distinction from the honors program if they complete a mentored honors project.

Creation of the Master of Science in Organizational Management Program

In 2006, as part of an initiative to enhance institutional capacity to better serve various external constituencies, the Nebraska State College System promoted the establishment of a cooperative Master of Science degree in organizational management at all three state colleges. After a review of the College's capacity and past efforts to support communities in its service area, the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees approved the College for a special emphasis on entrepreneurial and economic development. With this new degree option, the College is helping prepare community leaders to be more effective change agents, to encourage entrepreneurial corporate cultures, create new business opportunities and facilitate community growth. The degree is available entirely online and can be completed by working professionals in two to three years. A unique aspect of this program is the flexibility for students to design their own projects throughout the program.

Scholarship Program Enhancement

The College enhanced its scholarship program in 2008 to reward student engagement, creating a unique program that gives eligible students the ability to increase their own scholarship awards if they establish themselves as campus leaders. The goal is not only to sustain on-campus enrollment growth, but also to motivate students to choose to maximize their campus experience, learning opportunities and career prospects. The most successful and persistent students are those who participate in athletics, music, drama, intramurals, and/or other clubs and organizations.

One Rate, Any State

The recent increase in out-of-state enrollment is due to the College's One Rate, Any State program which allows all students, regardless of residency, the opportunity to pay the same low tuition rate as Nebraska residents. The three-year pilot program, approved by the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees in the summer of 2009, was permanently adopted at the June 2011 meeting. One of the attendant benefits of the program is the potential to significantly impact rural vitality in southeast Nebraska by exposing more individuals to this region of the state. Conventional wisdom is that students who move to a state to attend college have a higher chance of staying after graduation or returning at some point later in their careers. This program also has the significant potential to further enhance the diversity of the student body.

Redesigned College 101

Using best practice models, the freshman introduction to college course was redesigned to provide enhanced content so students can focus earlier on critical thinking and advanced communication skills, and so they can be part of smaller cohorts of peers with similar career interests. Beginning in fall 2010, the course is facilitated by faculty members who are responsible for major-level courses so that effective academic relationships can begin earlier and have more time to grow. This experience is not just an introduction to college, but is instead an introduction to college-level expectations regarding critical thought and its role in one's discipline and career path. Students learn in an exceptionally engaging environment that requires them to think critically, consider focused case studies, read career-related material, interact on a social level, and participate in inspiring field trips into "real world" environments.

Distinguished Speaker Series

Through a commitment to student engagement and success, the College established the Distinguished Speaker Series in fall 2010 to host diverse nationally and internationally recognized speakers with the goal of enriching the educational experience while providing an opportunity to engage communities in Southeast Nebraska around interesting and relevant topics. Speakers are encouraged to engage with the campus throughout their visit with classroom talks, guest lectures, meet and greet receptions and a keynote address. By hosting speakers from diverse backgrounds, the College has created campus-wide dialogue surrounding topics of diversity and respect. During the inaugural year of the series, the speakers were selected to explore areas of respect for others and diversity. Speakers for 2010/11 included Minnijean Brown Trickey, a leader in the Civil Rights movement and a member of the Little Rock Nine. She helped students celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by talking about social change, diversity and the battle against racism. Hearing the perspective of someone who was an active participant in shaping this country's history engaged many students in ways that a classroom discussion could not. Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Arun Gandhi and reformed skinhead Frank Meeink also spoke, both describing their experiences and observations about personal responsibility and social reform.

Freshman Fusion Experience

Colleges across the country are using a variety of programs to address alcohol use and abuse, and Peru State College is no exception. As implemented in fall 2010, the College's most recent holistic, engaging approach may be unique. The Freshman Fusion Experience program is designed for first-year students interested in living in an experience rich, substance-free environment. The program's purpose is to reinforce the connection between leadership opportunities, academic excellence and healthy choices, supported by defined opportunities for healthy engagement with college life and a student-mentor relationship. Participants contractually agree to live in a substance-free environment and to remain substance-free for the duration of their participation in the program. Each participant is assigned a student mentor at the beginning of the fall semester. They live in a suite-style environment with other participants and mentors in Mathews Residence Hall. Mentors receive extensive training on resourcing, personal decision making, academic support and program planning. They facilitate bi-weekly, individual meetings with participants and provide monthly programming around themes like self-awareness, personal decision making, working and living with others and servant leadership. One of the most popular programs is Daring Discussions, an activity designed to support the development of critical thinking skills. Participants have an opportunity each week to discuss controversial topics such as substance abuse, relationship building, and public policy creation – all of which are moderated by a staff member. The Freshman Fusion Experience also provides participants with the opportunity to work in

separate workshops with speakers from the College's Distinguished Speaker Series. Finally, students in the program plan and conduct community outreach service projects. Most recently, students volunteered at the Belle Terrace Skilled Nursing Facility and Assisted Living and Ridge View Towers in Tecumseh where they planned and executed a "Remember When" themed prom for residents.

What Is Next?

As part of the coordinated Higher Learning Commission self-study and strategic planning processes, the College community has considered over two years what is done well, what can be improved, and what enhancement initiatives should have priority. This reflection supports what many have long known to be true – student engagement has been the hallmark of our educational endeavors. Now the College community has renewed its commitment to, expanded the definition of, and developed new ways to operationalize the concept of Essential Engagement.

As the future unfolds, the words symbolizing and communicating Peru State College's values – engage, inquire, discover, innovate – will be more than just a line used in promotional materials. They will serve as a call to action for students, faculty and staff who invest in their futures at the College. The 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan, the guiding strategic initiative document approved by the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees in June 2011, promotes an application of these values through the implementation of initiatives most directly supportive of them. The theme of Essential Engagement is designed to increase effectiveness and enhance College prominence at an accelerated pace at a pivotal time in the College's history. Students will experience more engaging opportunities in classes, between classes and within the community. Faculty and staff members will have greater opportunities to be engaged in their disciplines and in the region. The College will become even more engaged with its constituencies, continuing the cycle of mutual education and service to students and the community.

Most notable for the future is the planned establishment of a community development initiative, which has two components: establishment of an institute for community engagement and a curriculum initiative consisting of the establishment of interdisciplinary upper division courses focused on applied leadership and learning through community engagement. As the College nears its 150th anniversary, the future has never been more promising.

The 2009-2011 Self-Study Process

This section of the report sets forth a summary of the organization of the self-study process and the involvement of the campus and community in the process.

The Organization of the Self Study

In anticipation of its scheduled comprehensive evaluation in November 2011, Peru State College undertook an institutional self-study that began with President Hanson's Stakeholder Survey conducted in the fall of 2009 shortly after Dr. Hanson was appointed as the 33rd president of the College. Members of a self-study steering committee and five sub-committees aligned with the five criteria for accreditation were appointed in November 2009 and began meeting in January 2010. Membership on these committees included a broad cross-section of faculty and administrators, with 35 persons serving directly as committee members. The remainder of the college community, including students, staff members, faculty members, administrators, and representatives from the surrounding community provided input through surveys, town-hall meetings, focus groups, chapter read-ins, and individual interviews.

The vice president for academic affairs, Dr. Todd Drew, assumed the role of self-study coordinator and he developed a formal plan to guide the self-study process. The plan included a process theme, primary process goals, timeline, committee membership, and funding considerations. A copy of the Peru State College PEAQ Self-Study Plan for Continuing Accreditation is located in the College Resource Archive.

The process theme for the College's self-study was identified to be: Essential Engagement – Enhancing Institutional Effectiveness and Reputation. The primary process goals were as follows:

Primary Process Goals for Self-Study

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of real and perceived institutional strengths and weaknesses in each of the Criteria for Accreditation areas and each of the NSSE benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment.
2. Define strategies for continued success and quality enhancement in the areas of Academic Programming and Enrollment Management (Recruitment and Retention). For each Benchmark area, what two or three major initiatives have the potential to energize our academic experience? Are there initiatives that would be transformational for the entire institution, or at least set the stage for excellence in engagement? Are there initiatives that would help us emerge as regionally recognized for student engagement, quality, and innovativeness?
3. Develop a common understanding and commitment to the above and a recommitment to the College's Mission.
4. Use the above as a foundation for a strategic plan with a six year horizon.

An organizational meeting of the steering committee and all sub-committees was held in January 2010. President Hanson presented his expectations for a thorough and candid process and explained how the self-study process would coordinate with the development of a strategic plan for the College. The members of the steering committee oriented the participants to their roles, reviewed the self-study plan, and answered participant's questions. Each sub-committee met to review the timeline and to organize their work for the spring semester.

Subcommittees began collecting and analyzing information related to their criteria for accreditation and drafted questions for a master self-study survey to be administered to students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and members of the community. These surveys were administered in the spring, summer and fall of 2010.

The College set up a Blackboard site to support the self-study process and to serve as a working electronic resource room for college reports, survey results, discussion of issues, and for archival of meeting minutes and self-study report drafts.

Using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the steering committee reviewed a list of possible peer institutions to use for benchmarking and comparison of performance factors, and selected a set of eight institutions to use as peer schools for purposes of the self-study report. The selection was made based on the similarities of the peer schools to Peru State College in community demographics, mix of programs, characteristics of student body, numbers of staff and faculty members, and location in the central region of the country. The peer schools include: Chadron State College, Wayne State College, Dakota State University, Dickinson State University, Indiana University – East, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, University of Arkansas – Monticello, and Western State College of Colorado. Exhibits and text in this report referring to IPEDS peers make use of data from these eight institutions.

The College participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) annually. The steering committee reviewed opportunities for comparing the College's results in this survey to those of other institutions. The steering committee determined that the most appropriate comparison would be to the group of institutions identified by NSSE as "Plains Public Institutions." Comparisons of College NSSE data in this report are most often to the data of the Plains Public Institutions.

Several steering and sub-committee members attended the Higher Learning Commission Annual Meeting in 2010 to learn more about the self-study process and accreditation generally. A report writing workshop for sub-committee chairs was held in May 2010 to provide and discuss information that the sub-committee chairs would need for writing their first chapter drafts during the summer. Materials included a style sheet and writing conventions, how to use the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database, how to use the National Survey of Student Engagement database, and the lists of benchmarking institutions against which to compare the College's data.

Campus and Community Involvement in the Self-Study

To introduce the whole campus and surrounding community to the self-study process underway, the College held a kick-off event in fall 2010 that was themed as a tailgate party in connection with the first home football game. Campus banners were installed with the words "Engage – Inquire – Discover – Innovate" which are the key concepts from the College's mission statement. Small cards with information about the Higher Learning Commission and accreditation were attached to

balloons and handed to attendees. Announcements were made during the football game about the College's self-study in anticipation of a formal accreditation review.

On August 19, 2010, the Strategic Planning Committee chaired by President Hanson held its first meeting. Members of the Self-Study Steering Committee served as members of the Strategic Planning Committee, in order to facilitate coordination of the planning process with the self-study process. During the 2010 fall semester, the steering committee and all subcommittees continued working on enhancing and refining the information contained in the draft self-study report.

To gain further feedback from the campus community, the steering committee hosted chapter read-ins and focus groups in October and November 2010. To garner student participation, the College held an entertaining fashion show event during the evening meal hour in the dining hall called "How Do I Look?" and modeled after the cable show of the same name. At the end of the event, students were encouraged to register for focus group participation and a drawing for gift card prizes. Results of the read-ins and focus groups were provided to the sub-committee chairs for consideration in further chapter refinements.

During the 2011 spring semester, sub-committee chairs began working on their second draft versions of their respective criteria for accreditation chapters, informed by the feedback received from the fall 2010 events. On March 4, 2011, sub-committee chairs made presentations to the strategic planning committee of the strengths, weaknesses, and preliminary conclusions that were emerging from the work on their chapters of the self-study report. Following these presentations, President Hanson hosted a luncheon to thank the sub-committee chairs for their leadership and work on the self-study report.

In April, several members of the steering committee and sub-committee chairs attended the Higher Learning Commission Annual Meeting in Chicago. By May 2011, all second draft chapters were submitted to the steering committee and the work of the sub-committees essentially concluded.

On May 26, 2011, the College hosted a visit by Higher Learning Commission liaison representative, Eric V. Martin, for the purpose of sharing preliminary findings from the self-study report and to receive guidance about preparing for the consultant-evaluator team visit in November 2011. The College received valuable information and advice from Dr. Martin. The self-study steering committee finalized the self-study report during the summer of 2011 and presented the report to the College president in August 2011 for further distribution to College constituents, including administrators, members of faculty and staff, students, alumni, and members of the community. In September 2011, the self-study report will be disseminated to the Higher Learning Commission and consultant-evaluators as required by applicable rules of the Commission.

During the fall 2011 semester, the College will inform the College community about the contents and conclusions of the self-study report by making the whole report available along with an executive summary of the major findings and conclusions of the report. Additionally, the College will communicate with College community members and host events designed to orient the community to the benefits and importance of accreditation generally, and the purposes of the November 2011 consultant-evaluator team visit.

Self-reflection is a powerful activity. Educators encourage it of students as a means to inspire intellectual and emotional growth. This process of self-study provided similar benefits to the College as an organization, and to the individuals who participated in the process. Sometimes the surveys and discussions revealed new and surprising perceptions. Other times they only reinforced what representatives of the College already believed about the College and about themselves. Even

when the process illuminated information and perceptions that were already known and anticipated, still the process served to clarify priorities, focus a vision, facilitate consensus, and improve communications among all constituents of the College. In this regard, the self-study process was a complete success.

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Peru State College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its commitment to the mission, purposes, and goals delineated in four fundamental mission documents: the Nebraska State College System Mission Statement, the Peru State College Mission Statement, the Peru State College Purposes and Goals, and the Peru State College Academic Program Mission Statements. These documents provide the foundation for the College's structures and processes associated with cultivating the capacity and propensity for life-long learning, fostering independent inquiry and promoting the value of knowledge and discovery to benefit society and make vital contributions to the future of the region and the state. This chapter presents the Peru State College mission documents and evaluates the extent to which the College fulfills its mission through structures and processes that involve the Nebraska State College Board of Trustees, Peru State College administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Core Component 1a: The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.

The Nebraska State College System mission broadly defines the direction and focus of each of the Peru State College mission documents. These include the Peru State College Mission Statement, the Peru State College Purposes and Goals, and the Peru State College Program Mission Statements. These documents are located in the College Resource Archive.

Peru State College, Wayne State College and Chadron State College comprise the three state colleges of the Nebraska State College System. The Nebraska State College System mission is to offer high quality, accessible undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees and programs that serve the state, benefit individuals, and promote the public good. Core values include meeting the changing needs of students and the state and fostering cooperative ventures among the three colleges as well as other agencies and organizations. The Peru State College Mission Statement, as revised and adopted on January 14, 2008, states:

Peru State College Mission Statement:

In educating the individual to the benefit of society, Peru State College cultivates the capacity and propensity for life-long learning by fostering independent inquiry and promoting the value of knowledge and discovery. Through innovative undergraduate and graduate programs, Nebraska's first college continues its commitment to making a vital contribution to the future of the region and the state.

The mission statement is regularly reviewed to coincide with the College's strategic planning and accreditation cycles. No changes were made to the mission statement in advance of the 2001 comprehensive evaluation, but changes were made in 2002 that simplified the mission and created a new statement of purposes. In 2007 the College noted the need to review and update the mission based on the addition of graduate programs and a concern that the mission emphasized liberal arts more than appropriate for the program mix of the College. An ad hoc committee was formed to propose a new mission statement for the College and after review and discussion by the student

senate, faculty senate, and other College constituencies, the College approved the new mission statement. The most significant change made to the mission statement in 2008 was the inclusion of the word “innovation” as a means of keeping the College oriented toward continuous improvement and change.

The purposes of Peru State College support the accomplishment of the mission and are derived from the specific responsibilities assigned to the institution by the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees and the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

Peru State College Purposes are to:

1. Provide accessible education through engaging experiences and emphasis on student learning.
2. Offer baccalaureate degrees with emphases on teacher education, professional studies, and disciplines in the arts and sciences.
3. Provide graduates with an enhanced capacity for continued learning and effective citizenship through a strong general studies program.
4. Provide accessible graduate programs for working professionals leading to master's degrees in education and organizational management.
5. Contribute to the development of the fields of knowledge and instruction.
6. Contribute to economic, social, and cultural development.

The Goals of Peru State College are to instill in its students:

1. effective communications skills;
2. computer and information literacy;
3. independent critical thought and intellectual capacity for change;
4. preparation to assume social and civic leadership roles; and
5. The ability to pursue intellectually, ethically, aesthetically, and physically rewarding lives.

In support of the Nebraska State College System mission statement and the Peru State College mission statement, purposes, and goals, each academic program, as well as the extended campus program, the athletics program, the residence life program, and many other campus entities have developed mission statements and related program goals aligned with institutional mission and goals.

For example, the athletics program has adopted the following statements of vision, mission, and values:

Athletics Program Vision, Mission and Values

Vision: Peru State College Athletics will emerge as a regionally recognized program of excellence

Mission: Peru State College Athletics creates a foundation where student athletes develop potential for successful lives

Values: Peru State College Athletics values servant leadership, sportsmanship, integrity, respect and responsibility. The Athletic Department encourages the development of these values for the attainment of life- long learning and achieved success.

Servant Leadership: Athletic personnel and student athletes are expected to put the needs of the team ahead of their own

Sportsmanship: Athletic personnel and student athletes will conduct themselves according to the rules of fair play and etiquette

Integrity: Athletic personnel and student athletes are expected to be reliable, considerate and honest

Respect: Athletic personnel and student athletes will show respect to teammates, coworkers, opponents, fans, officials, the campus and Peru communities

Responsibility: Athletic personnel and student athletes are held accountable for their decisions and actions, by their teammates, coaches, instructors and administrators.

Each academic program also adopts a mission statement and program goals. As an example, the mission and goals of the natural science program follows:

Natural Science Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Natural Science distills and embodies the mission of Peru State College. Our mission is to cultivate the scientific, analytical, and intellectual capacity of our students by directly fostering and mentoring independent inquiry, knowledge, and discovery in the biological, chemical, and physical sciences. We pursue this mission through rigorous instruction, personal attention, and an aggressive undergraduate-based research program.

Our institutional role is to provide comprehensive and general studies course work in the physical and life sciences including specialized courses of study leading to baccalaureate (BS/BA) degrees and teaching endorsements in biology, biochemistry, chemistry, natural science, and physical science. We provide the scientific and intellectual foundation for advanced training in science, veterinary medicine, and the human health professions.

Natural Science Program Goals

Our ultimate goal is to establish a national reputation of academic excellence and leadership in undergraduate preparation for professional and graduate study, undergraduate research opportunity, and faculty development. Proximate departmental goals are divided into two groups that reflect our dual responsibilities for pedagogy and public stewardship.

Pedagogical Goals

1. Maintain and expand our unique experiential mentored approach to undergraduate science by integrating faculty professional development as a pivotal element of the teaching environment.

2. Instill in our students the six hallmarks of a general liberal education:
 - A. effective communication;
 - B. computer literacy;
 - C. independent critical thought;
 - D. intellectual capacity for change;
 - E. preparation to assume social and civic leadership roles; and,
 - H. the ability to pursue intellectually, ethically, aesthetically, and physically rewarding lives.

3. Produce Natural Science graduates who demonstrate the following:
 - A. baccalaureate-level mastery of scientific vocabulary and concepts appropriate to their major discipline of study;
 - B. the ability to utilize the scientific method in problem solving;
 - C. the ability to critically evaluate scientific ideas and data and incorporate new information in a synthetic context; and,
 - D. an ability and proclivity for life-long learning.

Public Stewardship Goals

1. Acquire faculty and infrastructure sufficient to maintain a four-year timeline for all degree-seeking majors.
2. Produce at least 12 graduates each academic year. Increase graduate production to maintain current efficiency as additional faculty and resources are allocated.
3. Maintain overall advancement rates above 50%.
4. Secure resources appropriate to provide significant opportunity for student research and faculty development.

Other examples of academic program missions and goals are located in the College Resource Archive, along with mission statements and goals of other departments and units of the College. These are regularly reviewed to coincide with the College's strategic planning and accreditation cycles.

The School of Education completed an additional review and revision of its mission documents for both the undergraduate and graduate programs in August 2008 as a part of an accreditation review by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). An evaluation team from the NCATE Board of Examiners visited the College in October 2008 and followed-up with a formal report stating that the College met every standard for both initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation. As a result, the College was awarded continued accreditation for seven years by NCATE.

As a part of the NCATE evaluative process, areas for suggested improvements may be noted. The NCATE Board of Examiners report identified three areas for improvement set forth below. In January 2009, the dean of the school of education submitted a formal rejoinder to NCATE

responding to the noted areas for improvement. The rejoinder described the College's plans for making improvements in the areas noted. A summary of the plans follows:

NCATE Board of Examiners Noted Areas for Improvement and Responses of College

1. Teacher education candidates have limited opportunities to interact with faculty from diverse backgrounds.

Summary of College response:

Peru State College remains committed to the recruitment of diverse faculty and staff. While there are currently no racially diverse full-time faculty members in the School of Education, this is not due to lack of effort. The dean of the school of education works closely with the personnel in human resources to increase the pool of diverse candidates when seeking to fill a faculty position or to hire adjunct faculty members. In the past, diverse faculty candidates were offered employment, however, they accepted positions in larger metropolitan areas. Candidates indicated a concern with the isolation and rural nature of the geographic area surrounding Peru State College as well as the differences in salary when compared to larger, metropolitan area campuses. Future efforts will include attracting more qualified minority candidates in applicant pools, participating in national and regional higher education job posting services, and seeking candidates with diverse experiences and skills to teach students about diverse populations and perspectives.

2. Teacher education candidates have limited opportunity to interact with students from diverse backgrounds.

Summary of College response:

Peru State College participates in many programs and activities designed to attract diverse populations of students. Scholarships, recruitment fairs, mentoring programs, and career experiences are conducted annually and focus on diverse populations and/or geographic regions. With the move to an entirely online graduate program in education, opportunities to attract diverse candidates for this level of program increase, as the geographic barriers to attending classes are removed. Recruitment in diverse communities will continue to take place to positively impact the diversity of the Master of Science in Education program. The College remains committed to the recruitment efforts, as are the faculty and administrators for the School of Education. It is recognized that everyone benefits from engaging diverse learners at all educational levels.

3. Unit faculty involvement in scholarly activities is limited.

Summary of College response:

During the calendar year 2007 faculty evaluation period, 3 out of 15 faculty members in the School of Education received "Needs Improvement" in the area of scholarship and 2 out of 15 received "Unsatisfactory" in the area of scholarship. The fact that one third of the faculty was not perceived as meeting the expectations for scholarship was a defining factor in this area for improvement being cited. As was stated in the institutional report, the unit faculty members are relatively "young" academically, with a majority of the individuals working toward promotion and tenure. As is expected during this probationary period, oversight of each individual's progress toward successful promotion and tenure falls to the dean of each school, who will provide encouragement and guidance for enhanced scholarly achievement.

To assist faculty in their scholarly endeavors, a workshop is being developed that will focus on strategies for successful research on topics that are of interest to faculty and to the School of Education as a whole. Based on these efforts and the clear expectation for successful scholarship as part of the promotion and tenure process at Peru State College, the dean of education is confident that the unit faculty for the School of Education will be successful in all professional areas in the future.

Peru State College makes its mission documents available to the public, particularly to prospective and enrolled students. Examples of such public statements of mission include banners and signs erected on campus, pages on the College's web site, postings on every online Blackboard course site, statements included in the College catalog, student handbook, employee handbook, College brochures, informational and recruitment materials, event programs, and announcements made by faculty members at the start of each class. In the Spring 2010 Faculty Survey, 77.08% of faculty members respondents stated that they agree or strongly agree that they review and explain to students how their courses address the mission and goals of the College. Survey results are located in the College Resource Archive.

Similarly, numerous speaking engagements by College representatives provide an opportunity for the College to communicate its mission, purposes and goals to various internal and external constituencies. Samples of speeches by College representatives are located in the College Resource Archive. The College's administration, faculty, and staff members engage in numerous opportunities to communicate the College's mission when meeting with community groups, local and regional school districts, lawmakers, and other constituent groups about the College.

Core Component 1b: In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

The College recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves. Further, the College is committed to embracing, honoring and celebrating all varieties of diversity including diversity of race, national origin, culture, religion, gender, age, income, wealth, ability, skill, perspective, life experience and opinion. The College offers a wide variety of programs to create a vibrant learning, living and working environment for all students, employees and visitors to the College.

Although the word "diversity" does not appear in the College's mission documents, it is clear that the College emphasizes the value of each individual in its mission, purposes and goals. The College endeavors to help each student attain success by instilling effective communications skills, computer and information literacy; independent critical thought and intellectual capacity for change; preparation to assume social and civic leadership roles; and the ability to pursue intellectually, ethically, aesthetically, and physically rewarding lives. These achievements are equally valuable to and valued by persons of all backgrounds and perspectives.

As an open admission public institution, the College welcomes students of all backgrounds and capabilities and commits to providing free and readily accessible learning support services to help every student succeed. The College provides tutoring and learning support services on campus and via online access for students located at a distance from campus. Reports of services provided by the Center for Achievement and Transition Services are located in the College Resource Archive.

The College also hosts a Student Support Services project funded by the Federal TRiO program, designed to identify and provide support for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. The program includes a three-week summer bridge experience encompassing 3-6 hours of free college credit, workshops, cultural and academic events and an opportunity to develop relationships with faculty, staff and other students. Continuing services include tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skill development, time management, academic and career advising, advocacy, specialized workshops, cultural events, peer mentoring, and leadership opportunities. Student Success Services served 230 students during the 2010/11 academic year with funding in the amount of \$286,923. Participants are selected based on federal eligibility criteria.

In accordance with federal and state law, the College does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. Beyond the bare legal obligation of non-discrimination, the College affirmatively seeks to attract and retain students and employees who bring diverse life experiences and perspectives to the College.

Recruitment of Diverse Students

Each year the College strives to increase the number of students in underrepresented and minority student groups for undergraduate study (see Exhibit 1.1). Although the number of minority students enrolled has increased substantially, consistent with overall enrollment growth, the proportion to total students has remained relatively constant at about 9% on average for the study period. The proportion of minority students has recently increased in 2010/11 to 9.7%. The proportion enrollment of students with documented disabilities has declined to 1.9%. This is below the average proportion of 2.3%, and down from 2.6% in 2006/07. Fairly small total population numbers make variation in proportions for these students more volatile. Data in Exhibit 1.1 also indicate that the number of lower income and part-time students have grown dramatically. While both changes can put significant downward pressure on retention success, the College's performance remains strong in that area.

The College reports greater success in enrolling students in underrepresented and minority student groups for graduate study. As shown in Exhibit 1.2, the proportion of enrollment of ethnic minority graduate students increased from 4.8% to 7.2%.

Exhibit 1.1

Peru State College Undergraduate Demographics										
		Full-time Students	Female	Ethnic Minority Representation	25 Years of Age or Older	Pell Eligible (as low income indicator)	First-generation College Students	First-generation and Low Income	Students with Documented Disabilities	Total Undergraduate Enrollment
2006-2007	#	1312	1246	192	743	459	743	197	57	2186
		60%	57%	8.8%	34%	21%	34%	9%	2.6%	
2007-2008	#	1368	1254	212	866	524	798	228	64	2280
		60%	55%	9.3%	38%	23%	35%	10%	2.8%	
2008-2009	#	1440	1415	216	869	646	720	199	57	2483
		58%	57%	8.7%	35%	26%	29%	8%	2.3%	
2009-2010	#	1430	1746	252	1124	*	*	*	63	2993
		48%	58%	8.4%	38%	*	*	*	2.1%	
2010-2011	#	1429	1789	300	1014	808	843	350	60	3085
		46%	58%	9.7%	33%	26%	27%	11%	1.9%	

Source: Peru State College Institutional Research Office

* Data not available due to system conversion.

Figure 1.2

Peru State College Graduate Student Demographics							
		Full-time Students	Female	Ethnic Minority Representation	25 Years of Age or Older	Students with Documented Disabilities	Total Graduate Enrollment
2009-2010	#	155	385	26	511	0	544
		28%	71%	4.8%	94%	0.0%	
2010-2011	#	129	336	36	431	4	502
		26%	70%	7.2%	86%	0.8%	

Source: Peru State College Institutional Research Office

* Prior year data not available due to system conversion.

Several of the College's undergraduate and both of the College's two graduate programs are available as 100% online programs allowing students in any geographic location to attend. By its nature, a fully online program increases the diversity of students and perspectives by including students outside of the College's physical campus location, and by including those for whom travel is a hardship due to professional obligations, family circumstances, financial limitations, or disabling conditions.

Peru State College has many strategies to recruit a diverse population of undergraduate students. Each year, College representatives attend college and career fairs in areas of high diversity including events held in Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island, Nebraska, and in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. Recruiters have established connections with many organizations that serve a diverse population of potential students including Girls Inc, Talent Search programs, Upward Bound programs, and the Chicano/a Awareness organization. College representatives attend college fairs sponsored by Boys/Girls Club, Urban League, Hispanic Career/College Fair, and Native American conferences. In addition, the College sponsors bus tours from Lincoln and Omaha for students interested in attending Peru State College. Students spend a day on campus exploring the opportunities available to them. Since 2008 the College has hosted over 100 students annually from each of these communities.

The College has partnered with Omaha Public Schools for the past eleven years to host an early awareness program to introduce fourth grade students to college. The students visit the College to experience “college for a day.” Students are typically from areas with low socioeconomic demographics with a high percentage of adults who have never attended college. During the past several years, parents have been included in these visits in order to broaden parent understanding of the college admission process.

During the past two years, the College hosted speakers at local high schools as well. In January 2010, Elane Norych Geller, holocaust survivor, was hosted at Auburn High School, Nebraska City High School and Falls City High School. Schools from surrounding areas were invited to attend the speaking event as well broadening the impact of the speaker to include students from Sacred Heart High School, Lourdes High School, and Johnson County Central High School. In January 2011, the College hosted diversity speaker Quay Hanna at two local schools, Johnson County Central High School and Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer High School. These events are intended to broaden the educational experience of high school students in Southeast Nebraska and to introduce high school students to Peru State College.

Each year the College reviews its progress in providing robust and engaging activities on campus that celebrate diversity in many forms. Examples of such activities include: guest speakers from diverse cultures and foreign countries in classes; reading materials about diverse cultures; a poverty simulation to aid understanding the pressures of poverty; a travel opportunity to study the impact of white settlement on American Indians of the Great Plains; a celebration of Black History Month and “diversity tables” as an encouragement to dine with persons of different background than oneself in the dining hall; a diversity conference titled “Branching Out: Leadership, Diversity and Making a Difference;” residence hall programming on diversity topics; tutor training with a module on intercultural competence; and a workshop on Hispanic culture.

In November 2010, the College’s Black Student Union received a 2010 Governor’s Points of Light Award for its volunteerism and service to the community from Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman. Students from the Black Student Union were invited to a Proclamation Ceremony at the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln to honor their achievements. The Governor’s Points of Light Awards are presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

The Black Student Union was formed in 2008 to foster a sense of community and stimulate intellectual, social, cultural and political growth for students of all backgrounds. The organization’s projects include collecting donations for community service groups, preparing emergency backpacks for children, reading to children in the College day care center, visiting local nursing homes, speaking to area service clubs and raising money for Haiti earthquake relief. The Black Student Union has also worked to increase cultural awareness by creating educational displays and hosting speakers for Black History Month.

Graduate programs are promoted regionally and occasionally nationwide without reference to either geographic location or specific population. In this way, the College seeks a fully diverse student enrollment including students from every region, culture, economic status, and background.

Recruitment of a Diverse Workforce

The College’s commitment to diversity extends to recruiting and retaining diverse members of the faculty, staff and administration. Given the demographics of the College’s geographic region, this

remains a challenge; however the recent trend is positive. In 2011 the College added two persons of color to its full-time staff, along with two graduate assistants who are also people of color. As shown in Exhibit 1.3, the College struggles some with recruitment of minority and women faculty members. As of August 2011, the College employed only four full-time faculty members who self-identify as minority, comprising 8.2% of all full-time faculty members, and 21 female faculty members, comprising 42.9% of all full-time faculty members. This is an improvement over past years. In 2009, the College employed only one full-time faculty member who self-identified as a minority, comprising 2.2% of all full-time faculty members, and 15 female faculty members, comprising 33.3% of all full-time faculty members.

The numbers are similar for executive/managerial and support service personnel. Overall, the College employs 13 self-identified minorities for a total of 7.8% of the College workforce, not including consideration of adjunct faculty members. Once again, the trend is good. In 2009, the College employed only 6 self-identified minorities for a total of 3.6% of the College workforce.

The College makes considerable effort to attract qualified minority applicants for open faculty, staff, and administrative positions at the College. In each advertisement or listing of open positions, the College places the following statement:

Statement in every position listing

Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. PSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. The College has designated an individual to coordinate the College's nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to Eulanda Cade, Director of Human Resources, Title VI, VII, IX Compliance Coordinator, Peru State College, PO Box 10, Peru, NE 68421-0010, (402) 872-2230.

Further, the College places notices of open positions in newspapers, on websites, and with other media that are believed to have a high minority constituency. Even given its recent advances, the College is committed to continuing its efforts to hire a more diverse workforce. The demographics information for full-time employees is noted in Exhibit 1.3.

Exhibit 1.3

Peru State College Workforce Demographics 2011		
FACULTY		
Female		
White		18
Minority		3
Unreported		0
Male		
White		22
Minority		1
Unreported		5
EXECUTIVE/MANAGERIAL		
Female		
White		33
Minority		3
Unreported		0
Male		
White		24
Minority		3
Unreported		0
SUPPORT/SERVICE*		
Female		
White		31
Minority		2
Unreported		0
Male		
White		20
Minority		1
Unreported		0
TOTAL		
White		148
Minority		13
Unreported		5
* One staff member self-reported two categories for ethnic status (White and Minority) This table includes the employee in both groups.		

Source: Peru State College Human Resources Office

Policies That Respect Diversity

Peru State College's 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves. The plan identifies educational engagement as a core value that emerges from the College's mission, purposes and goals. The plan defines educational engagement as:

Educational Engagement as defined in the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan

Educational engagement is an active approach to teaching and learning that considers the diversity of students and creates a culture of ownership, inclusion, and leadership. It empowers all students and employees to connect personally with the educational experience, others and society by creating opportunities for direct involvement in learning. Engaged educators and learners seek to understand and respect multiple perspectives in the search for solutions to problems through inquiry and research. This process facilitates the discovery of new ideas and better practices. These discoveries, along with continuous reflection and a commitment to service foster a culture of innovation resulting in progressive change that benefits society.

Peru State College's codes of expected behavior for students and employees reflect the College's commitment to honor the dignity and worth of individuals. Policies relating to appropriate treatment of individuals are found in both College policy and in the policies of the Nebraska State College System.

The Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees adopted Policy #3100 – Conduct & Discipline of Students, which states in part:

The following acts shall be considered to constitute misconduct for which an offending student or student organization may be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

...

10. Sexual harassment, assault or any other uninvited behavior of a sexually explicit nature;

...

19. Hazing any person. Consent of the victim of the hazing will not constitute a defense to an allegation of misconduct for hazing. Hazing shall mean any activity by which a person intentionally or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health or safety of an individual for the purpose of initiation into, admission into, affiliation with, or continued membership with any organization;

...

30. Discriminating against any student, faculty or staff member on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion or age; and

....

The College's Employee Handbook includes a prohibition of the following listed behaviors:

Work place harassment based, in whole or in part, on race, color, sex, religion, age, disability or national origin, which manifests itself in the form of comments, jokes, printed material and/or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Possession of materials and/or the utterance of comments in the work place that are derogatory towards a group or individual based upon race, gender, color, religion, disability, age or national origin.

The Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees adopted Policy #5007 which states in part:

Anti-Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the Nebraska State College Board of Trustees to provide a workplace free of tensions involving matters which do not relate to the System's business. In particular, an atmosphere of tension created by unlawful non-work-related conduct, including ethnic, racial, sexual, age, disability, or religious remarks, animosity, unwelcome sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors and such other conduct does not belong in the State College workplace or learning environment. Unlawful harassment of students, employees, job applicants, or any visitors to a campus by other employees or students is prohibited. Unlawful harassment includes, without limitation, verbal harassment (derogatory comments and/or slurs, negative stereotyping, intimidating behavior), physical harassment (assault or physical interference), visual harassment (posters, cartoons, drawings, or improper written or graphic material), and innuendo.

Sexual harassment is a violation of state and federal law. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct, and other verbal or physical conduct, or visual forms of harassment of a sexual nature when submission to that conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or is used as a basis for employment decision. Further, other forms of unlawful harassment include actions that have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

The purpose of this policy is to establish clearly and unequivocally that the Nebraska State College System prohibits unlawful harassment in any form by and of its employees and students and requires the Colleges and System Office to set forth explicit criteria and procedures by which allegations of such harassment may be filed, investigated, and adjudicated. Such criteria and procedures are to be consistent with federal regulations pertaining to employees and students as well as the principles stated in this policy....

Anecdotal evidence also illustrates the College's commitment to honor the dignity and worth of individuals. One student stated the following according to National Survey of Student Engagement Student Comments 2009:

2009 Student Statement

"I have been so impressed with Peru State College. The faculty and staff are genuinely concerned with the success of each student. It is a very personal, small school type of experience where you are treated as a valuable member not one of a hundred or more. Even in the online setting they are able to convey the importance of each student and their commitment to the success of each student."

In summary, the College recognizes and values the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves. The College promotes curricular and co-curricular experiences

that are designed to respect, honor and celebrate diversity in all of its forms, including diversity of race, national origin, culture, religion, gender, age, income, wealth, ability, skill, perspective, life experience and opinion. College policies reaffirm the College's commitment to honor the dignity and worth of all individuals. Finally, the College endeavors to recruit and retain diverse students and members of its faculty, staff and administration, but with limited success. This is an area that will require continued attention and effort by College officials. The College welcomes advice from the Higher Learning Commission consultant-evaluators concerning additional ways the College might enhance the diversity of its students, faculty, staff members and administrators.

Core Component 1c: Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

College programs, policies and operations are driven by the mission of the College. Key decisions related to new programs and courses, hiring practices, admissions practices, planning, budgeting, and recruitment and retention are focused on a clear understanding of and support for the mission of the College by members of the administration, faculty, and staff.

Starting with the planning function, the College's Strategic Planning Committee began the planning process anew in 2010 with a detailed review of the mission, purposes and goals of the College. To this, the committee added a statement of vision, values, and intent for the planning process, all of which were derived from the mission and from comments gathered from the College community in a strategic planning survey. The resulting 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan contains two overarching transformational goals and several strategies that support each goal. The goals and strategies are tied to the mission of the Nebraska State College System and to the mission of the College. The full 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan is located in the College Resource Archive.

The following is one example of the linkage of the strategic plan to the mission of the Nebraska State College System and to the mission of the College.

2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan

Transformational Goal: Excellence Through Essential Engagement

Strategy One: Enhance the student experience through distinctive engagement. (Nebraska State College System, NSCS, Priority: Educational Excellence Throughout the System)

- a. Create a Community Development Initiative by:
 - i. Establishing an Institute for Community Engagement (ICE) that:
 - 1. Promotes community partnerships and service learning initiatives.
 - 2. Works with advisory boards.
 - 3. Identifies and secures funding.
 - 4. Develops and rewards student/faculty independent research relationships.
 - 5. Supports the activities of community development courses.
 - ii. Developing an interdisciplinary/integrative upper division community development course or courses focused on applied leadership and learning through community engagement.

- b. Support educational engagement initiatives by:
 - i. Providing funding for investigation and implementation of advanced engagement techniques in critical college courses.
 - ii. Providing access to international/multicultural study programs. (NSCS Emphasis)
 - iii. Supporting innovative field engagement approaches, such as field trips, speakers, service learning, living/learning communities and residence life programs.
 - iv. Continuing academic advising enhancements. (NSCS Emphasis)
- c. Develop a comprehensive Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) by:
 - i. Cultivating relationships with area health care providers and the University of Nebraska Medical Center.
 - ii. Implementing a facilities improvement plan.
 - iii. Hiring faculty to support program growth.
 - iv. Seeking outside funding for specialized equipment needs.

As decisions are made about allocation of resources for new initiatives and existing operations, support for the mission of the College is an important element of the decision-making process. For example, the proposal for the institute for community engagement was given high consideration by the Strategic Planning Committee because it exemplifies student engagement, societal benefit, inquiry, discovery, innovation, and life-long learning as valued in the mission statement of the College.

Peru State College has a history of mission-driven policies and programs. Seeking ways to make its programs more accessible to students, the College launched a robust distance learning program in 1999 so that students could attend the College without the need to travel to its campus in Peru, Nebraska. The initiative was a success with 100% online student enrollments (those students taking all online courses) growing from 58 in 1999 Fall Semester to 1130 in 2009 Fall Semester. The percentage of students taking at least one online course was 7.51% in 1999 Fall Semester as compared to 77.11% in 2009 Fall Semester.

The creation of the Master of Science in Organizational Management with Emphasis in Entrepreneurial and Economic Development in 2005 is a more recent example of a mission-driven program. This program is a part of a joint offering with the other two colleges in the Nebraska State College System – Wayne State College and Chadron State College. It is designed for individuals who want to acquire advanced education as change agents to facilitate growth in organizations and communities.

The concentration in Entrepreneurial and Economic Development at the College directly addresses successful business growth and economic development strategies, blending coursework in organizational management, economic development, and entrepreneurship. Graduates are uniquely prepared to start their own businesses, foster development of new enterprises in their communities, and facilitate a company's evolution to a more innovative and growth-oriented corporate culture. The program also provides students an opportunity within each course to design their own business and community enhancement projects. The program is directly responsive to the College's mission to make a vital contribution to the future of the region and the state and to benefit society.

The mission of the College inspires innovation in co-curricular activities as well. One example is the development of an electronically-based mentoring experience known as the E-Mentoring Program piloted in 2010. The purpose of this initiative is to bring students and alumni of the College together to give students access to role models who can help them with college life, personal guidance, and career planning. Since many students and alumni are physically distant from the College, a program based on electronically enhanced communications is appropriate to provide access to all and to serve the greatest number of participants. For the first year of this program, 8 mentors and 10 mentees participated. The program is expected to grow in coming years. Also, participants will be surveyed in future years about their experiences so that the program can be fully evaluated and enhanced.

Another example of a mission-driven co-curricular activity is a service project launched in coordination with the 2010 inauguration of President Hanson. In partnership with Auburn Elementary School, Brownville Fine Arts Association, City of Peru, Peru Kiwanis Club, and Peru Historical Society, more than 275 College students and members of the faculty, staff, and community volunteered their time to help with seven service projects ranging from cleaning grounds and landscaping to charitable fundraising and reading with children.

Innovative course development is mission-driven at the College. One such course, CJUS 298/498 Searching for Justice, is a part of an initiative to bring students studying criminal justice together with incarcerated men and women to study as peers in seminars behind prison walls. The course creates a dynamic partnership between the College and a correctional institution in order to deepen the conversation about and transform approaches to issues of crime and justice. Referred to as Inside-Out, the program provides a life-altering experience that allows undergraduate students to contextualize and rethink what they have learned in the classroom, gaining insights that will help them to better pursue the work of creating a more effective, humane and restorative criminal justice system. For the first offering of this course in 2011 Spring Semester, a total of 20 students participated.

Given that student engagement in the form of inquiry, discovery and innovation are the building blocks of the College's mission, these values are integrated into many aspects of College courses. Members of the faculty have been inspired to incorporate engaging activities into courses and classrooms, both on campus and online. A few examples of engaging course activities include:

Three examples of engaging course activities

1. CHEM 304 Organic Chemistry II and BUS 492 Marketing Strategies - A joint activity between chemistry and marketing course students to form competitive teams to design, create, produce and sell perfumed soap bars on campus (Spring 2011)
2. ENG/HIST/EDUC 498/598 Trails and Tales – An interdisciplinary course offered in the summer with a study theme and related tour. In 2008, the theme was “Conflict, Compromise and an Uneasy Coexistence on the Contested Plains.” Study included short stories, novels, and poems written by and about Plains Indians, particularly the Cheyennes, the Lakotas, the Omahas, and the Pawnees. It introduced students to some of the important portrayals of the Plains Indian Wars period (1854-1890) from both Indian and non-Indian writers. Study culminated with a seven-day tour of historically significant locales.
3. BUS 353 Organizational Ethics – Inspired by what they learned about social entrepreneurship and micro-lending, students held an event to raise funds to loan to struggling entrepreneurs in Peru, Honduras and Ecuador through Kiva, a micro-finance

organization that connects lenders with entrepreneurs worldwide. Such loans promote dignity and alleviate poverty through support of entrepreneurial enterprises. Future Organizational Ethics course students will add to the funds repaid and make new loans to entrepreneurs (Spring 2010).

Further, faculty members rely on the College mission statement in making academic decisions. As shown in Exhibit 1.4, 80.85% of faculty members agree or strongly agree that their academic decisions are informed by the mission statement of the College.

Exhibit 1.4

Faculty Survey Responses to the Statement: "My academic decisions are informed by the mission statement of the College"		
Frequency Analysis		
Answer	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	7	14.89%
Agree	31	65.96%
Disagree	2	4.26%
Strongly Disagree	1	2.13%
Unknown or no opinion	<u>6</u>	12.77%
Total	47	

Source: Peru State College Spring 2010 Faculty Survey

The perceptions of students are perhaps more critical than those of any other constituency. Peru State College students were surveyed in spring 2010 about their beliefs and observations concerning the mission of the College. Responses indicate that students believe the College is dedicated to its mission and that faculty members make explicit the connections between coursework and the mission of the College.

Peru State College students agree that the College is dedicated to its mission. As shown in Exhibit 1.5, 84.84% of students agree or strongly agree that members of faculty, staff and administration of the College are dedicated to its mission.

Exhibit 1.5

Student Survey Responses to the Statement: “The faculty, staff, and administration of the College are dedicated to its mission”		
Frequency Analysis		
Answer	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	63	25.82%
Agree	144	59.02%
Disagree	8	3.28%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.64%
Unknown or no opinion	<u>25</u>	10.25%
Total	244	

Source: Peru State College Spring 2010 Student Survey

Students observe faculty members making a connection between coursework and the mission of the College. As shown in Exhibit 1.6, 70.56% of students agree or strongly agree that faculty members review and explain how their courses address the mission and goals of the College.

Exhibit 1.6

Student Survey Responses to the Statement: “Faculty review and explain how their courses address the mission/goals of the College”		
Frequency Analysis		
Answer	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	48	19.35%
Agree	127	51.21%
Disagree	33	13.31%
Strongly Disagree	8	3.23%
Unknown or no opinion	<u>32</u>	12.90%
Total	248	

Source: Peru State College Spring 2010 Student Survey

In summary, members of the faculty, staff, administration and students recognize and embrace the mission of the College. Further, each constituency perceives evidence of the dedication of others to the College mission. There is general support for the assertion that the College's mission, purposes and goals provide the foundation for structures and processes related to College planning and operations.

Core Component 1d: The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

The College has established a strong commitment to shared governance among members of faculty, staff, administration, and students. This commitment to essential engagement of all stakeholders, combined with a commitment to strong administrative structures, successfully enables the College to promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes which allow for the fulfillment of its mission.

As one of three colleges in the Nebraska State College System, Peru State College is governed by the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees has seven members, six of whom are appointed by the Governor of Nebraska to six-year terms with legislative approval. The Nebraska State Commissioner of Education serves as an ex officio member. The governor also appoints annually a nonvoting student board member from each of the three state colleges.

The Board of Trustees holds public meetings five to eight times a year. It is responsible for approving salary and benefits for all system employees, reviewing instructional courses and programs offered by the colleges, establishing system-wide policies, tuition and fees, inspecting the physical properties of the state colleges to assure they are maintained appropriately, and approving degrees awarded by the colleges. The Board of Trustees is authorized to adopt rules governing the three state colleges and these rules are published in a Board of Trustees Policy Manual. This Policy Manual is posted publicly on the website of the Nebraska State College System at www.nscs.edu and is also located in the College Resource Archive.

The Board of Trustees appoints an executive officer known as a chancellor. The chancellor reports directly to the Board of Trustees on matters of policy and administration in academics and operational areas for the Nebraska State College System. The chancellor is responsible for policy implementation and system administration by providing vision, leadership, planning, advocacy, coordination and management for the system with a commitment to quality management and with particular attention to maintaining and strengthening the colleges' services to Nebraska citizens.

From the start, the appointment of the college president is a collaborative process. Board of Trustees Policy #2015 requires that a presidential search committee be appointed to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Such a search committee may be appointed by the Chancellor only after consultation with appropriate constituent groups and must include representatives of college faculty, students, alumni, nonacademic staff and administrative staff. Upon recommendation of the chancellor, the Board of Trustees appoints the college president.

The college president is required to create a mechanism for shared governance with faculty members. Board of Trustees Policy #2030 states:

Policy #2030 – Governance and Administration

Each college shall provide a principal agency for faculty participation in college governance. Through agencies and procedures designated by each college president and approved by the Board, the faculty may make recommendations to its president on any matters affecting the college or any of its sub-divisions.

The college president may, but is not required to, establish other committees, councils, cabinets or other academic or administrative groupings to engage in planning, advising, developing and implementing programs to improve the operation and instructional program of the college.

Governance and administration at Peru State College is structured so as to facilitate shared governance and administrative structures that are in compliance with this policy and support the College's mission. A strong commitment to a process of shared governance was not so evident prior to 2007; however, under the leadership of the vice president of academic affairs and the faculty senate, a shared governance structure was developed, approved, and implemented during the 2007/08 school year. A critical element of the structure is the involvement of administration, faculty, staff, and students.

The College Faculty Senate is made up of faculty and other academic leaders who share responsibility for the coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of academic processes. The Faculty Senate Constitution states in part:

The Faculty Senate Constitution:

The Faculty Senate is the body at Peru State College to provide primary counsel on all academic matters. Thus, the Faculty Senate shall concern itself with any and all policies governing academic matters such as admission requirements, degree requirements, teaching assignments and course schedules, courses and curricula, faculty committee structure and authority, academic standards for students and for the institution, and evaluation of the educational program. Any proposed change in academic policy from any source within the College shall come to the Faculty Senate for its review and recommendation to the College President for approval . . .”

Faculty Senate meets weekly during the academic year to consider matters relating to admission requirements, degree requirements, teaching assignments and course schedules, courses and curricula, faculty committee structure and authority, academic standards for students and for the institution, and evaluation of the educational program. Composition, membership and meeting minutes of the Faculty Senate are posted publicly on the web site of the College. Any member of faculty is permitted to attend the meetings of the Faculty Senate.

Faculty Senate evaluates its structures and processes regularly and strengthens them as needed. Faculty Senate approved a new campus committee structure to become effective in August 2008. Committees include academics and curriculum; assessment; teacher education; professional development; institutional review board; and rank, promotion and tenure. Details concerning the composition, purview, membership and meeting minutes for each committee are located in the College Resource Archive.

The College Professional Staff Senate is an organization of professional staff members that serves as a means of communication and consultation among senate members, the College president, and other campus senates. The College Support Staff Senate serves the same purposes for support staff

employees. Details concerning the composition, purview, membership and meeting minutes for the Professional Staff and Support Staff Senates are located in the College Resource Archive.

The College Student Senate represents the interests and opinions of students pertaining to the curriculum and operations of the College. Through involvement in a wide variety of campus affairs the senate provides a means for students to participate in the formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student services. From this participation, the Student Senate aims to express student views and interests to the administration, develop better educational standards, facilities, and teaching methods, and to foster the recognition of the rights and responsibilities of students to the school and community. Details concerning the composition, purview, membership and meeting minutes for student senate are located in the College Resource Archive.

Effective communication facilitates governance processes and sound decision-making. With the appointment of the new president in 2009, campus communications have improved markedly. In fall 2009, President Hanson held a series of 93 meetings with 171 participants in small groups in order to learn about the College and the people associated with it. President Hanson also invited the campus community to help shape his agenda for leading the College. He used the following questions as a basis for discussion:

Questions Used in Fall 2009 Meetings with the College president

1. How do you view your role at PSC?
2. What is important to you about PSC?
3. Are there any student stories that are especially meaningful to you that you would like to share?
4. What are your thoughts about the areas of focus that have been identified:
Empowering the campus community around a common vision
Reenergizing the on-campus experience
Engaging with the external community
Continuing to use online programming strategically
5. Are there other topics about which you would like to visit?

Notes from these meetings were compiled and made available to members of the faculty, staff and students. Concern about communication was a major theme, mentioned in 54 of the 93 meetings. Specifically, it was noted that communication needed to be improved between and among faculty and students, faculty and staff, various academic departments and disciplines, the main campus in Peru and satellite locations, and the foundation and the College. These notes are located in the College Resource Archive, serving as evidence that the new president intends to place a high priority on communication and collaboration among and between all College constituencies.

Additionally, the College president conducted an online survey where he collected anonymous responses from Peru State College employees, students, alumni, community members, state senators, and employees of the Nebraska State College System. The questions posted on the Stakeholder Survey included the following:

Fall 2009 Stakeholder Survey Questions:

1. What do you value most about Peru State College?
2. What do you perceive is unique about the student experience at Peru State College?

3. What is your perception about the quality of a Peru State College education?
4. How could the educational experience for Peru State College Students be improved?
5. What advice or other thoughts would you like to share with me as I begin as president of Peru State College?

Responses to this last question provided valuable insight into how leadership and administration had been perceived at the College in the past, and the optimism that came with the appointment of a new president.

Fall 2009 Stakeholder Survey Comments:

“You have already made a very positive impression with many people in this area. This includes faculty, staff, and area residents. Keep doing what you are doing. I have faith that you are one president that will always be truthful and open and not resort to „politically correct“ statements... ” (Community member)

“Building relationships with students, faculty, support staff, community members is the most important... ” (Faculty)

“I truly appreciate your willingness to hear views from those outside your administrative cabinet. I hope that you will continue to do so and not follow the tendency of previous presidents to become somewhat buffered and insular.” (Professional Staff)

“Know that most of the employees and alumni of PSC are extraordinarily dedicated to this institution; if you give us the image of a better campus and let us know what we can do to help PSC grow and flourish we will work to support you and that vision. We are very happy you accepted the position at PSC and are very encouraged by the positive nature you bring to the campus.” (Professional Staff)

“First of all, thank you for doing this. I am a senior and will graduate in May. Until this survey, I have had no contact with the president of PSC. It is awesome that you taking the time to get to know your students and staff.” (Student)

“I’ve been here 5 years now. You are the first president who has actually said Hi to me... I appreciate it and keep it up!!!” (Student)

The College’s improved efforts to effectively communicate and facilitate essential engagement with a cross section of its constituencies results in the College’s regular evaluation of its structures and processes and efforts to strengthen them as needed. These recent efforts to facilitate improvement of the College’s governance and administrative structures have resulted in momentum for further development of effective leadership and support for collaborative processes that enable the College to continue to fulfill its mission.

Core Component 1e: The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Peru State College understands and abides by local, state and federal laws, exercises its responsibility to the public to ensure that it operates responsibly and with fiscal honesty, consistently implements clear and fair policies, presents itself accurately and honestly to the public, deals fairly with all constituents, and documents timely response to complaints and grievances, particularly those of students.

The Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees exercises oversight of the fiscal, legal, and regulatory compliance matters of the College. In accordance with Nebraska State College Systems Board of Trustees Policy #6010, the financial transactions and accounting records of the College are audited annually under the supervision of the State Auditor of Public Accounts as required by Nebraska state law. The examination includes review of operations supported by general funds, cash funds and federal funds. Information from the general operations audit is consolidated with that of the other two state colleges and is filed with the Nebraska State Auditor and made available for public inspection on the web pages of the Nebraska State College System. The College's revenue bond program is audited annually on a consolidated basis with the other state colleges by an independent certified public accounting firm. Copies of the College's audit reports are available in the College Resource Archive.

Since the College's 2001 comprehensive evaluation by the Higher Learning Commission, no audit report has identified any significant issue or irregularity. However, in January 2010 the Nebraska State Auditor contacted the Office of the Nebraska State College System with concerns that a former president of Peru State College, Dr. Ben E. Johnson, misused private funds generated by the College bookstore.

The College bookstore had been operated by a private nonprofit corporation, Peru State Advancement, Inc. under contract since 1983. Funds generated by the bookstore operation had been made available to the College president in order to pay for student travel expenses and other expenses in support of the College. It was alleged that these funds had been used by Dr. Johnson for his own personal expenses between the dates of July 2007 and June 2009. The Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees and the governing board of Peru State Advancement, Inc. cooperated fully and assisted auditors and investigators from the State Attorney General's office. Criminal charges were never filed against Dr. Johnson, who had retired in August 2008 before the matter was discovered. In March of 2010, the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees and Peru State Advancement, Inc. agreed to end the contract for the operation of the College bookstore. A new contract with a national bookstore company started on April 1, 2010.

One other matter arose concerning a financial transaction between former President Ben E. Johnson and the Peru State College Foundation. In 2008, following the retirement of Dr. Johnson, the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees learned that Dr. Johnson had entered into a contract with the Peru State College Foundation that would allow him to receive compensation from the Foundation following his retirement. The Board of Trustees was concerned that such an arrangement might not comply with Nebraska law and notified the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission and the Nebraska State Auditor of the contract. To prevent such contracts with any other employee, the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees entered into an agreement with the Peru State College Foundation that prohibits the Foundation from entering into any such contracts with any College employee.

It would later be discovered that when Ben E. Johnson was hired by the Nebraska State College System in 1999, he had not disclosed that he had been convicted of a felony in 1989 in California. At that time the College did not conduct criminal background checks. In 2001 the Nebraska State College System implemented a system-wide employment background check process and now conducts thorough reference and criminal background checks for all new employees.

Peru State College complies with local, state, and federal laws and administrative regulations applicable to it, including the policies of the Nebraska State College System. The College operates in compliance with three collective bargaining agreements as follows:

Collective Bargaining Agreements of the College

- Nebraska Association of Public Employees, Local #61, of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (Support Staff)
- Nebraska State College Professional Association (Professional Staff)
- State College Education Association (Faculty)

In accordance with federal and state law, the College does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. The College has designated the director of human resources to coordinate the College's nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504.

Peru State College complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Drug Free Workplace Policy and the Family Education Rights to Privacy Act, and publishes a statement of such compliance in the College catalog, student handbook, on the College website, and in course syllabi. The human resources office maintains a cumulative record of the credentials, training and experience of each employee, including adjunct faculty members. These records include official transcripts of all academic credit earned, degrees conferred, and other credentials applicable to College employment.

Peru State College maintains and adheres to clear and fair policies regarding the rights and responsibilities of each of its constituencies. College policies are published in the College catalog, student handbook, on the College website, and, in some cases, in course syllabi. The College is committed to presenting itself accurately and honestly to the public. The College provides a grievance process for employees in accordance with the grievance provisions of each of the collective bargaining agreements of the College with the three bargaining units representing faculty members, professional staff members and support staff members.

Among the policies of the College is a student grievance system for resolving complaints of students. Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees Policy #3210 governs these matters.

Policy #3210 Grievance Procedures

Section 1. The grievance procedure set forth herein is designed to provide a method for a student to resolve a request or complaint with the College. Time lines should be adhered to unless modifications are agreed to by the parties to the grievance.

Section 2. A grievance is defined to be a request or complaint by a student not covered under faculty or staff grievance procedures. Issues involving academic dishonesty; grade appeals; failure to pay a financial obligation; or, academic performance and achievement, probation or suspension for which the College has established appeal procedures are not eligible for grievance under this policy. Issues of student misconduct for which appeal procedures are available pursuant to Board Policy #3200 are not eligible for the grievance procedure under this policy.

Section 3. In reducing a grievance to writing, it should include the exact nature of the grievance, the act(s) of commission or omission, the date(s) of the act(s), the identity of the grievant, the identity of the party(ies) alleged to have caused the grievance, provisions of any agreement, bylaws, rules, policies or practices that are alleged to have been violated, and the remedy that is sought.

Section 4. The grievant shall, at his/her expense, have the right to assistance by a person of his/her own choosing from the College community, or to legal counsel in any step of the grievance procedure.

Procedure

Step 1. The grievant shall first discuss the grievance with the appropriate College administrator, faculty or professional staff member or with the person at the first level in the chain of command within ten (10) working days of the occurrence giving rise to the grievance in an attempt to settle the grievance. The college administrator, faculty or professional staff member or the person at the first level in the chain of command shall then have ten (10) working days in which to respond and give a written answer to the grievant.

Step 2. A grievance not settled in Step 1 may be filed in writing with the appropriate person in the next level higher in the chain of command in accordance with Section 3 above to discuss and attempt to settle the grievance. If the grievance is with the school dean or department chair, the grievant shall discuss the matter with the Vice President responsible for Academic Affairs.

Step 3. A grievance which has not been settled in Steps 1 and 2 and which the grievant wishes to pursue shall be appealed to the President responsible for Student Affairs, within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the response given in Step 2. The appeal shall include the written grievance and all responses given in the first two steps. The Vice President responsible for Student Affairs may conduct a conference with the grievant.

Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the grievance the Vice President responsible for Student Affairs shall render his/her written decision. If such findings and recommendations are not submitted within that time or if the grievance is not satisfied, then the grievant may proceed to the next step within ten (10) working days.

Step 4. Should all prior steps fail to resolve the grievance, and the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance, the grievant may appeal to the President, within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the response in Step 3, by filing the grievance and all prior responses with the President.

Step 5. Should all prior steps fail to resolve the grievance, and the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance, the grievant may appeal to the Chancellor, within thirty (30) working days of the receipt of the response in Step 4, by filing the grievance and all prior responses with the Chancellor. The Chancellor will only consider whether basic procedural fairness was offered. The Chancellor may request additional information from the grievant and the College in order to render a decision. The Chancellor will issue a written decision within twenty (20) working days after receipt of the appeal.

Step 6. If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision made by the Chancellor, the grievant may seek relief under applicable State and Federal laws.

The College has received and resolved a total of four student grievances since 2007.

The College is concerned with the success of students and provides advising and academic support to help students succeed.

All students at Peru State College are assigned an academic advisor with whom they are required to meet for review of an academic plan and course schedules. To facilitate academic planning, the College publishes course rotation schedules and program requirements on the College web site. Program requirements are also published in the College catalog. Students have continuous access to their academic records, transcripts, grades, and program requirements by using the student information system access portal known as MyPSC. Students may also register for courses, drop courses, check on the status of financial aid, account balances, and receive official College communications using MyPSC. The student information system is a part of a consortium of the Nebraska State College System and the University of Nebraska and is managed by the central administration office of the university system in Lincoln, Nebraska. It is secured by multiple firewalls and security policies of the University of Nebraska. Any student data stored on College computers is secured by two Fortigate 300A firewalls and has never, to the knowledge of anyone at the College, been accessed without authorization.

The College provides student support services to enhance the opportunity for students to succeed in College. These services include:

Academic Success

- Three-week Summer Bridge program encompassing 3-6 hours of free college credit, workshops, cultural and academic events and an opportunity to develop relationships with faculty, staff and other students
- Individualized peer tutoring for any class offered at the College
- Professional tutoring in science, computer technology and math
- Supplemental instruction in Elements of Composition, Basic Algebra and Introduction to General Biology
- Academic monitoring, intervention and advocacy
- Academic guidance and advising
- College-transition consultation
- Assistance with academic goal setting/prioritizing
- Graduate school advising
- Assistance with study skills development
- Assistance with time management
- Disability accommodation advocacy
- Tutorial programs on computers

College Cost Management

- Access to equipment for document preparation
- Small equipment check-out
- Workshops and individual guidance on applying for financial aid
- Workshops and individual guidance on applying for scholarships
- Workshops and individual guidance on finance and financial literacy
- Workshops and individual guidance on obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in graduate and professional programs
- Cashcourse website

Social Networking

- Assistance in learning campus procedures
- Cultural events
- Service learning opportunities
- Exposure to diverse cultures through speakers and field trips
- Guidance for personal adjustment to college life
- Facebook, Blackboard and email communication and updates
- Participation in Summer Bridge
- Peer mentoring services
- Leadership opportunities

Career Development and Job Search Preparation

- Assistance with resume writing, filling out applications, and practicing interview skills
- Career exploration services
- Guidance on choosing a program of study
- Workshops on careers, resume writing, the job application process, etc.

Peru State College is concerned about the academic integrity of its courses and programs. To educate students about academic integrity, and to provide a basis for action in the event of a breach of academic integrity, the College maintains and enforces a policy on academic integrity.

Policy on Academic Integrity

The College expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an honest assessment of student learning outcomes and the assignment of grades that appropriately reflect student performance. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to understand and comply with instructions regarding the completion of assignments, exams, and other academic activities. At a minimum, students should assume that at each assessment opportunity they are expected to do their own original academic work and/or clearly acknowledge in an appropriate fashion the intellectual work of others, when such contributions are allowed. Students helping others to circumvent honest assessments of

learning outcomes, or who fail to report instances of academic dishonesty, are also subject to the sanctions defined in this policy.

Instances of academic dishonesty may be discovered in a variety of ways. Faculty members who assign written work ordinarily check citations for accuracy, run data base and online checks, and/or may simply recognize familiar passages that are not cited. They may observe students in the act of cheating or may become aware of instances of cheating from the statements of others. All persons who observe or otherwise know about instances of cheating are expected to report such instances to the proper instructor or Dean. In order to promote academic integrity, the College subscribes to an electronic service to review papers for the appropriate citations and originality. Key elements of submitted papers are stored electronically in a limited access database and thus become a permanent part of the material to which future submissions are compared. Submission of an application and continued enrollment signifies your permission for this use of your written work.

Should an occurrence of academic misconduct occur, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. Each incident of academic misconduct should be reported to the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA may suspend for two semesters students found to be responsible for multiple instances of academic dishonesty. The reason for the suspension will be noted on the student's transcript.

A faculty member need present only basic evidence of academic dishonesty. There is no requirement for proof of intent. Students are responsible for understanding these tenets of academic honesty and integrity. Students may appeal penalties for academic dishonesty using the process established for grades appeals.

The College uses two commercially available systems to aid in the detection of plagiarism or cheating. The database product Turnitin, compares student work against published web pages, student papers previously submitted by faculty and students, and library databases, digital reference collections, textbooks and subscription-based publications. The system reports incidents of previously published material to the faculty member and/or student who submitted the paper. A similar system called SafeAssign is also available on the Blackboard course management platform used by the College for online courses.

Student Safety and Welfare

The College is concerned about the safety and mental and emotional welfare of students. The College provides private, confidential counseling services at no charge to students through the Blue Valley Behavioral Health Center. These services can be accessed on campus during the regular academic year when classes are held on campus. Additionally, the College sponsors a Campus Assessment Response and Evaluation Team (CARE Team) to assess circumstances, enhance communication, and initiate appropriate responses to specific behavioral problems that may involve threats to the safety and security of the campus community. Any member of the campus community can refer a student or report an incident to the CARE Team for investigation and follow-up attention. The CARE Team may perform a threat assessment, and determine the best mechanisms for support, intervention, warning/notification and response. The team may deploy its resources and resources of the community and coordinate follow-up. The team will develop a database of reports in order to identify patterns of behavior over a period of time and to track responses to reports.

The College provides health and medical services to students in the student health center. Services include counseling, health education, and medical care. Services are confidential and the College will not release information without the written permission of the student, except upon court order, in cases of certain communicable diseases (as required by law), or as required to protect students and others from immediate physical danger.

The College maintains a security office and staff to supplement the law enforcement services provided by the Nemaha County Sheriff's Office. College security staff members provide campus patrol and escort services for College students and employees as needed. Federally mandated crime statistics reported by the College indicate the following incidences of crimes on campus and in College residence halls:

Exhibit 1.7

Peru State College Crime Statistics

ARRESTS - ON CAMPUS

Law Violation	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Illegal weapons possession	0	0	0
Drug law violations	0	1	1
Liquor law violations	0	1	0

ARRESTS - RESIDENCE HALLS

Law Violation	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Illegal weapons possession	0	0	0
Drug abuse violations	0	1	1
Liquor law violations	0	0	0

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS - ON CAMPUS

Law Violation	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Illegal weapons possession	1	0	0
Drug abuse violations	3	3	3
Liquor law violations	81	19	20

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS - RESIDENCE HALLS

Law Violation	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Illegal weapons possession	n/a	0	0
Drug abuse violations	n/a	3	3
Liquor law violations	n/a	0	0

CRIMINAL OFFENSES - ON CAMPUS

Law Violation	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Murder/Non-negligent manslaughter	0	0	0
Negligent manslaughter	0	0	0
Sex offenses - Forcible	0	0	1
Sex offenses - Non-forcible	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	0
Aggravated assault	0	0	0
Burglary	0	0	3
Motor vehicle theft	0	0	0
Arson	0	0	0

CRIMINAL OFFENSES - RESIDENCE HALLS

Law Violation	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Murder/Non-negligent manslaughter	0	0	0
Negligent manslaughter	0	0	0
Sex offenses - Forcible	0	0	1
Sex offenses - Non-forcible	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	0
Aggravated assault	0	0	0
Burglary	0	0	3
Motor vehicle theft	0	0	0
Arson	0	0	0

Source: Peru State College Security Office

Note: Categories of offenses for which the College reported no incidents for the 2007/08, 2008/09, or 2009/10 academic years are not included in this exhibit. The full report is available in the College Resource Archive.

The most notable trend in the incidences of crimes on campus is the significant decrease in liquor law violations from 81 in 2007/08 to 19 in 2008/09 and 20 in 2009/10. This is evidence that the College's alcohol education and security programs have been more effective in recent years.

In fall 2010 a major security incident occurred on campus that focused the attention of the College and the local community on the matter of the safety and security of students. On December 3, 2010, a female freshman student who lived in a College residence hall was reported missing after attending an off-campus party in Peru. She was last seen at 1:30 a.m. walking across campus and toward a residence hall. In the days that followed, members of the campus and local communities searched for the student but she was never found. She remains missing as of the writing of this report. A male student, who also resided on campus in fall 2010, was arrested in connection with false reporting and tampering with evidence and was reportedly identified by the Nemaha County Sheriff's Office as a "person of interest" in the disappearance of the freshman female student. No arrests have been made in connection with her disappearance, but the matter remains under investigation by law enforcement officials.

As the event of the missing student unfolded, the College maintained a nearly constant flow of updates and reports to the family of the missing student, the College community, the parents and families of students, and the surrounding communities. A web page on the College website was created to report news and updates and to ask for information from anyone who might know something about the incident.

Additional safeguards and measures were undertaken by the College to ensure the safety of students and employees and these included: enhanced campus presence by security officials; regular meetings with students to discuss their observations and concerns; reminder notices about the emergency information system to notify students and employees of emergencies by text message, email and/or phone call; expanded counseling services; and self-defense classes.

In March 2011, the College contracted with an individual certified in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design assessment to gain a comprehensive view of potential safety concerns for the campus. A detailed report was presented to the campus safety committee as well as administrators, faculty and staff in May 2011. Following this presentation, the vice president for enrollment management and student affairs, in conjunction with the safety committee, developed a priority list of projects based upon the report and a campus inspection. Priorities have been divided into six categories: camera system upgrades, lighting, campus signage, landscaping, parking enforcement/security coverage, and general building improvements. The College is in the process of developing an implementation plan based upon this assessment and identification of priorities.

Peru State College athletics is concerned with the integrity of the College as well as the personal integrity of individual student-athletes. The College pursued and attained a Champions of Character Five Star Award in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Champions of Character Program.

The Champions of Character program has established five core values to encourage student-athletes to make good choices in all aspects of their lives and reflect the true spirit of competition.

The Champions of Character Five Core Values:

Integrity – positive internal traits that guide behavior

Respect – Treating others the way you want to be treated

Responsibility – The social force that binds the individual to the good of the team
Sportsmanship – Following the rules, spirit and etiquette of athletic competition
Servant Leadership – Serving the greater good

Institutions are measured based on a demonstrated commitment to Champions of Character and earned points in each of the following categories: character training, conduct in competition, academic focus, character recognition and character promotion. Institutions earned points based on exceptional student-athlete grade point averages and by obtaining zero ejections during competition throughout the course of the academic year. Peru State College scored 73 points which put it in the top 25% of the NAIA schools honored.

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

There is substantial evidence to support the assertion that Peru State College meets the core components of Criterion One: Mission and Integrity.

The College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students. The College's mission, purposes, and goals are clearly and visibly articulated to the College's constituencies and are congruent with the larger mission of the Nebraska State College System. The mission documents reflect the unique identity and sense of purpose of the College, particularly for Southeast Nebraska and the larger region. The mission has clearly informed the planning process of the College and is emphasized in the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan. The College upholds and protects its integrity, maintains clear and fair policies, presents itself accurately and honestly to the public, and abides by all applicable laws and regulations.

Several strengths have presented themselves in relation to Criterion One. Partly in response to the self-study process, there has been an improved articulation of the mission of Peru State College both in spirit and in visibility on campus and in College communications. Evidence shows that the College values the presence of diverse perspectives and ideas in educational and co-curricular programming. The College actively recruits students, faculty members, staff members and administrators with diverse backgrounds and experiences to enrich the campus environment, with particular attention to recruitment of members of minority groups that are presently underrepresented on campus and in the surrounding communities. Additionally, the College provides speakers and activities that celebrate diversity of thought, opinion, and perspective.

Faculty members, staff members and students declare hearty support for the mission of the College, and each recognizes the commitment of others. A robust shared-governance system facilitates the involvement of all constituencies in planning and in broad campus-wide discussions about proposed policies and priorities. There is a renewed commitment to open communications among all constituencies of the College, and ample opportunity for all stakeholders to provide feedback and ideas to College leaders. The result has been enhanced collaboration and the initiation of mission-driven projects by faculty members, staff members and students.

Even given the dedication of College constituencies to the mission and integrity of the College, there remain opportunities for improvement. Despite abundant attention to and effort in the recruitment of diverse learners and members of the College workforce, inconsistent results indicate that this effort should continue in earnest. While the location and size of the College may hamper its ability to compete with other institutions for a fully diverse student population and workforce, it

remains an important goal and, accordingly, the College should continue to pursue opportunities to improve campus diversity.

A second opportunity for improvement concerns continued attention to the perception of the security of the College campus. While it is clear that the College maintains appropriate security measures and that it responds diligently and candidly to security concerns as they arise, it will be important for the College to reinforce the efficacy of its security systems and the safety of the campus population when communicating with prospective students, enrolled students, employees, visitors and members of the surrounding community. The College should include attention to this message in its communications with all constituencies.

Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

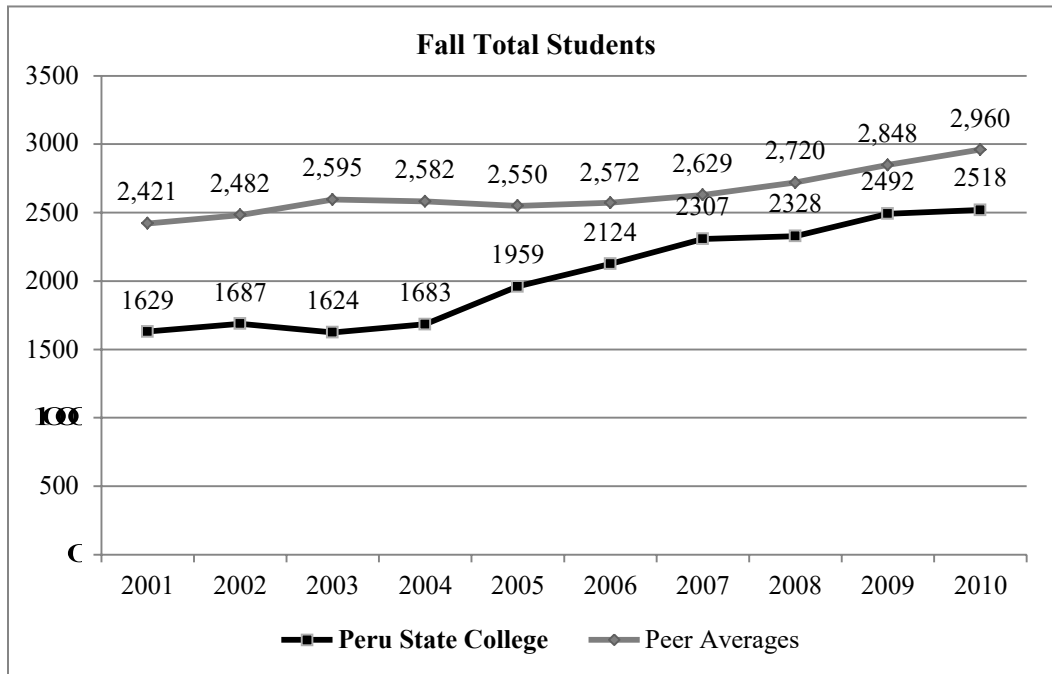
Peru State College undertakes to prepare for the future by realistically assessing its historical performance, current capacity, and potential strategies to improve service to its key constituencies. During the self-study/strategic planning process, the College has established its vision to be a college of choice by fostering excellence and student achievement through engagement in a culture that promotes inquiry, discovery and innovation. This chapter presents the College's process for assessing institutional effectiveness and for preparing for the future. Enrollment growth at a pace that has exceeded growth in resources has resulted in an exceptionally efficient, and effective, institution. In order to continue to preserve quality and strengthen the College, the College plans for slower growth and a focus on resource acquisition to the next planning horizon.

Core Component 2a: The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends

During the period just after the last self-study process, which ended in 2001, Peru State College has enjoyed a period of rapid enrollment growth. Most of this growth was due to specific entrepreneurial decisions and endeavors, including being an early niche entrant into online education. Total fall enrollments (Exhibit 2.1) grew 55% from 2001 to 2010, while the College's peers grew just 22% in the same period. Fall full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollments (Exhibit 2.2) grew 50% since 2003 (fall FTE student figures are not available prior to 2003 in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System or "IPEDS").

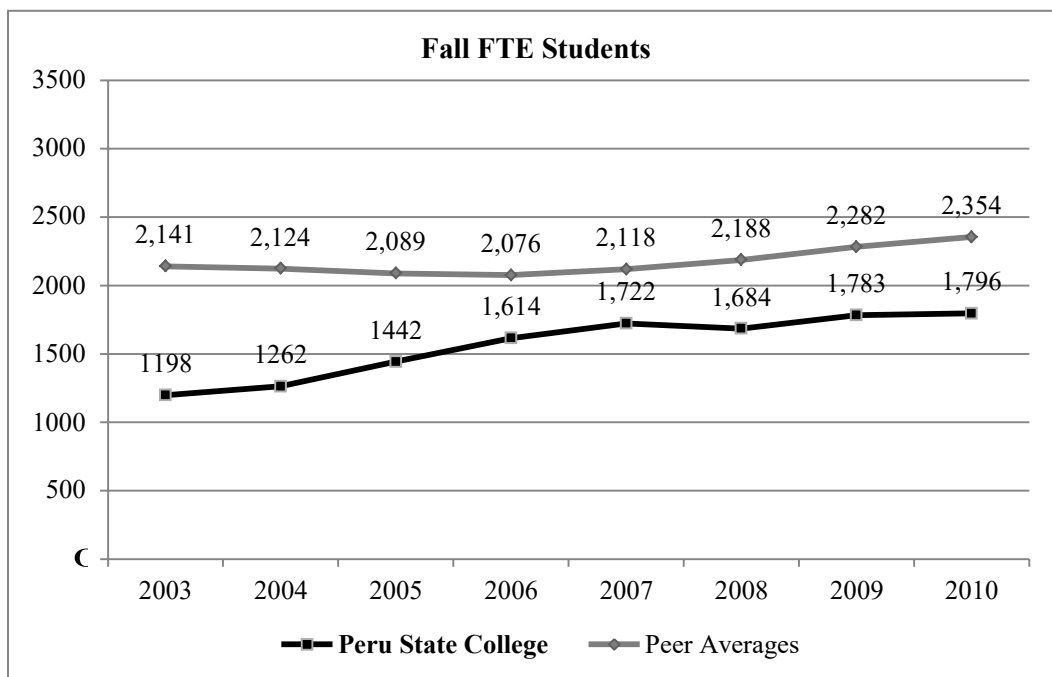
During this period of growth, the College benefitted from serving constituents in a state with a long history of material support for higher education in general, and support for this institution specifically. Still, at the beginning of the current self-study process, which began in 2009, the College found itself at a crossroads while considering the tradeoffs between future growth and its impact on future perceptions of quality. A new set of strategic priorities had to be set.

Exhibit 2.1



Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

Exhibit 2.2



Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

In June 2011, the College finalized a two year evaluation process that culminated with the adoption of a strategic plan to cover the years 2011 through 2017. The year 2017 is also the 150th anniversary of the founding of Peru State College, and for that reason the plan is titled the Sesquicentennial Plan. The plan guides the investment of resources and energy in two transformational goals: 1) creating excellence through essential engagement, and 2) increasing prominence. Each of these transformational goals includes key strategies and initiatives that emerged as a result of a college-wide assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The full 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Plan is located in the College Resource Archive.

The evaluation process that led to the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Plan started with the new leadership of incoming President Dan Hanson in summer 2009. During his first year as president, Dr. Hanson dedicated himself to learning as much as possible about the College from the perspectives of all of its constituencies. In fall 2009 President Hanson conducted a stakeholder survey that invited all students, staff members, faculty members, administrators, alumni, and members of the community to participate. A total of 315 persons participated as follows:

2009 Stakeholder Survey Participants

- 187 students
- 40 professional staff members
- 41 faculty members
- 25 support staff members
- 12 alumni
- 10 community members and others

As noted previously in this report, the 2009 Stakeholder Survey questions included:

2009 Stakeholder Survey Questions

1. What do you value most about Peru State College?
2. What do you perceive is unique about the student experience at Peru State College?
3. What is your perception about the quality of a Peru State College Education?
4. How could the educational experience for Peru State College students be improved?
5. What advice or other thoughts would you like to share with me as I begin as president of Peru State College?

The result was a comment-rich document with qualitative descriptions and advice. The responses to the 2009 Stakeholder Survey were published and sent to all members of the campus community via email in early 2010. The full report is located in the College Resource Archive.

In addition to the survey noted above, the president also met with small groups (often two persons) of faculty members, staff members, students, administrators, alumni and community members to discuss the issues raised in the survey, future planning for the College, and any other matters that the constituents wished to raise. A total of 171 persons participated in 93 of these small group

meetings with the president. Notes from these meetings were transcribed and are maintained in the office of the president. These meetings helped to inform the president about issues and perceptions important to the College.

In fall 2010, the president formally convened a Strategic Planning Committee for which he served as committee chair. The members of the Strategic Planning Committee represented a cross-section of the stakeholders of the College. The membership was as follows:

Members of the College Strategic Planning Committee

Dr. Gene Beardslee, Director of Computer Services
Ms. Kelly Bequette, TRiO Program Director
Mr. Heath Christiansen, Web Administrator
Ms. Leslie Fattig, Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Administration and Finance
Mr. Paul Fell, Co-President of the National Alumni Association Board of Directors
Ms. Peggy Groff, Student Success Coordinator
Dr. Paul Hinrichs, Associate Professor of Science and Technology
Dr. Christy Hutchison, Associate Professor of Business and HLC Committee Chair
Ms. Julia Perry, Community Representative
Mr. Steve Schneider, Athletic Director
Mr. Todd Simpson, PSC Foundation Executive Director
Dr. Dennis Welsh, Associate Professor of Chemistry
Ms. Elizabeth Zito, Student Senate President
Dr. Loretta Zost, Assistant Professor of Education

To provide direction for the planning process, the Strategic Planning Committee developed the theme: Essential Engagement – Enhancing Institutional Effectiveness and Prominence. This theme was intended to inform the process and to guide research on student achievement and the importance of engaging students in a supportive environment with high expectations. Educational engagement includes an active approach to teaching and learning that empowers students to connect personally with their educational experience, their faculty members, other students, and the community. This theme also suggested a new way of learning for students and a new way for the College to interact with the community and society. This culture of engagement is intended to enhance instructional approaches and student learning outcomes.

The work of the Strategic Planning Committee was coordinated with the work of the President's Cabinet, Higher Learning Commission self-study committees, the enrollment management committee, the strategic marketing committee, and the athletic strategic planning committee. Input from all constituencies, including students, was crucial in developing the plan. Input was obtained by use of surveys, senate and departmental meetings, focus groups, and town hall meetings. Working together, the College community developed a shared vision for a vibrant future while building on the strengths and heritage of the College.

During the 2010/11 academic year, the Strategic Planning Committee met two times each month, and sometimes more often, and engaged in a thorough analysis of the College's mission, operations, and effectiveness. A Strategic Planning Committee Blackboard site was created and the following types of documents and reports were posted there for study by members of the committee: mission, vision, and goals of the College, student enrollment reports, student demographic reports, report of strengths and weaknesses as derived by the Higher Learning

Commission self-study steering committee, financial reports, and results of the 2009 Stakeholder's Survey. The committee considered the prior and concurrent reports of the Enrollment Management Committee, the Strategic Marketing Committee, and the Athletic Strategic Planning Committee. It also reviewed studies of economic and societal trends and descriptions of educational best practices.

The Strategic Planning Committee administered a survey in fall 2010 of the campus community to assess priorities and to gauge support of the College's mission, purposes and core values. The survey contained the following items:

Items on 2010 Survey Administered by Strategic Planning Committee

Items asked of all participants:

- I support the statement of strategic intent: Peru State College will emerge as a regional small college of choice based on a reputation for student engagement and a culture of inquiry, discovery and innovation.
- Of the following choices, which three area of focus do you believe are top priorities for the college to emerge as a college of choice? Options: academics, student life, resources, technology, facilities, leadership, people, community outreach, other
- (Optional) Please share additional ideas you have for Peru State College's future.

Items asked of alumni and community members only:

- A college strives to produce graduates who have a broad general education and who can write clearly and effectively, speak well to large groups, use information technology competently, think critically and analytically, understand people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds, solve real-world problems, practice a personal code of ethics, and who are prepared to succeed in a global, diverse, technological workforce. Would you comment on any knowledge you have about Peru State College graduates and whether or not you believe we generally achieve these goals?
- If you have had the opportunity to work with one or more Peru State College graduates, please describe generally the knowledge, skills, and job performance of the graduates you observed. Please feel free to comment upon both strengths and weaknesses.

Item asked of alumni only:

- Please share your vision of how Peru State College could better serve its alumni community and/or how the alumni could better serve Peru State.

For each item, respondents were invited to provide comments. The result was a comment-rich qualitative document with many impressions, perspective and ideas. A total of 354 persons participated in the survey as follows:

Participants in 2010 Strategic Planning Committee Survey

73 students

37 staff members

- 24 faculty members
- 186 alumni
- 28 community members and others
- 3 administrators
- 3 others

Results of the survey were posted on the strategic planning Blackboard site and reviewed and discussed by the members of the strategic planning committee. This information was used by committee members to prioritize the goals, strategies and initiatives for placement into the emerging strategic plan for the College.

To further involve the campus community in the process, individual members of the Strategic Planning Committee engaged in discussions of the committee's work with colleagues in academic and administrative departmental meetings. The committee held open town hall meetings with the campus community to invite proposals of strategic initiatives for consideration by the committee, and to give updates on the progress of the committee's work to community members. This work culminated in the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Plan of the College.

Core Component 2b: The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

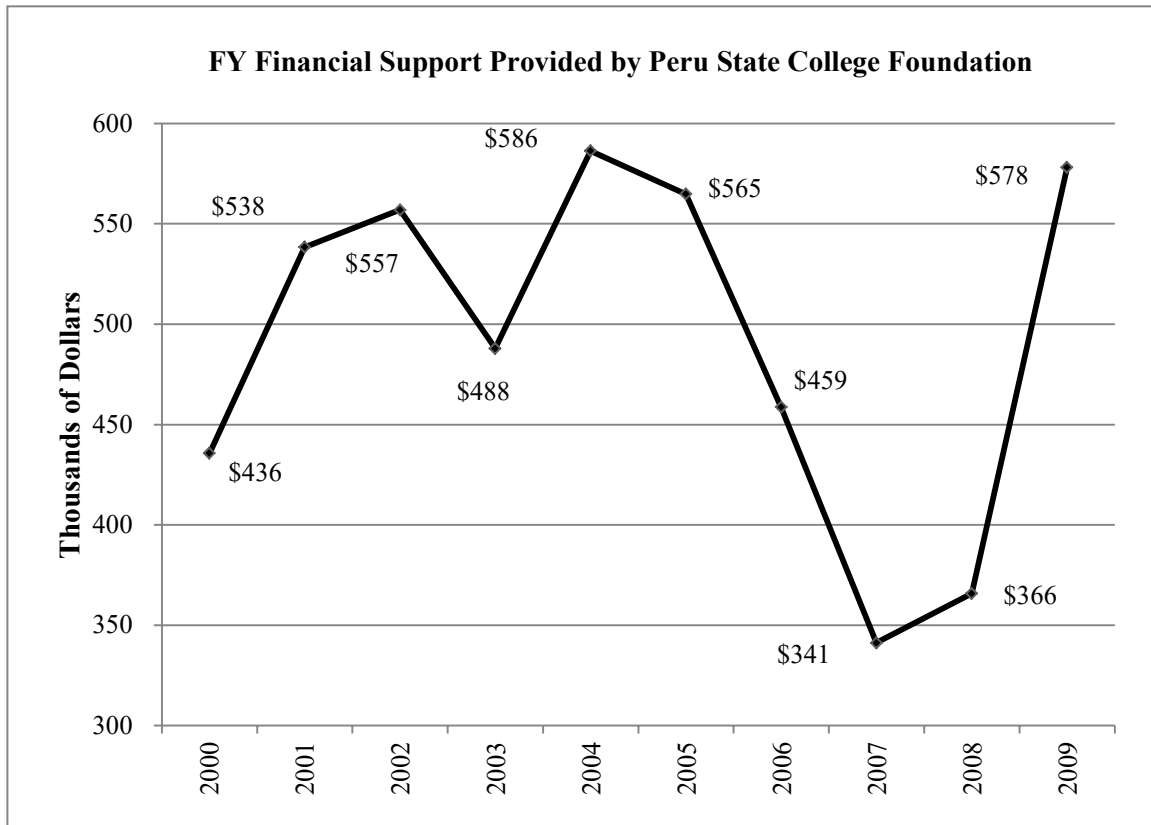
Peru State College receives funding from a variety of sources. Each of these sources, described below, has defined permissible uses for funds.

The Nebraska Legislature appropriates operating funds to the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees in the form of general funds and cash funds. The general fund appropriation consists primarily of state tax revenues, and the cash fund appropriation represents tuition and fee payments and other revenues that accrue to each state college. The Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees allocates the general fund appropriation among the three state colleges and the state college system office. The Board of Trustees allocates to each college a cash fund appropriation based on the college's anticipated revenues. At its discretion, the Board of Trustees may modify a college's cash fund appropriation without further legislative approval.

The College's residence halls, apartment buildings, food service operation, and student center are administered through a revenue bond enterprise fund that collects room and board payments, parking fees, and other rental and food service income. Receipts from the revenue bond program are applied to the operating expenses of the revenue bond facilities, to maintenance and improvement of the facilities, and to debt service on the bonds.

The College receives scholarship funds from the Peru State College Foundation and numerous third party donors. Over the past decade, the Foundation has provided an average of approximately \$500,000 of scholarship support each year, although there was a notable drop from 2006 to 2008 and recovery in 2009. Exhibit 2.3 charts the history of annual gifts from the Foundation to the College since 2000.

Exhibit 2.3



Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

The College administers student financial aid from the federal government in the form of Pell grants, direct student loans, and federal work-study funds. Financial aid proceeds applied to student tuition and fees become a part of the College's cash fund revenue, and financial aid proceeds applied to room and board charges are deposited in the revenue bond program.

State Allocations to the Nebraska State College System

The history of state allocations to the Nebraska State College System has trended away from general funds and towards cash funds. Both types of funds have increased nearly every year since 2000, but cash fund allocations have increased at a greater rate than general funds allocations. The result has been that the Nebraska State College System is becoming more dependent on receipts of tuition and fee revenues, and less dependent on state general funds, a trend typically found in higher education. Exhibit 2.4 sets forth the history of state allocations to the Nebraska State College System and indicates the percentage change each year since 2000.

Exhibit 2.4

History of State Allocations to the Nebraska State College System FY 2000 through 2010					
	General Fund	Cash Fund	Total \$	% General Fund Change	% Cash Fund Change
FY2000	31,484,710	14,524,502	46,009,212		
FY2001	32,712,178	14,956,613	47,668,791	3.9%	3.0%
FY2002	35,541,402	15,773,272	51,314,674	8.7%	5.5%
FY2003	36,257,396	16,991,361	53,248,757	2.0%	7.7%
FY2004	34,416,556	18,952,541	53,369,097	-5.1%	11.5%
FY2005	35,159,799	20,377,837	55,537,636	2.2%	7.5%
FY2006	38,562,253	21,457,406	60,019,659	9.7%	5.3%
FY2007	40,966,621	21,965,487	62,932,108	6.2%	2.4%
FY2008	43,109,898	23,550,579	66,660,477	5.2%	7.2%
FY2009	45,393,201	25,129,721	70,522,922	5.3%	6.7%
FY2010	45,335,219	26,714,187	72,049,406	-0.1%	6.3%

Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

Exhibit 2.5 shows the relationship between dependence on general funds and cash funds in the Nebraska State College System. In fiscal year 2000, the Nebraska College System received 68.4% of its state funds in the form of general funds, and 31.6% of state funds in the form of cash funds comprised of tuition and fee revenues. By fiscal year 2010, 62.9 % of state funds were in the form of general funds, and 37.1% of state funds were comprised of tuition and fee revenues.

Exhibit 2.5

Nebraska State College System General and Cash Funds FY 2000 through 2010					
	General Fund	Cash Fund	Total \$	% General Fund	% Cash Fund
FY2000	31,484,710	14,524,502	46,009,212	68.4%	31.6%
FY2001	32,712,178	14,956,613	47,668,791	68.6%	31.4%
FY2002	35,541,402	15,773,272	51,314,674	69.3%	30.7%
FY2003	36,257,396	16,991,361	53,248,757	68.1%	31.9%
FY2004	34,416,556	18,952,541	53,369,097	64.5%	35.5%
FY2005	35,159,799	20,377,837	55,537,636	63.3%	36.7%
FY2006	38,562,253	21,457,406	60,019,659	64.2%	35.8%
FY2007	40,966,621	21,965,487	62,932,108	65.1%	34.9%
FY2008	43,109,898	23,550,579	66,660,477	64.7%	35.3%
FY2009	45,393,201	25,129,721	70,522,922	64.4%	35.6%
FY2010	45,335,219	26,714,187	72,049,406	62.9%	37.1%

Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

Fortunately for the College, enrollment growth has provided steadily increasing receipts of tuition and fees from students. Exhibit 2.6 is a five-year history of Peru State College tuition receipts minus remissions and refunds.

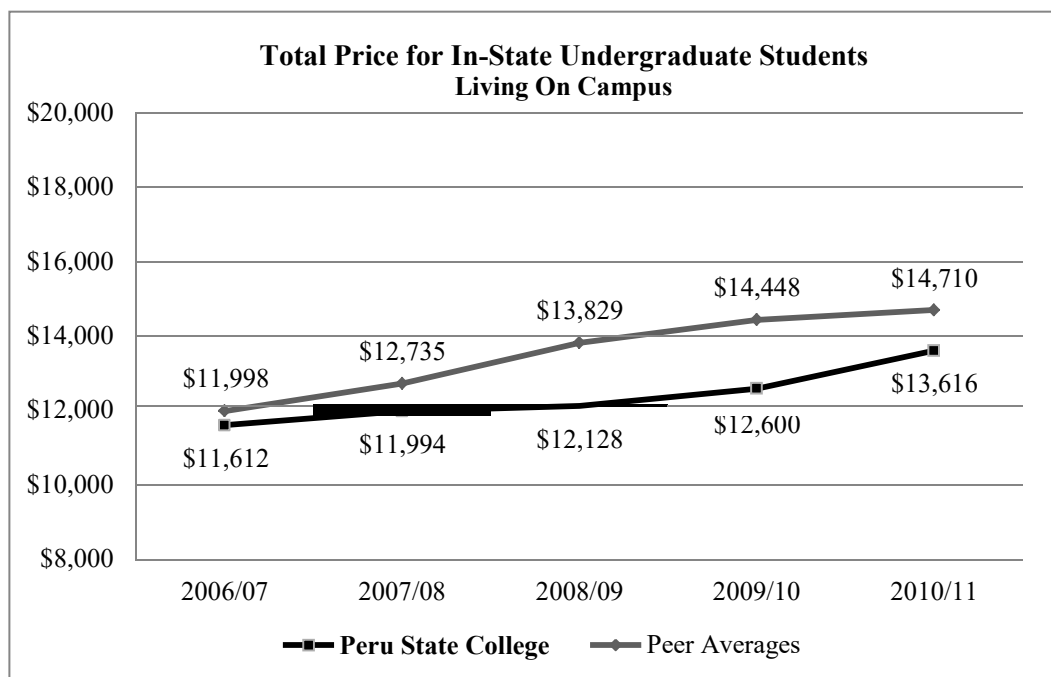
Exhibit 2.6

History of Peru State College Tuition Receipts FY 2005 through 2009					
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Gross Tuition	4,815,864	6,043,588	6,810,943	7,043,836	7,225,282
Less: Remissions	971,084	1,108,679	1,206,006	1,323,158	1,179,686
Less: Refunds (Including Financial Aid)	15,248	16,697	17,666	18,372	19,103
Net Tuition	\$ 3,829,531	\$ 4,918,210	\$ 5,587,270	\$ 5,702,305	\$ 6,026,491

Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

Even with the College's growing reliance on tuition receipts, its tuition costs are still competitive when compared to its peer institutions. Exhibit 2.7 shows the College's total price for in-state undergraduate students living on campus as compared to the average of its peer institutions. The College's cost-of-attendance advantage has grown over time.

Exhibit 2.7

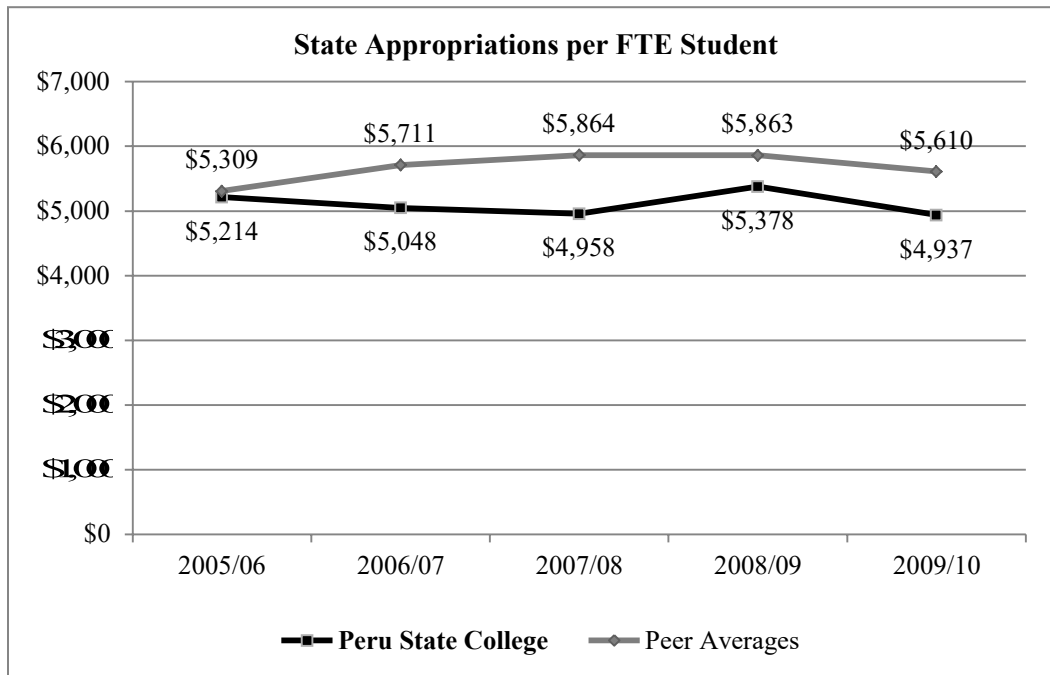


Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

Nebraska State College System Allocations to Peru State College

After the state of Nebraska has allocated state funds to the Nebraska State College System, the next step in the funding process is for the Nebraska State College System to allot funds to the three state colleges – Peru State College, Chadron State College and Wayne State College. The Nebraska State College System distributes general funds by supporting the same percentage of the core needs (salaries, benefits, utilities, etc.) of each of the three colleges. Strategic initiatives and enrollment growth are funded when the state allocates additional general funds to the Nebraska State College System. Growth related to online programming is expected to be self-funded. This approach to the distribution of general funds provides stability for the colleges so that budgets do not immediately fluctuate with enrollments. However, it does not respond well to sustained significant growth of the type Peru State College has experienced. This is especially true when there are small or no increases in general funds allocated from the state, giving the Nebraska State College System few opportunities to provide funds for strategic initiatives or to respond to growth. Exhibit 2.8 shows Peru State College starting at near equality with its peers in state appropriations per full-time equivalent student, but dropping to 12% below five years later. The intra-system difference is more pronounced.

Exhibit 2.8



Source: Calculated from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data

Since fiscal year 2006/07, Peru State College has received the lowest funding per full-time equivalent student as compared to the other two state colleges. For each of the past five years, Peru State College enrolled approximately 24% of the total students in the Nebraska State College System, but received approximately 21% of the state appropriations in the form of general fund and cash fund dollars allocated to the colleges (disregarding general fund money allocated to the state college system office). Accordingly, the other two state colleges received proportionally more funding from the Nebraska State College System than was represented by the percentage of students they enrolled. As a result, the allocation of general fund and cash fund dollars per full-time equivalent student is lower at Peru State College than at the other two state colleges. Exhibit 2.9 illustrates the comparative funding per student provided to each of the three state colleges. Peru State College's 2010/11 funding was 17.3% below Chadron's and 13.8% below Wayne's funding per student. Note: figures per FTE student are calculated using Nebraska State College System data collected at a time different than IPEDS reporting and consequently may be different than figures from that source.

Exhibit 2.9

General Fund and Cash Fund Allocations per Student FTE FY 2006 through 2010									
Wayne State College				Chadron State College			Peru State College		
Year	Allocation \$	FTE	\$/FTE	Allocation \$	FTE	\$/FTE	Allocation \$	FTE	\$/FTE
2006/07	28,135,245	2868	9,810	20,476,346	2040	10,037	13,221,809	1548	8,541
2007/08	29,761,159	2965	10,037	21,671,635	2011	10,777	13,840,462	1651	8,383
2008/09	31,436,403	2983	10,539	22,846,276	2097	10,895	14,919,046	1628	9,164
2009/10	32,173,773	3052	10,542	23,260,304	2104	11,055	15,267,652	1732	8,815
2010/11	32,798,938	3022	10,853	23,610,011	2087	11,313	15,498,444	1657	9,353

Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

The disproportion in funding is more pronounced in the allocation of general fund moneys alone. While in recent years all three state colleges have experienced a decline in the proportion of operating expenses paid from the general fund, Peru State College's general fund allocation, as a percentage of its general fund and cash fund allocation, has declined further than those of the other two colleges. As a result, the College has been required to rely more heavily on cash fund revenues to support its operations. The proportion of each college's allocation attributable to the general fund appropriation is set forth in Exhibit 2.10. The general fund appropriation per full-time equivalent student over the past five years is set forth in Exhibit 2.11.

Exhibit 2.10

Proportion of State Colleges' Allocations from General Fund Appropriation FY 2006 through 2010									
Wayne State College				Chadron State College			Peru State College		
Year	General + Cash Funds	General Fund	% General Fund	General + Cash Funds	General Fund	% General Fund	General + Cash Funds	General Fund	% General Fund
2006/07	28,135,245	17,514,189	62%	20,476,346	14,205,835	69%	13,221,809	8,147,890	62%
2007/08	29,761,159	18,393,130	62%	21,671,635	14,914,810	69%	13,840,462	8,539,737	62%
2008/09	31,436,403	19,435,668	62%	22,846,276	15,660,586	69%	14,919,046	8,975,750	60%
2009/10	32,173,773	19,460,500	60%	23,260,304	15,724,192	68%	15,267,652	8,802,850	58%
2010/11	32,798,938	19,574,994	60%	23,610,011	15,709,284	67%	15,498,444	8,722,542	56%

Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

Exhibit 2.11

**General Fund Allocations per Student FTE, Nebraska State Colleges
FY 2006 through 2010**

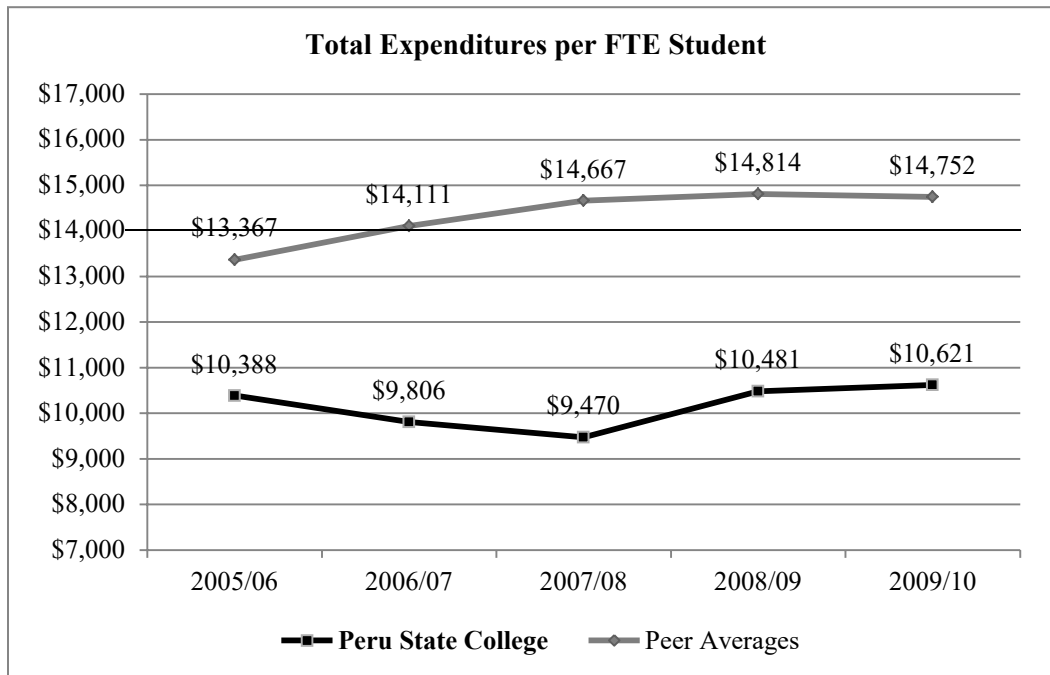
Wayne State College				Chadron State College			Peru State College		
Year	General Fund \$	FTE	\$/FTE	General Fund \$	FTE	\$/FTE	General Fund \$	FTE	\$/FTE
2006/07	17,514,189	2868	6,107	14,205,835	2040	6,964	8,147,890	1548	5,263
2007/08	18,393,130	2965	6,203	14,914,810	2011	7,417	8,539,737	1651	5,172
2008/09	19,435,668	2983	6,515	15,660,586	2097	7,468	8,975,750	1628	5,513
2009/10	19,460,500	3052	6,376	15,724,192	2104	7,473	8,802,850	1732	5,082
2010/11	19,574,994	3022	6,477	15,709,284	2087	7,527	8,722,542	1657	5,264

Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

The current funding imbalance is attributable in part to a difference in the financial support provided for online enrollment as compared to on-campus enrollment. Recommendations for funding to the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees are made on the original condition that online programming, which tended originally to serve a greater proportion of non-resident students, had to be self-sufficient at each of the colleges. Peru State College implemented online courses earlier and in greater numbers than its sister institutions, resulting in a greater proportion of its enrollment being self-funded. While online enrollments at Chadron State College and Wayne State College have increased in recent years, the funding imbalance is continued as a part of the overall funding model. The recent on-campus growth at the College occurred when the Nebraska State College System had little or no increase in general funds, thereby limiting its ability to respond.

The funding model of the Nebraska State College system impacts directly the amount of money Peru State College spends per FTE student when compared to the average per full-time equivalent student expenditures of its peer institutions. Exhibit 2.12 illustrates the efficiency of the College in terms of the relatively flat cost per student trend, and the most recent cost per student, which is 28% below the peer average.

Exhibit 2.12



Source: Calculated from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data

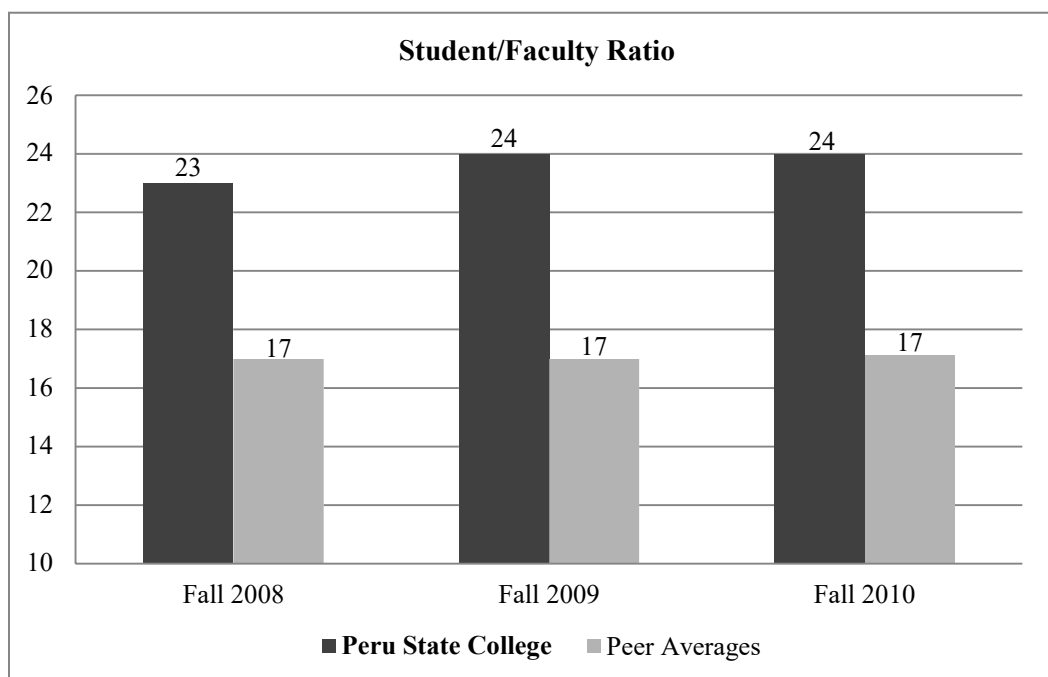
The meaning of these financial comparisons, especially in the context of the outcomes described in later chapters, is clear: Peru State College is incredibly efficient. The College provides high quality and highly valued academic instruction and support services for students at significantly less cost than other institutions, including its sister institutions in the Nebraska State College System. The College has a history of making smart and efficient financial investments in core educational services and a record of obtaining value for every dollar of funding it receives. College personnel are also innovative and creative in providing value at the lowest possible cost.

The Potential Impact of the Funding Imbalance on Future Operations

Without a plan for remediation, at some point Peru State College would no longer be able to rely on efficiency as a means to remain competitive. A critical area in which the previously described funding imbalance directly affects the operations of the College is the number of full-time faculty members providing instructional services. This can already be observed in the enrollment history in graduate programs. In 2008 the College made a decision to reduce course offerings in its graduate programs due, in large part, to its inability to fund continued growth of the programs. The College lacked the required faculty and support services to serve the growing population of graduate students in its online Master of Science in Education and Master of Science in Organizational Management programs. Although this decision was a significant factor in a 32% reduction in credit hours generated from graduate programs from 2007/08 to 2009/10, it shows the College's commitment to quality of the student experience over revenue enhancement.

In all programs, as enrollment grows and additional course sections are offered, the College must staff increasingly higher numbers of course sections with adjunct instructors, and class sizes are growing beyond the point of retaining the College's traditional competitive advantage in this area. Exhibit 2.13 compares the student-to-faculty ratios of Peru State College and its peer institutions.

Exhibit 2.13



Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

The College's fall 2010 student-to-faculty ratio of 24 is the highest for its peer group, exceeding the peer average of 17 by over 40%. This figure warrants monitoring, given that small classes have been an important marketing advantage in the past, and that student engagement, which is facilitated by smaller classes, is an important theme for the future.

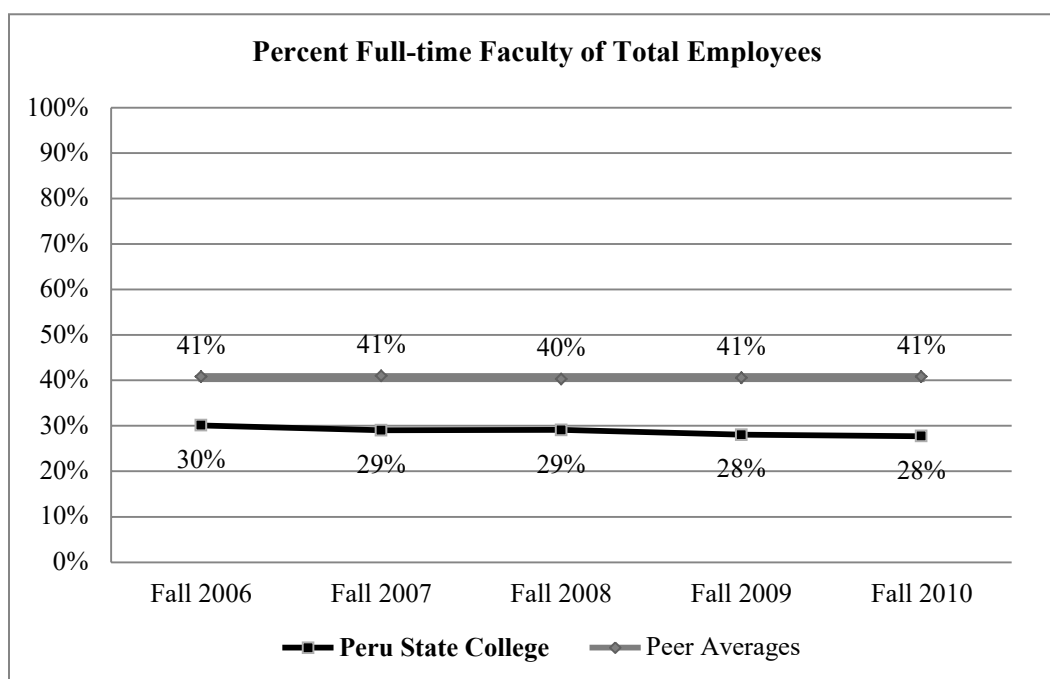
To compensate for its comparatively low number of full-time faculty members, the College must hire a greater number of adjunct instructors to teach sections of courses, both on-campus and online. The College recognizes that there are some benefits to the use of adjunct instructors. Adjunct instructors often have industry and business experience that full-time faculty members lack. Adjunct instructors may also know more about the technologies, policies and practices of organizations that will employ graduates of the College. As practitioners, adjunct instructors may serve as resources for internship placements and jobs for graduates. Using adjunct instructors may expand the College's network and relationships in the community for fundraising, service opportunities, advisory roles and general goodwill. Finally, the use of adjunct instructors gives the College the flexibility to add or reduce course sections as student demand changes. The use of adjunct instructors provides a nimbleness that the College would not otherwise have.

Conversely, there are many benefits associated with increasing the number and ratio of full-time instruction to adjunct instruction. Some expected benefits associated with an increase in full-time

faculty include the improved quality of academic advising, an ability to expand College 101 (a freshman experience introductory college course) to accommodate growth, generation of and support for future strategic initiatives (e.g., the Rural Health Opportunities Program), support to develop a wider variety of general education and honors program courses, and increased capacity for shared governance roles.

The College's total number of full-time faculty as a percentage of all employees is 28%. This is the lowest in the College's peer group. Exhibit 2.14 shows the percentage of full-time faculty to total employees for Peru State College and the average for the College's peer institutions. While the peer average trend is flat, Peru State College shows a slight decline over the study period.

Exhibit 2.14



Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

The College's low proportion of full-time faculty members is not a consequence of a larger than usual number of non-faculty employees. The College is staffed efficiently in all operations. Even though the optimal proportion of full-time faculty members can provide the College with flexibility in the case of enrollment declines or financial downturn, it could begin to affect basic operations of the College if too few faculty members are spread across growing shared governance and service needs. It can also begin to affect critical aspects of instructional and advising quality.

The College recognized this risk during the self-study and strategic planning processes and therefore incorporated in the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan, which was approved by the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees, the addition of 12 full-time faculty members over a six-year period (a 25% increase over the 2010/11 level). Given current financial projections, this pace of growth is sustainable. Peru State College has added full-time faculty at several points over the last ten years to maintain the level of instructional staffing needed to provide strong

educational programming. Two positions were added by 2004. Ten more lines were allocated in 2005, a net seven of which were filled after subsequent budget cuts. More recently, the Nebraska State College System supported the College by immediately allocating a high percentage of discretionary system dollars to fund a new faculty position for 2011/12, which was sooner than planned and a direct response to concerns developed in the self-study process.

To further enhance the educational experience of the College in ways defined in the strategic planning process, plans were made in 2010/11 to reallocate considerable resources, over \$400,000 or approximately 2.6% of the College's budget, to support engagement and academic environment enhancement.

The Physical Plant of Peru State College

The State of Nebraska and Peru State College have invested substantially in its physical infrastructure during the past decade. Since 1999, nearly \$45 million has been invested in the physical infrastructure at the College, and complete renovation or substantial remodeling has occurred in nearly every building on campus, with the exception of the student center and several residence halls. The College also updated its water system to provide additional treatment to water furnished by the City of Peru. A summary of significant facilities improvements is set forth in Exhibit 2.15. Details of example facility improvement projects are available in the College Resource Archive.

The College has paid for facilities improvements from a variety of funding sources. Revenue-producing facilities, such as the residence halls and student center, may be improved using the proceeds of revenue bonds, surplus revenues in excess of operating costs and debt service, and gifts. Other campus buildings can be improved with moneys derived from State appropriations for capital construction, accumulated cash fund balances, donations, and moneys provided by the State Task Force for Building Renewal, which is funded with cigarette tax revenues and other State funds.

The College is in the process of developing a Campus Facilities Master Plan with the assistance of a team of consultants selected by the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees. The College's Campus Facilities Master Plan will guide facilities improvements for ten years after its completion in early 2012. In previous years, the College prioritized future capital improvements primarily on the basis of funding availability, with an emphasis on projects that enhance life safety. For the next several years, the College anticipates that projects will be selected based on the strategic priorities in the recently completed 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan, as reflected in the Campus Facilities Master Plan.

Exhibit 2.15

Capital Improvements at Peru State College Since 1999 (Includes Estimated Costs of Projects under Construction)	
<u>State Buildings</u>	
Administration Building Renovation	\$1,695,400
A.V. Larson Building Codes Upgrade	2,137,827
Al Wheeler Activity Center Addition and Renovations	7,847,019
Campus Services Building Addition, Renovations, Emergency Generator	3,299,579
Library/CATS Center Renovation	7,124,362
Little Red Schoolhouse Reconstruction	42,260
Theatre/Auditorium Improvements	390,337
T.J. Majors Building Improvements	2,203,771
V.H. Jindra Fine Arts Building Improvements and Codes Upgrade	5,709,421
W.F. Hoyt Science Hall Addition and Renovations	4,462,815
Miscellaneous Campuswide, Parking, Grounds, Water Projects	1,166,225
Subtotal State Buildings	\$36,079,016
<u>Revenue Bond Buildings</u>	
Centennial Complex Residence Hall Renovations	\$1,820,422
Eliza Morgan Residence Hall Renovations	5,875,169
Student Center Improvements	477,102
W.N. Delzell Residence Hall Improvements	41,048
Miscellaneous Campuswide Revenue Bond Improvements	181,345
Subtotal Revenue Bond Buildings	\$8,395,086
Total Capital Improvements Since 1999	\$44,474,102

Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

Core Component 2c: The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Peru State College uses numerous means to assess the overall effectiveness of the institution. Strategically, a variety of performance indicators are tracked and considered by the College's leadership team. Given the College's past areas of emphasis, many of the strategic indicators have to do with recruitment, enrollment, retention, diversity and placement outcomes. As concerns evolve, responses are developed. For example, discussions regarding annually tracked retention rates were the origin of the campus-wide Enrollment and Retention Committee formed in 2009/10.

The leadership team is currently reviewing Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and finalizing a comprehensive reporting format.

Assessment of student learning is of primary importance and consequently ever more detailed reports have been prepared and shared with the College community. In 2008 the College created a new position titled director of student assessment in order to standardize student assessment and to integrate it into the overall assessment of the effectiveness of the College. The College also reorganized the academic resource center, now known as the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (often referred to as CATS), which provides educational success services to students, including tutoring, specialized testing, early warning of academic problems, probationary advising, study tips, disabled student services, workshops, and career services. Considerable details regarding the College's learning and outcomes assessment programs and resulting activities to enhance institutional quality are provided in the sections covering Criterion Three and Criterion Four.

Specialized accreditation is another way for the College to assess its effectiveness in specific programs. The School of Education participates in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). A team from the NCATE Board of Examiners visited the College in October 2008 and followed-up with a formal report stating that the College met every standard for both initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation. As a result, the College was awarded continued accreditation for seven years by NCATE.

During the review period, the Peru State College was involved in a considerable strategic commitment to improve data generation to support strategic decisions and enhance student service. The single most comprehensive source of data for assessing institutional effectiveness is the Nebraska Student Information System, a software database system that supports virtually all aspects of College operations. In 2008, the College participated in a statewide consortium of four-year public colleges and universities in the implementation of the Nebraska Student Information System. This system has begun to serve as the primary resource for all functions related to the operations of the College and as the central repository for all data about the College's students, personnel, finances, and property. The Nebraska Student Information System has already enhanced the student experience by providing twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week access to enrollment records from any location with an Internet connection. The new software system allows students to maintain their own data, provides increased functionality in the area of degree audit and graduation check-points, and provides a more integrated software system for use campus-wide. Once fully implemented, the new system will integrate various processes throughout campus and create efficiencies in the processing of student applications, transfer of credits, course registration, student advisement, financial aid processing, collection of tuition and fees, and graduation audits. The report generating capability will allow the College to track performance data more efficiently and over multiple academic semesters and years.

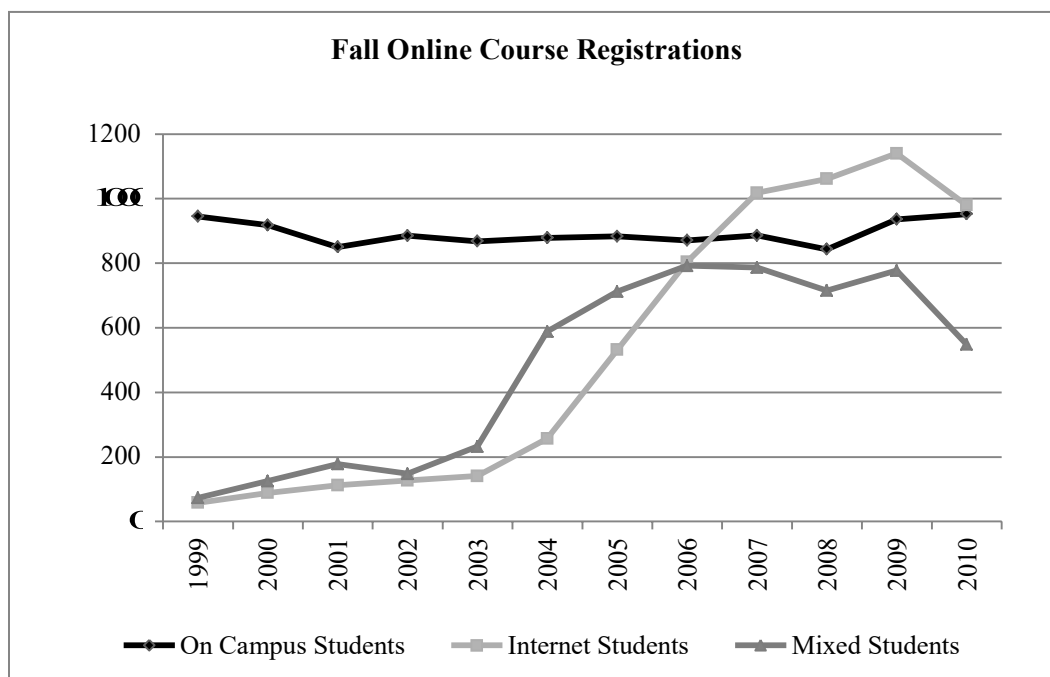
Strategic Improvement Informed by Environmental Assessment

Peru State College has a record of assessing its environment and instituting reforms designed to improve its performance and service to its constituents. During the past ten years, the College has faced uncertainty in state funding, changes in campus leadership, stagnant growth in on-campus enrollment, a highly competitive student recruitment market, and a diminishing population base in the regions of its service area that have historically supplied the most students.

In response to declining populations of cities and towns in its rural Nebraska service area, and in order to better accommodate a growing number of non-traditional and military students, in the

early 2000's the College adopted what was then an evolving technological means of serving students. Overall enrollments increased dramatically. Exhibit 2.16 shows the growth of on-campus, Internet (online) and mixed (both on-campus and online) students from fall 1999 to fall 2010.

Exhibit 2.16



Source: Peru State College Institutional Research Office

The upward trend in online enrollment of students ended in fall 2010 when online enrollments dropped fairly dramatically. While many factors may have combined to cause this result, anecdotal evidence suggests that one factor was a policy change relating to final exam proctoring. In the fall of 2010, in an effort to adhere to Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees Policy #4220, which in turn was a response to anticipated changes in federal regulations, the College began a system of in-person monitoring/proctoring of final exams. This was required even of students studying at a great distance from the College and the burden of finding a proctor was the responsibility of the student. Faculty members and administrators reported receiving complaints from students about the inconvenience that the policy caused, since students had to travel to campus or to a proctor site. In addition, the quality of off-campus proctors was hard to control in some cases, which resulted in rescheduled exams on occasion. This inconvenience reduced the perceived flexibility students value in online courses, and some likely went to other institutions. In spring 2011, the Board of Trustees authorized changing Board Policy #4220 to make in-person monitoring permissive instead of mandatory. College officials will monitor online enrollments closely to see if they rebound as a result of this policy change.

As a further response to the declining rural population in its service area, the College modified its tuition rates to attract more out-of-state students. In 2006, the College initiated a standard online rate for both in-state and out-of-state students. In 2009, the College initiated a "One Rate, Any State" program which allows students from throughout the United States to attend on campus

classes at Nebraska resident tuition rates. The result of this program has been an immediate 36.7% increase in the total number of out-of-state students attending the College.

During the most recent planning process, it was recognized that the College, while having a history of growth, lacks significant competitive advantages to sustain it under ever more competitive conditions. As a result, the College has identified a need to enhance the student experience through the creation of a community development initiative that includes the following features:

- 1) Establishment of an Institute for Community Engagement that:
 - Promotes community partnerships and service learning initiatives
 - Works with advisory boards
 - Identifies and secures funding
 - Develops and rewards student/faculty independent research relationships
 - Supports the activities of community development courses
- 2) Development of an interdisciplinary/integrative upper division community development course or courses focused on applied leadership and learning through community engagement.

It is the hope of the administration that this initiative will increase the prominence of and distinctly define the character of the College while focusing the efforts of the institution in an educationally sound and socially relevant direction.

Core Component 2d: All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

Peru State College's planning ultimately originates in accordance with the requirements of the State of Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education is a state constitutional agency whose mission is to promote sound policies for Nebraska's state and community colleges and the University of Nebraska. The Coordinating Commission balances the best interests of taxpayers, students and Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. The Coordinating Commission's responsibilities include:

Coordinating Commission Responsibilities

- Collaborating with the state's public colleges and universities to implement a plan that will guide Nebraska's higher education system
- Administering student financial aid programs
- Conducting research and publishing reports on higher education issues
- Authorizing academic programs
- Approving proposals for facilities
- Reviewing institutions' budget proposals and making recommendations to the State Legislature
- Approving applications from out-of-state institutions

Peru State College is a member of the Nebraska State College System and is governed by the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State College System. The Nebraska State College System states its mission, core values, and vision as follows:

Nebraska State College System Mission, Core Values and Vision

Mission Statement: The Nebraska State College System serves our students, communities and state by providing high quality, accessible, educational opportunities.

Core Values:

- Provide a safe, stimulating, caring, and enriching learning experience.
- Meet the changing needs of our students and the state.
- Assure financial, programmatic, and geographic access to NSCS institutions.
- Maintain affordable tuition and fees.
- Provide opportunities for applied research.
- Foster cooperative ventures among NSCS institutions and other agencies and organizations.
- Emphasize participation in public service and service learning.
- Recruit and retain quality faculty and staff.

Vision Statement:

Chadron State College, Peru State College, and Wayne State College, along with the System Office and the Board of Trustees constitute the Nebraska State College System.

Working together with a unity of purpose: We will become a premier system of state colleges that will be recognized as centers for intellectual growth, cultural enlightenment, and economic development. We will serve as a model of collaborative educational excellence, setting standards for strengthening individuals and communities through knowledge, service, leadership, and global understanding.

Peru State College operates under a mission statement, purposes and goals revised and adopted on January 14, 2008, and more recently reviewed in 2011 as a part of the strategic planning process of the College. A complete discussion of the development and review of the mission statement of the College is set forth in the chapter on Criterion One: Mission and Integrity in this report.

Peru State College Mission Statement

In educating the individual to the benefit of society, Peru State College cultivates the capacity and propensity for life-long learning by fostering independent inquiry and promoting the value of knowledge and discovery. Through innovative undergraduate and graduate programs, Nebraska's first college continues its commitment to making a vital contribution to the future of the region and the state.

The mission statement is the original source document for all planning for the College. The master planning document for the College is the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan, developed by the Strategic Planning Committee and approved by the Nebraska State College Board of Trustees in June 2011. A copy of the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan is located in the College Resource Archive. A complete discussion of the development of the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan is set forth earlier in this chapter.

Academic planning for the College begins with academic program review. The College reviews each academic program no less often than once every seven years in accordance with the policy of the Nebraska State College Board of Trustees (Policy #4200 – Program Review; Procedures.) These reviews include consideration of the following elements:

Academic Program Review Elements

1. Curriculum
 - a. List of minors, options, and endorsements offered within the major
 - b. Definition and number of hours required for program completion according to Board # 4140
 - c. Description of course capstone experienced
 - d. Program assessment findings
 - e. Distance learning opportunities
2. Centrality to the role and mission of the College;
3. Consistency with the Nebraska State-wide Comprehensive Plan;
4. Consistency with the Nebraska State College System Strategic Plan;
5. Objective evidence of need and demand;
6. Adequacy of available and anticipated resources to support the program, such as:
 - a. Faculty and faculty-related resources;
 - b. Library resources;
 - c. Physical facilities and instructional equipment; and
 - d. Fiscal resources and costs.
7. Program quality and student success, including:
 - a. Number of graduates (5 years);
 - b. Headcount (5 years);
 - c. Student credit hour production (5 years);
 - d. Student credit hour per FTE (5 years); and
 - e. Estimated program capacity.
8. Specific actions and strategies to improve recruitment and retention; student financial aid; and transfer of credit;
9. Accreditation;
10. Career follow-up information, including employment statistics and students pursuing advanced study;
11. Service to non-majors; and
12. Any additional information to assist the Board in determining the quality and effectiveness, efficiency, and non-duplicative aspects of each program.

Following each academic program review, the College submits a report to the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees. The report contains a summary of the review along with

supporting documentation and a recommendation as to whether or not the program meets or does not meet the following criteria:

Program Review Criteria

- a. Consistency with the College's role and mission;
- b. Consistency with the State-wide Comprehensive Plan;
- c. Consistency with the Nebraska State College System Strategic Plan;
- d. Has sufficient institutional resources to support the program;
- e. Meets or exceeds the threshold requirements established by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education; and
- f. Is of sufficient quality.

In the event a program does not meet all of the above mentioned criteria, the College must provide the Board of Trustees with recommendations for terminating the program or a plan for taking corrective action which will improve and justify continuance of the program. Following each academic program review, the College may initiate program changes.

Other operational areas of the College engage in planning that is informed by and consistent with the mission of the College.

The Enrollment Management Committee was created in January 2010 with the goal of planning, creating, implementing and assessing enrollment management efforts of the College. The basis of the planning process has been to focus on institutional mission while emphasizing student retention and success as key priorities for the College. Student retention and success are emphasized for three primary reasons. First, creating an environment of engaging experiences leads to increased student retention providing a method for continued growth and stability for the College. Second, emphasizing student success will help the College emerge as a regional college of choice through continued development of a strong reputation for preparing students for future careers. Finally, student success and retention assist the College in contributing to the economic and social/cultural development of the service region and the state.

The Enrollment Management Committee is comprised of members from the student affairs and academic affairs areas including faculty, professional staff, students and administration. In addition to representing the campus community, committee members provide key expertise and knowledge related to areas relevant in enrollment management planning. Throughout the development and planning process, the committee analyzed various assessment tools in order to create a strategy for the future. Data sources included national high school projections, peer group comparisons, National Survey of Student Engagement results, freshman profiles, senior exit survey results, annual graduate employment survey statistics, and an external and internal assessment of areas of strength and challenge. From this analysis a set of key performance indicators was developed to assess past trends, a picture of the current situation, and future progress toward our enrollment management goals.

The plan has established objectives under five themes: promotion of the College to prospective students, supportive environment for students, excellence in service for students, academic success

of students, first-year experience of students, and leadership development of students. Each objective has the following components for implementation: 1) a responsible subcommittee and/or office, 2) a timeline, 3) allocation of budgetary resources, 4) an assessment tool, and 5) key performance indicators. The plan implementation phase began in fall 2011 and includes identification of assessment tools, data collection and review, communication of results, and follow-up review of the plan and its objectives.

The Peru State College Foundation engages in planning that is informed by and consistent with the mission of the College. Strategic initiatives are determined after assessment of the needs and future plans of the College and the funding capability of the Foundation. The Foundation is represented on the college Strategic Planning Committee and plays an active role in developing the strategic goals of the institution.

Strategic planning specific to the Foundation for the 2012 calendar year and forward is awaiting the completion of a detailed operational review currently being conducted by the Foundation executive director and staff. The review is based on 16 key areas of advancement with more than 190 specific questions. Minutes of the meetings of the Foundation Board of Directors and documents relating to the operational review underway are located in the College Resource Archive.

Peru State College's planning processes are linked with its budget processes. In the budget process described earlier in this chapter, funds are allocated for anticipated increases in core needs, such as increases in salaries, health insurance premiums, and utility costs. The College may also request budget increases for identified strategic initiatives. The state legislature's appropriation to the Nebraska State Colleges System Board of Trustees for the 2011-13 biennium was essentially unchanged from the prior biennium, but sufficient to cover anticipated increases in the colleges' core needs. In 2010/11, the College implemented \$406,000 of annual budget reductions to make funds available for strategic initiatives identified in the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan. The College expects to devote additional moneys to strategic initiatives as they become available.

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

There is substantial evidence to support the assertion that Peru State College meets the core components of Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future.

The College has a history of effective planning and strategic goal-driven decision making. With the arrival of a new president in 2009, the College embarked on a new strategic planning process. The process was deliberate and inclusive and resulted in a formal plan approved by the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees in June 2011. Coordinated self-study and strategic planning processes resulted in a particularly thorough consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the College and a plan that is designed to strengthen the already effective student experience in new ways. As a result, the College's prominence will be enhanced to position the institution optimally for a highly competitive environment and to better serve its constituencies.

The College engages in systematic strategic assessment of its operations and environment and responds effectively to evolving conditions. Resulting programmatic innovations described in the chapter position the College well for the future and the College's physical plant has been dramatically improved as a result of effective strategic assessment and planning.

The combination of rapid enrollment growth and controlled budget increases has made Peru State College incredibly lean and efficient, without significantly impacting effectiveness. With proactive

planning, careful spending habits, and college-wide resourcefulness, the College has succeeded in providing a strong educational experience at a cost significantly less than its peer institutions. Given the current funding approach, the College has reached the point where continued dramatic enrollment growth would be problematic in the context of the desire to enhance the student experience. Consequently, the College's plans now call for more modest enrollment growth and additional attention to critical aspects of the student experience, including educational technology, physical amenities, full-time faculty, and engaging programming. Looking forward, the College has the same challenge as most other higher education institutions in this era, which is to secure the resources necessary for it to achieve its goals as set forth in its 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan.

Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Assessment was a key subject of Peru State College's 2005 focused visit. The Commission's reactions to the focused visit team's findings and the follow-up report prepared by the College in 2008 clearly indicate significant progress was made regarding the College's response to concerns raised by the consultant-evaluator team after the 2001 visit.

The College has developed a culture of evidence as a basis for enhancing student learning and effective teaching. The assessment system engages faculty members, staff members, and administrators in every level of assessment. The system is designed to provide evidence of whether or not students have achieved program level goals, institutional goals, and career or professional goals. Assessment system evidence is used to guide planning and decision making and to benefit students directly as individuals. Finally, the assessment system itself is evaluated and adjusted to ensure that it provides useful and valuable information upon which planning and decision making may rely. The result is a living assessment plan that supports the College's mission and educational goals. Implementation and oversight of the assessment plan is the joint responsibility of the Assessment Committee, the director of student assessment and success services, and the vice president of academic affairs. The Faculty Senate at-large member is chair of the Assessment Committee. Members of the committee include representatives from the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, School of Professional Studies, the vice president of academic affairs, the director of student assessment and success services, the chair of the Academics and Curriculum Committee and a student member appointed by the Student Senate.

Core Component 3a: The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

The Assessment Plan is designed around the following college goal areas:

- Affordable Education
- High Quality Education
- Major Field of Study Content Knowledge
- Foundation for Life-Long Learning
- Effective Communication Skills
- Communication and Information Literacy
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Capacity for Change
- Ability to Assume Leadership Roles
- Ability to Pursue Intellectually, Ethically, Aesthetically and Physically Rewarding Lives.

In the College's assessment plan, each goal has an associated assessment approach, identified measures and actions, and an administrator responsible for data collection. Annual institution-level assessment reports are prepared by the director of assessment and student success services and shared with the College community. The full report is placed on the College web site and is

available to all College constituencies, including students and the public. The faculty as a whole considers the assessment report results in a special meeting each fall and as necessary when considering policy and curriculum changes. Each undergraduate and graduate program at the College has specific outcome goals as well. These program goals drive program-specific assessment and program reviews. Academic deans work with faculty members who teach capstone courses to complete program level assessment reports that are shared within the schools at the beginning of each year. College and program-level goals are available to students and other interested parties on school websites and they are discussed at the start of individual courses.

The College uses the following direct and indirect measures as part of its institutional assessment plan to assess student learning, development, and outcomes:

- ACT Alumni Surveys – Institutional Level
- Capstone Assessment Reports – Program Level
- Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) – tests in critical thinking, math, reading, science, and writing – Program and Institution Level with direct student feedback provided
- Course Evaluation Surveys – Course, Program and Institution Level
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – Institution Level
- Senior Exit Survey – Institution Level
- Student Portfolios (education students) – Course and Program Level
- Student Culminating Experiences (graduate students) – Program Level

Although not part of the formal assessment plan, College administrators track other key performance indicators, including retention, success, and six year graduation rates, as general indicators of instructional effectiveness. Statistical reports are available in the College Resource Archive. Because of the relatively small numbers of students entering the College each year, retention and success rates can vary by several percentage points due to one disciplinary incident, so fluctuations can be expected. Multi-year trends are down slightly in these areas.

There appears to be some inverse association between retention and success rates as compared to the proportion of part-time and online students. Retention and success rates tend to drop as the proportion of part-time and online students increases. Internet-based instruction can be particularly challenging for those who may be less committed and prepared, but who are able to pursue higher education by virtue of the College's open enrollment policy. Relatively few first-year students begin and progress 100% online. The majority of the College's online enrollments are transfer students. Online students are assessed using the same procedures as on campus students, with one exception. Students studying online who live more than 100 miles away from campus may elect to take another standardized exam in lieu of the CAAP tests and have the scores reported to the College. This is due to the CAAP tests not being available online at this point. The Assessment Committee balanced fairness, student feedback, student convenience and institutional data needs when creating this policy. Online students studying at a greater distance are often working professionals who are likely to have an interest in graduate education. Consequently, they may elect to take an entrance exam that would facilitate their application to graduate school. Over time, this will be another useful source of learning data for the College.

Given the age of the retention and success data, there is some question of the accuracy of the earlier years, particularly in terms of timing of measurement. Consequently the trend results are not reported here. The 2009/10 success rates follow in Exhibit 3.1.

Exhibit 3.1

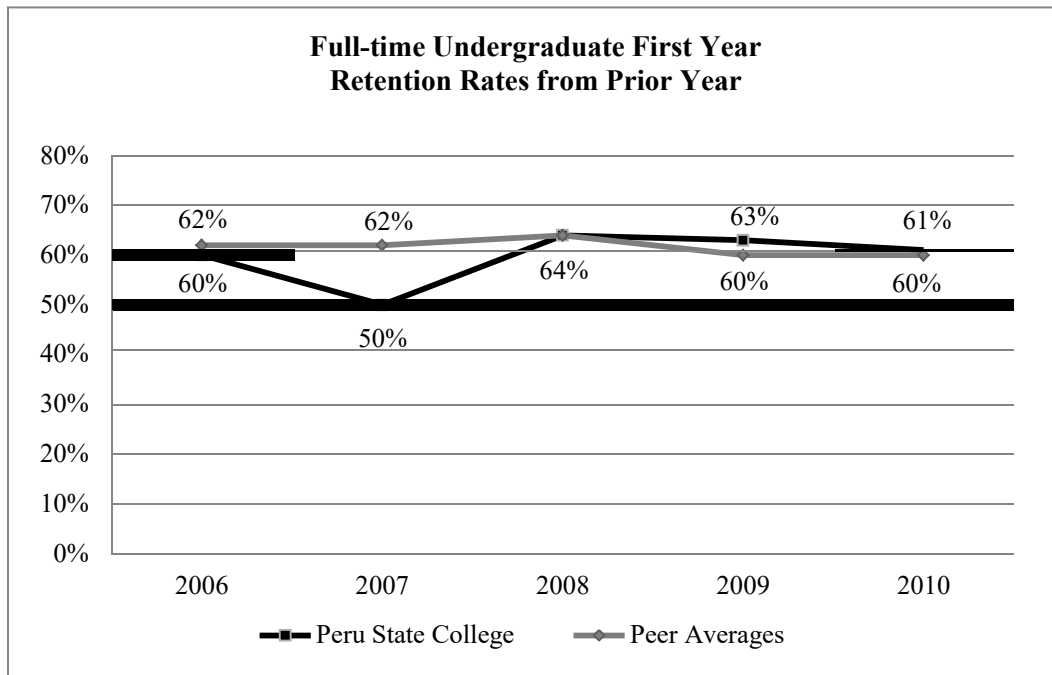
2009/10 Student Success Rates		
Freshmen	Full-time	81.50%
	Part-time	50.00%
	FT-and-PT	80.17%
Transfer	Full-time	82.42%
	Part-time	83.16%
	FT-and-PT	82.69%
Combined	Full-time	81.89%
	Part-time	80.00%
	FT-and-PT	81.49%

Source: Peru State College Academic Affairs Office

Note: Figures indicate the percentage of students that returned to the College for a second year or that left the College with a 2.0 or higher grade point average.

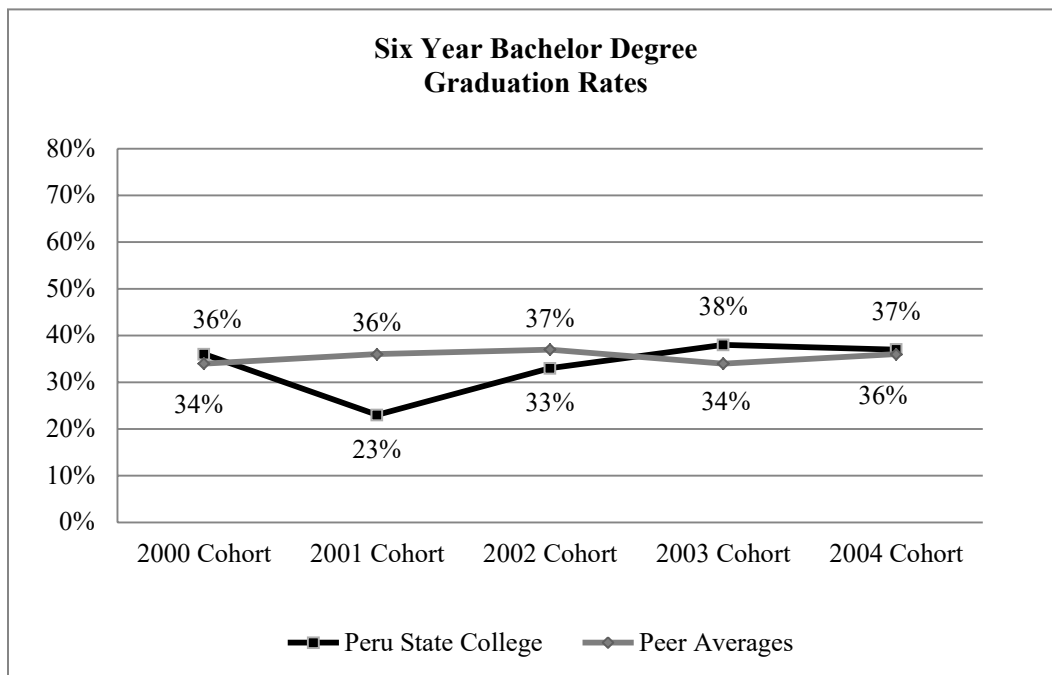
Although success rates are not available for peer comparison through the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), retention rates and six year graduation rates are. Exhibit 3.1 tracks historical retention rates for the College against its peers. Exhibit 3.2 illustrates the trend in six year graduation rates. The College performs on par with its peers in these areas, although there is some fluctuation attributable to the inherent volatility of small populations.

Exhibit 3.2



Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

Exhibit 3.3



Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

An essential part of individual student assessment procedures is the Accuplacer proficiency testing associated with the Math and English 100 foundation skill development courses. The college uses the results of these tests to place those without ACT scores in the appropriate math and English courses, and to determine participating students' capacity to proceed to the next level in these disciplines. Students receive individualized feedback and support in these courses regarding what specific skills need to be developed and how to achieve better outcomes.

As noted previously, the faculty considers formal assessment reports at the institution and program levels at the beginning of each academic year. Example assessment reports are available in the College Resource Archive. Freshman students meet with faculty advisors to review the results of CAAP tests in each area. Senior students receive a report regarding their performance directly. Students who score above the national mean for sophomores receive a certificate of achievement generated by the test publisher.

Assessment strategies have evolved over the last ten years, with the full array of refined approaches being utilized in 2008. Recent changes to the assessment program and learning support based on ongoing review of effectiveness and best practices include:

- **Integrated Assessment and Learning Support**
In 2008 the College reorganized the Academic Resource Center (ARC) and renamed it the "Center for Achievement and Transition Services" (CATS) to refocus the department on student success. The reorganization involved the reestablishment of a career services function, the movement of quasi-instructional personnel to fully integrate them into the faculty, and the creation of a single integrated office responsible for student learning assessment and the provision of support services. College officials intended for there to be a closer integration between learning measurement and student support functions in order to produce a better understanding of individual student needs and how they may be more effectively met. Following the reorganization, CATS and the student support service staff made a variety of changes based on assessment data and best practices to more directly support student learning and success.
- **Assessment-Aligned Shared Governance**
In 2008 the College adopted a new shared governance structure that moved the College's Assessment Committee within the Faculty Senate structure to enhance faculty ownership, while retaining administrative oversight and adding student representation. The faculty crafted a more purposeful governance structure designed to better align assessment and academic policy/program decisions and improve faculty leadership communication and transitions. Communication between the Assessment Committee and the Academics and Curriculum Committee is facilitated by alternating meeting times and having the chair of each committee serve on the other committee. The Faculty Senate president-elect is also the Chair of the Academics and Curriculum Committee, which improves preparation for the role of president.
- **Learning Feedback Optimization**
Over the years, concerns have arisen about the proportion of students who do not give the CAAP test their best efforts. Measuring the best efforts of students is critical as faculty and administrators do not want to waste students' time and College resources only to get a large proportion of unusable data, especially given the relatively small number who take the test each year and the time it takes to gather enough aggregate pre-test and post-test

data to allow for conclusions. Initially, test order was rotated to deal with the higher rate of participation fatigue for the last test administered. More recently, the College adopted a policy that uses test results in ways most directly relevant to students. Freshmen who score significantly below the national average on any CAAP test are placed on academic probation and provided support in the form of a remediation plan. Seniors who score significantly below the national average on any CAAP test do not graduate until they complete an additional learning seminar to address any deficiencies. This policy will be fully implemented in the 2011/12 academic year. The initial thresholds are set low enough that few students will likely be impacted, yet the expected outcome is that all participating students will try their best and provide more useful data. The real goal, however, is that this will be yet another means of identifying students who can benefit from support programming so that it can be provided.

- **Consideration of Early Entry Program**
The College's Early Entry/Dual Credit program, which grants college credit for some basic courses offered to high school students, was reviewed. Based on an evaluation of grades earned in that program and subsequent grades earned later courses in the same discipline at the College, a policy was developed to more fully utilize faculty input to guide the development of the final exams for these courses. College faculty members now have the option of providing the same final exam they use in on campus courses for the Early Entry course, or to guide the development of the Early Entry course final exam to match theirs in terms of difficulty and learning objective measurement.
- **Graduate Program Assessment Enhancement**
Assessment discussions held with faculty and administrators responsible for the delivery of the Master of Science in Education (MSED) and the Master of Science in Organizational Management (MSOM) programs led to the development of more comprehensive, program goal-driven capstone projects and associated assessment rubrics for these projects. The assessment rubrics are designed to generate comparison and trend data. Assessment procedures for graduate programs were also enhanced by the addition of exit surveys to provide detailed program perception data. To improve response rates, the College mandates completion of exit surveys.

Core Component 3b: The Organization Values and Supports Effective Teaching.

Faculty members at Peru State College are distinguished by their commitment to teaching excellence and are actively engaged in all levels of curricular design, implementation, and oversight. Their qualifications are available for review. Organizational structures are in place to actively support and encourage experimentation in new teaching methods and course content.

Effective teaching is a requirement for both promotion and tenure. In accordance with Section 16.3 of the 2011-13 Agreement Between the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees and the State College Education Association, the performance criteria for promotions and tenure include the following:

Performance Criteria

Demonstrated ability to teach and contribute to students' academic growth and development, which may include, but are not limited to, the faculty member's:

- i) knowledge of subject matter;
- ii) effectiveness in communicating such knowledge;
- iii) assisting students to think critically and creatively;
- iv) encouraging continued study;
- v) mentoring and advising students in the academic major; and
- vi) supporting student participation in field activities and professional activities.

Evidence of teaching effectiveness is collected for each faculty member as part of his or her annual review. This review is conducted by the deans of each school in consultation with the vice president for academic affairs. As a part of the review process, each faculty member completes a Professional Activities Report and Development Plan, which allows the faculty member to present evidence of effective teaching as well as plans for future improvements to teaching. For 2010, the form was enhanced to focus faculty on instructional enhancement with the addition of two items of interest generated from the self-study process:

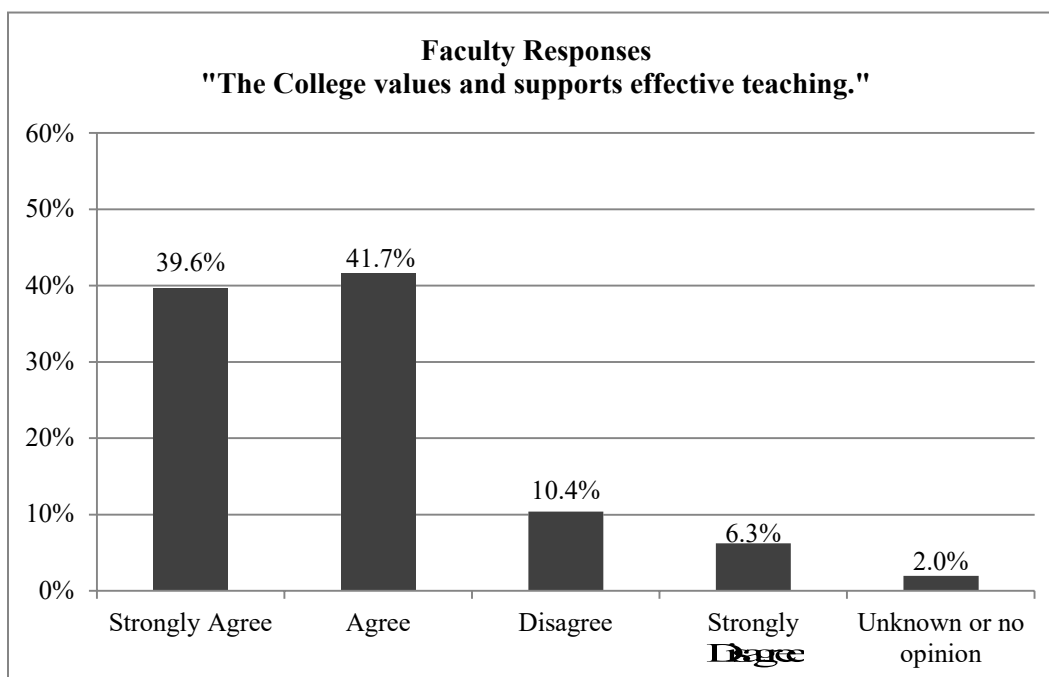
Self-Characterization of Teaching Evaluations (e.g., strengths & development opportunities)

List specific activities completed for the purpose of improving the quality of your classroom instruction and student engagement in the learning experience.

Faculty members are strongly encouraged by deans to be actively involved in at least one professional organization relevant to their disciplines. Several faculty members have served as officers and publication editors for such organizations. The annual review process involves a teaching observation and a comprehensive review of course evaluations. Members of the Rank Promotion and Tenure Committee place significant weight on evidence of teaching effectiveness before making promotion and tenure recommendations to the vice president for academic affairs. Deans and the vice president for academic affairs review annual evaluations and individual course evaluations before making recommendations regarding promotion and tenure decisions and before employment contracts are issued each year.

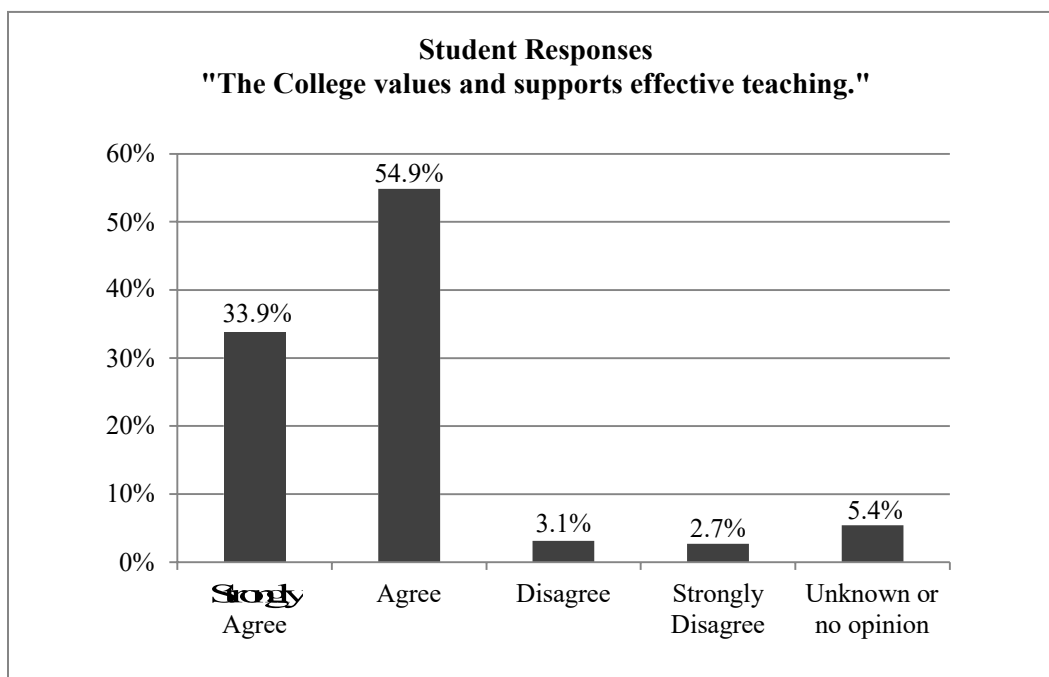
As part of the self-study process, the Self-Study Steering Committee surveyed faculty, staff and students in spring 2010 to gain insights into the perceptions of the College. Complete survey results are available in the College Resource Archive. Survey results indicate faculty members and students report believing the College supports effective teaching. As shown in Exhibits 3.4 and 3.5, 81.3% of faculty and 88.8% of student respondents agree or strongly agree that the College values and supports effective teaching.

Exhibit 3.4



Source: Peru State College Spring 2010 Self-Study Faculty Survey

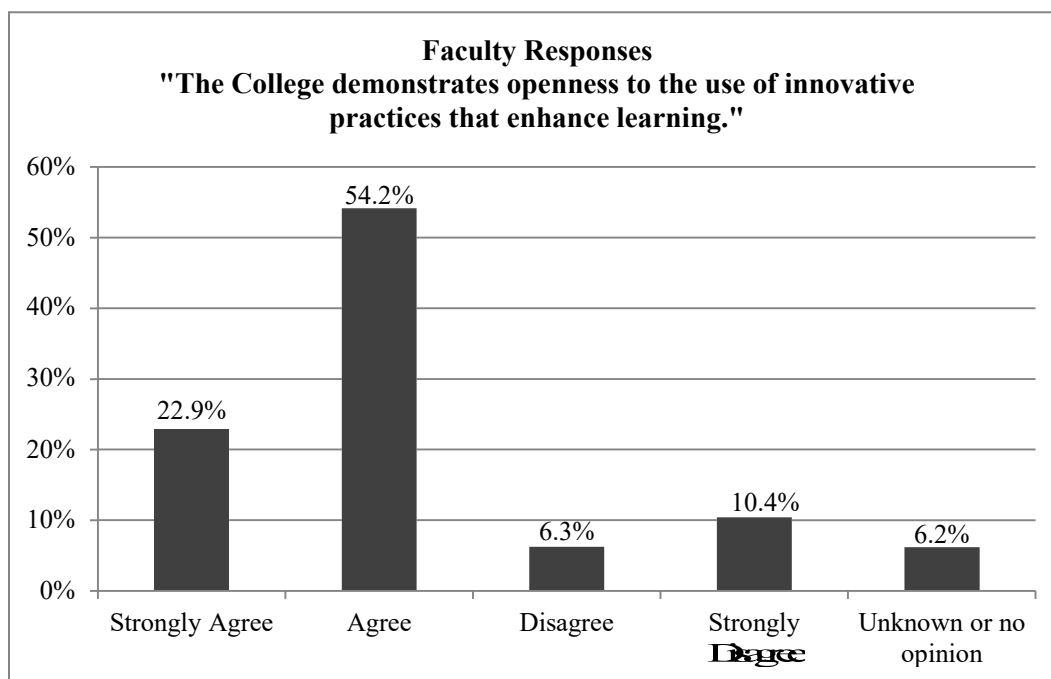
Exhibit 3.5



Source: Peru State College Spring 2010 Self-Study Student Survey

Faculty members also perceive that the College supports their use of innovative educational practices. As shown in Exhibit 3.6, 77.1% of faculty members agree or strongly agree that the College demonstrates openness to the use of innovative practices that enhance learning. There have been several examples of faculty-led instructional course-level innovations over time, including whole new courses developed to cover new and engaging interdisciplinary topics (e.g., Analysis of Evil I & II), partnerships between disciplines (e.g., the cooperative economics activity that is part of specific business and chemistry courses), and the development of special topics courses designed to get students outside the classroom for guided “real world” experiences (e.g., the Comparative Justice and Inside-Out courses offered as part of the Criminal Justice program).

Exhibit 3.6



Source: Peru State College Spring 2010 Self-Study Faculty Survey

Each semester, the College collects data on effective teaching from student evaluations. As part of a faculty member’s annual review, students evaluate courses for design and faculty for teaching effectiveness. Evaluations are conducted in all courses for non-tenured faculty and adjuncts, and at least two courses a year for tenured faculty (although many prefer to have all of their courses evaluated). In fall 2010, after discussion with Faculty Senate, the College adopted an online course evaluation tool for all courses offered on campus and online. Although there were concerns about the potential for typically low response rates for this approach, subsequent review indicates the response rate remains high. The overall response rate for spring 2011 was 78.5%. Further, the amount and detail of students’ comments seems to have increased. Results from these evaluations are reported to each faculty member and the deans of the schools. The vice president for academic affairs also reviews all course evaluations and discusses concerns with deans. Deans use this information to evaluate teaching effectiveness as part of each faculty member’s annual review.

Students completing course evaluation forms in spring 2011, the most recent data available, reported a high degree of instructor success in exhibiting the behaviors that faculty members and administrators agree are important in creating an effective learning environment. Graduate students, who complete their degrees entirely online, had somewhat more favorable impressions than undergraduates. Online students more strongly agreed the desired behaviors occur in six cases, while on campus students agreed more strongly in five cases. The means were the same in two cases. For the critical summative question, “The instructor teaches this course effectively,” the mean responses were not materially different. This provides some evidence that the overall educational experience for online and on-campus students is similar. Results are shown in Exhibit 3.7.

Exhibit 3.7

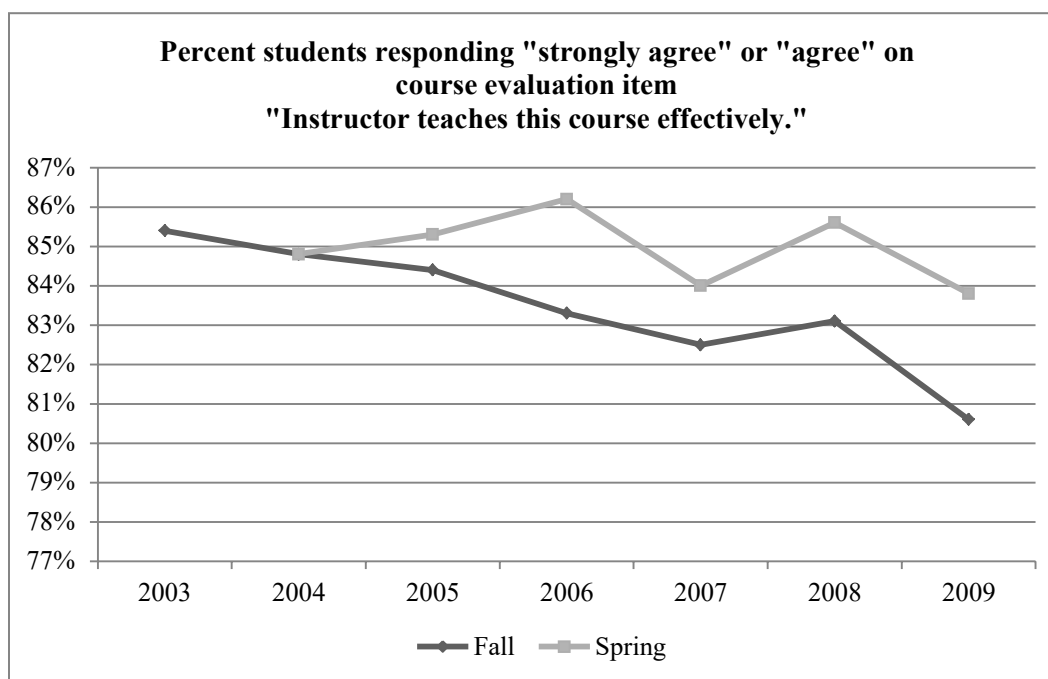
Percentage of Students Responding “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” Spring 2011 Course Evaluation By Item and Student Type

Evaluation Item	All Students	All Undergraduates	Online Graduate	Online Undergraduate	On Campus Undergraduate
The instructor clearly communicates course objectives and how they relate to the program’s goals and mission at the beginning of the course.	85.7	89.5	92.5	90.5	88.3
The instructor follows the syllabus and/or explains when a deviation is necessary.	91.2	90.9	94.3	92.6	89.3
Course material/presentations/discussions clearly relate to the course objectives.	89.8	89.4	93.8	91.3	87.3
Course material/presentations/discussions are well organized and clearly presented.	84.8	84.6	87.5	86.8	82.0
Exams/assignments clearly relate to the course objectives.	89.4	89.1	92.5	90.2	87.8
Exams/assignments are well organized and clearly presented.	84.2	84.2	84.4	85.2	83.0
Grading criteria are clear.	85.0	84.7	87.8	86.3	82.9
Graded assignments are returned within a reasonable time.	83.8	82.9	92.5	82.7	83.2
Appropriate feedback is provided on graded material.	83.1	82.3	90.6	81.7	83.0
The instructor responds effectively to questions.	85.0	84.7	88.3	83.2	86.4
The instructor is available for individual help.	81.5	81.1	86.2	77.0	85.7
The course is intellectually challenging.	87.1	86.8	89.8	90.6	82.5
The instructor teaches this course effectively.	85.3	84.8	90.4	85.0	84.6
Response Rate	78.5	77.9	85.1	81.2	74.5

Source: Peru State College Academic Affairs Office

Longitudinal comparisons of results from student evaluations provide insight into the trends in teaching effectiveness. Results over time for the summary item, “The instructor teaches this course effectively” for on-campus courses are represented in Exhibit 3.8. The evaluations conducted in the fall include courses taught by all tenured, non-tenured, and adjunct faculty members. The spring evaluation period includes all courses taught by non-tenured and adjunct faculty members, but only those courses taught by tenured faculty members that were selected by the tenured faculty member for evaluation. The downward trend in the data seems to provide evidence of a decline in perceived teaching effectiveness, although the change over six years is small – an approximate decline of one percentage point for spring and five percentage points for fall figures. It is unclear if this change in perception is based on a decline in teaching effectiveness, an increase in student expectations, or some combination of these and other factors.

Exhibit 3.8



Source: Peru State College Academic Affairs Office

Note: This exhibit shows results for on-campus courses only that were gathered using a paper and pencil process that has since been discontinued in favor of an electronic online process.

The College recognizes and honors teaching excellence through the Annual Teaching Excellence Award. Each year, faculty members nominate fellow faculty members for the award. Information about each nominee is collected and Faculty Senate recommends the award recipient. The recipient is recognized by the College and the Board of Trustees at commencement exercises. Each recipient at each of the three Nebraska State Colleges is considered for the system-wide Nebraska State College System’s George Rebensdorf Teaching Excellence Award. It is evidence of a pattern of excellence that, although performance expectations are increasing across the system, the nominee from Peru State College has won the system-wide award for 2009, 2010, and 2011.

The College provides financial support for the development of faculty members designed to improve instruction and to create engaging learning environments on campus and online. One

source of support is from a faculty development fund administered through the office of the vice president for academic affairs. Allocations from this fund are based upon the recommendations of the Faculty Development Committee, a faculty committee operating under the auspices of the Faculty Senate. Additional support is available from the operating funds of each of the three academic schools – Professional Studies; Education; and Arts and Sciences. These funds are allocated by the academic deans who manage the budgets of the academic schools. More information about faculty development is set forth in the chapter on Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge in this report.

College-sponsored on site faculty development activities have historically related to learning support, distance education and technology-related matters. Since 2006, the College has presented a distance education/technology development event each summer and invites new, full-time and adjunct faculty to participate. More recently, the “Bill Snyder Growing Ideas Faculty Discussion Series” was created by faculty members to share instructional innovations and other information with each other in a less formal setting (e.g., brown bag lunches). Technology training is also provided to individual faculty members and groups using new equipment in classrooms. During the self-study process, an impression was formed that additional instructional technology training for the faculty would be appreciated. In response, a plan for additional faculty development sessions related to instructional technology is being developed for the 2011/12 academic year. Further the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan includes the following elements relating to support for teaching excellence:

Elements Related to Teaching Excellence

Included in 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan:

Enhance online instruction through:

- i. Hiring an additional instructional technology employee with advanced training,
- ii. Providing course improvement funding,
- iii. Upgrading technology.

Support educational engagement initiatives by:

- i. Providing funding for investigation and implementation of advanced engagement techniques in critical college courses.

Encourage growth and leadership development through professional engagement by:

- i. Encouraging and supporting ongoing professional development focused on leadership for the campus community.
- ii. Offering additional research and creative funding for all faculty members.
- iii. Setting clear standards for research and creative work through the promotion and tenure process.
- iv. Rewarding professional development and leadership for the campus community through the evaluation process.
- v. Enhancing recognition for the campus community.

Core Component 3c: The organization creates effective learning environments.

Each year College administrators and faculty review the results from the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) exam and consider trends in the annual results. Starting in

2008/09, coordinated pre-test and post-test data from individual students has started to become available on a limited basis for students who enrolled at the College as freshmen and have taken the test as a graduation requirement in their senior year. As a result of CAAP test data analysis, the College has made several policy and curricular enhancements listed below.

- CAAP reading, writing, and math test data were driving factors behind the new policy limiting student course loads to 13 credit hours per semester for those enrolled in MATH 100 and ENG 100, two critical foundation courses. Students in these courses must now earn a C or better grade and pass a proficiency test to move on to higher level math and English courses.
- CAAP writing test and capstone course reports led to concerns about writing skill development, which in turn led to a faculty-driven focus to add writing skill development experiences throughout the curricula. Faculty driven changes at the course level were voluntarily reported using a Course Enhancement Form. Over two dozen forms were submitted by faculty documenting enhanced writing requirements in courses.
- CAAP math test data were considered during the discussions of the elimination of the lower division, introductory statistics course (MATH 240) to establish the requirement that all students take the upper division statistics course, Math 340, which involves higher order critical thinking skills and math skills.
- Institution-level retention rate data, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data, and critical thinking skill concerns noted in capstone course reports were factors in redeveloping COLL 101, the introduction to college experience previously offered mostly online without much traditional academic content, into a discipline cohort-based experience with more discipline-based engagement activities and critical thinking skills exercises.
- A review of capstone course reports revealed scant information about students' exposure to and knowledge of diverse cultures. In response, the College established the Distinguished Speaker Series and related goals for that program, including the designation of diversity and respect for others as the theme for the 2010/11 academic year.
- Retention data and best practices review, coupled with the comprehensive reorganization of the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (formerly Academic Resource Center) led to several major learning enhancement initiatives in the student support area, including the expansion and academic enhancement of the Summer Bridge Program, the selection and implementation of new tutoring and instructional support software, and expanded and more integrated learning support for student athletes.
- Recent reflection on all assessment data and reflection on best practices has driven initial discussions on general studies program revision and two emphases are emerging – enhancing student engagement in and out of the classroom, and enhancing the development of critical thinking skills. Given the importance of this particular task, significant new efforts were developed to seek additional faculty, staff and student input and in spring 2009, a survey was developed and administered. The results were shared with the entire campus community.
- Special program reviews conducted in 2010/11 as part of the self-study process will drive

more course-level and program curricular changes in 2011/12.

It is expected that CAAP and other assessment data will become ever more critical for major decisions to be made for undergraduate programs in the 2011/12 academic year, both during the comprehensive revision of the general studies program, and for consideration of program changes suggested by program review reports.

Graduate programs have experienced a number of recent changes based on assessment data as well. Most of these changes, with examples noted below, relate to the Master of Science in Education (MSED) program.

- As a result of a curriculum mapping exercise, EDUC 623 Assessment of Instruction and EDUC 605 Cognition and Learning, were added for MSED students starting in fall 2007 to better support students' professional interests and better align the curriculum with program goals.
- Starting in fall 2006, two research courses are required for students to replace the one course previously offered in the MSED program. This was a response to student concerns noted in course evaluations regarding the pace of the original course, and to respond to faculty concerns regarding students' capacity to use and explain research techniques by the time they reached the final project stage. This model was built into the Master of Science in Organizational Management (MSOM) program, which was launched in 2006.
- Because average evaluation results for final projects were the lowest for the research methodology and data analysis skills item on the MSOM Program final project evaluations, more course content was added for the 2010/11 academic year, including spreadsheets designed to better illustrate statistical techniques. Students were also required to make final project videos to explain their research approach and discuss their approaches with the instructor using Skype so they could benefit from real time feedback.

The College provides academic advising, learning support services, and student development opportunities that create effective learning environments for all students. Advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success. Advising policies have been revised dramatically over the past decade. Though each student has always been assigned an advisor within his or her discipline, the student was not required to meet with the advisor in many of the academic program areas, based on the theory that each student should have a choice about whether or not to consult with an advisor for academic planning. Starting in the 2007/08 academic year, the policy changed and students were required to meet with advisors before registering for each term, in order to improve course selection and increase student engagement with faculty members. Engagement with faculty as part of this advising process seems to have improved, but the impact may not yet be reflected in Senior Exit Survey results. Only 51.3% of respondents to the Senior Exit Survey rated the quality of faculty advising as excellent or above average. Other data are somewhat more promising. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) contains the question, "Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?" For perspective, the College compares itself to three NSSE peer groups:

- Plains Public: large and small public institutions in the great plains geographic area,
- Public <5K BacDiv: a group of the most direct competitors consisting of smaller public

institutions with 5,000 or fewer students and diverse degree programs that primarily focus on undergraduate education,

- Private <5K NeEBS: a peer group consisting of small private non-profit institutions with 5,000 or fewer students located in Nebraska and bordering states.

The College's 2010 freshman advising quality responses do not show any statistically significant difference from any of the peer groups mentioned above. Senior's responses were not statistically significantly different for the Plains Public and Public 5K peer groups. A statistically significant difference was noted for the comparison with the peer group consisting of private institutions, but with an effect size of -.22 on a 4 point scale, the difference is small. Although these results are promising, there is opportunity for further investigation in this area.

Graduate program advising quality is currently tracked using exit surveys of graduating students. Centralization of graduate program advising in one office, the enhancement of catalog and online program information, and the integration of program of study and candidacy requirements into courses seems to have improved support for these online students, for whom detailed information and quick feedback are often critical determinants of their perceptions of quality. For students in the Master of Science in education program, exit survey results have improved from 2.31 in 2008/09, to 3.19 in 2010/11 on a 4.0 scale (4.0 = "very effective"). Surveys of students in the Master of Science in organizational management program have not been collected for as many years, but were positive for summer 2010 (3.10), fall 2010 (3.83), and spring 2011 (3.67). The lower figure for summer may be related to students taking their quantitative research courses during that term. Discussions will occur in fall 2011 regarding the development of an assessment instrument more tailored to gathering contemporary and detailed information on advising quality, including by important categories of respondents (e.g., online vs. on campus students).

Learning Support and Co-Curricular Services

The College provides learning support services that enhance the on campus and online learning environment for all students. Learning support services are largely provided through the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (CATS). The types of services include testing and assessment program coordination, tutoring, services for students with disabilities, probationary student advising and support, early warning process administration, career education and counseling, and internship supervision. Utilization statistics are available in the College Resource Archive. These services are a significant element of the retention and graduation rate success previously described, and they should be considered especially effective given the College's open enrollment policy and the funding advantages the College's peer institutions enjoy. CATS services are a cornerstone for supporting the diverse needs of all learners, and have been particularly valued by those with recognized disabilities and ethnic minorities. A variety of new services have been added to extend support to online students, career and personal tutoring, and other services traditionally provided. For example, the College subscribes to the Grammarly service which allows students to submit work for writing improvement review. CATS also mails installation CD's for an interactive math tutorial program. In 2010/11, CATS staff began to record various workshops offered on campus to put on the College's website for students studying online. CATS services are regularly reviewed, and major changes were made as described earlier in this chapter. Additional changes will likely result as the recently formed Enrollment Management Committee continues its work.

The dean of student life position was created to connect areas of residence life, student

programming, intramurals, health and counseling services and student judicial affairs with an emphasis on student development. Each of these reorganizations will impact the future direction of the College and improve co-curricular support of students.

The College endeavors to provide an enjoyable residential experience for students that also allows for students to study effectively, meet people, and learn outside of the classroom. Residence life staff completes extensive training prior to the start of each semester to assist in their role with student development. Active programming is conducted throughout the semester for residents in order to support both academic and social development for students. In 2011/12, with new leadership for residence life, a new programming model and departmental philosophy have emerged. Assessment measures will be implemented into the operational plan for this area as part of the new direction for the area. One particular program led by Residence Life to positively impact student development is the redesigned Freshman Fusion Experience Program.

The First Year Experience Program at Mathews Hall was developed in 2000 to create a learning community with a commitment to wellness and a focus on student retention. In 2009, this program was evaluated by Residence Life staff and redesigned into what today is known as the Freshman Fusion Experience Program.

The Freshman Fusion Experience program is designed for first year students interested in living in an experience rich, substance-free environment. The program's purpose is to reinforce the connection between leadership opportunities, academic excellence, and healthy choices, supported by defined opportunities for healthy engagement with college life and a student-mentor relationship. The program focuses on five pillars: academics, student engagement, social integration, leadership, and healthy living. Participants contractually agree to live in a substance-free environment and to remain substance free for the duration of their participation in the Freshman Fusion Experience. Each participant is assigned a mentor at the beginning of the fall semester. They live in a suite-style environment with other participants and mentors in Mathews residence hall. This arrangement allows participants to establish a network of people with whom they can connect for the rest of their college careers. Mentors receive extensive training on resourcing, personal decision making, academic support and program planning. Mentors facilitate bi-weekly, individual meetings with participants and provide monthly programming designed around themes such as self-awareness, personal decision making, working and living with others, and servant leadership. In the 2010/11 academic year, 40 students participated in this program.

Student activities emphasize leadership development and social integration into the College community through programming that actively engages students. Improvements in the quality of programming throughout campus can be measured by increasing participation of students in activities sponsored by student organizations. The Campus Activities Board assesses the success of each activity sponsored in order to inform decisions regarding future programming. Student interest surveys have also provided insight into the type of programming needed to increase student engagement outside of the classroom. As a result of these surveys, weekend programming has been expanded in recent years to meet the demands of an increasing population of out-of-state students who remain on campus during the weekends. The Championship Series was implemented as a weekend activity through coordinated efforts of Campus Activities Board, Intramurals and Residence Life programming in order to create more opportunities for student involvement. In an effort to establish a more comprehensive approach to student programming, the College recently developed a co-curricular educational plan which involves collaborative efforts among various departments in order to focus student programming efforts on student development.

Funding for student organizations has also improved in order to create opportunities for student

leadership and development. Student organizations have the opportunity to apply for funding to support co-curricular and recreational programming. Some examples of funded initiatives include Oakstock, the annual music festival sponsored by Black Student Union, the first annual Drag Ball sponsored by Peru Respecting Individual Differences and Equality (PRIDE) which promoted social acceptance on campus for individuals with differing sexual orientation, the second annual History Conference sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta, and funding for the Peru Theater Company for its future productions. Student organizations promote student development by providing leadership opportunities and diverse student experiences, while enriching the student experience.

To support leadership and career development of student-athletes, the College established a partnership with Career Athletes, an organization dedicated to assisting college athletes with career preparation and opportunities to develop skills useful in the workforce. Through this partnership, student-athletes are connected with College alumni in various fields of expertise who serve as mentors to the students. Internship opportunities have been developed through this partnership along with workshops designed to prepare student-athletes for careers after participating in college athletics. Over the past two years, approximately 123 student-athletes have engaged in this opportunity along with 77 alumni. The Athletic Department will continue to evaluate this partnership to ensure students continue to benefit from the program.

To reward character development of its student-athletes, the College pursued and attained a Champions of Character Five Star Award in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Champions of Character Program. Institutions are measured based on a demonstrated commitment to the core values of integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership. Points are awarded for character training, conduct in competition, academic focus, character recognition and character promotion. Peru State College scored 73 points which put it in the top 25% of the NAIA schools honored in 2010.

Student Success Services, a federally funded TRiO program has implemented services to positively impact student development through a first-year mentoring program. In March 2010, the College's mentoring program was certified by the College Reading & Learning Association. Mentors increased their leadership skills and face-to-face contact with participations by planning and facilitating a variety of activities including a retention retreat, workshops, residence hall mandatory meetings, open houses, and many cultural and academic events.

In reviewing research on student behavioral health on college campuses across the country, the College recognized a need to provide mental health services to students. In fall 2010, the College contracted with Blue Valley Behavioral Health to provide counseling services on campus one afternoon each week as a trial to determine student utilization of this new service. During the fall 2010 semester, the counseling schedule was full nearly every week. As a result, the College has continued to provide these counseling services with extended hours during peak times of student need.

Another effort instituted during the 2010/11 academic year based upon national best practices was the creation of the Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation (CARE) Team for behavioral interventions. The charge of the CARE Team is to assess circumstances, enhance communication, and initiate appropriate responses to specific behavioral problems that may involve threats to the safety and security of the campus community. During the first year of implementation, the team promoted both the team purpose as well as counseling services to the campus community. In addition, the CARE team received referrals from both faculty and staff, evaluated each referral, and developed interventions for the behavior reported. The team also developed two assessment tools

to utilize for future referrals in order to assist in the evaluation of level of threat as well as potential interventions appropriate for the level of threat the student poses to themselves or others.

The Distinguished Speaker Series provides another example of the College investing in the development of its students. The College established the Distinguished Speaker Series in fall 2010 to host diverse nationally and internationally recognized speakers with the goal of enriching the educational experience at Peru State College as well as providing an opportunity to engage communities in Southeast Nebraska around interesting and relevant topics. Speakers are encouraged to engage with the campus throughout their visit with classroom visits, guest lectures, meet and greet receptions and a keynote address. By hosting speakers from diverse backgrounds, the College has been able to create campus-wide dialogue surrounding topics of diversity and respect. During the inaugural year of the series, the speakers were selected to explore areas of respect for others and diversity. Speakers for 2010/11 included Minnijean Brown Trickey, a leader in the Civil Rights movement and a member of the Little Rock Nine, who helped students celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by talking about social change, diversity and the battle against racism. Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Arun Gandhi and reformed skinhead Frank Meeink also spoke, both describing their experiences and observations regarding intentional change at the personal and social levels. Hearing the perspective of each speaker engaged many students in ways that hours in a classroom never could. Feedback from the campus community gathered via web-survey following each event showed an increased level of engagement around the topics presented. One student wrote, in response to speaker Frank Meeink, "Reputation is important but character is how you build the reputation. Everyone comes from different backgrounds but we are all the same in ways which are important." The 2011/12 series will focus on humanitarian efforts and social justice.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) informs the College about how undergraduate students perceive the academic experience along critical dimensions with origins in the best practice literature. Survey results are communicated using five benchmark classifications: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment. NSSE survey results will be a critical indicator of the College's progress toward creating a truly engaging academic environment. Since the assessment tool has only been given three times, and the peer groups were changed based on assessment program review in 2010, longitudinal progress will need to be addressed in the future. Comparative results for 2010, using the previously described peer groups, are reported in Exhibit 3.9. "Above" in the exhibit indicates that Peru State College was above the mean for the comparison group, "below" indicates that the college was below the mean for the group and a "-" sign indicates no statistical difference.

Exhibit 3.9

National Survey of Student Engagement 2010 Results Compared to College-Defined Peer Groups

		Comparison Group		
		Plains <u>Public</u>	Public <u>≤ 5K</u>	Private <u>≤5K</u>
Level of Academic Challenge				
How challenging is the college's intellectual and creative work?	First-Year Senior	– Above	– Above	Below –
Active and Collaborative Learning				
Are students actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others?	First-Year Senior	– Below	– Below	– Below
Student-Faculty Interaction				
Do students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?	First-Year Senior	Above –	– –	– Below
Enriching Educational Experiences				
Do students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?	First-Year Senior	– –	– –	Below Below
Supportive Campus Environment				
Do students feel the institution is committed to their success?	First-Year Senior	– –	– –	Below –

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2010

The College performs as well as, or better than, the aggregate of the Plains Public colleges for undergraduate perceptions of the quality of the campus environment as defined by the NSSE benchmarks classifications noted in Exhibit 3.9 above. The College does not compare well to the small private colleges peer group in most benchmark classifications. Achieving parity with this peer group is a goal of the College. Of most concern is the below peer group results for the active and collaborative learning benchmark classification, especially given the College's strategic goals surrounding engaged student learning.

To measure the perceptions of graduate students, the College uses a Graduate Student Senior Exit Survey. Graduate student responses to the item, "Overall, how would you rate the level of academic challenge that was received through the Master's program?" in the 2010/11 exit surveys averaged 3.12 for MSED students and 3.17 for MSOM students on a 4 point scale (4.0 = "very effective"), indicating there is room for improvement for graduate students as well.

To improve the level of academic engagement of all students, the College adopted an engagement initiative as a major part of the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan. The Community Development Initiative consists of two parts: the establishment of an Institute for Community Engagement and the development of an interdisciplinary/integrative upper division course requirement in the general studies program that focuses on engaging students with contemporary issues in real communities. More information on the Community Development Initiative is available in the College Resource Archive. In addition, plans were made in 2010/11 to reallocate

considerable resources, over \$400,000 or approximately 2.6% of the College's budget, to support engagement and academic environment enhancement. Engagement for online undergraduate and graduate students will also be enhanced by instructional technology support, which is a part of the College's strategic plan.

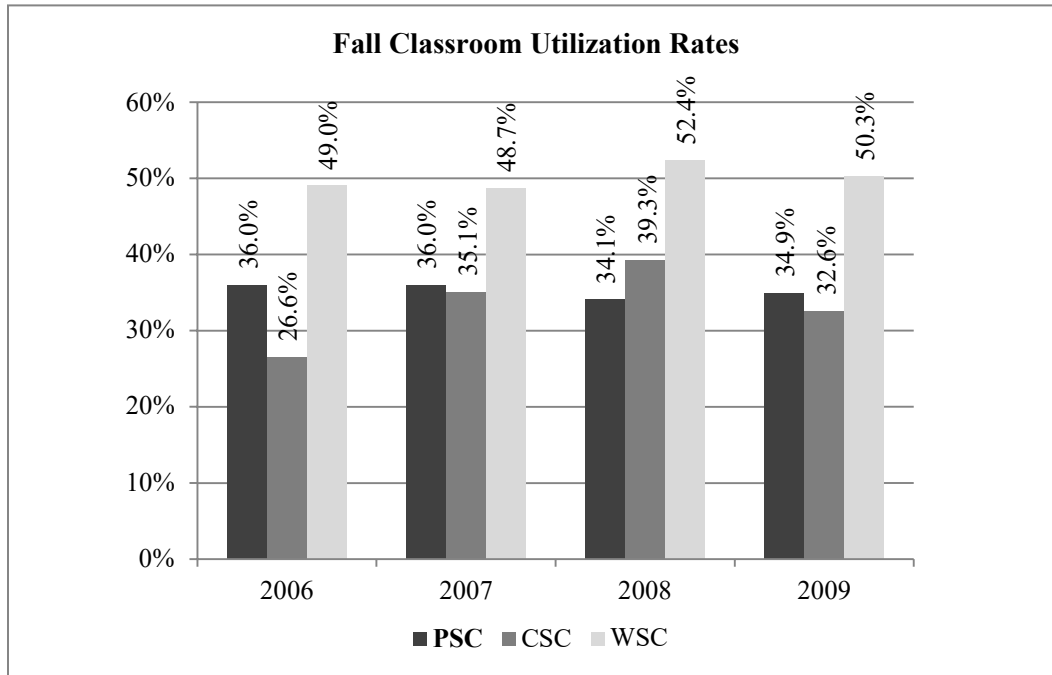
During the self-study process, it was clear that one aspect of the campus environment, instructional technology, could be improved immediately. This became an important aspect of the College's strategic plan, but initial steps were pursued even before the formal adoption of the plan. All classrooms in the renovated Jindra Fine Arts building will be outfitted with new presentation technology. Advanced presentation technology will also be added to four additional classrooms in TJ Majors for fall 2011, and three more classrooms will be equipped over the course of 2011/12. The two largest classrooms on campus, TJ Majors 114N and 114S, and the College's Theater have already been fully equipped with advanced presentation technology. To support faculty members most directly in need, 35 laptop computers were purchased to facilitate faculty access to technology and more seamlessly integrate their work into the classroom. By summer of 2012, all faculty members who choose to work from a laptop computer will receive one with updated software. One computer lab has been upgraded, planning has begun for another computer lab upgrade, and the addition of a new computer lab is planned. Evidently the culture of engagement associated with the self-study and strategic planning processes has taken root, as a faculty member has proposed that students plan the new computer lab as an academic project for students in the management information systems program. Other technology enhancement activities are taking place as well, including the planned upgrade of microscopes for the science program. Focus-groups held for the College's Offutt/Annex students indicated technology is an issue for them as well. Although the College will not be offering courses at these locations after 2011/12, the College plans to provide better computer equipment and Internet connection technology for students during the final year of operation. In the longer term, the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan calls for the addition of an instructional technology staff member.

Core Component 3d: The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Peru State College ensures access to the resources necessary to support learning and teaching, measures the use of its learning resources, and regularly assesses the effectiveness of its learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching.

The College has adequate classrooms to serve current demand. As shown in Exhibit 3.10, Peru State College has excess classroom capacity and a comparable rate of occupancy with the other two Nebraska state colleges – Chadron State College and Wayne State College. Most courses at Peru State College meet two days per week for 75 minutes each meeting. Course meeting schedules are normally Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday. Some courses meet on Fridays for 150 minutes and a few others meet on other weekly schedules in the evening.

Exhibit 3.10

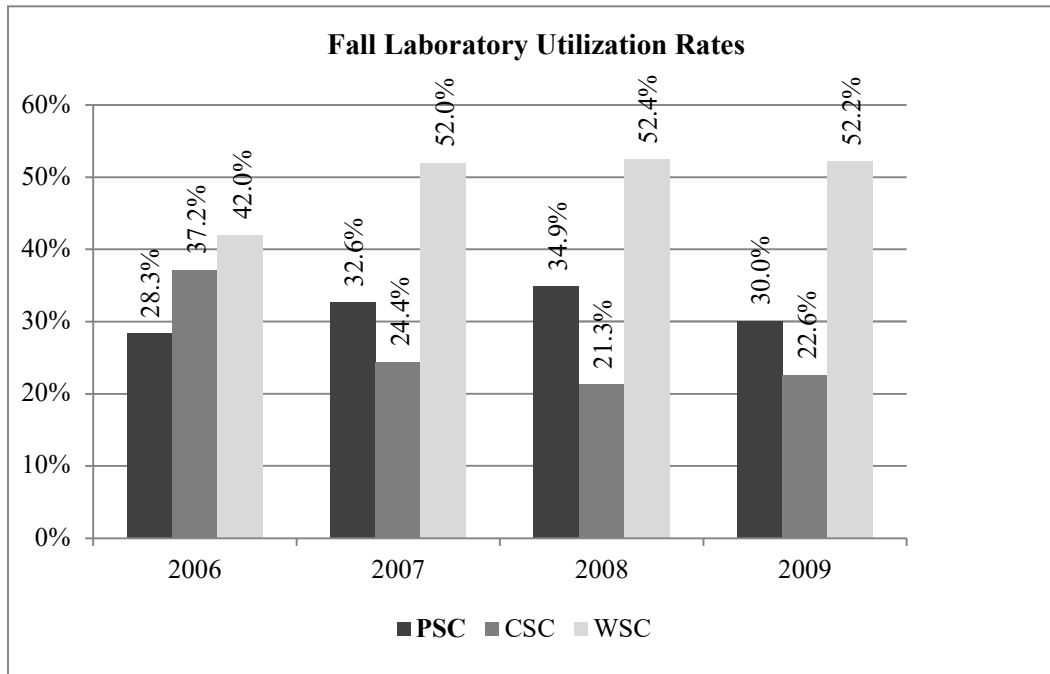


Source: Nebraska State College System Optimal Enrollment Model Reports

There are particular time periods in the typical weekly schedule when classroom scheduling is more of a challenge. Balancing the number of classes in each time period and scheduling Friday and evening meeting times helps reduce potential student schedule conflicts. Recent facility improvement projects put a strain on classroom schedule planning, but all operations were accommodated. Staging of improvement projects has enabled the College to improve facilities while maintaining an effective learning environment.

Peru State College has six teaching science laboratories: two biology; two chemistry, one physics/geology, one fitness research lab, and three general research laboratories. As shown in Exhibit 3.11, science laboratory occupancy rates show available lab time and utilization rates that are comparable with the other two Nebraska state colleges. Although the College has the laboratory space for more sections of laboratory courses, it lacks sufficient faculty resources for additional sections.

Exhibit 3.11



Source: Nebraska State College System Optimal Enrollment Model Reports

The College periodically updates its technology plan. The last revision was for the period ending in 2009, and the revision process is underway at the time of this report's preparation. The revision delay was due to completion of a state mandated budget reduction exercise and the intervening development of the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan.

The College has made significant investments in computing resources and technology since 2001, including the installation of a wireless networking system across campus and in the residence halls. Windows-based and Mac-based instructional computing labs are available in classroom buildings, the Library, and the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (CATS.) All general purpose classrooms on campus contain or can accommodate technical equipment, including laptop computers, LCD projectors, and video players. Once all planned technology upgrades are completed, classroom technology will be adequate for most instructional purposes. The College also has several more technologically advanced teaching classrooms with dedicated computers and projection systems, interactive smart boards, and enhanced audio and video systems. All three general classrooms in the recently upgraded Jindra Fine Arts Building include the advanced technology.

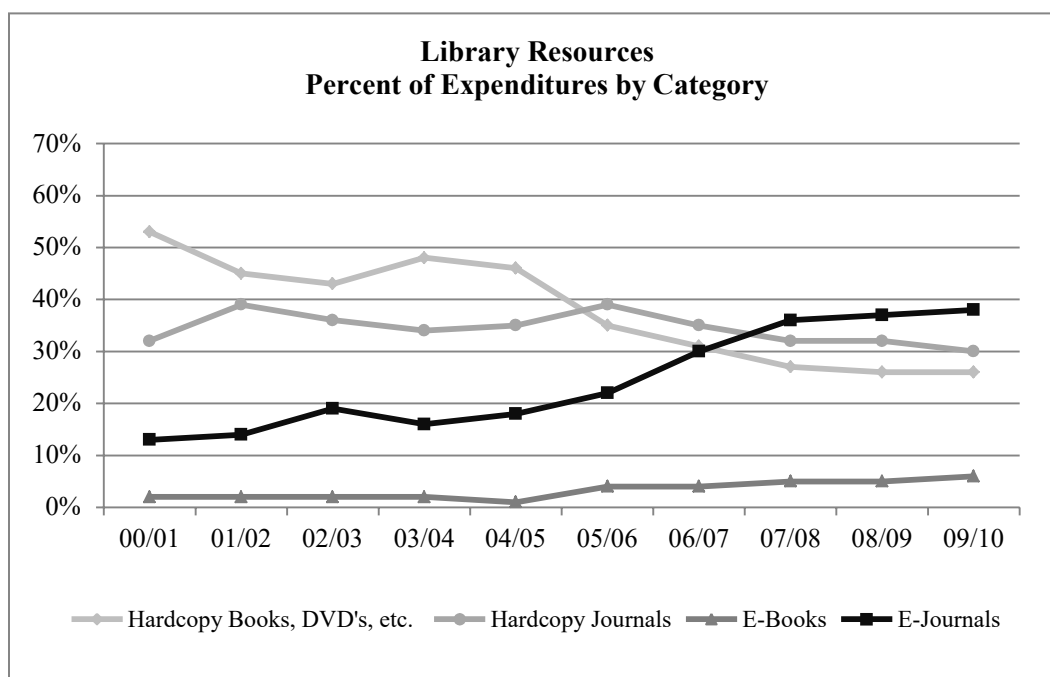
The College has two performance areas: the College Theatre, an auditorium with approximately 630 seats; and Benford Recital Hall, a flexible performance space in the recently upgraded Jindra Fine Arts Building that will seat 70-75 people. The College also has an art gallery used for special art exhibits and senior art shows. The performance areas are used by a number of constituencies across the campus. The College Theatre was heavily booked for classes and performances during the 2009/10 and 2010/11 academic years, while the Jindra Fine Arts Building was under construction.

The College completes an annual Optimal Enrollment analysis for the Board of Trustees. The Optimal Enrollment Reports indicate that Peru State College's enrollments do not exceed the capacity of its instructional facilities. Copies of recent Optimal Enrollment Reports are available in the College Resource Archive.

Since 1999, the College has invested heavily in renovation, improvement, and expansion of campus facilities as described in the chapter on Criterion Two: Planning for the Future. In spring 2011, each of the three state colleges began to develop a Campus Facilities Master Plan with a team of consultants selected on a statewide basis. The College's Campus Facilities Master Plan will guide facilities improvements for ten years after its completion in early 2012. In previous years, the College prioritized future capital improvements primarily on the basis of funding availability, with an emphasis on projects that enhance life safety. For the next several years, the College anticipates that projects will be selected based on the strategic priorities in the recently completed 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan, as reflected in the Campus Facilities Master Plan.

The College's library supports student learning with printed materials on campus and electronic materials for access from any computer on or off campus. Library usage reports indicate that although the use of hardcopy books has doubled over the last ten years, the use of electronic books and journals has increased at a faster rate. For example, the number of e-journal searches has increased six-fold. As the number of online students has grown, the College has shifted investment to electronic resources to provide research and learning support for those students and for any student who prefers to access materials online, as shown in Exhibit 3.12. The College also participates in interlibrary loan programs with other Nebraska libraries, which makes virtually any resource material available to Peru State College users.

Exhibit 3.12



Source: Peru State College 2010 Library Utilization Report

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

There is substantial evidence to support the assertion that Peru State College meets the core components of Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching.

Beyond providing an environment that supports teaching effectiveness and student development in general, the College has developed a sustained commitment to assessment that has been integrated into the institution's culture. The assessment program is particularly comprehensive in that it has the capacity to impact student development at the individual level for each student. The College employs pre- and post-testing for every first-time freshman and graduating senior student using standardized tests for the purposes of individual service identification, providing comparative performance feedback, and institutional assessment. Assessment data are routinely used to inform academic priorities in a wide variety of ways, and the result has been an extensive list of enhancements to the assessment process as well as academic and student support programming.

Despite a strong and evolved assessment program, reflection during the self-study process provides ideas for further improvement. Assessment of advising, then advising itself could be enhanced. General studies learning objectives could be clarified as the general studies program is reconceptualized. The benefit/cost tradeoffs for discipline-specific standardized tests, which can provide individual student comparative performance data, should be evaluated. Coordinated assessment-driven professional development priorities and activities, aligned with strategic planning goals, should be developed with faculty leadership.

The College has made significant efforts to enhance instructional technology application and support across campus. As identified in the College's strategic plan, this progress will continue as a priority. Progress will continue in three critical areas: continuing to upgrade technology when appropriate, provision of professional development activities related to instructional technology on a more frequent basis, and addition of designated staff with expertise in instructional technology to work with faculty to continuously review courses with an emphasis on instructional content and process enhancement.

Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

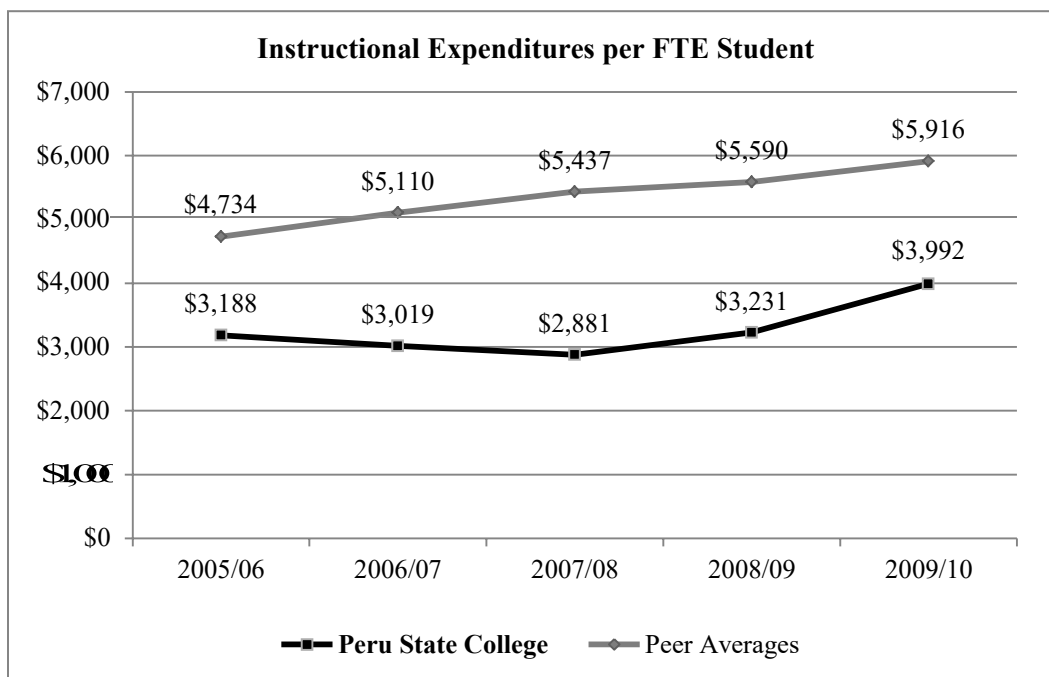
Peru State College recognizes that the motivation to a life of learning is instilled by role models and solidified by experience, and that professional development, research, scholarship, and creative work are the synergistic activities that simultaneously invigorate and justify instruction. The primary role and mission of the College centers on instructional excellence, and the College believes that this excellence will be achieved only with a faculty engaged in professional development and fully supported by the College. Professional development includes primary research, scholarship, creative work, and pedagogical study, particularly as it relates to instructional program enhancement and creating opportunities for students to engage in active learning.

Core Component 4a: The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

For the purposes of this self-study, Peru State College's financial resource commitment to learning is measured in three ways: instructional expenditures per student (Exhibit 4.1), the percentage of instructional to total expenditures per student (Exhibit 4.2), and the percentage of core mission-related expenditures to total expenditures (Exhibit 4.3.) An analysis of these exhibits provides some evidence that the College, in the context of the outcomes to be described later in this chapter, is a highly efficient operation, generally performing as well as its peers in terms of learning outcomes at a much lower cost. For example, the College's cost of instruction is 33% less than the average of its peers. The proportion of instructional to total expenditures has increased over the past four years and nearly equals the peer average for the 2009/2010 fiscal year. When instructional, academic support and student services expenditures are combined, the College's proportion of these core mission-related expenditures relative to total expenditures significantly exceeds the peer average (66% vs. 59%). For this performance indicator, the College is the second highest performer in the comparison group.

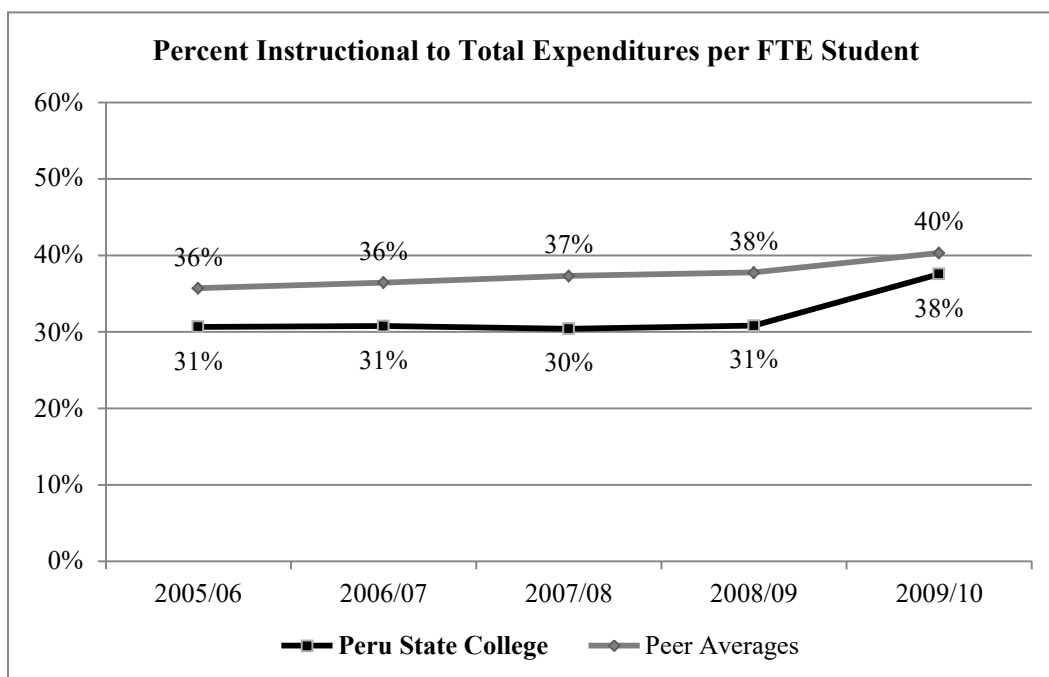
A commitment emerged in the self-study process that sustained enrollment growth warranted increased investment in the core mission-related activities. Consequently, the 2010/11 budget and 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan reflect a shift of resources to provide additional instructional programming and support, more faculty with competitive starting salaries, and additional investment in instructional technology.

Exhibit 4.1



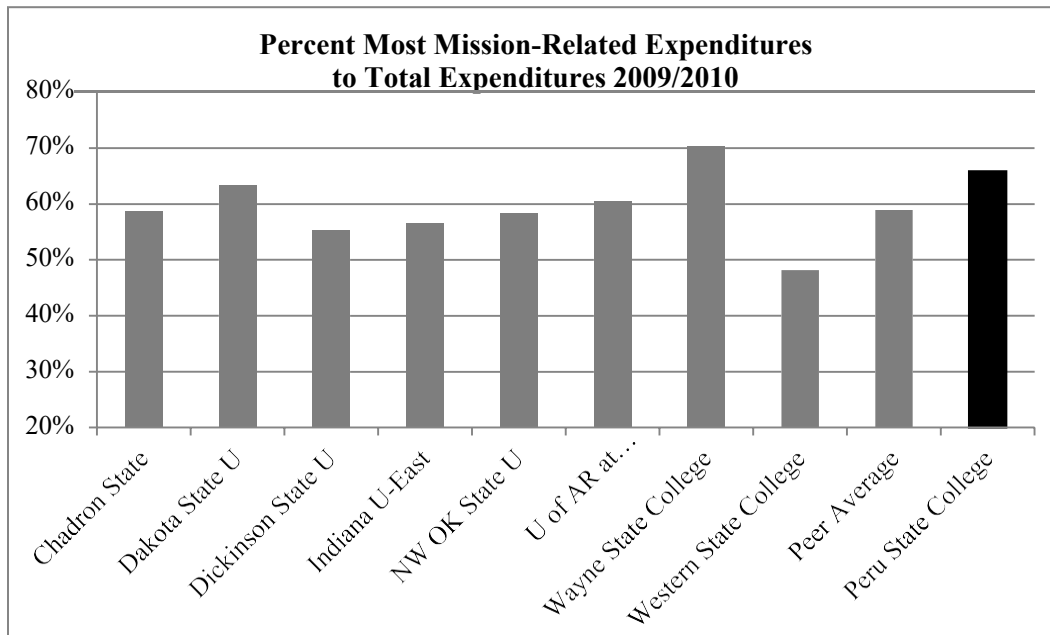
Source: Calculated from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data

Exhibit 4.2



Source: Calculated from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data

Exhibit 4.3



Source: Calculated from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data

Note: Core mission-related expenses are the sum of expenses for IPEDS categories of instruction, academic support, and student services.

Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees Policy #4320 declares support for research activities with an emphasis on those activities related to instruction. Policy #4650 declares the Board's support for freedom of inquiry. This support, based on the current principles of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Statement of Principles and Interpretive Comments on Academic Freedom and Tenure, is reiterated in the negotiated agreement between the Board of Trustees and the State College Education Association (available in the College Resource Archive).

The College's own mission statement was revised in 2008 to, among other things, promote life-long learning more directly and define the College's values relating to education more clearly.

Peru State College Mission Statement

In educating the individual to the benefit of society, Peru State College cultivates the capacity and propensity for life-long learning by fostering independent inquiry and promoting the value of knowledge and discovery. Through innovative undergraduate and graduate programs, Nebraska's first college continues its commitment to making a vital contribution to the future of the region and the state.

The State College Education Association (SCEA) negotiated agreement with the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees contains a provision concerning the expected professional development of faculty members for purposes of performance evaluations. Faculty members are evaluated, in part, on "Evidence of continuing preparation and study through scholarly and/or

creative activities and achievements related to the primary area of employment.” (See section 7.2 (b) of the 2011-2013 Agreement between The Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees and the State College Education Association located in the College Resource Archive.) This expectation for continuing professional development of faculty members is reviewed and reinforced in new faculty orientations, annual performance evaluations and promotion and tenure discussions.

Planning and Resource Allocation

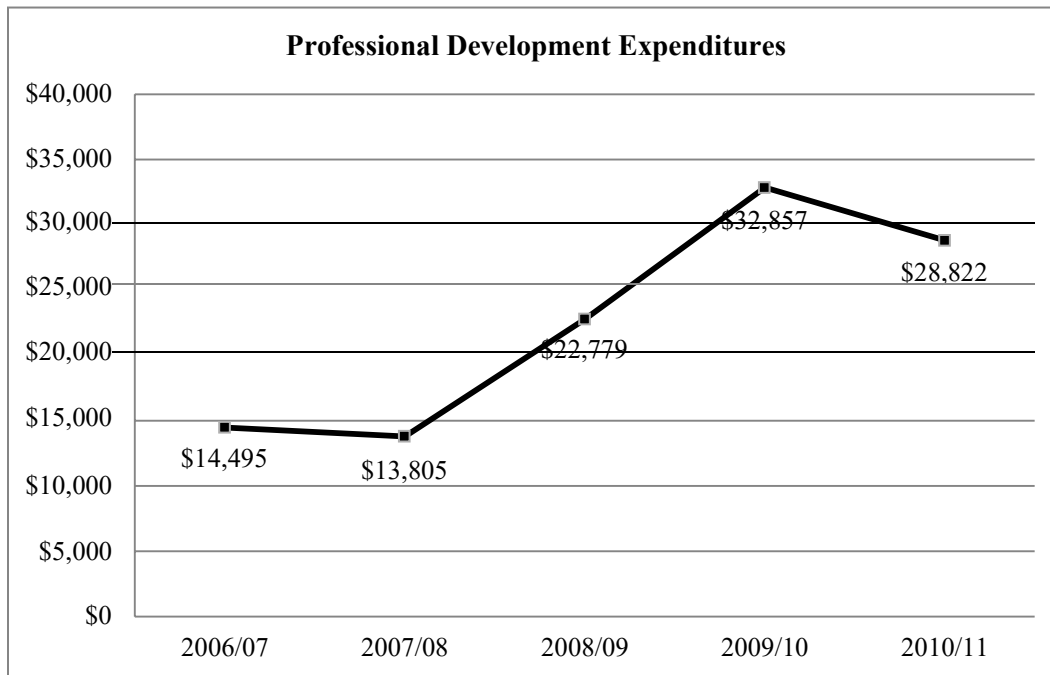
Planning and resource allocation support research, scholarship, and creative work at the College. It is customary for the College to allocate 6 of 30 faculty contract credit hours per year to scholarly and service activities for each faculty member. This is provided for in section 5.2.1 of the 2011-2013 Agreement between The Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees and the State College Education Association, located in the College Resource Archive. Each faculty member formally reports current year productivity and the following year’s plan for research, scholarship, and creative work in an annual Professional Activities Record & Development Plan submitted each spring as part of the annual evaluation process.

Research, scholarship, and creative work are further supported through the award of sabbaticals. Over the past ten years, sabbaticals have been used by faculty members to extend research in their fields of study and to gain knowledge for enhancement of instruction. In 2009, the science faculty member who received a sabbatical submitted a number of papers in his field and gathered research data and specimens for student research upon his return. The College also awards individual course release time to members of the faculty who request it for specific research, development, or service projects.

Other resources to support research, scholarship, and creative work are available from any one or a combination of professional development funds, operating funds, non-financial accommodations, external agency grants or private funds. A professor of biology has conducted scientific research for several years funded by grants from the National Science Foundation.

A faculty development fund is administered through the office of the vice president for academic affairs. Allocations from this fund are based upon the recommendations of the Faculty Development Committee, a faculty committee operating under the auspices of Faculty Senate. The Faculty Development Committee receives requests for funding from individual faculty members and makes recommendations regarding the expenditure of funds. Since 2007/08, the College has budgeted \$25,000 in this fund, representing a 67% increase over prior year allocations. Additional moneys may be provided as needed to cover requests. During academic years 2009/10 and 2010/11 all requests for resources from the fund were granted, subject to a funding constraint of \$1,000 per request. In 2009/10 there were 31 requests and in 2010/11, 29 requests. Figures in Exhibit 4.4 include a college-wide professional development budget of \$5,000 for non-faculty professional and support staff.

Exhibit 4.4



Source: Peru State College Administration and Finance Office

As a consequence of an emphasis on professional development and scholarly contribution, faculty activity is significant. For the 2010 calendar year, the College's 47 full-time faculty members:

- had 43 publications or creative works accepted;
- made 53 academic or professional presentations;
- attended 58 conferences;
- served as association or journal board members, officers, reviewers or editors in 61 instances; and
- received a National Science Foundation grant for \$443,000.

The Nebraska state colleges encourage professional development of administrators, faculty members and staff members by waiving tuition in excess of \$1.00 per credit hour, to the equivalent of the on-campus tuition rate. Between five and seven College employees take advantage of this benefit each year.

The College pays for job-specific training as appropriate. In recent years, the College has provided training to qualify employees for water operator licenses, annual training opportunities for financial aid staff members, and opportunities for staff members who use the new PeopleSoft software system to interact with other users around the country. The College sends many employees to one- or two-day conferences and training sessions on job-related skills. The College also brings experts to campus to provide training to prevent sexual harassment, improve interpersonal skills and otherwise enhance the employment experience. The state colleges' policies and negotiated labor agreements provide base salary increases to support staff, professional staff, and faculty members who complete degree programs at the College or elsewhere. Typically, three to five employees each year receive increases for the completion of degrees.

Informal opportunities exist for administrators, faculty members and staff members to learn about the College and educational issues generally. For example, the Office of Admission holds monthly staff meetings and invites individuals from various departments to present updates for the staff. The first hour of each meeting is designated for campus updates while the second hour is intended to share information among staff members. Departments presenting updates in the past have included the academic deans, financial aid, residence life, online services, Offutt programs, student records, student support services, student activities, athletics, student database training, dining services and marketing/web-design services. These sessions have assisted the staff in developing a thorough knowledge about a variety of aspects of campus operations in order to assist students more effectively.

Peru State College publicly acknowledges the achievements of students, faculty, and staff in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge. Peru State College recognizes undergraduate student achievement through membership in National Academic Honorary Societies such as Alpha Chi (general academic performance), Beta Beta Beta (biology), Kappa Delta Pi (education), Phi Alpha Theta (history), Phi Beta Lambda (business) and Commencement recognition of academic honors and academic honorary society membership. Each semester, the College recognizes student academic achievement by public announcement of the Dean's List, which is populated based on semester grade point average and class standing. Employee and student accomplishments are frequently the subject of press releases and Facebook postings, and occasionally featured on the College's main webpage.

The College publicly acknowledges the research and creative achievements of outstanding faculty by bestowing an Honors Chair, which carries a \$10,000 stipend for two years. Four Honors Chair awards have been made since the award was established in 2000.

The College's senior leadership members seek to model a commitment to professional development and scholarship. Recent development activities include:

- The president completed the American Association of State Colleges and Universities New Presidents Academy in 2009 and Harvard University's Institute for Management and Leadership in Education in 2008.
- The vice president for academic affairs completed Harvard University's Institute for Management and Leadership in Education in 2010. He had a research paper accepted for publication in 2010.
- The vice president for enrollment management and student affairs is completing a doctorate in educational leadership at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. She completed the James E. Scott Academy 26th Annual Stevens Institute for Senior Student Affairs Officers in 2011 and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Institute for New Senior Student Affairs Officers in 2009. She has been an active presenter at professional conferences.
- The vice president for administration and finance attended the Central Association of College and University Business Officers Winter Workshop in 2011. He has presented at the Higher Learning Commission annual meeting three times since the last evaluation visit.
- The director of marketing and communications completed the Nebraska State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program in 2009 and earned a graduate degree in organizational

management the same year. She presented a workshop at the Regional Conference for the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education in January 2009.

Core Component 4b: The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

The College's general studies program is designed to foster a value of life-long learning and to endow our students with the skills and opportunity to pursue a life of the mind. The general studies program is the required common experience of all degree-seeking students and is designed to accomplish its goals as demonstrated by assessment of outcomes and student perception.

The general studies program is reviewed regularly. The last full review was in 2003/04, when changes were made to remove highly specific course requirements within topic areas and open up the program to allow a wide variety of courses to meet requirements. This had the effect of accommodating the diversity of student interests and improving degree completion efficiency for transfer students, which was an evolving college priority at the time. The goals and structure of the program remained fundamentally the same. The program is once again under review as part of the self-study process and as a response to changes in Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees Policy #4140 adopted in summer 2010. Policy #4140 reduced degree requirements from 125 to 120 credit hours, and reduced general studies requirements from a maximum of 47 to a maximum of 42 credit hours. This change was a response to the state's P-16 (pre-kindergarten through bachelor degree) initiative goals to improve degree completion rates and lower the costs of higher education. Proposals for degree changes were considered and discussed by administrators and faculty members of all three Nebraska state colleges for over a year before adoption by the Board of Trustees. Changes to the general studies program of the College will be informed by assessment data and guided by the College's values as clarified in the self-study and strategic planning processes.

The purposes of Peru State College, as described in the 2011/12 Undergraduate Catalog, emphasize the importance of an effective general education for all students. The second purpose listed is: "Provide graduates with an enhanced capacity for continued life-long learning and effective citizenship through a strong general studies program."

The goals of the College include a strong general education program.

The Goals of Peru State College are to instill in its students:

1. effective communications skills;
2. computer and information literacy;
3. independent critical thought and intellectual capacity for change;
4. preparation to assume social and civic leadership roles; and
5. The ability to pursue intellectually, ethically, aesthetically, and physically rewarding lives.

The general studies program purpose statement reinforces the College's commitment to life-long learning:

The purpose of the General Studies Program at Peru State College is to prepare the student for advanced college work as well as for life-long learning. The General

Studies Program consists of specific courses that are designed to assist the student in acquiring the intellectual foundation that will last for a lifetime of learning.

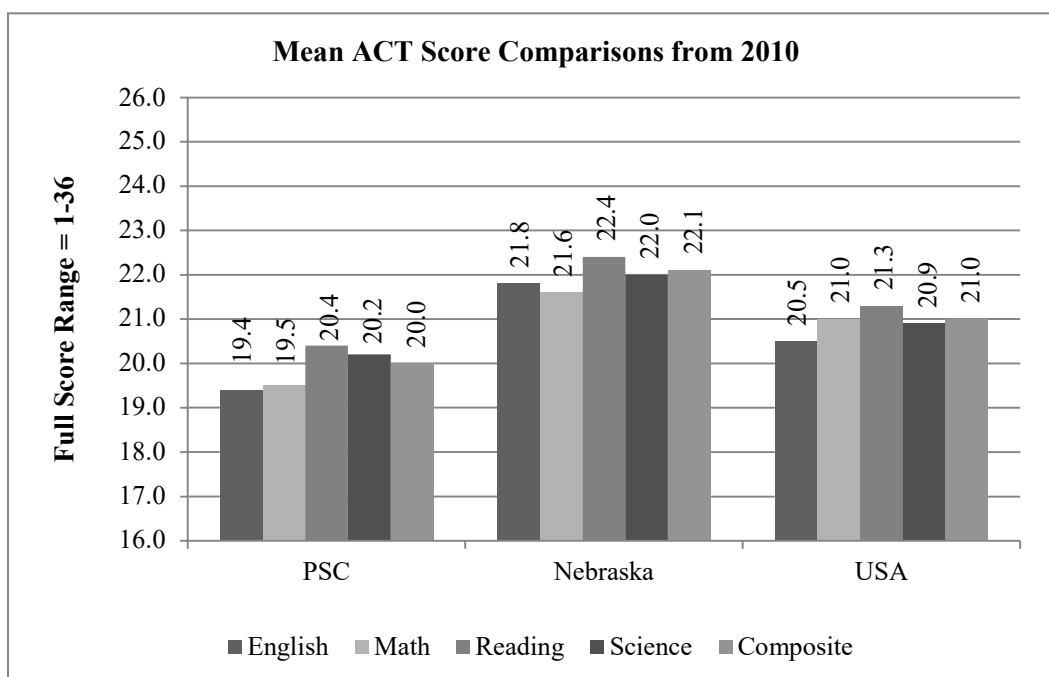
The College's general studies program is typical of such programs in many institutions. One notable difference is the College's requirement of a course in statistics for every degree except for the Bachelor of Applied Science. A statistics course was added to the general studies program to enhance the critical thinking skills of students. The general studies requirements for 2011/12 are:

- English Composition (2 courses)
- Oral Communications and Presentation Skills (1 course)
- Mathematics (1 course)
- Statistics (1 course)
- Social Science (3 courses including at least 1 History course)
- Humanities (3 courses including at least 1 Literature course)
- Science (2 courses, including 1 course with a laboratory co-curricular component)
- Physical and Mental Health (2 courses)
- Global Studies (1 course)

In addition to these requirements, students must complete College 101 – Introduction to Collegiate Education, a course in computer literacy or an online course, and developmental courses in math and English if necessary to help promote the development of a solid foundation for college-level work. Concepts pertaining to diversity in all its forms are presented in many general studies courses and a global studies course provides an opportunity to focus on cultural diversity to an even greater degree.

For undergraduates, the College directly assesses student acquisition of knowledge for several of the goal areas using the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) exam. The College administers the CAAP exam to every new entering freshman and each senior as a graduation requirement. Students falling significantly below national averages are offered additional academic support. All students have the opportunity to meet with advisors to get individual feedback regarding their skills. There is evidence of somewhat lower pre-college academic preparation for the College's students when compared to the average for all Nebraska and all American students taking the ACT. Results for 2010, which are typical, appear in Exhibit 4.5. However, a much greater proportion of the College's students perform better on the CAAP component assessments than their ACT scores would predict, compared to all American students taking the test, as shown in Exhibit 4.6.

Exhibit 4.5



Source: American College Testing Score Reports and website

Exhibit 4.6

Actual CAAP Performance for Peru State College Seniors Relative to Expected Performance						
	Lower Than Expected		Expected Progress		Higher Than Expected	
	PSC	USA	PSC	USA	PSC	USA
Reading	21%	9%	43%	82%	36%	9%
Writing	20%	8%	55%	82%	25%	10%
Math	33%	6%	39%	84%	27%	10%
Science	31%	8%	50%	81%	19%	11%

Source: Peru State College Assessment Report 2010

Notable CAAP exam results indicate:

- The College's seniors are close to parity with the national norm in mathematics, reading, critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and writing skills (Exhibit 4.7);
- The College's seniors, as a group, perform significantly better than its freshmen in all areas except in mathematics, where there was a gain, but it was not statistically significant (Exhibit 4.8);
- Individual seniors show significant gains over their performance as freshmen in all areas except mathematics, again where there was a gain, but it was not statistically significant (Exhibit 4.9.)

Exhibit 4.7

Peru State College Assessment of Academic Proficiency Outcomes and National Norm Comparisons 2009/10										
	Mathematics*		Reading*		Critical Thinking*		Science*		Essay Writing**	
	FR***	SR****	FR***	SR****	FR***	SR****	FR***	SR****	FR***	SR****
Scale Score Mean	55.5	56.2	57.9	61.5	57.6	61.8	57.2	60.1	2.7	3.1
Number	235	154	233	154	235	154	234	154	72	103
Stand. Dev.	3.6	3.5	5.4	5.5	5	5	4.1	4.1	0.72	0.71
National Mean	57.1	57	62	62.3	61	63.2	58.4	60.9	3.1	3.3
National %ile Rank	35	46	27	48	33	39	45	49	27	50
* Range 40 - 80 points ** Range 1 - 6 points *** National Comparison: 4-year Public Freshmen **** National Comparison: Seniors, Public and Private										

Source: Peru State College Assessment Report 2010

Exhibit 4.8

Peru State College CAAP Outcomes Independent Samples t-Test: Senior Scores Compared to Freshmen Scores for 2009/10*

	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	p value (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
Writing*	3.2	0.3	2.7	3.7	12.6	1047	0.0
Math	0.7	0.4	0.0	1.4	1.9	387	0.1
Reading	3.6	0.6	2.5	4.7	6.5	385	0.0
Critical Thinking	4.2	0.5	3.1	5.2	8.0	387	0.0
Science	2.9	0.4	2.0	3.7	6.7	386	0.0
Essay Writing	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.6	3.7	173	0.0

* Writing data are based on historical scores (2002F-2009S) because the objective Writing test was not administered in 2009/10.

Source: Peru State College Assessment Report 2010

Exhibit 4.9

Peru State College CAAP Outcomes Paired Samples t-Test: Progress of Students Tested as Both Underclassmen and Upperclassmen

	N	Mean Diff.	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	p value (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Writing	157	1.3	3.1	0.2	0.9	1.8	5.4	156.0	0.0
Math	225	0.4	3.5	0.2	-0.1	0.8	1.6	224.0	0.1
Reading	225	1.9	4.2	0.3	1.4	2.5	6.9	224.0	0.0
Critical Thinking	198	2.6	4.1	0.3	2.0	3.1	8.9	197.0	0.0
Science	195	1.9	3.7	0.3	1.3	2.4	7.0	194.0	0.0

Source: Peru State College Assessment Report 2010

Perceptions of gains in key aspects of undergraduate student development are measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Exhibit 4.10 represents a cross-sectional analysis of the degree to which students think the College has contributed to functional gains in the areas of Practical Competence, Personal and Social Development, and General Education. Seniors report strong gains in practical competencies, including acquiring job-related knowledge and skills, and general education.

Exhibit 4.10

Peru State College National Survey of Student Engagement 2010 Cross-Sectional Comparison of Senior Responses to Freshmen Responses Gains in Knowledge, Skills, and Personal Development							
QUESTION: To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	t-test for Equality of Means				p value (2-tailed)
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	
			Lower	Upper			
Gains in Practical Competence	13.1	3.5	6.3	19.9	3.8	149.0	0.0
• Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	18.2	4.8	8.8	27.7	3.8	146.0	0.0
• Working effectively with others	8.1	4.0	0.2	15.9	2.0	149.0	0.0
• Using computing and information technology	16.7	4.5	7.9	25.5	3.7	149.0	0.0
• Analyzing quantitative problems	15.2	4.5	6.3	24.1	3.4	147.0	0.0
• Solving complex real-world problems	6.5	4.9	-3.2	16.1	1.3	150.0	0.2
Gains in Personal and Social Development	4.0	3.8	-3.5	11.4	1.0	150.0	0.3
• Developing a personal code of values and ethics	4.7	5.1	-5.3	14.7	0.9	149.0	0.4
• Understanding yourself	13.9	4.8	4.4	23.4	2.9	149.0	0.0
• Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	-9.6	4.9	-19.4	0.2	-1.9	148.0	0.1
• Voting in local, state (provincial), or national (federal) elections	3.6	5.8	-7.9	15.1	0.6	147.0	0.5
• Learning effectively on your own	18.5	4.5	9.7	27.4	4.1	147.0	0.0
• Contributing to the welfare of your community	2.2	5.4	-8.4	12.8	0.4	148.0	0.7
• Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	-6.1	5.5	-16.9	4.7	-1.1	149.0	0.3
Gains in General Education	10.4	3.6	3.4	17.4	2.9	149.0	0.0
• Writing clearly and effectively	13.6	4.5	4.7	22.6	3.0	148.0	0.0
• Speaking clearly and effectively	2.2	4.6	-6.9	11.3	0.5	147.0	0.6
• Acquiring a broad general education	8.8	4.4	0.1	17.4	2.0	148.0	0.0
• Thinking critically and analytically	16.5	4.1	8.4	24.6	4.0	149.0	0.0

Source: Peru State College Assessment Report 2010

The College also measures perceptions of other areas of undergraduate growth using the senior exit survey process. Results for the last five years are reported in Exhibit 4.11. In spring of 2009, after considering how the assessment process could be further enhanced, eight new questions were added to the Senior Exit Survey to better assess quality of instruction, quality of advising, and progress toward the institutional goals of developing effective communication skills, computer and information literacy, and capacity for change. An open-ended question about future plans was replaced by a multiple-selection item required for participation in the Voluntary System of Accountability. For 2011, an additional item was added to better distinguish perceived gains in critical thinking skills.

Notable results include:

- Approximately three-quarters of the respondents report growth in key goal areas, with the exception of the ability to make oral presentations;
- General studies course quality is viewed as lower than other courses;
- An increasing proportion of students report they are prepared for their careers, but there is room for improvement in this area (note this result conflicts with NSSE data, which is likely to be more valid given the collection procedure).

Exhibit 4.11

Peru State College Senior Exit Survey Items Directly Relating to Institutional Goals

% = EXCELLENT or ABOVE AVERAGE ratings (except where otherwise noted)

Provision of Affordable Education

- Why did you pursue and complete your program at Peru State College? 29.2% of 09-10 respondents referenced affordability as a reason for choosing Peru State College.

Provision of High Quality Education

- | | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 5-Yr. Ave. |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------|
| • Quality of general education courses | 45.5% | 37.5% | 51.0% | 58.3% | 51.3% | 49.3% |
| • Quality of courses in major field | 82.7% | 75.0% | 78.0% | 84.4% | 75.2% | 79.2% |
| • Quality of On-Line Courses | 57.3% | 56.9% | 65.0% | 79.2% | 75.2% | 67.2% |
| • Quality of faculty instruction | ---- | ---- | ---- | 86.5% | 74.3% | N/A |

Major Field of Study Content Knowledge

- Preparation for Career Choice 57.3% 54.2% 68.0% 61.5% 64.6% 61.5%

Development of Foundation for Lifelong Learning

- Do you intend to pursue a graduate education in the next five years? (% = "Yes" responses) 65.5% 81.9% 64.0% 91.7% 60.2% 71.5%
- In what ways have your experiences at Peru State College helped and/or inspired you to develop and pursue future learning projects and goals? 49.6% of 09/10 respondents wrote of some way in which Peru State College had done this.

Development of Effective Communication Skills

- | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| • Your ability to effectively communicate formally in writing | ---- | ---- | ---- | 77.1% | 79.6% | N/A |
| • Your ability to effectively communicate formally with others individually and in small groups | ---- | ---- | ---- | 79.2% | 77.9% | N/A |
| • Your ability to make a formal oral presentation | ---- | ---- | ---- | 64.6% | 64.6% | N/A |

Development of Computer and Information Literacy

- | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| • Your ability to use computers to research information, solve problems, and communicate results | ---- | ---- | ---- | 84.4% | 77.0% | N/A |
|--|------|------|------|-------|-------|-----|

Development of Capacity for Change

- | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| • Your capacity to consider different opinions and perspectives and change your views or approaches when you believe it is warranted | ---- | ---- | ---- | 84.4% | 81.4% | N/A |
|--|------|------|------|-------|-------|-----|

Development of Ability to Assume Leadership Roles

- | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| • Your ability to assume a leadership role in the community and/or organizations | ---- | ---- | ---- | 70.8% | 69.9% | N/A |
|--|------|------|------|-------|-------|-----|

Development of Ability to Pursue Intellectually, Ethically, Aesthetically, and Physically Rewarding Lives

- | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| • Your ability to pursue an intellectually, ethically, aesthetically, and physically rewarding life | 74.5% | 72.2% | 76.0% | 82.3% | 77.0% | 76.6% |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

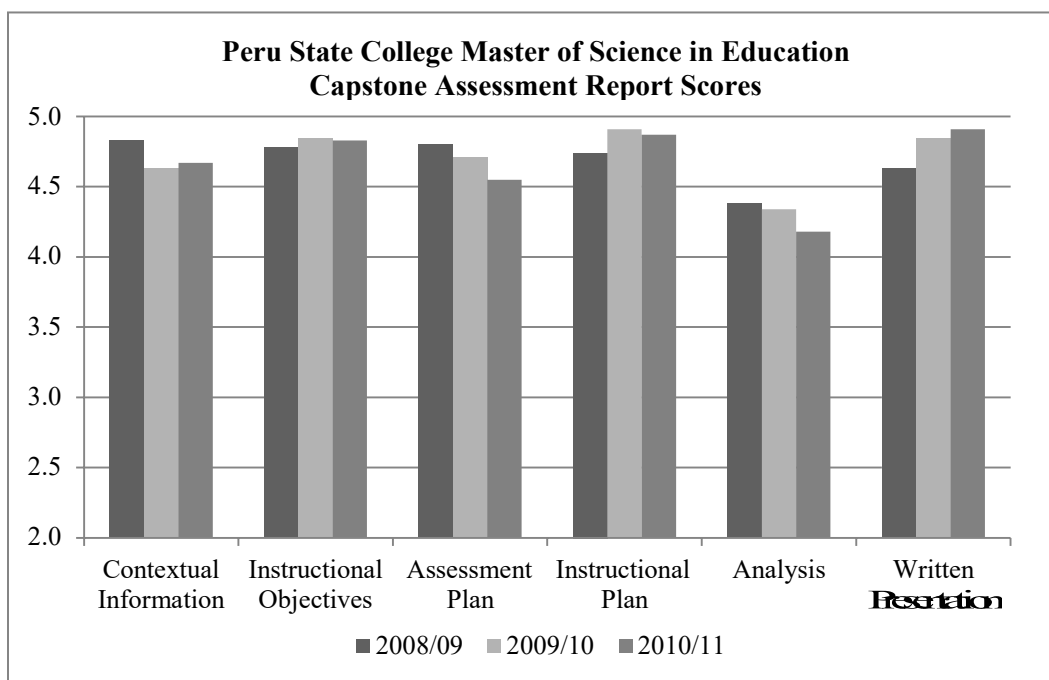
Source: Peru State College Assessment Report 2010

One measure of how undergraduate students view themselves as prepared for continued learning is the rate at which they express an interest in going to graduate school. Over the last five years, an average of 71.5% of exiting seniors indicated they intend to pursue graduate education within the next five years as shown in Exhibit 4.11 above.

Perceptions of the general studies program were assessed as part of the general studies program review in 2010/11. A survey focused on the general studies program was conducted in spring 2011. Reported perceptions of program quality were lower than desirable from both student and faculty points of view. Only 9.74% of student respondents rated the program as excellent and 44.1% rated it as good. Less than 3% of faculty rated the program as excellent, and 41% rated it as good. The College has an opportunity to improve perceptions of the program as it completes the review cycle and recreates the program during the 2011/12 academic year.

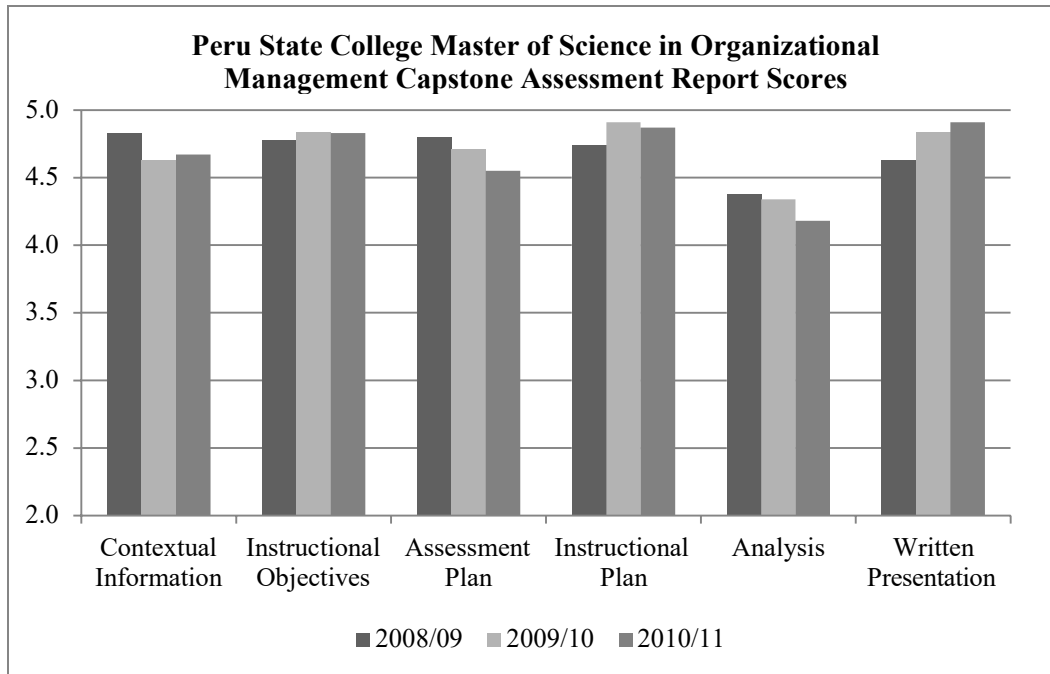
Peru State College assesses how effectively graduate programs establish a knowledge base upon which students develop depth of expertise. The tool for such an assessment is a capstone project. The College offers graduate study in two areas: Master of Science in Education and Master of Science in Organizational Management. Capstone project outcomes are reported in Exhibit 4.12 and 4.13. Graduate students are assessed to be performing well across all dimensions of analysis in both programs.

Exhibit 4.12



Source: Peru State College Graduate Programs Office

Exhibit 4.13



Source: Peru State College Graduate Programs Office

As they prepare to graduate, the College's graduate students rate the preparation they received during their experiences across a series of general knowledge/skill areas related to program goals. The results are reported in Exhibits 4.14 and 4.15. The exit survey assessment for the Master of Science in Organizational Management program started in summer 2010. In general, graduate students report significant gains as a result of their education.

Exhibit 4.14

Peru State College Master of Science in Education Average Scores of Exit Surveys for Items Related to Program Goals			
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
To what extent did PSC prepare you to:			
To read, discuss, and analyze current educational and content area research/literature?	4.3	4.3	4.6
Discuss, practice, and assess the appropriateness of instructional methods and strategies in relation to students' learning styles, background, and special needs?	4.3	4.3	4.6
Research, discuss, practice and assess classroom management techniques and effective/safe teaching practices in relation to your own beliefs and values, as well as students' learning styles, backgrounds, and special needs?	4.3	4.3	4.6
Demonstrate advanced technology skills and their application for enhancing student learning?	4.2	4.2	4.5
Demonstrate the collaborative process of curriculum development?	4.3	4.2	4.5
Discuss ideas, concepts, and research/literature with faculty and peers?	4.5	4.4	4.5
Enhance your professional skills and collegial competencies through collaboration?	4.4	4.3	4.5
Research, analyze, and discuss literature in your areas of interest, diversity issues, curriculum development, and curriculum planning?	4.4	4.4	4.6
Extend and apply your knowledge and skills thorough an internship, theses, action research project, and/or additional coursework focused on areas of interest?	4.2	4.2	4.5
Analyze and discuss your background, beliefs and values in relation to your teaching environment, historical and current issues, students, and community?	4.5	4.3	4.5
5 = Fully; 4 = Mostly; 3 = Partially; 2 = Minimally; 1 = Not at all			

Source: Peru State College Graduate Programs Office

Exhibit 4.15

Peru State College Master of Science in Organizational Management Average Scores of Exit Surveys for Items Related to Program Goals			
	2010/11 Averages		
	August	December	May
Understanding theoretical and practical knowledge associated with innovation and organizational change in the public and private sectors.			
To what extent did PSC prepare you to understand theoretical and practical knowledge associated with innovation and organizational change?	4.3	4.3	4.6
Understanding quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to conduct program evaluations and assist in evidence-based decision making for profit and non-profit organizations.			
To what extent did PSC prepare you to understand quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to conduct program evaluations?	4.4	4.8	4.5
To what extent did PSC prepare you to apply evidence based decision making for profit and non-profit organizations?	4.4	4.7	4.5
To what extent did PSC prepare you to research, analyze, and discuss literature in your areas of interest?	4.3	4.8	4.7
Understanding entrepreneurship, economic development and financing of projects.			
To what extent did PSC prepare you to understand entrepreneurship?	4.4	4.5	4.9
To what extent did PSC prepare you to understand economic development?	4.4	4.3	4.2
To what extent did PSC prepare you to understand financing of entrepreneurship and economic development projects?	4.2	4.3	4.2
Understanding the role of technology in commerce and research			
To what extent did PSC prepare you to understand the role of technology in commerce and research?	4.0	4.7	4.2
Understanding negotiation and mediation as a mechanism to promote change in organizations and communities.			
To what extent did PSC prepare you to understand negotiation and mediation as a mechanism to promote change in organizations and communities?	4.7	4.8	4.7
5 = Fully; 4 = Mostly; 3 = Partially; 2 = Minimally; 1 = Not at all			

Source: Peru State College Graduate Programs Office

The College demonstrates the linkages between curricular and co-curricular activities that support inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility. All degree programs include a “Capstone Experience” that is linked to one or more courses in the degree program. The capstone experience is designed to support field-based inquiry, creativity, and immersion in the practical activities of the major discipline. Examples of capstone experiences include student teaching, public performances, research projects, portfolio development, mentored independent research, public service, formal presentation and oral defense examinations. In addition to the capstone experience, the College offers a variety of co-curricular activities that support inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility. These are covered in detail in the chapters on Criterion Three and Criterion Five. One notable activity that is coordinated with student learning is the Distinguished Speaker Series. This program includes an emphasis on diversity and social responsibility, and it has benefited from strong faculty support in the form of integration into lessons, required and/or incented attendance for courses, and whole class participation in the main and ancillary events.

Core Component 4c: The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees Policy #4200 requires that each academic program be formally reviewed every seven years. In practice, elements of programs are considered on a more frequent basis as regulations change, assessment data are reviewed, and faculty express an interest in innovation at the program level. All College programs have mission and goal statements that serve as the basis for program assessment and these are reconsidered as part of the program review process. Student services departments now generate reports annually, and these, in conjunction with periodic student surveys, are reviewed for opportunities for improvement by the vice president for enrollment management and student affairs. Program reviews involve soliciting input from alumni and consideration of best practices literature. Example program reviews are available in the College Resource Archive. Constituent surveys provide evidence that Peru State College graduates have developed knowledge and skills to function effectively in the workforce.

In the 2009 Peru State College Stakeholder’s Survey, 142 of 315 respondents, for a total of 45.08%, reported that the quality of a Peru State College education was excellent. Results from the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement summarized in Exhibit 4.10 earlier in this chapter indicate seniors report significant gains in “acquiring job or work-related knowledge or skills,” which is the second highest gain reported. The highest gain reported was for the independent learning item, which is also indicative of a capacity essential for career success. Graduate program exit surveys for each term in 2010/11 averaged 3.4 to 3.8 on a 4 point scale for items related to students’ abilities to apply their knowledge and skills in their occupational settings. These results, when combined with the previously presented learning outcome data, are evidence that the College’s students, in general, are prepared for the world of work.

Students have the opportunity to participate in primary research under the guidance of and with faculty researchers. This experience may culminate in the opportunity to present findings at an academic conference. In May 2011, an undergraduate student received the Marc H. Dresden Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research at the 44th annual meeting of the Southwestern Association of Parasitologists in Willis, Oklahoma. The student, Kate Trout, observed, “The Natural Science Department at Peru State prepares students to be successful by helping cultivate minds to extrapolate and develop advanced thoughts. The field of science is always changing, so it’s important that students have the ability to apply concepts and make deductions in labs and through research. It’s a unique and valuable opportunity to have as an undergraduate. The PSC science program is exceptional not only because of the specific classes that are offered, but also

because of the way instructors encourage us to engage intellectually and think critically - like a scientist. The knowledge I have acquired through my research is more than I could have ever expected in my undergraduate career. I am leaving Peru State as a motivated, inspired individual fully prepared for my future and excited to continue scientific research throughout my life.”

Students have a chance to test their academic knowledge and skills in regional and national competitions. In one recent example, 17 Phi Beta Lambda members qualified to compete in the business association’s national leadership conference in June 2011 in Orlando, Florida. The competition included business-related tests and presentations on subjects ranging from financial analysis to human resource management. Seven students placed in the top ten of their events and two students earned first-place awards in justice administration and in database design and applications.

The College offers supervised internship, practicum and independent study opportunities to help prepare undergraduates for careers. Practicum and internship experiences can be so critical to success in certain careers that, based on past program reviews, they are required for certain undergraduate majors (e.g., education, psychology, and criminal justice) and they are strongly encouraged for other majors (e.g., wildlife management). Sixty percent of the College’s seniors report having participated in a practicum or internship experience, pursuant to the 2010 NSSE survey (see survey results located in the College Resource Archive), which is higher than the rate reported for both the Plains Public and the more direct peer group of smaller public colleges. The peer groups reported a greater percentage of students planning to have these experiences, however. Graduate students are able to select an internship or active research project as their capstone experience. Most students do select one of these options as opposed to the thesis option, which is available for those interested in doing more theoretical research. This program attribute has the effect of improving the relevance of the programs and providing an opportunity for service learning in organizations that often can benefit the most from it.

The College provides curricular and co-curricular opportunities to promote social responsibility at the undergraduate level. Faculty members sponsor many of the student organizations and coordinate opportunities for students to participate in service projects associated with those organizations. In addition to community volunteer and service activities, students also support campus-based academic contests for elementary and secondary students. Annual events include a business contest, history contest, jazz contest, show choir contest, mathematics contest, and BrainQuest event, among others. These events give College students a chance to support the achievements of others and to inspire excellence in their disciplines. From a practical perspective, they also learn valuable organizational and event planning skills.

NSSE results from 2010 show promising evidence of an interest in social responsibility. Fifty-one percent of seniors reported having done community service or volunteer work. This is lower than the 63% participation rate for the Plains Public peer group, but close to the 55% rate reported for the more direct peer group of smaller public institutions in the College’s market area. An additional 20% of the College’s students reported having plans to participate in community service or volunteer work.

Core Component 4d: The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

The Institutional Review Board has oversight of faculty research, scholarship, and creative work at Peru State College and is primarily responsible for compliance issues, in particular federal

compliance with the “Common Rule” governing use of human subjects in research. Institutional Review Board policies ensure compliance with the federal “Common Rule” and ensure compliance in subject consent, reporting, and data maintenance. The Institutional Review Board was reconstituted in 2010 after a several year hiatus, during which time research projects were reviewed and approved by administrators. Going forward, the Institutional Review Board is charged with keeping accurate records of all research conducted under the aegis of Peru State College. At this time, Peru State College has no formal institutional animal care and use committee as no research requiring animal care oversight is currently conducted at Peru State College. Upon notification of a desire to initiate such research, the Institutional Review Board will convene an institutional animal care and use committee to provide compliance and oversight. Institutional review board policies and forms are available in the College Resource Archive.

As interest in conducting research grows at the College, the administration is currently considering procuring or developing a formal program to train faculty and students in the responsible and ethical conduct of research. In the interim, responsibility falls to the individual faculty member as indicated in the institutional review board required certification statement:

In providing this notification, I certify that I have read and understand the principles of the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research as outlined in *On Being a Scientist: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research: Third Edition*. 2009. Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine, Published by The National Academies Press. If my research includes undergraduate research students, I understand that it is my responsibility to instruct them in the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research. Federal, State, and Local Departments and Agencies may have their own standards for conducting research and it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with and comply with any such applicable standards.

The College uses the standard federal procedure for investigating research misconduct and responsibility falls to individual faculty member as indicated in the Institutional Review Board required certification statement:

I understand the definition of Research Misconduct (intentional, knowing, or reckless fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results, honest error or difference of opinion withstanding) as defined by the United States Public Health Service (Department of Health and Human Services) regulations at 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 93 and I acknowledge my responsibility to report such misconduct to the VPAA for inquiry and investigation.

Intellectual property rights to discoveries or inventions that are created by the efforts of faculty are addressed by the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees in Policy #5003 which states, in part:

The Board encourages members of the staff to seek patents on discoveries and inventions as a method of bringing recognition and remuneration to the employee and to the State College System. Patentable discoveries by staff members that result from the performance of duties owed to the College, or from the use of College properties or facilities, except where such use is minimal, shall be offered to the Board in writing prior to making a patent application.

If the Board accepts the offer within six (6) months, it shall pursue the patent application with the help of the inventor at no cost to the inventor. Royalties and other proceeds occurring from any successful patent shall be decided according to a mutually agreed on formula, but in no case shall the inventor's share be less than 15% of the net revenue.

If the Board rejects the offer, the inventor is free to pursue the patent application at his or her own expense. In the event that a third party assists the Board and the inventor in pursuing the patentability of a discovery or invention, the conditions and financial arrangements shall be specified by contracts signed by all parties to the agreement.

The intellectual property rights for faculty are also covered in Section 4.1 of the 2011-2013 Agreement Between the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees and the State College Education Association:

Faculty members shall retain all copyright and intellectual property rights when course materials are created, updated, or modified when the three following conditions are met:

- a) The works reflect research or creativity which within the State College System are defined as traditional works of scholarship and are considered as evidence of professional advancement or accomplishment. Traditional works of scholarship include instructional materials (i.e., lectures, lecture notes, study guides, etc.) journal articles, research bulletins, monographs, books, textbooks, lab notebooks, research files, CD's, software, plays, poems, film and artistic works, as long as the works do not involve substantial use of college resources.
- b) The faculty member has not voluntarily transferred the copyright, or intellectual property right in whole or part, to the Board through a signed written instrument.
- c) The faculty member did not receive specific compensation in exchange for developing the work, the terms of such specific compensation communicated in writing.

The behavior of students at Peru State College is governed by the Academic Integrity Policy in the college catalogs and the Statement of Student Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities set forth in the student handbook. The Academic Integrity Policy was revised in 2009 to require proctored finals for undergraduate online students as a response to federal regulations associated with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008). As the regulations evolved to allow less stringent requirements, and given the significant loss in online registrations the College experienced as a consequence of being one of the relatively few institutions that adopted this approach, the proctoring requirement was dropped in 2010. The College makes available web-based tools to monitor plagiarism (e.g., Turnitin, Blackboard SafeAssign) and periodically offers academic integrity workshops for faculty. Ethics and ethical reasoning are incorporated into research course curricula in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

There is substantial evidence to support the assertion that Peru State College meets the core components of Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge.

The College promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission. The College demonstrates two outstanding strengths: 1) the integration of intellectual inquiry into the College's education programs; and 2) the assessed usefulness of the College's curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. These strengths are further demonstrated by the success of the College's students who compete in regional and national academic contests and who present research results at national conferences.

There are two clear opportunities for improvement: 1) providing focus to professional development efforts, and 2) continuing the revision of the general studies program. The College has a clear plan to shift more resources into instruction and the core mission-related activities as set forth in the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan. Pursuant to the values identified in the self-study and strategic planning processes, activities resulting in a more engaging culture for students, faculty and staff should have the highest priority. These activities may require additional resources and commitments to professional development in all its forms. Although the College's culture of support for professional development has evolved to a high degree, there is an opportunity for greater faculty-driven professional development activities associated with enhancing student engagement, improving student critical thinking skills, creating more opportunities for faculty-student research, and using technology applications more effectively in online and on-campus classes. The development of this agenda begins in fall 2011.

Although it seems to support real developmental and learning results, the College's general studies program is not viewed as favorably as it might be. Revision of the general studies program is scheduled for fall 2011 and will proceed with a focus on enhancing the engagement of students, increasing its effectiveness in preparing students for a life of learning, and improving perceptions of its value to students.

Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

From teacher preparation beginning in 1867, to training officers for the military in 1943, to its present day offerings in teacher education, arts, sciences, and professional studies, Peru State College has prepared thousands of teachers and leaders in Nebraska and globally. For nearly a century and a half, the College has reached thousands of individuals who might not otherwise seek a post-secondary education. By engaging both internal and external constituents in the education process, Peru State College serves the economic and social needs of the Southeast Nebraska area and reaches beyond these boundaries to serve our society.

Engagement and service are related and both directly support the mission of Peru State College. The term engagement suggests a learning environment that fosters student interaction with key concepts and questions in the classroom, other students, faculty, staff, real world situations, surrounding communities and the broader world. Service is a form of engagement that helps students view their education and their lives as ways to contribute to building a better world.

Core Component 5a: The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Peru State College's commitments are shaped by its mission and its capacity to support those commitments. "Educating individuals to enhance the benefit to society" is a guiding premise of the mission of the College and its commitment toward fulfilling that mission. As stated by a community member in the President's 2009 Stakeholder Survey, "[Peru State College] is responsible for providing life changing experiences for many people in Southeast Nebraska" (see 2009 Stakeholder Survey, p. 2 in the College Resource Archive.)

In order for the College to effectively serve the community, it must learn about the needs of the community and assess its capacity to serve those needs. In fall 2009, President Dan Hanson disseminated an online survey where he collected anonymous responses from Peru State College employees, students, alumni, community members, state senators, and employees of the Nebraska State College System.

A total of 315 students, staff members, faculty members, alumni and community members participated in the Stakeholder Survey, but only 12 of the respondents were alumni and only 10 were community members. While the survey garnered no specific advice about how the College could better serve the community, it did begin to open the lines of communication between the College and the community. Many of the comments suggested that these lines of communication had not been fully open during the past several years and that the respondents were hopeful that the College would engage with its stakeholders more fully in future years. With only 22 alumni and community participants, it was clear that the College would need to do more to assess the needs of the community and how the College might serve those needs.

In fall 2010, as a part of the strategic planning process, the College surveyed alumni and community members again on a number of matters, including how the College could better engage

with the community. A total of 186 alumni and 28 non-alumni community members participated in this survey, which yielded rich qualitative results in the form of commentary and suggestions.

In the fall 2010 survey, the College asked respondents to identify three top areas of focus from a list of 9 possible responses. Overall, alumni identified community outreach as an area of focus 5.7% of the time, resulting in an overall ranking that tied it for 7th and 8th position out of the 9 possible responses. Not surprisingly, community members ranked community outreach higher, identifying it as an area of focus 15.6% of the time, resulting in an overall ranking that tied it for 3rd and 4th out of the 9 possible responses. Responses from the community members that ranked higher than community outreach were academics and student life. Technology tied with community outreach, and the following responses ranked lower: people, leadership, resources, facilities, and other. Survey results included many pages of comments offered by respondents explaining their rankings and offering suggestions as to how community outreach might be facilitated.

The data, comments, and ideas provided in the fall 2010 survey were presented to the members of the Strategic Planning Committee and considered as the committee wrestled with competing priorities for the future of the College. The result was the establishment of a community development initiative and the vision of an Institute of Community Engagement that became an important element in the College's 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan. The goals for an Institute for Community Engagement are to:

Establish an Institute for Community Engagement (ICE) that:

1. Promotes community partnerships and service learning initiatives
2. Works with advisory boards
3. Identifies and secures funding
4. Develops and rewards student/faculty independent research relationships
5. Supports the activities of community development courses

The 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan further supports:

Developing an interdisciplinary/integrative upper division community development course or courses focused on applied leadership and learning through community engagement;

Supporting educational engagement initiatives by:

1. Providing funding for investigation and implementation of advanced engagement techniques in critical college courses,
2. Providing access to international/multicultural study programs,
3. Supporting innovative field engagement approaches, such as field trips, speakers, service learning, living/learning communities and residence life programs.

Improving the quality of life in Peru and the surrounding area by:

1. Building partnerships across southeast Nebraska,
2. Collaborating with the City of Peru,
3. Engaging students in educational opportunities and service throughout the region,
4. Establishing relationship with community and state political leaders.

Even prior to the adoption of the 2011-2017 Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan, the College had other initiatives aimed at responding to community needs in the area of economic development. In one

instance, a business professor and the director of internships met with representatives of the Nemaha County Development Alliance and learned of the need for entrepreneur development in Nemaha County. As a result, the College collaborated with a community member to establish a pilot program to mentor young entrepreneurs. The program matched College business students as mentors to high school business students who wished to study entrepreneurship and economic development. In the 2009/10 academic year pilot program, 8 College students and 17 high school students participated. During the 2010/11 year, 3 College students, 2 faculty members and 1 community member participated with 13 high school students.

In a second instance, College representatives met with civic organizations and individual community members to ascertain whether or not there was a need for a graduate program to support entrepreneurship and economic development in the rural communities in Southeast Nebraska. The result of these discussions was the establishment in 2006 of the Master of Science Degree in Organizational Management with an emphasis in Entrepreneurial and Economic Development.

In one more example of ascertaining and responding to needs in the community, College representatives reviewed a report of the Nebraska Department of Education Assessment on Health and Wellness. The report identified an increasing need to better serve youth in learning about and practicing a healthy lifestyle. As a result, the College added a health education component to the existing physical education endorsement in order to better prepare teacher candidates to address youth health issues.

Core Component 5b: The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

Peru State College's structures and processes enable effective connections with its communities. One way for the College to engage with constituencies and communities is for students to have valuable experiences in the community as a part of their educational program. The magnitude of these experiences can be measured by analyzing student responses to specific questions on the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement, and to compare the responses of Peru State College students with Plains Public colleges.

As set forth in Exhibit 5.1, with three exceptions, Peru State College students compare closely with the peer group used for NSSE surveys, a group of the most direct competitors consisting of smaller public institutions with 5,000 or fewer students and diverse degree programs that primarily focus on undergraduate education. Peru State College seniors report a statistically significant lower amount of engagement than peers on the community-based project and co-curricular activity items. Freshmen report a statistically significant greater amount of participation in co-curricular activities. Given the College's emphasis on engagement for the future, these already strong levels of participation are likely to improve.

Exhibit 5.1

Select Items from the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement				
NSSE Survey Item	Peru State College Mean Response		Public <5K BacDiv Mean Response	
Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course (a)	Freshman	1.55	Freshman	1.50
	Senior	1.44	*Senior	1.79
Practicum, internship, field experience, coop experience, or clinical assignment (b)	Freshman	0.00	*Freshman	0.08
	Senior	0.60	Senior	0.51
Community service or volunteer work (b)	Freshman	0.29	Freshman	.33
	Senior	0.51	Senior	.55
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports) (c)	*Freshman	2.38	Freshman	1.89
	Senior	1.60	*Senior	1.91
<p>(a) In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</p> <p>(b) Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution? (Recoded: 0=Have not decided, Do not plan to do, Plan to do; 1=Done. Thus, the mean is the proportion responding "Done" among all valid respondents.)</p> <p>(c) About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following? 1= 0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=more than 30 hrs/wk</p> <p>* statistically significant higher indicator, .05 level or greater.</p>				

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement, 2010

Co-curricular activities provide opportunities for collaboration between students and professionals in the community. Students in the undergraduate Teacher Education program have the opportunity to spend 100 plus contact hours with experienced teachers in Pre-K – 12 schools. Arranged and monitored by the school of education's director of field placement, teacher candidates experience actual classroom situations while completing college courses. These experiences, as well as the student teaching experience, are evaluated by the practicum cooperating teacher.

Internships are managed within the office of career services, and provide students with an opportunity to earn academic recognition and sometimes income while applying classroom theory to a realistic work setting. The program enables employers, students, and the College to share in planned and meaningful work experiences. Internships give students opportunities to apply and extend the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom to practical experiences, while allowing them opportunities to view and evaluate careers. Ideal internships establish positive contacts with prospective employers and are keys to building professional networks for students.

Volunteer service opportunities also allow students to connect with the surrounding communities. A new initiative known as Peru Students Care began in spring 2010. Peru Students Care is a volunteer service program comprised of students partnering with members of the City of Peru and surrounding communities to enhance both the physical and educational environment of these communities. Under the leadership of Peru State College First Lady Elaine Hanson, the College identified seven service projects which were chosen based on the following criteria: community need, benefit, partnership, cost, equipment/materials needed, and whether or not the service achievement was measurable. The chosen projects and corresponding organization included: City of Peru, city-wide cleanup; Brownville Fine Arts Association, landscaping around the new Flatwater Art Foundation Museum; Auburn Elementary School, reading to the second graders; Peru Historical Society/Peru Kiwanis, retaining wall and museum restoration; PSC Black Student Union (BSU), Leadership Conference and outreach to faculty emeriti; Bread For the World, letter writing campaign; and Peru State College Grounds Department, campus-wide cleanup. A total of 275 students, faculty, staff and community members participated as volunteers in March 2010.

In November 2010, the College's Black Student Union received a 2010 Governor's Points of Light Award for their volunteerism and service to the community from Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman during a Proclamation Ceremony at the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln. The Governor's Points of Light Awards are presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities. The Black Student Union was formed in 2008 to foster a sense of community and stimulate intellectual, social, cultural and political growth for students of all backgrounds. The organization's projects include collecting donations for community service groups, preparing emergency backpacks for children, reading to children in the College day care center, visiting local nursing homes, speaking to area service clubs and raising money for Haiti earthquake relief. The Black Student Union has also worked to increase cultural awareness by creating educational displays and hosting speakers for Black History Month.

Another example of community service involved work completed by a professor and students in the College criminal justice program. In 2008, a professor and two students administered a survey to 3000 randomly selected persons on perceptions of youth violence in Otoe County. The data were collected, analyzed, and results were presented at a community-wide forum in March, 2009 in Nebraska City. The professor and students wrote a grant application to address youth violence in Otoe County over a three-year period. The professor conducted a follow-up qualitative study in early 2010, obtaining information from five focus group meetings of community leaders, business owners, students, and high school staff members in three Otoe County communities to help narrow the focus of youth violence concerns. The study was presented to community leaders to help guide program development efforts and activities.

Peru State College Athletics promotes the mission of the College through various outreach activities and programs in the community. The development of student leaders has been a focus of the athletic department with emphasis placed on community outreach. Under the leadership of

coaches, student athletes have given back to the community through a variety of service projects. Two years ago, the Student Athlete Advisory Council was created with the purpose of facilitating communication and support among athletic teams, plan community service projects and promote leadership opportunities and diversity through the athletic programs. The Council coordinates service projects during the National Make a Difference Day including collecting food and personal hygiene items to donate to local organizations serving individuals in need. Student athletes have also shared their time with youth in the area by reading to children in area schools, serving as mentors, and assisting with summer athletic camps. Teams have served the community by participating in projects including rebuilding retaining walls for the Peru community and serving at local Teammates Mentoring Program events. Each athletic team completes a community outreach project each year in an effort to develop student leadership skills and give back to local communities.

Various clubs and organizations offer Peru State College students the opportunity to serve others and to engage in community activities. Exhibit 5.2 summarizes the clubs and organizations supported by Peru State College.

Exhibit 5.2

Peru State College Student Clubs and Organizations

Student Club/Organization	Description
Alpha Chi	Peru State College's national honorary scholarship society. It recognizes academic scholarship, good reputation, and character. The society's members are selected from the top 10% of the junior and senior classes.
Alpha Mu Omega	An Honorary mathematics fraternity which aims to develop and promote interest in the study of mathematics. Students with an average of "C" or better in required courses for a major in mathematics and who have completed or are enrolled in at least one mathematics course at the 200-level or above are eligible as members.
Art Guild	A student organization for art majors and students interested in art. Art Guild offers a forum for discussion concerning art and is dedicated to the advancement of the Fine Arts and the artistic growth of its members. They also attempt to make frequent trips to art museums.

BACCHUS (Boosting Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students)	A National affiliation that aims to: provide primary prevention efforts to help alleviate the problem of alcohol misuse and abuse on campus; promote responsible decisions about drinking within the campus community; help educate and inform students, faculty, administrators, and staff about health issues that affect the campus community including alcohol use, abuse and misuse; increase awareness concerning healthy alternatives to alcohol misuse and abuse; enhance communication within the academic community regarding health-related matters.
Biology Club	Open to all students (majors & non-majors) with an interest in biology-related subjects, service (e.g., roadside trash pickup), and field trips (e.g., Henry Doorly Zoo).
Black Student Union	Fosters a sense of community, stimulates the intellectual, social, cultural, and political growth of all Peru State College students, and provides support for students and the community. Membership in the black student union is open to all PSC students.
Campus Crusade for Christ	A college campus ministry of all denominations or faith backgrounds. It provides students the opportunity to enhance their relationships with Jesus Christ and with each other.
Council for Exceptional Children	Membership consists of students majoring in special education who wish to enhance the field of special education and to benefit individuals with special needs.
English Club (Sifting Sands)	Promotes the appreciation of written expression, encourages worthwhile reading, and fosters fellowship among students interested in English or literature.
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	A national organization that is open to all athletes and anyone interested in athletics. The goal of FCA is to present the challenge and adventure of receiving Jesus Christ and serving him in their relationships and in the fellowship of the church.
Kappa Delta Pi	National honorary education fraternity open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors who meet a certain set of criteria including: GPA, number of education classes, etc., and who show evidence of continued interest in education.
Multicultural Club	This club is open to students, faculty, staff and community, meets to celebrate diversity, increase cultural awareness and have fun.

Music Educators National Conference (M.E.N.C.)	A chapter of the Music Educators National Conference, open to all students interested in music. The club annually sponsors instrumental and music festivals as well as other musical productions.
PAW Squad	To create a community of students who want to be involved in dance and dance choreography. This club will provide student recreation, as well as provide entertainment at sporting events and dance recitals in the Peru State College service area.
Physical Education, Activities, and Kinesiology Students (PEAKS)	To promote healthy lifestyles through leadership, professional development, and advocacy in the areas of health, physical education, recreation, and dance.
Peru's Individual leaders of Today (PILOT)	To provide an opportunity for the students at PSC to volunteer for service learning projects that will benefit others. Targeted groups will include, but not limited to, agencies that serve those with learning and physical disabilities, retirement and nursing homes, food banks, nonprofit groups such as Peru Day Care and Girl Scouts, as well as other organizations such as Project Response, Hearts United for Animals, etc.
People Respecting Individual Differences & Equality (PRIDE)	To provide support and unity to people of all sexual orientations. PRIDE intends to increase awareness of differing sexual orientations on the PSC campus and in the surrounding community.
Peru Student Education Association (PSEA)	For potential teachers and is affiliated with the Nebraska State Education Association and the National Education Association. Its activities are devoted to the improvement of education.
Phi Alpha Theta	A professional society whose mission is to promote the study of history through the encouragement of research, good teaching, publication and the exchange of learning and ideas among historians. We seek to bring students, teachers and writers of history together for intellectual and social exchanges, which promote and assist historical research and publication by our members in a variety of ways.
Phi Beta Lambda (PBL)	A state and national business fraternity. Peru State's chapter, Epsilon Tau, is open to all students interested in business.
Philomathean Society	Open to all students, faculty, and staff interested in reading for fun.

Photography Club	Open to those wanting to share their interest in photography. It is an opportunity to learn more about this lifetime skill. Beginners to advanced photographers are welcome.
Psychology/Sociology/Criminal Justice Club (PSCJ)	A professional student organization for all Psychology, Sociology and Criminal Justice majors. The focus is campus activities, public service and service learning activities and professional development activities in all areas of the major.
Riverside Ministries	A student-led ministry whose purpose is to make pastoral care and ministry available to students, faculty and staff at Peru State College. Provides a religious, spiritual and ethical forum for discussion, study, service, and personal growth. Its supporting denominations are: The Christian Church-Disciples of Christ, The Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church. Events, programs and activities include: speakers, Bible studies, support and discussion groups, worship/devotions, trips, service projects, and social/entertainment events.
Student Athlete Advisory Council	The purpose of the council is to facilitate communication and support among athletic teams. The council will plan one community service project and social event each semester and will promote leadership opportunities and diversity throughout the athletic program. Members must be nominated by their coaches. Two members from each team will be selected to serve.

Source: Peru State College Student Affairs Office

Criterion 5c: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Peru State College is responsive to those constituencies that depend on it for service. The College has a robust partnership with the several Pre-kindergarten through 12th grade schools from which the College recruits students and with which the College places teacher education candidates for observational and practicum experiences. Peru State College also provides a number of special enrichment programs for the benefit of students and teachers from partner schools.

In order to serve students in partner schools, the College provides free transportation to high school students in Lincoln and Omaha to visit the College's campus in Peru. A number of the students who take advantage of this service might not otherwise have the financial resources to visit on their own. These high school students spend the day touring the campus, meeting faculty members, receiving career and academic program guidance, and learning about how to be successful in a post-secondary educational setting. Students who visit the campus for these events receive a benefit whether or not they decide to attend the College.

Peru State College also provides an Early Entry program to high school students who wish to earn college level credit while still attending high school. In this program, students enroll for Peru State College dual credit courses that are taught in the high school classrooms. Some early entry courses are offered online, allowing students to study from home, or from any computer with an Internet connection. In the 2010/11 academic year, the College served more than 800 students in its Early Entry program for more than 4000 credit hours.

The College forged a special relationship with 39 junior-level students in three schools in a high school to college transition program that included special programming and full-tuition scholarships. Called the High School to College Transition Program, the program invited junior-level students from three area high schools to participate in a special curriculum designed to introduce them to the college experience and college success strategies. Peru State College faculty, staff, and students presented much of the curriculum and answered participants' questions about college life. The program included monthly sessions to help participants build reading, writing, and math skills. Goal setting, money management, community service, job shadowing experiences, and leadership were other topics covered in the monthly sessions. Peru State College offered all participants a full-tuition scholarship renewable for four years to assist with one of the largest barriers to higher education, cost of attendance. Of the original 39 participants, 21 enrolled as full-time students at Peru State College, 14 attended other higher education institutions and four did not go on to college. As of spring 2011, eleven of the twenty-one students who enrolled at Peru State College have completed their degrees.

The College sponsors many specialized contests, celebrations, and programs that bring area school students to the College campus in Peru for educational, entertainment, and enrichment activities. Some of these are described in brief in Exhibit 5.3.

Exhibit 5.3

Examples of Peru State College Specialized Contests, Celebrations, and Programs

Event	Description
BrainQuest	Elementary students from area schools come to Peru State College to participate in ten learning stations featuring standards-based, hands-on math activities planned and taught by Peru State College teacher candidates. In 2011 approximately 193 students from 5 schools participated.
Business Contest	Students from area high schools spend a day at Peru State College participating in several business-related competitive events and tests in 15 disciplines. High performing students are awarded \$500 College scholarships. In 2010 approximately 200 high school students from 22 schools participated.

Camp Invention	Camp Invention is a weeklong adventure in creativity that immerses its participants in engaging, hands-on activities in science, technology, engineering, math, history and the arts. It serves children entering grades one through six.
Dr. Suess' Birthday	Each Spring semester, Peru State College students celebrate the birthday of beloved children's author, Dr. Seuss, with four special theatrical presentations of the author's work. More than 1,200 Head Start and Kindergarten through fourth grade students from a dozen area schools attend the annual event, held in conjunction with Read Across America Week. The Peru Student Education Association sponsors the event and donates books to each of the classrooms in attendance. The performances are free and open to the public. The event is open to the public and parents are encouraged to bring their children, especially those under age 10.
Games on the Green	The Peru State College Council for Exceptional Children hosts this event for Pre-kindergarten through 12 th grade students with developmental disabilities. Activities include outdoor fitness exercises and games. In 2011 approximately 60 students from 11 schools participated.
Greater Southeast Nebraska Mathematics Challenge	Students from area high schools spend a day at Peru State College participating in several math-related competitive events and tests. High performing students are awarded \$500 College scholarships. In 2010 approximately 150 high school students from 13 schools participated.
Annual Health Fair	In conjunction with "Global Youth Service Day," students from the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER) program sponsor an annual health fair to educate participants about healthy lifestyles and choices.
History Day Contest	Students from area middle and high schools spend a day at Peru State College participating in several history-related competitive events and tests. High performing students are awarded \$500 College scholarships. In 2010 approximately 260 middle and high school students from 11 schools participated. Special awards were also presented by the Peru Historical Foundation, Arbor Lodge in Nebraska City, and Nebraska City Museum Association.

Jazz Festival	Students from area high school jazz bands spend a day at the Peru State College campus participating in competitive music events. High performing students are awarded \$500 College scholarships. In 2011 approximately 275 high school students from 11 schools participated. Jazz bands from these schools compete for honors in various divisions of the contest.
Pathways at Peru State College	A career exploration day at Peru State College for students in grades 9-12, hosted by the Office of Admissions
Piano Extravaganza	Piano students from Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri participate in this event, which begins in the morning with rehearsals and culminates with a “piano orchestra” concert in the evening which is open to the public. The Piano Extravaganza, sponsored by the Peru State College Music Department and the student Music Educators National Conference chapter, is made possible through collaboration with and support of Dietze Music House of Lincoln and Omaha and the Yamaha Corporation of America, providers of the pianos. Approximately 200 piano students participated in the 2010 event.
Rural Health Careers Fair	Students from area high schools come to Peru State College to learn about health careers, educational programs, and job opportunities with area hospitals, clinics, public health agencies and medical offices. In 2010 more than 100 high school students from eight schools participated.
Show Choir Festival	Students from area high school show choirs spend a day at the Peru State College campus participating in competitive show music events. High performing students are awarded \$500 College scholarships.
Social Studies Fair	Peru State College sponsored 57 Calvert Elementary School 4th graders in this event which consists of teacher candidates working with 4 th grade students on various social studies projects. Students visit the Peru State College library to aid in their research. Each child is given a library card as part of his/her experience. Students present their projects to a panel of judges at an awards ceremony and reception at Calvert Elementary School for the students, their parents and Peru State College teacher candidates.

Student Leadership Conference	In April 2010, the Peru State College Black Student Union hosted the 4 th Annual Student Leadership Conference, “Branching Out: Leadership, Diversity and Making a Difference.” In collaboration with Wayne State College and Chadron State College, this conference was established in 2006 to encourage and develop leadership skills in diverse environments. In addition to attendees from all three of the Colleges, 25 students from Benson High School in Omaha participated in the event.
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Source: Peru State College Student Affairs Office

The College provides continuing education and customized training including courses for continuing education credits for certified teachers, Apple Valley Reading Sponsorship, early childhood conferences for area daycare teachers, a child abuse certification course, a credit for prior learning program, and Red Cross certifications in Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation, use of the Automatic Emergency Defibrillator, and lifeguarding.

Peru State College accommodates the mobility of students and accepts transfer credits from accredited schools, colleges and universities. Transfer guides of 11 schools are posted on the College’s website for easy access by interested students. Transfer students who have earned an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science degree from an accredited community college meet all Peru State College general education requirements and enter the College with junior class standing (or if less than 60 hours, with all hours transferred). Transfer students from other accredited institutions who have completed courses equivalent to Peru State College’s General Studies courses meet the College’s general education requirements in that area. A maximum of 95 semester credit hours from an accredited four-year college or university and extra-institutional sources may be applied toward the minimum 125 semester hours required for a Bachelor’s degree. Of these 95 semester hours, a maximum of 66 semester credit hours may be from a community, vocational, technical college or other extra-institutional sources. To be considered for possible transfer, courses must have been completed with a grade of C or higher. All students must complete a minimum of 50% of the hours required for the major core requirements at Peru State College.

Credit for life experience is available for students with significant experiences, accomplishments, and/or work outside of the normal college setting. Credit may be granted through standardized examination programs (e.g., CLEP, DANTES, APP), the credit recommendations of the American Council of Education, and/or an evaluation of an individual portfolio or examination by an academic department of the College.

Core Component 5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

Officials of Peru State College have reason to believe that internal and external constituencies of the College value the services it provides. The College has documented the various events and programs that draw constituents to the College, including students, faculty members, staff members, administrators, alumni, community members, partner organizations, and members of the general public.

In addition to the various events hosted by the College, Peru State College facilities are available to and used by organizations in the community for various purposes in ways that provide value to those organizations. It is also available in times of disaster. During the summer of 2011, the campus served as a temporary shelter, in coordination with the American Red Cross, for victims of flooding from the Missouri River.

Peru State College regularly hosts events that are open to the general public, including sports events, festivals, tailgate parties, concerts, theatrical productions, picnics, open houses to view facilities, distinguished speakers, and conferences.

Peru State College regularly features community members and events in its newspaper, the Peru State Times, published eight times a year. During the 2009/10 academic year, news coverage was expanded to include feature stories and pictures of those in the community who are familiar to students on campus, such as Barb Decker, co-owner of Decker's Food Center. The paper also published a story on two Peru State College students who are active members of the Peru Volunteer Fire Department. Copies of the paper are distributed on campus, as well as at Decker's Food Center and Catty's Place Restaurant in downtown Peru. The Bank of Peru, Catty's Place, Decker's and Shooter's Bar advertise in the newspaper, along with other small merchants and local realtors.

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

There is substantial evidence to support the assertion that Peru State College meets the core components of Criterion Five: Engagement and Service.

The College has documented multiple ways that it engages with and serves its surrounding community and external constituencies. One way to measure the success of the College in serving and engaging with its community is to compare its results from the National Survey of Student Engagement with those of its peers. The College fares well in a comparison of student responses pertaining to their involvement in practicum, internship, and field experiences. It is helpful that the College has a proportionately large number of teacher education candidates for whom student teaching experience is a degree requirement. It is possible that students in other degree programs do not have comparable community involvement.

Peru State College students report participation in service learning, community service, volunteer, and co-curricular activities, such as campus clubs, organizations, campus publications, student government, and intercollegiate or intramural sports at a rate that is on par with its peer institutions. Of course, improvement is always possible. As a small college located in a mostly rural area, the College may always have to expend considerable effort in making and nurturing community relationships in order to provide students with a diverse set of co-curricular experiences.

Peru State College also reports a robust schedule of campus activities that serve to connect the College with its external constituencies. From sporting events to festivals, conferences, job fairs, workshops and seminars, public speakers, academic competitions, summer camps, and theatrical and musical programming, the College provides ongoing opportunities for public visitation to the campus. Most of the College's academic programs sponsor one or more annual campus events open to the public or designed for students from primary or secondary schools in the region. Further, the College offers its facilities to area schools, businesses, and organizations for use for meetings and events.

A notable area for improvement is in the documentation and assessment of programs and events sponsored by the College. In the preparation of this self-study, College officials found that information on attendance and assessment of these events and service was widely dispersed across campus or not recorded at all. Further, few events include a participant survey to assess its value to the participants and to collect suggestions for improvement. In short, the College seems to provide a lot of value to the community, but it has mostly anecdotal evidence of this and little formal assessment on which to rely. In the future, the College should consider instituting a more formal means of documenting and assessing the services it provides to the community.

Conclusion and Future Action

The environment that allows for freedom of inquiry, creative teaching methodologies, respect for the rights and talents of all individuals, and the singular focus on the learning of students of all capabilities.

Anonymous response to the question, “What do you value most about Peru State College?” on the 2009 Stakeholder Survey.

As many reflect on the experience of the last two years, three words come to mind: comprehensive, efficient, and effective. Beginning in fall 2009, Peru State College conducted a comprehensive self-study process that served purposes beyond the important goal of providing evidence to support the College’s request for continuing accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. The process became the foundation of a strategic planning experience that provided unity of purpose for the College community as a relatively new leadership team, faculty, staff, students, and other constituencies considered the best path to travel toward the institution’s 150th anniversary.

Key mission-related values (engage, inquire, discover, innovate!) were developed and refined, and plans to further apply these values were woven into a new strategic plan. The College community learned from the process of gathering and considering performance evidence what most already knew to be true from experience: Peru State College makes a material difference in the lives of its students and for the communities in its service area and beyond, and it does so in a manner that is exceptionally efficient.

The history of success of Peru State is a critical foundation for the work yet to come. The strategic intent of the College is to become an institution of choice through enhancing the culture of engagement for students, faculty, staff and community members and taking the steps necessary to increase the College’s regional prominence. Strategies to achieve these transformational goals, which build on strengths and address opportunities for improvement discovered in the self-study, include:

- A community development initiative to support learning innovations and campus engagement through community partnerships,
- Development of a comprehensive Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) partnership with the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) to better serve students interested in careers in health care,
- Addition of 12 full-time faculty members to better accommodate a history of enrollment growth and provide the leadership resources for student experience enhancement,
- Instructional and support technology upgrades and more professional development opportunities related to instruction and technology applications,
- Personal growth and leadership development through professional engagement,
- Enhanced brand management and strategic communication activities,
- Strategic resource acquisition planning aligned with critical College priorities,
- Sustaining progress toward campus facility upgrades with a focus on projects with the highest impact on the student experience,
- A commitment to sustained, but controlled, enrollment growth on campus and online.

One of the most important traits of being an educated person is the ability to engage in critical and honest self-reflection. It is equally important for an educational institution to cultivate this trait. An authentic process of self-reflection can be uncomfortable even as it is enlightening. Dr. Lee Bollinger, President of Columbia University, described it this way in his March 2005 speech to the New York City Bar Association about nurturing a scholarly temperament:

To set aside one's pre-existing beliefs, to hold simultaneously in one's mind multiple angles of seeing things, to allow yourself to believe another view as you consider it -- those are the kind of intellectual qualities that characterize the very best faculty members and students I have known and that suffuse the academic atmosphere at its best. The stress is on seeing the difficulty of things, of being prepared to live closer than we are emotionally inclined to the harsh reality that we live steeped in ignorance and mystery, of being willing to undermine even our common sense for the possibility of seeing something hidden.

Bollinger, L. (2005, April 8). The value and responsibilities of academic freedom. *The Chronicle Review*, 51 (31), p. B20

This process of self-study provided many benefits to the College as an organization, and to the individuals who participated in the process. Sometimes the investigation revealed new and surprising perceptions. Other times it reinforced what the College community already believed about itself. Even when the process illuminated information that was already known, it served to improve communication, focus effort, and clarify priorities. In this regard, the self-study process was a success and this report serves as evidence of a promising future.

Request for Continued Accreditation

Peru State College respectfully presents this self-study report and the associated appendices, to The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools as its formal request for continued accreditation. This self-study report demonstrates patterns of evidence that Peru State College satisfies the Commission's General Institutional Requirements and the five Criteria for continued accreditation.

List of Exhibits (Tables, Charts, Graphs)

Note: For ease of navigation, all tables, charts and graphs are referred to as “Exhibits” in this document and numbered consecutively.

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