NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY AND HIGHER SCHOOLS

COMMISSION ON HIGHER SCHOOLS
Office of the Executive Director

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To: Commission on Higher Schools

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Washington, Seattle

Subj: Report of Visit for Recognition as a Candidate for Accreditation,
Western Nevada Community College, Carson City

Introduction. The Community College Division of the University of Nevada System
was established by the Nevada Legislature in 1969. Early in 1970 a director of
the Community College Division was appointed by the Board of Regents and a State
Plan for Community Colleges was completed by the end of that year. The plan
called for the establishment of community colleges in Clark County (Las Vegas)
and Western Nevada (Carson City-Reno), in addition to continuing Elko Community
College which had started as a local enterprise in 1967. Funds were appropriated
by the Nevada Legislature in 1971 and the three community colleges were operational
that fall.

Early in September, 1971 an Institutional Profile was submitted as part of the pro-
cedure for gaining recognition as a Correspondent. A visit to Western Nevada was
made on September 21. The office of the Community College Division was visited and
the administrative officers were interviewed. At the institutional level, all key
administrators and some faculty members were interviewed. The various facilities
in Carson City and Reno used by the college were visited, and several sites being
considered for permanent development were viewed. Recognition as a Correspondent
was granted by the Commission on Higher Schools through a referendum on October 3,
1971.

At the beginning of its second operational year with students Western Nevada Com-
munity College submitted an Analysis Report as part of the procedure for gaining
recognition as a Candidate for Accreditation. On September 19, 1972, Drs. Bemis
and Giles conducted a one-day general evaluation of the college.

Organization. The eleven member Board of Regents is responsible for the two state
universities, the Desert Research Institute, and the three community colleges. It
would appear that much of the Board's time must be devoted to the two universities.
To compensate, the Board has appointed a twelve-member Advisory Committee to serve
Western Nevada Community College. While the Advisory Committee was reported to be
interested and highly supportive, there is a problem of attendance at regularly
scheduled meetings because the membership is widely scattered. Also, a definitive role and function of the Advisory Committee needs to be carefully considered and adopted by the Regents. Since community colleges are relatively new in Nevada more attention needs to be given to statewide orientation and planning which involves regents, advisory committee members, university officials, and key community college administrators.

**Purposes.** Like many comprehensive community colleges, the mission of Western Nevada Community College is five-fold:

- Vocational-technical College, university transfer
- Developmental, remedial Community services Counseling and guidance

The college is particularly committed to occupational education in that the state plan aims for 60 per cent of the students to be in vocational-technical programs.

**Finances.** Of the $1300 per FTE available for operating expenses in 1971-72, $1044 was from a legislative appropriation and $256 from the student registration fee. Considering that the college is operating in temporary facilities and is attempting to serve low income families, the $256 fee appears to be a handicap. Discussions with faculty and staff indicated that WNCC is serving primarily those from the middle and upper classes.

Funds for capital improvements have been committed to the University of Nevada System from the Federal Slot Machine Tax Rebate. Of the $5,000,000 available for 1972, $1,330,000 will go to WNCC for Phase I of its Carson City campus. Although a 200 acre site was given to the college three miles northwest of the city, there will be significant expenses in developing the site.

A grant of $100,000 from the Max Fleischman Foundation was received to purchase books, microfilms and audio-visual equipment for the library.

It is encouraging to report the good progress of WNCC in the area of finance. Income for operations is considered to be adequate; there is a good beginning of the capital improvement program.

**Physical Plant.** The remodeled Civic Auditorium in Carson City to provide classrooms and to serve as the main administrative office appears to be working out reasonably well. Excellent use is being made of some facilities at Stead Air Base located ten miles north of Reno. The recent acquisition of the Stead hospital for health related programs provides exceptionally good facilities. In order to serve the eight counties for which it is responsible, Western Nevada has made arrangements for the use of a variety of facilities throughout the region.

A large majority of the people are concentrated in the Reno-Sparks area. If the college is to meet its commitment of taking education to the people, priority needs
to be given to facilities for the area. It is understood that the Desert Research Institute has 140 acres near this center of population and that WNCC could obtain 40 of these acres. A site such as this is of primary importance to the future development of the college.

Plans are moving ahead satisfactorily for providing a facility at the Carson City site. Site development problems will slow and increase the cost of the project. It is expected that the $1,330,000 now available will provide the necessary site development and 27,000 square feet of building in 1974.

Library-Learning Resources. This aspect of WNCC's development is in high gear with the $100,000 Fleischman Foundation grant and the employment of a qualified person to head the program. Plans are underway to tie into the excellent facilities of the county library system as well as develop instructional packages for the various programs.

Faculty are heavily involved in the development of the materials. Advantage is taken of the state service for cataloguing. Books and other materials can be ordered and put into use as quickly as they are identified.

Administration. The college is fortunate in having strong administrative leadership that is committed to the comprehensive philosophy. There appears to be the experience and ability needed to implement this philosophy. The administration has set into motion an impressive planning and development program, both short-range and long-range.

The coordination and leadership of the President of the Community College Division is very noticeable. This is an excellent resource which is being used widely.

Educational Program. The educational program is developing very rapidly, but with good planning. The college is presently achieving its goal of having at least 60 percent of its students enrolled in vocational-technical programs. There is a concentrated effort to develop the career oriented programs with the cooperation of the county school offices which have had this responsibility. The plan is to have the program transferred to the community college within three years.

The faculty appeared to be knowledgeable and enthused about developing a comprehensive educational program to serve the diverse needs of Western Nevada. The indications clearly point to an excellent program.

Instructional Staff. WNCC has a core of fifteen full-time faculty members who are well qualified for the positions held. They are committed to the comprehensive philosophy and interested in meeting student and community needs. Most of them have had excellent experience and education.
Heavy reliance is placed on part-time instructors which is to be expected during the early stages of development. It is important that this situation be only temporary. Disenchantment and poor morale can result from limited financial support and a lack of contractural security over an extended period of time. The 1971-72 average hourly compensation for part-time instructors of $8 is low.

Full-time instructors have adequate security. The teachers receive competitive salaries and a well planned program of benefits. Faculty security is also implemented through faculty tenure provisions and safeguards for academic freedom.

**Students.** Western Nevada is well suited for a community college with a population of 170,000 and growing. Carson City, the state capital, appears to be experiencing the most rapid growth rate; however, the major population center will be in the Reno area.

Projected enrollment increases at WNCC in the next two years are significant in terms of percentages but manageable in number of students. The FTE enrollment of 285 in 1972-73 is expected to increase to 400 in 1973-74 and to 510 the following year. Considering the population of the region and commitment of the college to serve the people, the projections appear to be conservative if adequate funding is available.

A good start has been made in offering a program of helping services for students at WNCC under the direction of a Dean of Student Services. Admissions and registration seem to be reasonably well organized and functioning satisfactorily. Academic advising and counseling were reported to be adequate by a representative number of students. A good start has been made in the development of a financial aid program except for a placement service. Excellent arrangements with the University of Nevada, Reno have been made to establish a book store operation. Housing facilities are readily available at a reasonable rate at the Stead facility while there is a critical shortage at Carson City.

There are plans for a limited collegiate athletic program. There is considerable interest in an intramural and personal activity program. Facilities at Stead are excellent and very limited at Carson City.

There is a structured student organization patterned after Elko Community College. While the students were not particularly enthused about the organization adopted, they thought it desirable to establish a structured student government. Student morale was reported to be excellent.

**Conclusion.** From the information included in the Analysis Report, the meetings with faculty, staff and students, and a review of college facilities, it is evident that excellent progress has been made since Correspondent status was granted in October, 1971. The college's organization, structure, and staffing appear to be acceptable; the level of financial support is adequate; its governing board is functioning properly; its educational program is well conceived and acceptable for its stage of development.