Northcentral University

Self-Study

for

Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs

(ACBSP) Accreditation

January 22, 2007
Institutional Overview

1. Contact Information
   Name of Institution: Northcentral University
   Name of Business School or Program: The School of Business and Technology Management
   Name/Title of President/Provost: Dr. Claudia Santin
   Name/Title of Business Unit Head: Mr. Bob Branch
   Academic year covered by the Self-Study: 2006-2007

   The institution’s Self-Study coordinator contact information:
   Name: Bob Branch
   Title: Chair for the School of Business and Technology Management
   Campus Address: 505 West Whipple Street    Country: United States
   City: Prescott    State: AZ    Zip: 86301
   Phone: 888-327-2877    Fax: 928-541-7817    Email: bbranch@ncu.edu

2. Identification of Individuals Who Helped Prepare the Preliminary Questionnaire

   Name      Title
   Dr. Claudia Santin    President/Provost
   Bob Branch     Chair – Business School
   Dr. Freda Turner    Research Professor - Business
   Melinda Lyons    Chair – General Education
   Donna Meyer     Director – Information Resources
   Dr. Baba Adams    Director of Research and Assessment
   Stone Shifflet    Director of Writing Programs
   Richard Wirth    Director of Information Technology
   Lee Everest     Dean, Learner and Alumni Services
   Angie Parker    Director of Faculty/Mentor Affairs
   Chuck Jarrell    Director of Marketing
   Brent Passey     Director of Enrollment

3. Review of All Academic Activities
   a. Business Courses Offered by Business Unit
      i. BBA
         Degree Program Related Courses
            Core

            BUS3000 - Introduction to Business
            BUS3001 - Basic Business Law
BUS3002 - Practical Business Accounting  
BUS3003 - Computer Information Systems  
BUS3004 - Economics  

General Education (BBA)  

Required  

LS1010 - Search Strategies  
LS1002 - English Composition I  
LS2002 - English Composition II  
LS1008 - Mathematics OR  
LS1009 - College Algebra  

Humanities  
Natural Sciences  
Political and Social Sciences  

ii. MBA  
Degree Program Related Courses  

Organization and Management  
OM7015 - Personnel Management and Organizational Behavior  

Business Statistics  
MGT5028 - Business Statistics  

Financial and Managerial Accounting  
MGT5012 - Managerial Accounting for Decision Making  

Economics (Select One)  
IB5012 - International Economics  
MGT5001 - Economics and the Modern Manager  

Management (Select One Course)  
ECM5006 - Integrated Supply Chain Management  
MGT5018 - Operational Management  

Marketing (Select One Course)  
ECM5007 - E-Commerce Marketing for the Internet  
IB5013 - International Marketing  
MKT5001 - Sales Force Management  
MKT6001 - Product Management
iii. PhD

Degree Program Related Courses

Organization and Management
OM7015 - Personnel Management and Organizational Behavior

Strategy/Policy/R&D (One Course or Equivalent Required)
MGT5028 - Business Statistics
MGT5027 - Legal Implications in Management
MKT6002 - International Marketing Research
MET5006 - Operations Research
RSH8910-B - Phenomenological Qualitative Research
RSH9900-B - Historical Research Methodology
LS6010B - Information Research Strategies

General Management (One Course or Equivalent Required)
MGT5000 - Business Organization and Management
MGT5019 - Ethics in Business
HRM5000 - Human Resources Management

Accounting/Finance (One Course or Equivalent Required)
MGT5005 - Management Finance and Control
MGT5012 - Managerial Accounting for Decision Making
FIN5014 - Financial Institutions

Marketing (One Course or Equivalent Required)
MGT5002 - Marketing Management
IB5013 - International Marketing
HCA5018 - Health Care Marketing

Doctoral Coursework
RSH8951-B - Research Questions, Constructs and Design
RSH8952-B - Measurement of Constructs and Concept Paper
RSH8953-B - Design, Statistics and Data Analysis
RSH8954-B - Research Ethics and Proposal
CMP8091B - Doctoral Comprehensive
DIS9007B - Doctoral Dissertation Proposal
DIS9017B - Doctoral Dissertation Data
DIS9027B - Doctoral Dissertation Defense
iv. DBA

Degree Program Related Courses

Organization and Management
OM7015 - Personnel Management and Organizational Behavior

Strategy/Policy/R&D (One Course or Equivalent Required)
MGT5028 - Business Statistics
MGT5027 - Legal Implications in Management
MKT6002 - International Marketing Research
MET5006 - Operations Research
RSH8910-B - Phenomenological Qualitative Research
RSH9900-B - Historical Research Methodology
LS6010B - Information Research Strategies

General Management (One Course or Equivalent Required)
MGT5000 - Business Organization and Management
MGT5019 - Ethics in Business
HRM5000 - Human Resources Management

Accounting/Finance (One Course or Equivalent Required)
MGT5005 - Management Finance and Control
MGT5012 - Managerial Accounting for Decision Making
FIN5014 - Financial Institutions

Marketing (One Course or Equivalent Required)
MGT5002 - Marketing Management
IB5013 - International Marketing
HCA5018 - Health Care Marketing

Doctoral Coursework
RSH8951-DBA - Research Questions, Constructs and Design
RSH8952-DBA - Measurement of Constructs and Concept Paper
RSH8953-DBA - Design, Statistics, and Data Analysis
RSH8954-DBA - Research Ethics and Proposal
CMP8091DBA - Doctoral Comprehensive Review
DIS9007DBA - Doctoral Dissertation Proposal
DIS9017DBA - Doctoral Dissertation Data
DIS9027DBA - Doctoral Dissertation Final Review

b. Business Degrees Offered by Business Unit
   i. Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
ii. Master’s of Business Administration (MBA)
iii. Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration (Ph.D.)
iv. Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

c. Business Content Courses not Offered by Business Unit
   i. None – All course of offered and are under the direct supervision of the School of Business and Technology Management

d. Branch Campuses/Extensions Centers
   i. None – Northcentral University does not have any branch or extension campuses. NCU is 100 percent online.

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TABLE 1: Review of all Academic Activities

4. Organizational Charts
   Place in Appendix of the Preliminary Questionnaire a copy of:
   1.) The institution’s organizational chart
   2.) The Business School program’s organizational chart

Identify here the Appendix Number: 1

5. Conditions of Accreditation
   a. Membership in ACBSP requires regional accreditation.
      Northcentral is a current member of ACBSP
      Northcentral University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, a commission of The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC/NCA) www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org

      Provide the approved statement of mission for the institution and state whether it is listed in the institution’s catalog or program offerings bulletin (see subsection d)
      Northcentral University’s Mission Statement is as follows:
      “Northcentral University uses distance learning methodologies to provide adult Learners throughout the world with opportunities to earn bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in recognized academic programs to enable them to acquire the competencies and to apply the knowledge and skills they need to participate and function effectively in modern society”
The Institution mission statement is reflected in the school catalog (section 1.02) and located on the NCU public web page at http://www.ncu.edu/mission_vision_culture.asp

c. **Statement of Mission – Business School or Program.**
School of Business Missions Statement -
“Northcentral University’s School of Business and Technology Management focuses on preparing the adult learner, through the use of distance learning methodologies, for successful professional careers by providing high-quality business programs with specializations designed to meet the high demands of the contemporary global business environments.” The School of Business Mission Statement is found in section 03.01 of the university catalog, page 22.

d. **Public Information.**
Five copies of the catalog or bulletin must be sent to ACBSP headquarters along with five copies of the completed self-study (one electronic version is acceptable).
State the catalog page number(s) where each of the following is located:
1) listing the business degree programs – page number(s) 17
2) the academic credentials of all faculty members – page number(s) 162
3) the academic policies affecting students along with a clear description of the tuition and fees charged the students – page number(s) 78
4) the statement of mission of the institution – page number(s) 4
5) the statement of mission of the business school of program – page number(s) 17

e. **Accreditation of Doctoral Program.**
It is the intent of Northcentral University to seek ACBSP accreditation for the following programs: Bachelor’s of Business Administration, Master’s of Business Administration, Ph.D. in Business Administration, and the Doctorate in Business Administration.
All programs have graduates and Northcentral University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, a commission of The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC/NCA)
www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org.

6.a **Business School or Program Organizational Profile**

Describe your organization’s environment and key relationships with students and other stakeholders.

The Organizational Profile of Northcentral University (NCU)
The University’s trademarked motto, “The Better Way to Earn Your Degree™,” forms the cornerstone of its philosophy. The University’s approach to higher education and the population of Learners it serves constitutes a unique learning environment. By offering Learners a 100% online education packaged in a convenient, interactive way, the University assists Learners in their quest to acquire knowledge and skills applicable to real-world situations.

NCU supports Learners with services and resources, one-on-one mentoring, and NCU’s proprietary Course Management System. NCU offers a non-residency program that provides a “better way to earn a degree.” NCU’s continuous improvement model ensures that input from constituents is continually explored for planning and improvement purposes.

**Distance Learning at NCU**
In the NCU distance-learning environment, Learners and faculty members reside throughout the world, in many different time zones. Therefore, courses cannot be held at fixed meeting times or locations. Instead, Learners and Faculty Mentors interact asynchronously during a course term to achieve learning outcomes.

Course interaction occurs through a proprietary Course Management System tailored to the Learners’ needs. The University uses asynchronous computer-mediated communications in a primarily text based higher education learning environment. Learners and Faculty Mentors communicate using NCU’s Message System thereby avoiding spam and viruses. The messaging system tracks Learner/Mentor interaction. Learners’ education is guided by Faculty Mentors, and supported by traditional texts, electronic resources and databases, and other supplemental materials.

Each program includes a set of fundamentals satisfied by one or more courses, and a set of related elective courses that allow the Learner to select coursework closely associated with his or her educational and career goals. Where appropriate, Learners must include courses to satisfy general education and/or content area requirements. Elective courses are divided into concentrations at the undergraduate level and specializations at the graduate level. Learners choose from a carefully selected array of courses that support program objectives.

NCU Faculty Mentors are assigned appropriate courses based on their education and area of specialization and experience. NCU’s faculty possess academic qualifications in their area of specialization and mentor Learners at least one degree level above those of the Learner. Only doctoral qualified faculty, with degrees from regionally accredited institutions, who have received NCU’s doctoral mentor training serve on doctoral committees. Faculty Mentors create and maintain a supportive climate that promotes conditions necessary for a dynamic, interactive, learning environment (Knowles, 1980).

**Learners**
The demographics of NCU Learners show that 85% are between the ages of 30 and 59. These mature, adult Learners have needs and expectations different from “traditional” 18
to 24 year-old students attending traditional, residential colleges, and universities. NCU Learners have indicated that they prefer the flexibility of distance education in higher education programs that match their real life schedules. Most Learners work fulltime, and may be involved with family, business and community commitments that further restrict available time for pursuing an education. No commuting time, no searching for a parking place, no arranging a babysitter, means that Learners may concentrate their attention on learning.

Within a busy schedule, motivated Learners seek additional knowledge and skills to enhance career opportunities, professional qualifications, and personal accomplishments. They are mature individuals who accept the responsibilities of time management, motivation, and commitment required by distance learning.

Most Learners have explored the variety of options available for higher education. During the admissions process, potential Learners become aware of the University’s approach to distance education. Those individuals who feel that NCU programs match their needs complete the application process to become enrolled Learners [admissions reference]. Learners admitted to NCU are likely to succeed in completing their programs because the University’s philosophy of education and method of delivery are tailored to their educational goals and life-style.

A diverse Learner population comprises the NCU’s learning community, Diversity and Inclusiveness at NCU. NCU attracts Learners from remote areas whether on board a submarine with the military or in an isolated cabin in Alaska. Other Learners may travel extensively in their employment, creating difficulties in attending class sessions in a campus-based program. Some Learners may not be able to commute long distances to the nearest educational institution.

Active Self-Learning
Active self-learning emphasizes learning, in which individuals are involved in and enjoy the learning process, and where individuals acquire knowledge to better understand and advance their own careers.

NCU recognizes that distance learning places a special responsibility on its Learners for the success of their education – and the distance-learning model is not for all students.

NCU’s methodologies and its strong Learner/Mentor relationships help ensure the success of NCU Learners. Encouraged by the support of Mentors, Academic Advisors, Learner Services, and Electronic Learning Resource Center (ELRC) services and resources, NCU Learners acquire and apply new knowledge and experience gained at NCU.

Learners may start a degree program on the first day of any month. Each Learner with an Academic Advisor develops a degree plan, an official strategy outlining all academic graduation requirements for the Learner’s degree program and area of specialization (if applicable). Some elements of the degree plan are prescribed (such as program core
courses), while others are derived from a menu of choices for the specialization and electives portion of the plan.

When a Learner enrolls in a course based on his/her established degree plan, the Course Registration Information (CRI) form provides the course outline and mentor information. The registrar emails the CRI to the Learner, Academic Advisor, and the Faculty Mentor. Learners are responsible for obtaining all materials required for the course. The University recommends MBS Direct, a book service available for the Learner and Mentor.

The Learner completes assignments and confers with the Faculty Mentor with the ultimate goal of demonstrating mastery of the course learning outcomes defined in the course outline and syllabus. To complete the goals, Learners use the textbook(s), course resources, library resources, and reference materials listed in the syllabus or available in a Course Guide in the Electronic Learning Resource Center (ELRC). The Faculty Mentors’ active guidance and feedback are essential to this process.

**Lead Faculty and Faculty Mentors**

Lead Faculty, with the assistance of an Instructional Designer, and approval of the Chair create or revise curricula in line with the specialization and program objectives. Typical assignments include chapter summaries, problems taken from the text, case studies, essays, analysis of articles from professional journals, projects, term papers, quizzes, tests, and job related assignments (project-based/problem-based or case-based learning activities). As Lead Faculty and the Instructional Designer consider a variety of assignment activities for possible inclusion in syllabi: constructivist learning activities position papers, reflections, multimedia activities (PowerPoint, digital storytelling, video projects, audio projects or podcasts), web-based activities (webquests, web page resources, blogs, or Wikis), or other technology/software activities. Courses require Learners to demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving and inquiry, application of concepts, and the ability to communicate clearly. The learning process may include examinations, performance assessments, questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, interviews, portfolios, capstones, research projects and papers, comprehensive exams, and follow-up studies. Faculty Mentor Development (FMD) courses provide orientation and training. Lead Faculty and Faculty Mentors working on curricula must complete FMD5020 Syllabus Development.

The Faculty Mentor provides feedback, and evaluates the Learner performance in order to assess achievement of the defined learning outcomes, at NCU this is “a dynamic relationship highlighting acquisition of knowledge, application, analysis, and critical evaluation and reflection” (Hollywood, 2005). Faculty Mentors have advanced and terminal academic degrees from recognized, regionally accredited universities, plus strong practical and applied backgrounds through teaching and/or professional experiences in their fields. Faculty Mentors are recruited from business and industry, professional practice, and the academic community. They are selected for their interest in promoting active self-learning, and expertise, their professional experience and acumen, academic background, technological skills, and ability to communicate specialized
knowledge and experience to distance Learners. 85 of the faculty members have earned doctoral degrees from regionally accredited institutions.

**Interactivity**
Learner/Mentor relationships, Learner-to-Learner interactivity, and active self-learning using course, library, and Internet resources contribute to the learning environment. NCU Learners communicate with their Faculty Mentors throughout their Course Pages, using Compass, the NCU learning management system (LMS).

**Learner Support Services … NCU’s Personalized Approach to Education**

Learner support services include Enrollment Advisement, Academic Advisement, Learner Services, Information Technology, Electronic Learning Resource Center, Accounting, and Financial Aid.

Following application, a prospective Learner is assigned an Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisor evaluates transfer credits before the applicant is accepted. Upon acceptance, the Learner is guided through the development of his/her degree program by the Advisor, who coordinates program requirements, course requests, and oversees academic progress throughout the Learner’s program. While the Learner interacts academically with a variety of Faculty Mentors, the same Academic Advisor assists the Learner throughout the degree program, maintaining an on-going relationship until graduation.

**Learner Services**
The Learner Services department fulfills a different role from the Academic Advisors. Learner Services Advisors proactively interact with Learners to encourage motivation, attitude, and problem avoidance. The Learner Affairs Advisor, through personal contact creates rapport, and acts as a coach while monitoring the Learners’ progress to ensure that studies are continuing smoothly. Learner Services Advisors help Learners understand best educational practices and procedures so that Learners benefit fully from the University’s distance learning opportunities. Learner Services provides an automated welcome letter outlining NCU services.

**Information Technology Services**

**Information Technology** (IT) supports NCU Learners, Mentors, and Staff by providing reliable Information Technology resources that enable them to succeed. The IT staff is comprised of three divisions: System Administration and Engineering, Applications, and Support Services. Compass, the proprietary system, encompasses all University functions and provides a course management system and administrative tools. The Information Technology staff develops and maintains the system for use by staff, Faculty Mentors, and Learners. The system serves all constituents and includes communications, Websites, as well as, University and office operations.

**NCU Writing Program and the Roadrunner Writing Center and Lab**
Beginning in 2007, the NCU Writing Program will offer a variety of support services, including Undergraduate and Graduate writing courses, The Roadrunner Writing Center, ELL Materials, a Publication Center, and a Dissertation Center. Through the Dissertation Center, the Writing Program will provide tutorials for Doctoral Learners in Comprehensives/Research (CMP/RSH) and Dissertation (DIS) courses. The Writing Program will provide a Dissertation Reviewer. The Reviewer will approve the completed dissertation for American Psychological Association (APA) style and NCU Writing Standards before the dissertation may receive final approval by the Dissertation Committee.

Beginning in 2007, the Roadrunner Writing Center will provide Learners and Faculty with information on all stages of the academic writing process, from pre-writing and reading strategies through revision and editing. Located in the Writing Center, the Roadrunner Writing Lab will offer consultation services for all NCU Learners. Faculty Mentors may refer Learners to the Writing Lab when writing issues arise during a course, or a Learner may submit writing questions or writing samples for feedback from a Writing Lab Consultant.

The Electronic Learning Resource Center (ELRC)
The ELRC is available to Learners, Faculty Mentors, staff, and the public, although the public cannot access protected databases and tools. The ELRC and provides resources for research, writing consultations, and dissertation support. Learners use the ELRC to access online databases, Course Guides, the Roadrunner Writing Lab, the Research Center, and tutorials with related quizzes. Services include interlibrary loans and document delivery. The ELRC staff answers reference questions and offers one-on-one assistance with database navigation, citation verification, reference tools, writing, and dissertation issues. The ELRC News Blog supplies research tips, answers access questions, and collects comments from Learners, Faculty Mentors, and the staff for ways to improve services. With a request from Faculty Mentors, the ELRC adds eReserves (ebooks or article links requested my mentors) to courses. The ELRC maintains and sends welcome letters to new Learners and mentors. The ELRC strategic plan is attached as Appendix ( ).

Partnerships
Northcentral University actively seeks partnership programs with leading businesses, governmental organizations, educational institutions, and associations nationwide. Partnerships offer special benefits, including tuition scholarships to Learners who enroll through the partnership. Organizations benefit by promoting opportunities for advanced education to their constituents — employees, students, and others. Many partners offer tuition assistance for completion of coursework thereby benefiting NCU by providing access and help in recruiting through partnering organizations.

NCU Mission
Northcentral University uses distance learning methodologies to provide adult Learners throughout the world with opportunities to earn bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in recognized academic programs to enable them to acquire the competencies and to
apply the knowledge and skills they need to participate and function effectively in modern society.

**NCU Vision**
Northcentral University is committed to being a premier higher education distance learning institution. This end will be achieved through an uncompromising passion for excellence in providing educational opportunities for adult Learners that fosters integrity, critical thinking, professional knowledge, a global view, and leadership for a changing world.

**NCU Values**
Values represent beliefs that the University holds in high regard and deems important in higher education. Northcentral University recognizes the keen interconnection of its organizational culture and the beliefs, values, and expectations that guide the behavior of the members of the institution. To achieve its Mission and Vision, NCU affirms its values of Learner Focus, Integrity, Innovation, Respect for Others, Teamwork, Leadership, and Performance.

Learners
Our Learners are our clients. We are deeply committed to meeting the needs of our Learners, and we constantly focus on putting people and their educational needs first in distance learning.

Integrity
We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards in relationships with our constituencies.

Innovation
Innovation is the key to improving the quality of our educational programs and services.

Respect
We recognize that our people are the cornerstone of our success. We value our diversity of thought and action as a source of strength, and we are committed to treat people with respect and dignity.

Teamwork
We know that to have a successful university a community of Learners, Faculty Mentors, and staff must work together, frequently transcending organizational and geographical boundaries.

Leadership
We believe that leaders exhibit standards for others to follow. Leaders achieve difficult goals, envision new and innovative educational delivery systems, and challenge outdated concepts of learning.
Performance
We strive for continuous improvement in our performance. We define and measure outcomes and take corrective action to ensure that our passion for excellence is never compromised.

The School of Business and Technology Management - Academic Organization

The Chair of the School of Business and Technology oversees the School of Business and Technology Management and its four programs. The Chair of the School is a member of executive staff responsible for ensuring all academic objectives established by the Academic Affairs Committee and the Provost/President are met; and ensures that faculty (full time and adjunct) are performing to standards of quality and integrity. Develops academic policies and programs for the School by performing the following duties personally or through designated full time, and lead faculty. Reporting to the Chair is the Research Professors, Assessment Professors, Lead Faculty Mentors, Fulltime Faculty Mentors, and all Adjunct Mentors.

Essential Duties of the Chair include the following:

- Ensures that faculty and staff are informed on organizational, educational, and accreditation policies that affect the delivery of educational services and operations of the department.
- Leads, directs and coordinates activities of FT faculty, faculty mentors, adjuncts.
- Evaluates qualification of mentor applicants to determine eligibility and works collaborative with Mentor Affairs.
- Maintains contact with faculty and staff to ensure quality delivery of services.
- Promotes the University and the School at conferences, and other outreach venues as approved by the Provost/President.
- Keeps current on trends in higher education and opportunities for improvement.
- Reviews and evaluates curriculum for appropriate rigor and breadth.
- Prepares the strategic plan and budget for the department.
- Performs periodic program assessments, program reviews, and participates in studies related to accreditation or licensing.
- Prepares and approves faculty mentor appointments.
- Establishes faculty mentor course assignments; monitors and evaluates faculty mentor performance, and recommends promotion and rank.
- Oversees the Research Professor and dissertation committees and may provide primary guidance for directing research of learners as appropriate.
- Serves as mentor to faculty mentors on an ongoing basis.
- Has oversight and leadership responsibilities for the day to day operations of the School.
- Prepares (or appoints FT faculty designee) letters of reference for learners as appropriate or per request.
- Approves conferring of diploma/transcript requests when learners have completed program requirements.
• Participates in the development of University budgets, plans, academic programs, and curriculum.
• Serves as a member on or chair (as directed by the Provost/President) of University committees.
• Advises the Provost on academic matters.
• Serves as liaison officer, as appropriate, with accrediting agencies that evaluate academic programs.
• Oversees counseling (via advisors or FT faculty) of learners regarding personal and academic problems affecting their performance.
• Hold the academic rank of Full Professor.
• Performs other assignments on an ad hoc basis as required by Provost. Other duties may be assigned.

The Chair supervises managers and fulltime faculty as required to accommodate departmental growth. Is responsible for the overall direction, coordination, and evaluation of the department. Also directly supervises faculty mentors. Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training associates; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining associates; addressing complaints and resolving problems, and ensuring that the academic advisement process operates in a smooth and efficient manner.

The Research Professors:
A Research Professor must have an earned doctorate in a discipline with primary interest in research design, statistics, and assessment. A demonstrated record of research, scholarly publications, or a clear indication of potential for success in these areas is required. Candidates must show evidence of substantial course work in statistics and quantitative methods.

• Provide assistance, guidance, and support as needed to dissertation committee chairs and members.
• As directed by the School Chair:
  o Review and approve of dissertation committee assignments, including chair, members and external reviewer;
  o Notify the Learner’s Academic Advisor and external reviewer of committee appointments;
  o Review all concept papers, proposals, and final reports primarily for methodological soundness;
  o Review learner, chair and member requests for committee reassignment; review and approve of all changes in appointment;
  o Attend PhD (DBA where appropriate) oral defense meetings; record attendance;
  o Serve as the School representative to the IRB.
• Monitor (for the School and institution) committee chair and member activity in the DTS;
• Maintain accurate data regarding dissertation/degree completions and other School and institutionally relevant information;
• Review, compile, and report results of dissertation committee chair evaluations completed by Learners;
• Serve as the School Mentor for FMD5026, Dissertation Management;
• Serve as the School liaison with the Dissertation/Research center;
• Serve as the School representative to the DTS Revision Committee
• Advise the Dissertation/Research center of needed School revisions and /or improvements.
• May serve on dissertation committees as assigned by the Chair

**Lead Faculty Mentors:**
The Lead faculty mentor is responsible for ensuring that specific specialization/fundamental/research courses are being taught according to NCU program standards. The Lead faculty mentor is also responsible for the curriculum content of the specialization/fundamental/research courses. The Lead faculty mentor is directly responsible to the respective School Chairperson or designee. This position is subject to annual renewal.

The following tasks are the primary responsibilities:

- To recruit highly qualified faculty for the assigned courses. Final selection will be made by the chair.
- To effectively communicate with specialization mentor faculty, School fulltime faculty and Chair, as required.
- To write, revise, maintain and monitor the curriculum for the designated courses, including textbook review.
- To work collaboratively with NCU’s Instructional Designer on ensure compliance with NCU’s curriculum design standards.
- To effectively use NCU technology.
- To respond to faculty, and Chair in a timely manner.
- To schedule and conduct quarterly conference calls with faculty members within their specialization.
- To attend a periodic scheduled conference calls with the School chair and the other lead faculty of their School. Discuss: learner issues, retention, quality of educational experience, and standards of best practices.
- To actively participate in professional development of School faculty mentors.
- To be active in the comprehensive examination process as directed by the Chair of the respective School.
- To perform other duties as assigned by the Chair and/or Academic VP.
- To comply with the Northcentral University, program guidelines, policies, practices and procedures.

**The Associate/Assistant Professors:**

Fulltime academic professional with responsibilities in the areas of a) mentoring courses, b) serving as chair and member of doctoral dissertation committees, c) academic governance, and d) professional growth. This is a non-tenure track position. This is a position for a take-charge person who understands academic integrity and organizational
responsibility. This position is field-based, residence at the main campus is not mandatory.

- Carries a teaching load or combined and comparable administrative and dissertation committee and advising responsibilities as directed by the Chair of the School and the Provost.
- Works with specialization lead faculty, and other mentors, recommends learning materials/course revisions for assigned courses at the undergraduate or graduate level to the School Chair.
- Coordinates the preparation of syllabi with Faculty Mentors in assigned area(s) of academic specialization, following NCU guidelines for course construction and assessment.
- Participates in the review and the selection of textbooks and learning resources with Faculty Mentors in assigned area(s) of academic specialization.
- Maintains currency in the field through professional organizations, journals, course development, and participation in research projects.
- Reviews Faculty Mentor activities and Learner progress, as assigned.
- Makes recommendations to the Chair, and other academic colleagues, e.g. Dean of Learner Services, Director of Mentor Affairs, specialization faculty, on ways to assist Learners in achieving educational outcomes and/or professional objectives.
- Provides periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assigned courses based on experiences with the courses, assessment of learning outcomes, relevance to the body of knowledge, advances in theory and technology, and interaction with Learners.
- Actively participates in University committees as assigned.
- Participates in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the University's learner outcomes assessment program.
- Serves as member of departmental committee for the selection of faculty mentors.
- Remains current and knowledgeable in area(s) of academic interests and assignments.
- Performs other assignments on an ad hoc basis as required by Chair and Provost.

Assessment Professor:
Same responsibilities as the Associate professor plus these mentors are trained to administer peer reviews and first course reviews

6b. Organizational Challenges at NCU

Describe your organization’s competitive environment, your key strategic challenges, and your system for performance improvement.

To answer this question in its entirety, Northcentral University has attached, as an appendix to this question, The Northcentral University Strategic Plan, Appendix 2, and Appendix 4 The School of Business and Technology Strategic Plan.
In 2002, NCU conducted a SWOT analysis in a series of weekly meetings, each focusing on one of the macro-environmental forces that influence the University. The entire Prescott-based staff participated, and suggestions from remote faculty members received via email or conference call input were also included. The external forces considered included Political/Legal, Social, Economic, Technological, and Academic Competitive environments.

Using the 2002 analysis as the baseline, the Executive Council in 2006 chose to identify NCU strengths and weaknesses overall and to organize the opportunities and threats in an Environmental Scan where the external environmental factors are Political/Legal, Social/Cultural, Economic, Technological, Academic Competitive, and Student Demographics. The goal was to focus on a few factors that are of utmost strategic significance instead of producing long lists of important but less meaningful factors. In addition, the SWOT concept has been extended to consider Trends in the internal and external environment that can further impact strategic planning. The results of the SWOTT Analysis are summarized below.

As with the Stakeholder Analysis, once the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan is completed, the Executive Council will ensure that key internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats, and organizational and marketplace trends are identified and addressed through specific strategies and action plans.

**Strengths** – Internal NCU strengths that offer marketplace opportunity and competitive advantage
- NCA accreditation and AZ licensure
- Differentiators that define the NCU brand
  - 100% online with no residency requirement
  - Monthly starts
  - One-on-one Faculty Mentoring
  - Flexible terms with ability to finish early and accelerate education
  - Individualized degree programs with choices of concentrations/specializations and courses

**Weaknesses** -- Internal NCU weaknesses that offer impediments to marketplace opportunity and competitive advantage
- Lack of sufficient trained staff to support growth
- Lack of a business continuity plan
- Number of senior faculty is inadequate to support growth
- Top-down decision-making processes rely on President/Owner
  - Decisions often do not rely on data and research
  - Operational impacts are often not considered
  - There is no structure or process to voice and hear differing opinions and constructively handle conflict
  - Operational coordination is often ad hoc and there is no structure for operational governance
- NCU’s niche positioning lacks strong appeal to the broad market
Opportunities – External, marketplace opportunities that NCU can strategically participate in and take advantage of:

- Need for college education at undergraduate and graduate levels is strong in the U.S and worldwide
- Emerging technologies (streaming and VOIP) and growth in the use of broadband in the U.S. can enhance Learner experience
- Distance learning use is growing and seen as viable alternative to classroom
- Organizations (business, other schools, military, etc.) are willing to partner to offer academic programs to their constituents
- NCU can create brand recognition and differentiate our position with niche markets

Threats -- External, marketplace threats that can strategically inhibit NCU.

- Infrastructure is susceptible to outside disasters (loss of phone lines, power, building)
- Distance learning competition from traditional institutions, non-traditional online universities, and newcomers for both Learners and faculty
- NCA’s perception of NCU may limit expansion of schools and programs

Trends – Events that point a strategic direction for NCU.

- Increasing numbers of potential online learners both in the U.S. and Internationally (examples include active Military and veterans; workers displaced from traditional industries; worker needing advanced knowledge/skills to keep up in information driven industries; and international Learners seeking American education and degrees)
- Increasing acceptance of online education
- Increased competition in distance learning/online education
- Continuing cost increases for higher education exceeding the rate of inflation
- Increasing flexibility by NCA regarding online universities

Strategic Marketplace

In 2002, NCU staff participated in a brainstorming session to identify markets and the actions that might be necessary to tap those markets. At that time, it was recognized that some markets might be addressed right away while others might be more appropriate in the future. The markets and ideas were organized into three categories: new or niche markets for current programs; new programs for emerging markets; and new ways to reach existing markets.

In 2006, the Executive Council reviewed the list and noted those markets and products/services that had been addressed (e.g., Military personnel, graduate degree programs in education) and ideas that need refinement or to be abandoned as the mission and focus of NCU becomes clearer. We used a four window pane screening tool that evaluates current and new markets and products/services as shown below:
Current Programs to Current Markets

We believe that further expansion of our current degree programs in business, education, and psychology are possible in market segments already served, including:

- **Major corporations and businesses** -- where the employer understands the value of education to improving the workforce and tuition reimbursement is available to employees.
- **Military personnel and governmental employees** -- seeking more education for career advancement or opportunities for a second career.
- **Law enforcement personnel** -- also seeking career advancement or a second career and often working irregular shifts and long hours.
- **Education professionals** -- often required to obtain higher education degrees to increase compensation or move into administrative positions.
- **Mental health professionals** -- also required to obtain higher education degrees to move into administrative positions or as a prerequisite to obtaining licensure.

To further penetrate these market segments will require continuing focus on the competitiveness of NCU’s degree programs and constant brand building to ensure that target audiences know and prefer NCU.

Current Programs to New, Emerging Markets

We believe that it is possible to address the needs of other market segments with current degree programs, including:

- **Community colleges**, who are seeking articulation partners offering opportunities for bachelor’s degree completion programs for their associate degree graduates.
• **Colleges and universities** currently employing adjunct faculty with bachelor’s and master’s degrees who are seeking to improve the educational credentials of faculty.

• **U.S companies** with significant overseas staffs, and their families, who desire a degree from an American university.

• **Families of U.S. military personnel** who move frequently or are stationed overseas.

• **Religious and humanitarian organizations** which have staff members located overseas.

• **A diverse mix of individuals:**
  - Individuals living in areas that are remote to traditional, campus-based colleges and universities or are homebound/care-givers, but are served by the Internet and are seeking higher education degrees.
  - Individuals who are seeking a career change for self-expression or due to down-sizing in their industries.
  - Individuals who consider themselves part of a minority (e.g., based on national identity or ethnicity, mental or physical limitations, or age) and would prefer the anonymity and convenience of online education.

To address these market segments, NCU will need to figure out how large each segment might be, how accessible each segment is, if the segment can be reached economically and served with existing degree programs, and if each segment fits NCU’s mission and vision over the planning horizon.

**New Programs to Current Markets**

We believe that new programs will be required to remain competitive and continue to serve the needs of current market segments, including:

• **Expansion of concentrations and specializations** within existing degree programs as we discover industry-recognized needs for specialized knowledge and education. Recent examples include specializations of homeland security in the School of Business and gender studies in the School of Psychology.

• **Expansion of degree programs** within existing schools to further meet the needs of each market.
  - Bachelor of Education to address the shortage of degreed teachers in K-12 educational systems.
  - Doctor of Psychology to address the needs of mental health professionals seeking a more practical, career-focused degree program.

• **Post graduate certificate programs** that fulfill the need for advanced skills and knowledge among working professionals and that may encourage seeking an advanced degree.

• **Cohort-based programs** – either new degree programs/specializations or certificate programs – formed in partnership with businesses, government, educational entities, or professional organizations and addressing specific knowledge or skill needed by professionals in the partnering institution.
To address the emerging needs of current markets, NCU will need to assess the size, needs, and interest of partners and invest in new degree programs, specializations, and programs adapted to the special needs of current market segments and specific partners.

**New Programs to New Markets**

We believe that new, emerging markets throughout the world will need to be identified and addressed with new programs that fit specific needs, including:

- **International markets** where students are seeking degrees from American educational institutions and foreign ministries of education can be engaged in support of NCU and our degree programs.
- **Healthcare** where the shortage of primary caregivers is acute, market demand is increasing, and current professionals are seeking to upgrade credentials to move into administrative roles.
- **Online charter high schools** where students are already familiar with online education and may be seeking dual high school/college enrollment as they prepare for their college careers.
- **Professional development curricula** for groups where continuing professional education is required (attorneys, doctors, dentists, real estate brokers and agents, financial planners, accountants), and individuals are seeking online options.

To address the emerging needs of new, emerging markets, NCU will need to develop international and industry partnerships where joint program and market development can create a “win-win” and invest in new degree programs, specializations, and programs adapted to the special needs of emerging market segments.

**Marketplace**

**Goal** – Expand Northcentral University enrollments by focusing on needs for higher education in the worldwide marketplace, selecting opportunities consistent with NCU’s mission, and developing and deploying appropriate educational programs and communications/recruiting strategies.

**Objectives** – From a base of 2,329 enrolled Learners at the end of 2005 and projected enrollment of 4,000 at the end of 2006, grow at a sustainable rate and achieve between 7,000 (15% annual growth) and 13,000 (35% annual growth) at the end of 2011.

**Strategies**

1. Continue expansion of our current degree programs in business, education, and psychology in market segments already served, including major corporations and businesses; military personnel and governmental employees; law enforcement personnel; education professionals; and mental health professionals.
2. Identify the size and ease of access to new segments and address their needs with current degree programs, including community colleges (degree completion); colleges and universities (improve educational credentials of faculty); U.S. companies with significant overseas staffs, and their families; families of U.S.
military personnel; religious and humanitarian organizations; and a diverse mix of individuals (remote to educational institutions, home bound, career change, or prefer convenience and anonymity).

3. Identify and develop new programs required to remain competitive and continue to serve the needs of current market segments, including: expanding concentrations and specializations within existing degree programs; expanding degree programs within existing schools; offering post graduate certificate programs; developing cohort-based programs.

4. Identify new, emerging markets throughout the world and addressed with new programs that fit specific needs, including: international markets; healthcare; online charter high schools; professional development curricula for continuing professional education.

5. Maintain focus on the competitiveness of NCU’s degree programs, positioning and differentiation of the NCU brand, and brand building to ensure that target audiences know and prefer NCU.

6. Evaluate whether to offer Federal financial aid as a way to expand the current market and enter new market segments, to offer additional financing opportunities for our Learners, and to meet our enrollment objectives.

7. Develop and deploy an enrollment management plan that tailors recruiting, retention, and student development tactics for all targeted segments, especially underserved learners throughout the global community.

8. Improve the admissions and initial enrollment process with a goal of decreasing average processing time (“applicant” to “enrolled” status) to 30 days or less.

Academics

Goal -- Northcentral University will excel in teaching and learning.

Objective -- NCU will maintain current good standing with both Arizona Post Secondary and the HLC. NCU will be reaffirmed by the HLC in 2008.

Strategies
1. Maintain a successful and sustainable student learning assessment program.
2. Continue the self study process, involving all University constituents.
3. Encourage best practices for online course learning and online course delivery via industry and HLC standards.
4. Enhance online and automated learner and alumni support services.
5. Support and enhance current program review processes.
7. Expand current program specializations to address Learner and industry needs.
8. Foster a safe, respectful online environment for NCU’s diverse Learner population.
9. Nurture and support a climate of academic leadership and professional development of academic staff and mentors.
10. Enhance Learner academic growth opportunities via the one on one Learner-Mentor relationship.

Financial

Goal -- Northcentral University will ensure the integrity of its finances providing a basis for sound financial decision making.

Objectives –
1. NCU controls its financial resources and allocates them in a way which reflects its mission and purposes.
2. NCU is recognized as a sound and creditworthy institution using accepted financial ranking methodologies pertaining to comparable “for profit” businesses and universities.
3. NCU has in place appropriate internal and external mechanisms to evaluate its financial management, draw conclusions and make adjustments in a logical and timely manner.

Strategies --
1. Use GAAP procedures as the basis for internal financial statement preparation.
2. Perform financial analysis using the following criteria:
   a. NCU will maintain a minimum Primary Reserve Ratio of .40X.
   b. NCU will maintain a Net Income Ratio of 3-5%.
   c. NCU will maintain a Return on Net Assets Ratio of 3-6%.
   d. NCU will maintain a Viability Ratio of 1.25X-2.0X.
3. NCU will maintain a minimum cash balance sufficient to provide an ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances.

People

Goal -- To attract and retain faculty and staff of high quality.

Objective -- From a base of 70 staff, 262 faculty mentors, and 6 fulltime faculty mentors in March 2006, we will take steps to ensure there is an appropriate and sustainable number of faculty and staff to support and serve each of the University’s academic programs and administrative functions. Therefore, when NCU achieves between 7,000 and 13,000 Learners at the end of 2011, we expect to have a minimum of 700 faculty mentors, 14 fulltime faculty, and 150 staff (including 22 to 40 Academic Advisors and 12 to 20 Enrollment Advisors).

Strategies –
1. Develop and deploy a recruitment plan to identify, attract and retain faculty and staff of high quality.
2. Hire qualified faculty and staff regardless of their geographic location.
3. Develop an institutional recruitment and hiring strategy.
4. Hire an experienced Human Resource Professional and establish a Human Resources Department to oversee the University’s HR practices, policies and procedures.
5. Establish fair and equitable compensation plans for faculty and staff.
6. Establish and promote a plan that offers clear professional development opportunities for both faculty and staff.
7. Provide a positive work environment - one that manifests a highly proactive interest in faculty and staff development and in promoting a dynamic, supportive, intellectual community.

Infrastructure

**Goal** -- Develop a facilities and technological infrastructure that directly supports the mission and growth of Northcentral University.

**Facilities Objective** -- Maintain an annually updated facilities master plan that reflects strategic University priorities; always adhering to construction and technological best practices.

**Strategies** --

1. Complete construction of the first new building and provide furnishings and equipment necessary to conduct business.
2. Maintain campus facilities and exterior areas in a manner that promotes a positive University image and work environment.
3. Proceed with buildings 2-7 in anticipation of need.
4. Design new buildings, with user involvement, to be flexible in order to accommodate multiple functions.
5. Building design will utilize emerging technologies that support the University mission.
6. Building design will provide for a healthy and productive work environment, encourage the efficient use of energy, and preserve open space and natural landscaping around buildings.
7. Emphasize dedicated exterior and interior space for gathering, recreation, and athletic activity.
8. Ensure that facility requirements are included as part of the business continuity plan.

**Technology Objective** -- Provide reliable Information Technology resources that enable the University’s educational mission and support University management.

**Strategies** --
1. Provide 24/7 University operations through a technology environment that encompasses access, stability, performance, redundancy, security and disaster recovery.

2. Ensure the Compass system remains a state-of-the-art, enterprise-wide, technology platform that is web-accessible from anywhere, available at all times, and easy to deploy and manage.

3. Research new technologies and develop methods to apply them to NCU requirements.

4. Maintain a technological infrastructure that supports the current and growing technology environment and is able to expand and support integrated uses of technology in educational, work and home environments for Learners, Mentors, and Staff.

5. Promote superior management capability by applying best industry practices that provide for audit and regulatory compliance.

6. Establish technology standards with enough flexibility to respond to specific requirements throughout academic and administrative areas.

7. Provide for a secure technology environment that is part of the business continuity plan.

Service

Goal – Continue to improve service quality and efficiency to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction while enrollments steadily grow.

Objectives – Identify all points of organizational contact and the service requirements of prospective Learners, Learners, and Faculty Mentors, as well as NCU staff, and develop the sustained ability to provide the required service.

Strategies –

1. For each process and service requirement, establish service metrics, a measurement plan, and continuous improvement plan, then implement and measure progress.
   a. IT -- Build and maintain an ability to respond to IT issues on a 24/7 basis.
   b. IT -- Ensure that web site access – public, Learner, Mentor, and Administrative sites – are available via the Internet on a 24/7 basis.
   c. Enrollment Services -- Ensure that prospective Learners receive follow-up responses from their initial inquiries and follow-up contacts within 1 business day.
   d. Financial Aid -- Continue to improve the variety of financial assistance services that respond to the financial needs of Learners and Applicants.
   e. Registrar – Ensure authenticity of Learner documents, adherence to NCU’s academic policies and procedures, and outside governing bodies’ rules and regulations.
f. Learner Affairs – Provide proactive communication and timely response to Learner queries, complaints, and ensure adherence to NCU academic policies and procedures.

g. Accounting – Ensure that financial information is kept and reported accurately, timely, and consistently to Learner accounts and to NCU management.

h. Mentor Affairs – Provide support to academic programs in identifying and training qualified mentors.

i. Academic Affairs -- Ensure that Faculty Mentors respond to assignments from Learners within 5 days maximum and are complying with NCU’s best practices in online mentoring.

j. Human Resources – Ensure that staff receives a response to compensation and benefits inquiries within 2 business days.

k. Academic Advising – Ensure that applicants are evaluated in compliance with NCU’s admissions policies. Provide timely service to Learner inquiries. Follow academic retention methodologies.

2. Survey prospective Learners, Learners, Faculty Mentors, and staff annually to assess customer satisfaction, including both the timeliness and quality of NCU services.

3. Use feedback from surveys to develop training that improves future customer satisfaction.

1. Leadership

Administration (chief academic officers, deans, department chairs) and faculty must personally lead and be involved in creating and sustaining values, business school or program directions, performance expectations, student focus and a leadership system that promotes performance excellence. The values and expectation must be integrated into the business school’s or program’s leadership system and the business school or program must continuously learn, improve and address its societal responsibilities and community involvement.

a. Do your administrator and faculty set, communicate and deploy business school or programs values and performance expectations? Yes, the academic Chairs of each school are responsible for the supervision of Faculty Mentors working under their authority. Chairs ensure instructional delivery aligns with Program Objectives and supports the University’s goals, philosophy, and Mission. The Chairs are responsible for all matters within their respective schools, such as personnel; budget; instructional material; curriculum; faculty performance; Learner enrollments, progress and success, terminations, graduations and so forth. The Chairs may have responsibility for either or both undergraduate and graduate degree programs as determined by the President/Provost based on factors such as enrollment, number of faculty, number of courses, workload, etc. The Chairs hold faculty status and may have instructional assignments.

The Academic Affairs Committee is responsible for setting and approving policies and procedures for academic standards, admissions standards and
evaluation, curricula, ethics, and institutional effectiveness and assessment. President, Provost, academic Chairs, Dean of Learner and Alumni Services, Registrar, Director of Information Resources (ELRC), Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, the Assessment Coordinator, and Lead Faculty comprise the committee membership. Staff, faculty, and Learners may be invited to take part in committee discussions. By overseeing all academically related matters, the Academic Affairs Committee provides continuity and assures the preservation of integrity of academic policy.

Lead faculty mentor, both an administrative and teaching position, is responsible for ensuring that specific specialization/fundamental/research courses are being taught according to NCU program standards. The Lead faculty mentor is also responsible for the curriculum content of the specialization/fundamental/research courses. The Lead faculty mentor is directly responsible to the respective School Chairperson, i.e., business, general education, education, or psychology.

The following tasks are the Lead Faculty Mentors primary responsibilities:

1. To recruit highly qualified faculty for the assigned courses.
2. To effectively communicate with adjunct faculty, and Chair, as required.
3. To update as needed and monitor the curriculum for the designated courses.
4. To coordinate comprehensive examinations process.
5. To effectively use NCU technology.
6. To respond to faculty, and Chair in a timely manner.
7. To schedule and conduct quarterly conference calls with faculty members.
8. To actively participate in professional development of department faculty.
9. To perform other duties as assigned by the Chair and/or Academic VP.
10. To comply with the Northcentral University, program guidelines and procedures.

b. Do your administrators and faculty review business school or program performance and capabilities to assess program success and your ability to address changing needs? Yes, in addition to their primary role of mentoring and guiding Learners through their educational pursuits, Faculty Mentors are invited and encouraged to become involved in the governance of the University through committee work. Faculty members also function in administrative roles such Lead Faculty Mentors or serve on teams for self-study.

c.

d. Does your business school or program have processes in place for evaluating the performance of your administrators and faculty?

e. Does your business school or program address the impacts on society of your program offerings, services, and operations?
NCU staff members interact with the quad-city community (Prescott, Prescott Valley, Dewey-Humboldt, and Chino Valley) through participation in NCU sponsored community events.

The staffing dollar as of August 2006 was 2.9 million dollars. This number represents a significant contribution to the people of Yavapai and Maricopa counties. The annual expenditures of NCU for resources in the community also benefit the local economy (e.g., electricity, other utilities, supplies, and services purchased from local facilities, businesses, etc.).

The NCU ambassador program consists of NCU alumni who have agreed to act as “goodwill ambassadors” and share their NCU experiences with applicants and Learners. The NCU Ambassadors are profiled in the NCU public website and regularly email and phone prospective NCU Learners in order to provide information on their courses, the Learner website and the extent to which their NCU degree has had an impact on their professional life, Ambassadors (http://www.ncu.edu/ambassador_profiles_and_testimonials.asp).

NCU responds to all constituencies in a timely and professional manner fulfilling organizational responsibilities. Responsiveness is measured in a variety of different ways. For Learners, this is often meeting a time constraint (either explicit or implicit). Examples include the admissions process, turnaround on course activity/assignment grading, interlibrary loans, help desk services, etc. In other domains, responsiveness incorporates both time to resolve an issue/question (e.g., questions about mentor pay or Learner accounts, grievances or appeals), as well as ease of use of various resources (e.g., website).

Courses are reviewed regularly to ensure that course materials and activities/assignments are up-to-date; courses are also designed to challenge critical thinking skills as well as encourage students to establish connections with working professionals and scholars in their communities. Coursework throughout the various programs requires students to interview working practitioners, seek scholars for research guidance, utilize electronic resources, and engage in other activities, such as course discussions, that are designed for acquisition of breadth of knowledge. Lastly, the university encourages and supports the personal research interests of students, and courses that lend themselves to self-exploration and acquisition of knowledge on a topic of interest or related to work environments.

The MBA program, redesigned July 2006 with approval from the Academic Affairs Committee, better prepares Learners for the 21st century. The School of Business and Technology Management strengthened core curricula emphasizing in-depth knowledge of fundamental skills in finance, marketing, statistics, and organization leadership.

The BUS6011 course offered in most of the MBA specializations allows Learners the “opportunity (under the supervision of a Faculty Mentor) to conduct an in-depth review of a topic of interest that enhances the understanding of a current course, specialization
offered by the university, or an emerging topic or issue in Business and Technology Management” (see BUS6011 course syllabus). Students are expected to present a written proposal of their topic or issue that must be approved by the mentor. By encouraging students to pursue a desired topic or issue, they are free to explore and expand their knowledge of the complexities, arguments, and nuances of the topic. In turn, these explorations by people in the field help Lead Faculty remain aware of current issues as they review curricula.

f. Does your business school or program ensure ethical business practices in all student and stakeholder transactions and interactions?

g. Does your business school or program have measures for monitoring ethical behavior throughout the business school or program?

The Board of Directors sets forth policy regarding Code of Conduct

01.2.3 BP - Code of Conduct

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<tr>
<th>Policy Number: BP 1.2.3</th>
<th>Initial Policy Date: February 1998</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Title: CODE OF CONDUCT</td>
<td>Revised Date: 2 August 1999</td>
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Purpose: Code of Conduct

Text of Policy:

The Board recognizes that an ethical code of conduct should apply reasonably to all constituents of the University, including administrative personnel, faculty, staff, and Learners. To this end, the Board adopts Codes of Conduct.

01.2.3.0a BP - Code of Conduct - Board, CEO, Administrators

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<tr>
<th>Policy Number: BP 1.2.3a</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Title: CODE OF CONDUCT - BOARD, CEO, ADMINISTRATORS</td>
<td>Revised Date: October 1998 27 November 2001</td>
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Purpose: Code of Conduct

Text of Policy:

The Board acknowledges its behavior and that of its employees must conform to an ethical code. Such a code of conduct must be idealistic, yet practical, so that it can apply reasonably to all. It is recognized that the institution's actions will be viewed and
appraised by constituents and Learners. Therefore, the Board embraces the following Code of Conduct for each employee:

1. Makes the well-being of Learners the basic element in all decision-making and actions.

2. Fulfills professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity.

3. Supports the principle of due process and equal treatment under the law.

4. Obeys laws.

5. Implements the Board's policies and administrative procedures.

6. Avoids using positions for personal gain.

7. Accepts academic degrees or professional certification used in relationship with professional responsibilities only from duly accredited institutions.

8. Maintains the standards and seeks to improve the professional effectiveness through research and continuing professional development.

9. Honors all contracts until fulfillment or release.

10. Seeks to involve the public and keep them honestly informed.

11. Recommends the employment, development, promotion and retention of the best possible personnel to assure a quality educational program.

12. Pursues appropriate means to correct those laws, policies and procedures that are not consistent with sound educational goals.

**01.2.3.0b BP - Code of Conduct - Staff and Faculty**

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<th>Policy Number: BP 1.2.3.0b</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Title: Code of Conduct - Staff and Faculty</td>
<td>Revised Date: October 1998</td>
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The Board acknowledges that the behavior of all staff and faculty must conform to an ethical code. Such a code of conduct must apply reasonably to all. It is recognized that the institution’s actions will be viewed and appraised by constituents and Learners. Therefore the Board embraces the following Code of Conduct for all staff and faculty:
- Be proud of my vocation in order that I may use my best endeavors to elevate the standards of my position so that I may merit a reputation for high quality of service to the end that others may emulate my example.
- Be a person of integrity, clean speech, and desirable personal habits.
- Be just in my criticism and be generous in my praise to improve and not destroy.
- At all times be courteous in my relations with Learners and others.
- Follow professional standards in all communiqués including: emails, messages, chats, and other forms of communication.
- Be a resourceful person who readily adapts to different kinds of work and changing conditions and finds better ways of doing things.
- Conduct myself in a spirit of friendly helpfulness to my fellow persons to the end that I will consider no personal success legitimate or ethical which is secured by taking unfair advantage of another.
- Associate myself with employees of other universities to discuss professional matters for the purpose of improving institutional performance.
- Always uphold my obligations as a citizen to my nation, my state, my institution, and my community.
- Not engage in any act or behavior that discriminates against individuals on the basis of race, religion, ethnic background, gender, age, or personal beliefs.
- Not engage in any acts or behavior or condone such acts or behavior in Learners, staff, or faculty that may be regarded as sexual harassment or sexual assault; and should such acts or behavior occur to my knowledge, I shall communicate the details to the appropriate University administrator.

It is the policy of Northcentral University that sexual misconduct, including assault, harassment, or inappropriate behavior by Learner's, faculty mentors, or staff shall not be condoned nor tolerated. Anyone who believes that he or she is the recipient of such behavior shall immediately contact the Executive Vice President/ Provost or the President with a written account and details of the incident(s) so that an appropriate investigation can be made. All communications will be held in the strictest confidence and the constitutional rights of the individuals involved will be protected.

**01.2.3.0c BP - Code of Conduct - Learners**

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<th>Policy Number: BP 1.2.3.0c</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Title: Code of Conduct - Learners</td>
<td>Revised Date: October 1998 27 November 2001</td>
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The Board of Directors has established the following Code of Conduct for Learners and graduates as a body and as individuals, that they should:

1. Reflect the integrity of the University, its programs and all associated with the University in behavior, activities and actions.
2. Refrain from threatening behavior which is defined as: harassment, stalking, humiliating, insulting and/or abusing any Learner, faculty mentor, or NCU staff member through written, verbal, or internet comments of an ethnic, sexist or racist nature, OR intimidation using the computer, phone or written comments.

3. Strive to fulfill professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity.

4. Support the principle of due process and equal treatment under the law.

5. Obey laws.

6. Adhere to ethical academic practices in their studies, examinations, and presentation of papers, theses and dissertations.

7. Maintain the standards and seek to improve the effectiveness of the profession through continuing professional and personal development.

8. Honor all contracts until fulfillment or release.

9. Pursue appropriate means to correct those laws, policies and procedures that are not consistent with sound educational goals.

**01.2.3.1 AP - Academic Integrity**

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<td>28 September 2005</td>
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Details of Procedure:

All assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects submitted to faculty mentors must be the Learner’s own work. The knowing submission of another person’s work presented as that of the Learner’s without properly citing the source of the work will be considered plagiarism.

The faculty mentor has the prerogative to challenge a Learner’s work, and to ask a Learner to resubmit an assignment or to retake an exam. Learners may be asked to have a proctor present when they take an exam.

Faculty mentors detecting plagiarism should discuss the incident with the Learner, directing the Learner to the NCU Writing Center for information on how to avoid violations of academic integrity. When the first incident of plagiarism is discovered, faculty mentors may assign an unsatisfactory grade for the assignment or for the entire
The Faculty Mentor notifies the Academic Advisor of the infraction violating NCU’s Academic Integrity policy. The Academic Advisor will send the Learner a warning letter.

The first incident of plagiarism will result in the Learner being placed on academic probation. Any further incident of plagiarism detected by a faculty mentor will result in the academic dismissal of the Learner.

NCU may conduct an investigation to review past homework assignments submitted by the Learner. NCU reserves the right to change past grades awarded by the University if plagiarism is subsequently found in previous assignments. The submission of work to multiple courses violates academic integrity unless substantially changed or cited as previous work. The submission of work completed by others violates academic integrity.

The Faculty Handbook reiterates these expectations. Through the following:

“(NCU) recognizes that education is an individual process. Individuals with different learning needs and styles can be accommodated” [section 2.03, G02].

Code of Conduct: (Faculty and staff) “Not engage in any act or behavior that discriminates against individuals on the basis of race, religion, ethnic background, gender, sexual preference, age, or personal beliefs” (AP 02.1.4.9).

The Learner Handbook states:

The Learner Code of Conduct states: “Learners and Graduates as a body and as individuals…should: Refrain from threatening behavior which is defined as: harassment, stalking, humiliating, insulting and/or abusing any Learner, faculty mentor, or NCU staff member through written, verbal, or internet comments of an ethnic, sexist or racist nature, OR intimidation using the computer, phone or written comments” (section 4.01). This policy disallows discriminatory behavior through our discussions, chats, phone, messages, or other forms of communication.

The Staff Handbook points out: The Northcentral University is an equal opportunity institution and makes employment decisions on the basis of merit. The best available persons are wanted in every job. University policy prohibits job discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, medical condition or ancestry, or in any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful, and is not tolerated nor practiced by the university (section 2.01). Board policy (BP 1.2.3a) direct NCU employees to “Make[s] the well-being of Learners the basic element in all decision-making and actions.”

NCU’s Policies and Procedures Manual specifically covers sexual harassment, and sets forth procedures for reporting and investigating any charges, BP 1.2.2 - Sexual Harassment Policy, OP 1.2.2.1 - Sexual Misconduct, OP 1.2.2.2 - Sexual Harassment
Response. “Northcentral University is committed to provide a work environment where women and men can work together comfortably and productively, free from sexual harassment” (BP 1.2.2 Sexual Harassment Policy). The complaint procedures describe the process of submitting a complaint and gaining a resolution (Please see Core component 1e, which requires NCU to “document timely responses to complaints and grievances”). Procedures are documented in the Course Catalog [section 4.25 - Sexual Misconduct F01], Faculty Handbook [section 03.01 - Code of Conduct - Staff and Faculty G02], Learner Handbook [section 4.3 - Sexual Misconduct M01], and Staff Handbook [section 2.4 - Sexual Harassment Policy B09].

h. Does your business school or program have processes in place for monitoring regulatory and legal compliance?

Federal Compliance

Credits
Northcentral University credits, program length, and tuition are determined by the Academic Affairs Committee and compare to similar institutions of higher learning. Graduate courses are typically 12-weeks in length; however, a Learner may accelerate completion with mentor permission. Credits are awarded for each satisfactory course completion within the 12-week framework.

Program Length
Courses begin on the first of any month.
The Bachelor’s degree requires a total of 120 semester credits. A minimum of 30 credits of instruction must be completed through the University. A minimum of 39 credits must be in general education with requirements in several specified areas. A minimum of 42 credits must be in the Business program area with 15 of those credits in the required core courses. A cumulative grade point average of "C", 2.0, or higher is required. The University may accept up to 90 semester credits in transfer toward the Bachelor's degree for course work completed at an accredited four-year college or university with a grade average of "C" or better. The University may also accept up to 90 semester credits in transfer toward the Bachelor's degree for graduates of an accredited community college with which NCU has entered into a formal partnership agreement.


The MA requires 36 graduate semester credits beyond the Bachelor’s degree. A maximum of 6 graduate credits may be transferred from another university. The required minimum courses consist of Fundamental Courses and Specialization Courses. The
Academic Advisor will assist you in developing your individualized Degree Plan to meet your learning objectives.

Learners who complete at least 18 graduate semester credits in an area of specialization may have the specialization recorded on their transcript and diploma. Electives may be taken from any graduate level course in the university.

Each school describes the set of doctoral research and dissertation courses required of doctoral Learners.

- 12 credits in dissertation preparation research modules (RSH courses);
- 9 credits in dissertation courses that result in the acceptance of a doctoral dissertation (DIS courses);
- 3 unit doctoral comprehensive review (CMP)
- The doctorate requires 51 credits beyond the master’s, with 24 of the 51 credits specifically focused on preparing and carrying out doctoral level research. These research credits constitute 47% of the 51 credits beyond the masters.

**Tuition and Fees**

The Board of Directors determines the tuition charged per credit hour and program. Tuition is prominently displayed in on the public web site, http://www.ncu.edu/tuition_and_fees.asp

**Application Fee for Admission** — A $50 non-refundable Application Fee is due within 30 days of submitting your application for admission to the University. Pay your application fee online through our secure server or call an Enrollment Advisor with your credit card information. Application fees not received within 30 days will result in your admission application being cancelled.

**Tuition Rates** — Tuition is charged and due at the time you request your course(s) for each term. The University reserves the right to change tuition rates as it deems necessary. Below are the current tuition rates.

**Graduate Level** — $475.00 per Semester Credit

Note – Tuition rates will increase to $495 per semester credit for doctoral courses and for new doctoral Learners accepted for admission and enrolled in their first course on or after April 1, 2007.

Learners may pre-pay for upcoming courses at the current rate if payment is received in the NCU Accounting office on or before March 31, 2007. Learners may also select the Pay-in-Full option and pay the current tuition rate for their entire program or lock in tuition at the current rate for up to three years by selecting the Pay-by-Semester payment option. For details, see Financial Assistance Programs.

NCU continues to manage its costs in order to keep the cost of education as low as possible. The 4.2% increase in tuition for doctoral courses is the first increase
in three years – since March 1, 2004. To compare the costs of education for NCU and other leading online schools, visit Great Value for Your Education.

**Undergraduate Level** — $375.00 per Semester Credit

*We do not plan to increase tuition for master’s or undergraduate courses on April 1, 2007.*

**Fees** — Additional fees which may be applicable to you are charged as indicated below.

*Note – Some fees will change on April 1, 2007 as noted below.*

- **Doctoral Dissertation Fee** – $2,000 is due in 4 equal payments of $500 before enrolling in RSH courses.
- **Practicum Fee** – $25 is charged per practicum course (Will increase to $50 on April 1, 2007).
- **Course Drop/Cancel Fee** – $25 is charged per course drop or cancel (Will increase to $50 on April 1, 2007).
- **Course Add Fee** – $25 is charged when registering for a course(s) after the enrollment deadline on the 21st of the month (Will increase to $50 on April 1, 2007).
- **Withdrawal Fee** – $50 is charged when withdrawing from the University.
- **Returned Check/Denied Credit Card Charge Fee** – $25 is charged per returned check or denied credit card transaction.
- **Late Payment Fee** – $25 is charged per late payment.
- **Re-evaluation of Transfer Credits after Enrollment** – $50 is charged per re-evaluation (Will decrease to $25 on April 1, 2007).
- **Official Transcript Fee** — $5 is charged per official transcript request.
- **Diploma Replacement Fee** – $50 is charged per replacement.
- **Replacement Library/ID Card** – $5 is charged per replacement.
- **Changing Payment Methods** – $25 is charged per change.
- **Program Transfer Fee** – $50 is charged per change (e.g. change from Business to Education Degree Program).

These fees will be added on April 1, 2007.

- **Accounting Processing Fee** – $25 is charged to refund a previous credit card or check payment.
- **Graduation Fee** – $100 is charged for graduation from a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree program and $200 for graduation from a Doctoral degree program.

**Organization Compliance**

NCU participates in the IPEDS reporting system administered by the National Center for Education Statistics. Disclosure of graduation and completion rates of Northcentral University students are available at the IPEDS web site. Other information on the web site includes enrollment and demographic information, admission requirements, safety reports, and accreditation information.
Advertising and Recruitment Materials
Northcentral University accurately reports its HLC affiliation in its official documents. The public web site includes the following statement:
Northcentral University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, a commission of The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Northcentral University also accurately reports its ACBSP status on the public web site:

ACBSP Candidacy:
Northcentral University is a candidate for accreditation by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs — ACBSP. ACBSP is the premier accrediting association for business schools and programs with a focus on teaching excellence and is itself recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Every effort is made to accurately report the institution’s affiliation with the HLC as well as provide Learners with additional statements regarding non-discrimination and Learner rights and responsibilities. (see Learner Handbook)

Organizational Records of Learner Complaints
Northcentral University officials respond to Learner complaints pursuant to the published policies and procedures of the institution. Learners have access to an online Grievance and Appeal process on the Learner web site. The process is explained in the Learner Handbook.

See also Policies and Procedures:

1.2.1 BP - Nondiscrimination in Programs and Activities
1.2.2 BP - Sexual Harassment Policy
1.2.2.1 OP - Sexual Misconduct
1.2.2.2 OP - Sexual Harassment Response
1.2.3 BP - Code of Conduct
1.2.3.0a BP - Code of Conduct - Board, CEO, Administrators
1.2.3.0b BP - Code of Conduct - Staff and Faculty
1.2.3.0c BP - Code of Conduct - Learners
1.2.3.1 AP - Academic Integrity
1.2.3.2 AP - Support of Learner Research
1.2.3.3 BP - Intellectual Property Policy
2. Strategic Planning

The business school or program must have a process for setting strategic directions to better address key student and program performance requirements. The strategy development process should lead to an action plan for deploying and aligning key plan performance requirements. It should also create an environment that encourages and recognizes innovation and creativity.

a. Do you use a formal process to set the strategic direction for your business school or program? Yes, under the direction of the NCU Operations Committee, the strategic planning process reevaluates the identity of Northcentral University and the goals the institution desires to achieve in the future. All program strategic direction and program action plans stem from this strategic planning process.

b. Do faculty and staff members participate or have a voice in this process? Yes, via Academic Affair Council meetings, the Chair’s quarterly conference call with the lead faculty mentors, the Quarterly lead faculty mentor conference call to the all faculty mentors, and committee participation, the faculty and staff participate in this process.

c. Have you established your business school or program’s key strategic objectives and the timetable for the current planning period? Yes, the school of Business and Technology Management strategic objectives are currently in line with the objectives of the universities strategic plan and directive and fall in their planning cycle.

3. Student and Stakeholder Focus

A business school or program must have a systematic procedure to determine requirements and expectations of current and future students and stakeholders, including how the business school or program enhances relationships with student and stakeholders and determines their satisfaction. Stakeholders may include parents, employers, alumni, donors, other schools, communities, etc.

a. Have you determined or targeted the student segments your educational programs will address? Yes, the School of Business and Technology along with the directors of marketing and enrollment determine the targeted Learner segment. Northcentral University employs the concept of active self-directed learning. Northcentral developed its academic programs, delivery format, and services with the belief that self-directed learning empowers the individual to take increasingly more responsibility for their learning process. The average Learner at Northcentral
University is a 43-year old mid-career professional. The adult Learners at NCU have different needs and expectations than the “traditional” 18-24 year old student who attends residential colleges and universities. Our Learners have indicated that they desire the flexibility of our distance education programs. Most of our Learners work full-time, and may be involved in business travel. They are seeking higher education knowledge and degrees to enhance their career opportunities and qualifications. These Learners also have peer support through work associates, family and friends. Many are members of professional or community organizations. Our adult Learners bring lifelong experiences to their learning processes, and are interested in applying their education rather than just gaining knowledge of theories and facts. They are mature individuals who take on the responsibilities of time management, motivation, and self-dedication to their studies.

The School of Business and Technology Management in synergy with university and the school mission statement defines its marketing segment as:

1. Community colleges, who are seeking articulation partners offering opportunities for bachelor’s degree completion programs for their associate degree graduates.
2. Colleges and universities currently employing adjunct faculty with bachelor’s and master’s degrees who are seeking to improve the credentials of its faculty.
3. U.S companies with significant overseas staffs, and their families, who desire a degree from an American university.
4. Families of U.S. military personnel who move frequently or are stationed overseas.
5. Religious and humanitarian organizations that have staff members located overseas.
6. A diverse mix of individuals:
   - Individuals living in areas that are remote to traditional, campus-based colleges and universities or are homebound/care-givers, but are served by the Internet and are seeking higher education degrees.
   - Individuals who are seeking a career change for self-expression or due to downsizing in their industries.
   - Individuals who consider themselves part of a minority (e.g., based on national identity or ethnicity, mental or physical limitations, or age) and would prefer the anonymity and convenience of online education.

a. **Have you identified methods to listen and learn to determine student and stakeholder requirements and their importance to these groups’ decisions related to enrollment?** Yes, the Executive Council has identified all stakeholders and actively seeks inputs form them. Furthermore, the School of Business and Technology Management has an advisory board that assists the school in evaluating all programs and enrollment requirements.

**TABLE 1 – NCU STAKEHOLDERS**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>What is at Stake?</th>
<th>How is input solicited?</th>
<th>What is done with input?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Applicants, Learners, Alumni, Employers, Educational Partners (other educational institutions, Military, law enforcement, businesses, associations, for-profit partners such as CITE and Mind-Streams)</td>
<td>Customers want NCU to provide degree programs that offer academic excellence and are valued in the global workplace. NCU wants customers to recognize the benefits of our degree programs and be willing to compensate NCU appropriately.</td>
<td>Pre- and post-course surveys, surveys of Learner satisfaction, one-on-one contact with Applicants and Learners, business development meetings with Employers and officers of Educational Partners.</td>
<td>Research results are reviewed with Academic Affairs Committee, Operations Committee, and department heads to facilitate planning and assessment of opportunities for operational improvement. One-on-one contacts are journaled in Compass system and shared, when appropriate, with key staff responsible. Results of meetings and contacts with Educational Partners are share with departments who can respond to requests for academic programs or new services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local publics</td>
<td>Prescott and Prescott Valley city governments, area civic organizations, local citizens</td>
<td>Local publics want NCU to provide jobs, pay taxes, purchase services, and enhance the value and quality of life in the area. NCU wants to attract and retain staff, attract local area Learners, receive city/county services, support local service businesses, and generally, be viewed as a responsible corporate citizen.</td>
<td>NCU maintains memberships in local Chambers of Commerce and other civic and community organizations. NCU staff who serve these organizations solicit input and bring it back to NCU.</td>
<td>Requests and feedback are channeled to manager of community relations and other department heads for appropriate follow-up and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credentialing agencies</td>
<td>AZ Private Post Secondary Board, HLC, U.S. DOE, APA, ACBSP and other discipline accrediting bodies, Veterans Administration and other Federal and state regulating bodies, foreign ministries of education</td>
<td>Credentialing agencies want NCU to maintain academic standards and comply with regulations affecting academic quality, consumer protection, and Federal educational funding. NCU wants to maintain credentialing as evidence of academic standards and compliance with various regulations, to maintain access to educational funding, and to maintain a positive reputation for customers of higher education.</td>
<td>Credentialing agencies request regular reporting from NCU and provide feedback as part of the reporting cycle. In addition, NCU’s President and department heads maintain informal contacts with staff of credentialing agencies for routine inquiries.</td>
<td>Feedback is reviewed with Academic Affairs Committee, Operations Committee, and department heads to facilitate planning and assessment of opportunities for operational improvement. Informal guidance from credentialing agencies is shared with appropriate NCU administrators and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>Members of the Board of Directors want to participate in NCU’s governance, contribute to NCU’s success, and receive acknowledgment and prestige of association with NCU. NCU wants members to contribute ideas, expertise, and contacts that provide quality governance and help NCU achieve its mission and strategic objectives and goals.</td>
<td>Members of the Board of Directors want to participate in NCU’s governance, contribute to NCU’s success, and receive acknowledgment and prestige of association with NCU. NCU wants members to contribute ideas, expertise, and contacts that provide quality governance and help NCU achieve its mission and strategic objectives and goals.</td>
<td>Board of Directors meets quarterly and provides guidance and feedback to President. Board of Directors members meet periodically with department heads to receive focused updates, discuss academic and business issues, and provide feedback.</td>
<td>President shares feedback from Board of Directors with Academic Affairs Committee, Operations Committee, and department heads to facilitate planning and assessment of opportunities for operational improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>Staff, Faculty Mentors</td>
<td>Employees want compensation, benefits, rewards and recognition commensurate with performance and contribution, a sense of belonging and contributing to NCU’s success, and acknowledgment and prestige of association with NCU. NCU wants employees to contribute knowledge, expertise, and skills to help NCU achieve its mission and strategic objectives and goals.</td>
<td>Employees provide feedback when participating in committee meetings, through performance assessment meetings with supervisors, and during employee satisfaction surveys.</td>
<td>Employee feedback is shared with department heads and used in the annual strategic planning process and operational reviews. Supervisors use employee feedback to improve performance on individual work units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia</td>
<td>Traditional colleges and universities, non-traditional (including online) institutions, community colleges, academic and professional organizations</td>
<td>Academia want NCU to provide recognized academic programs and courses that offer convenient articulation opportunities, transfer policies and procedures that favor NCU’s coordinator of articulation and partner agreements contacts transfer offices and works directly with key staff of community.</td>
<td>The coordinator shares feedback to academic chairs and department heads from college partners requesting information about NCU academic programs and special partnerships and programs.</td>
<td>NCU Preliminary Questionnaire page 41 of 38</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
b. **Do you have a process to use the information you obtain from students and stakeholders for purposes of planning educational programs, offerings and services; marketing; process improvements; and the development of other services?** Yes, stakeholders and students are actively surveyed and polled for their inputs regarding program offering, recommend changes, and services. As an example, recently the U.S. Military Sergeant’s Academy came to the school and asked the school to evaluate their program and then determine if there could be an articulation agreement between the school and the academy for a specialization in Organization and Management.

### 4. Information and Analysis

Business schools and programs must have an outcomes assessment program with documentation of the results and evidence that the results are being used for the development and/or improvement of the institution’s academic programs. Each business school or program is responsible for developing its own outcomes assessment program.

#### 4.1 Selection and Use of Information and Data

a. **Do you have an outcomes assessment program?** Yes, the School of Business and Technology Management has a very robust outcomes and assessment program that is the contained in the university’s “Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suppliers</th>
<th>Educational services (MBS, Herff Jones), business services (Staples, printers), financial services (banks, auditors, student loan providers, third party services), IT services (hardware, software, systems support), marketing services (agencies, publications, Internet sites, search engines)</th>
<th>Suppliers want financial stability, profitability, and growth so that NCU will continue to rely on their products and services and compensate them fairly and on time. NCU wants suppliers who provide products and services that NCU cannot produce internally and who provide them at reasonable costs and on reasonable terms.</th>
<th>NCU department heads and staff keep suppliers apprised of NCU’s needs and progress and solicit feedback.</th>
<th>Department heads and staff share supplier feedback with others as appropriate at NCU to provide guidance for strategic planning and operational improvement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELRC suppliers</td>
<td>Amigos, EBSCO, ProQuest, Xrefer, Psychiatry Online, EZProxy, OCLC, eBrary, etc.</td>
<td>ELRC suppliers want continued growth of NCU and fair use and growing use of their services. NCU wants ELRC resources that support delivery of a quality academic experience for Learners and Faculty Mentors.</td>
<td>The ELRC staff maintain regular contact with all suppliers and solicit input and feedback about existing and new products.</td>
<td>ELRC staff share supplier information with Academic Affairs Council, notifies Learners and Mentors about new services and changes to existing services through postings on Learner and Mentor web sites, and holds quarterly updates with all NCU staff to share recent changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plan.” This program is inline with both the university and school’s mission statement.

b. **Do you have measures/indicators for tracking your business school or program's overall performance?** Yes, the School of Business and Technology Management actively tracks all indicators through the use course embedded outcome assessment, pre and post course surveys, faculty performance monitoring, and assessment, external (i.e. Noel Levitz Survey) and internal satisfaction surveys.

### 4.2 Selection and Use of Comparative Information Data

Describe the business school or program’s selection, management, and use of benchmarking (comparing to best practices) or comparison (comparing with similar business schools or programs) information and data to improve overall performance. The School of Business and Technology Management is closely aligned with Northcentral's Mission as evidenced through the degree programs offered. The school’s curricula are designed based on the institution's review of similar higher education programs at other regionally accredited institutions of higher education. The school’s program reviews include benchmarking existing courses and academic programs against information gathered about courses and programs at several other institutions.

### 4.3 Selection and Use of Information Results

What improvements have been made to your programs based on information obtained from outcomes assessment programs? Through continuous improvement, all facets of the program have been strengthened. A key component to continuous improvement for this school is the use of assessment.

Examples:

a. Pre and post course surveys are used to assess individual courses.

b. Peer reviews and post course surveys are tools used to assess mentors and have enabled the school to maintain and strengthen its core of faculty mentors.

c. Noel Levitz Survey is used to assess the entire university and compare all aspects of the university to like universities. This tool strengthens all services and program offerings at the school and university.

### 4.4. Continuous Process Improvement: Student Learning and Performance

How do you evaluate and improve your student learning and performance processes? With contributions from Faculty Mentors who are involved in mentoring a particular course, Lead Faculty Mentors with the assistance of curriculum developers create or revise syllabi. Specific learning objectives and performance outcomes articulate the educational achievements to be accomplished that are in alignment with Bloom’s Taxonomy to measure learning outcomes. Learners accomplish a variety of learning goals, such as, higher order thinking,
active self-learning, and effective writing and computational skills, as well as course objectives.

Through a Pre-Course Survey, Learners are asked to identify their goals for a course. Frequently, these goals are very specific and practical in nature when a Learner identifies what they want to learn about a subject and how it might be applicable professionally. Learners use a 5-point Likert-type survey to rate their level of skills in areas relevant to their studies, and to identify how comfortable they are using a computer, participating in an online discussion group, constructing and organizing graphical information skills. The resulting data makes it possible for measurements and comparisons of Learners over time. Mentors use the Pre-Course Survey to ascertain how to assist Learners in achieving their stated goals.

At the end of each course, Learners provide feedback through a Post-Course Questionnaire. The school’s chair analyzes data from post-course assessment to identify improvements for a course. The school’s chair also uses the results as a Faculty Mentor evaluation tool.

Data from Pre-Course and Post-Course surveys are available to show trends over time in terms of what Learners need to know and what skills they require to move ahead with their selected areas of study. Furthermore, as a result of Pre-Course and Post-Course surveys, The chair can identify areas of improvement for individual mentors and as training objectives in FMD course development.

Use of curriculum-embedded assessment and analysis of collected assessment data provides measurable results of Learner gains from their educational experiences in the school.

5. **Human Resource Development and Management**

The ability of a business school or program to effectively fulfill its mission and meet its objectives is dependent upon the quality, number and deployment of the faculty and staff. Hence, each institution seeking ACBSP accreditation for its business school or program must: (1) develop and implement policies and plans that ensure an excellent faculty including a staffing plan which matches faculty credentials and characteristics with program objectives, (2) evaluate the faculty based on defined criteria and objectives, (3) provide opportunities for faculty development and ensure scholarly productivity to support department and individual faculty development plans and program objectives; and (4) foster an atmosphere conducive to superior teaching.

5.1 **Human Resource Planning**

**Do you have a human resource plan?** Yes. In conjunction with the Institution’s Human Resource plan, the School of Business and Technology is required to file a needs report to the university president anticipating the school’s needs for fulltime employees. This report, filed in November of the year, is then presented to the board of directors and from that meeting the allocation is then granted.
Adjunct faculty is hired by the school in conjunction with Mentor Affairs. Below is the hiring procedures followed by the school and Mentor Affairs.

5.2.1 How do you determine the best makeup of the faculty, including academic credentials and business experience? Northcentral University is regionally accredited and is bound by the standards of the Higher Learning Commission. Therefore the faculty teaching undergraduate level course must have obtained a degree at least one level higher than the program being taught. In addition, faculty teaching graduate courses must have a terminal degree. To avoid any potential conflict it is the standard practice of the School of Business and Technology to recruit only faculty (with very few exceptions) with terminal degrees to mentor all programs.

5.2.2 If your institution offers non-traditional delivery systems or if any of your programs make extensive use of part-time (adjunct) faculty, how do you establish clear and explicit policies for recruiting, training, observing, evaluating, and developing faculty for these non-traditional delivery systems. Academic Affairs Committee sets the policies for the hiring of faculty mentors. Credentials of the faculty mentors are reviewed to ensure they have credentials to support teaching of program curriculum. Prior to teaching classes, all adjunct faculty must take a Faculty Mentor Development (FMD5000) course. This course is designed to teach and evaluate the faculty mentor prior to the new faculty interacting with the Learner. Once the new faculty mentor passes FMD5000 he/she is then assigned and Faculty Assessor that monitors the new faculty through the first course. Below is the hiring procedures followed by the school and Mentor Affairs.
Faculty Mentors are recruited from business and industry, professional practice, and the academic community. They are selected for their interest in promoting active self-learning, and expertise, their professional experience and acumen, academic background, technological skills, and ability to communicate specialized knowledge and experience to distance Learners. Many members of the faculty and staff belong to professional organizations and attend conferences and workshops or take courses related to their staff or teaching assignments. Mentors complete FMD5000 Distance Mentoring at NCU, a required orientation course, benefit from the New Mentor Support Person program, and participate in continuous professional development.

The NCU Mentor Hiring Process and Training outlines the process from inquiry to teaching (adopted June 2005). FMD5000 Distance Mentoring at NCU provides
new NCU mentors with an understanding of the policies and procedures that govern the university. Mentors develop the ability to navigate the NCU mentor website, and become familiar with its features. The course provides mentors with an overview of the Learner website and best practice guidelines to ensure effective Mentor/Learner interactions. The New Mentor Support Person program provides one-on-one support for the new mentor.

The potential Mentor has six weeks to complete the course. Extensions are seriously discouraged as this timeframe allows the Mentor to demonstrate their abilities as an online instructor, to exhibit their adherence to deadlines, and to interact with their FMD5000 Mentor as a Learner and as a professional. Furthermore, the university sees the talents of the potential Mentor. New Mentors are required to take FMD5000 Distance Mentoring at NCU plus one other FMD course during their first year.

Faculty Mentors, actively teaching one or more courses per year, are required to successfully complete at least one Faculty Development course per year. Beginning in April 2006, an Online Teaching Certificate became available to Mentors. This certificate allows Mentors to update teaching skills needed in the virtual classroom. Although each course is approximately 6 weeks in length, there is no established timeframe for completion of the entire Certificate. The Online Teaching Certificate is awarded once a Mentor successfully completes five Faculty Development courses, excluding FMD5000 Distance Mentoring at NCU and FMD5020 Creating Syllabi. NCU mentors receive an increase in pay per Learner for completing the certificate program.

5.2.3 Historically, accredited programs have focused on faculty input as a basis for demonstrating quality. The following criteria are considerations of historically appropriate employment input:

- At least 80 percent of the undergraduate credit hours in business and 90 percent of the graduate credit hours in business are taught by
doctoral or professionally qualified faculty (see glossary of terms for doctoral or professionally qualified).

- At least 40 percent of the undergraduate credit hours in business and 70 percent of the graduate credit hours in business are taught by doctoral faculty.

- There is a mix of faculty, including sufficient business experience, business consulting experience, or other characteristics to ensure appropriate emphasis on business practice to meet program objectives.

Note: If your institution deviates significantly from these historically proven criteria, you must demonstrate explicit rational for these requirements and provide detailed records of performance evaluation as it relates to program objectives.

a. How do you determine and justify what the appropriate percent of doctoral or professionally qualified faculty is appropriate for your business school or program to meet your mission? Northcentral University is regionally accredited and is bound by the standards of the Higher Learning Commission. Therefore the faculty teaching undergraduate level course must have obtained a degree at least one level higher than the program being taught. In addition, faculty teaching graduate courses should possess a terminal degree. To avoid any potential conflict it is the standard practice of the School of Business and Technology to recruit only faculty (with very few exceptions) with terminal degrees. Northcentral University is well within the mix requirements set forth by ACBSP.

b. What percent of your undergraduate credit hours in business are taught by doctoral or professionally qualified faculty? 100%. Northcentral University prides itself in the fact that all of the undergraduate credit hours in business are being taught by doctoral or professionally qualified faculty.

c. What percent of your graduate credit hours in business are taught by doctoral qualified faculty? Currently, the School of Business and Technology Management has 100% of its Doctoral Learners, in the doctoral phase of their degree, being taught by 100% doctoral qualified faculty. In the master’s degree the School of Business and Technology Management has 95% of graduate credit hours being taught by doctoral qualified faculty.

5.3 Faculty Deployment

Do you provide sufficient academic leadership at each location where the program is offered to ensure effective service to students and other stakeholders? Yes, all of our academic leadership is provide centrally. This
leadership is located at NCU’s worldwide headquarters in Prescott, Arizona. NCU does not have branch or satellite locations.

5.6 Faculty and Staff Development

How do you provide an opportunity for faculty and staff development consistent with faculty, staff, and institutional expectations? Part-time faculty should participate in appropriate faculty development activities.

NCU supports professional development. Faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in campus in-service programs (via live and conference calls), in professional teaching groups, and in state and national programs related to their own professions. The university covers the total cost of attending approved conferences, seminars, and workshops for faculty who are members of university committees. The university encourages academic school chairs, and fulltime Faculty Mentors to attend at least one professional development workshop, seminar, or professional organization conference or convention each year. The university will defray expenses up to $100 annually.

Staff, Fulltime Faculty, and Part Time Faculty Tuition Assistance

Northcentral University offers employees tuition assistance to pursue degree and non degree study through Northcentral University’s program offerings, and as appropriate, may take classes at other educational institutions dependent on purpose and the individual's roles and responsibilities. Northcentral University also provides financial assistance and days off for employees to attend professional development opportunities, as approved by their supervisors, e.g. conference attendance, workshops, etc.

**BENEFIT: ENROLLING IN NCU COURSES**

**Who is Eligible For This Benefit**

- NCU fulltime employees in good standing (employee cannot be on probation or have had disciplinary action within past three months).
  - **Fulltime** – Defined as working more than thirty (30) hours a week.
  - **Employee** – Includes NCU staff, administrators, and fulltime faculty mentors.

- NCU Adjunct Faculty, in good standing (adjunct faculty cannot be on probation or have had disciplinary action within past three months).
  - **Adjunct Faculty** – Classified as independent contractor on NCU mentor database.
• Spouse, Domestic Partner and children of fulltime employee AND adjunct faculty (spouse, domestic partner, children must reside in same household as NCU employee). Proof of shared domicile or other relevant documents may be required to substantiate relationship.

**NCU Fulltime Employees Enrolled in NCU Courses/Degree Programs** – Fulltime employees working more than thirty (30) hours a week are entitled to the following tuition benefits as long as they remain employed with the University:

• Bachelors and Master’s Degree – Full tuition scholarship.

• Doctoral Degree – $200 per course tuition and a 20% discount on the current doctoral dissertation fee at the time the employee enrolls in the doctoral sequence.

• CAGS Certificate - $200 per course tuition.

• Non Degree Courses – Employees may take up to 3 courses (bachelors or masters level) a calendar year without charge. Doctoral level courses are $200 per course.

**Spouse/Domestic Partner/Children of NCU Fulltime Employees Enrolled in NCU Courses/Degree Programs** – Spouse, domestic partner and children of fulltime employees in good standing, may enroll in NCU courses and programs for a 50% tuition scholarship.

**NCU Adjunct Faculty AND Spouse/Domestic Partner/ Children of NCU Adjunct Faculty Enrolled in NCU Courses/Degree Programs** – Adjunct Faculty in good standing and the spouses, domestic partner and children of adjunct faculty may enroll in NCU courses and programs for a 33% tuition scholarship.

**Policies/Procedures Governing Courses/Degree Programs** - NCU employees (and Spouse/Domestic partner/children) as well as NCU adjunct faculty enrolled in courses/degree programs will be subject to the same University policies and procedures as all other enrolled Learners.

**NCU Fulltime Employees/NCU Adjunct Faculty - Voluntary and Involuntary Termination of Employment** - Employees and adjunct faculty will be offered the option of remaining in their degree program, however, they will be subject to the current tuition rate in effect at the time of termination. If the employee is currently enrolled in a course and elects not to continue in the program, the final severance paycheck will reflect an adjustment for any monies due NCU based on the current NCU tuition policy for withdrawal from course/program.
Faculty Mentor Development Goals

- To develop training that will aid mentors in understanding how learners learn in a distance learning environment
- Develop an working definition of distance learning at Northcentral University
- Broaden mentors’ understanding of the potential of the technology that supports the distance environment, and to encourage the best use of such tools to support learning.
- To identify faculty mentor needs and provide support to mentors
- To prepare faculty for distance mentoring by helping them adapt and accept change.

To these ends, the Faculty Mentor Development Plan includes courses designed to improve mentor skills in the following areas:

(1) teaching at a distance
(2) departmental leadership
(3) interaction with other mentors and Learners to build an active learning community at NCU
(4) assessment
(5) technology mastery
(6) professional development through incentives for educational activities (publication, conference presentations, etc.)
(7) curriculum development
(8) global awareness and perception of the impact of cultural diversity

Current Resources:
- Mentor Web site
- Faculty Handbook
- NCU Faculty Development Mentor Center
- Mentors’ Discussion Forum
- University Documents
- Faculty Mentor Development courses
- ELRC resources and services
- Tutorials and Web site information
Selecting Courses for Faculty Mentor Development

**FMD5000 Distance Mentoring At NCU**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is designed to provide new NCU mentors with an understanding of the policies and procedures that govern the University. Mentors will develop the ability to navigate the NCU mentor website, and will become familiar with its features. The course also provides mentors with an overview of the Learner website. The course will also provide mentors with best practice guidelines to increase effective Mentor/Learner interactions.

**MENTOR LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Mentors will be expected to:

- Show ability to log into the mentor website.
- Demonstrate understanding of how to navigate the mentor website.
- Identify the components of the mentor and Learner websites.
- Apply understanding of NCU policies and procedures to simulations of Mentor/Learner interactions.
- Use FirstSearch and ProQuest to locate articles in a field of interest.
- Participate in asynchronous discussion forums.
- Create mentor global discussion folders and course specific discussion folders.
- Evaluate a Learner assignment by applying the NCU writing rubric, annotating the assignment, grading the assignment, and posting the assignment to the Learner web site.

**COURSE CONCEPTS:** Mentors will understand major concepts of:

- Distance Learning Environment.
- NCU Policies and Procedures.
- NCU Learner and Mentor Websites.
- Virtual Library (ELRC).
- NCU Best Practices.
- Effective Learner/Mentor interaction.
- Effective Mentor/Department Chair interaction.
- Identify and locate information resources using FirstSearch and ProQuest basic search.
FMD5011 Online Learner/Online Mentor

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
This course explores the characteristics of the online Learner and strategies for teaching in the online environment. The course offers the distance mentor an opportunity to develop online classroom management strategies. The emphasis of the course is on mentor behaviors that constitute best practices in distance mentoring.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
Learners will be expected to:
- Explore the implications of online learning.
- Compare and contrast online learning vs. face-to-face learning.
- Analyze personal technology skills.
- Examine the most critical technology skills needed for online mentoring.
- Evaluate the critical characteristics of an online learner.
- Identify strategies of a successful online learner.
- Assess potential learner needs in an online course.
- Examine strategies for meeting the individual learning needs and learning styles of online learners.
- Evaluate the critical characteristics of an online mentor.
- Assess personal skills in the role of an online mentor.
- Develop a personal improvement plan for an online mentor.

**COURSE CONCEPTS:**
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
- Online learning
- Online vs. Face-to-Face Learning
- Technology skills
- Online learner characteristics
- Meeting the needs of online learners
- Online mentor characteristics
- Develop skills for online mentoring
FMD5012 Building an Online Learning Community

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
Establishing community relieves Learners and mentors from the sense of isolation sometimes experienced in distance learning. This course explores ways to build a learning community through interaction.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
Learners will be expected to:
- Define an online learning community
- Identify elements that foster the building of a learning community
- Discuss the mentor’s role in a course discussion forum.
- Assess the skills needed by a mentor to communicate clearly through email.
- Evaluate effective management techniques for mentors when responding to learners’ assignments. Recognize the need for additional mentor action to assist Learners from diverse backgrounds or cultures.
- List ways to encourage interactivity and build a learning community.

**COURSE CONCEPTS:**
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
- Learning communities
- Facilitation of course discussion forums
- Communication techniques
- Management techniques
- Recognition of diverse Learner needs
- Building interactivity
FMD5013 Critical Thinking and Writing

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Especially in the online environment, writing provides the main mode of communication. The critical thinking displayed in course writings becomes the basis for assessing Learner academic growth. This course explores the links between critical thinking and writing. In addition, the course discusses assessment and mentor comments on Learner writing that provide a framework for improving writing scores and encouraging critical thinking.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Learners will be expected to:
Explore the meaning of critical thinking on a personal level
Analyze three stages of learning.
Evaluate the factors involved in critical thinking.
Examine the core critical thinking skills.
Assess personal disposition toward critical thinking and the impact on personal approaches to life.
Evaluate critical thinking beliefs of college faculty.
Identify and evaluate critical thinking skills found in selected NCU courses.
Evaluate four common types of responses to learner assignments and writing.
Analyze and evaluate sample responses to learner writing.
Assess the advantages of using Bloom’s taxonomy of critical thinking skills to evaluate learner work.
Identify and evaluate the use of Bloom’s critical thinking skills in selected NCU courses.
Analyze the benefits and limitations of learner feedback on mentor effectiveness.
Identify strategies for improving the quality of feedback on learner assignments.

COURSE CONCEPTS:
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
Online learning
FMD5016 APA Essentials

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course acts an introduction to APA formatting. Practice in a variety of citations, in-text citations, and formatting of written documents will sharpen the skills of those experienced in APA and provide necessary skills for those new to this style of formatting. The course will address some of the more commonly made mistakes in research papers by Learners and will provide ongoing updates with regard to new APA standards. (1 credit)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of FMD5016 Online Learner/Online Mentor, mentors will be able to:
- Identify problem areas that Learners have with APA formatting.
- Illustrate competency using APA formatting.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop an APA reference list in the APA citation style.
- Explain some of the common errors Learners make with APA formatting.

COURSE CONCEPTS: Mentors will understand the major concepts of:

APA citation style
APA grammatical style
APA formatting – entire documents
NCU Dissertation Handbook and its application using APA style
FMD5017 Communication Tools

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course introduces education applications to communication tools. Blogs, wikis, RSS feeds, podcasting, chat, discussion, videoclips, PowerPoint and interactive media will be explored.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Learners will be expected to:
Define the term blog.
Evaluate the use of blogs in the academic environment.
Define the term wiki.
Analyze the potential of wikis in higher education.
Explain how an RSS feeder or aggregator works.
Subscribe to blogs through an RSS aggregator.
Explain and define the term podcasting.
Analyze the potential uses of MP3 players for learning.
Assess the features of PowerPoint that could be used in an interactive fashion.
Design an interactive PowerPoint presentation.
Evaluate the potential for and benefits of networking with other educators.
Outline a professional development plan to sustain lifelong learning in online mentoring.
Analyze the potential opportunities for the educational marketplace of the future.

COURSE CONCEPTS:
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
Blogs
Wikis
RSS feeders/Aggregators
iPods and MP3 Players
Podcasting
Interactive PowerPoint
Online networking
Educational marketplace of the future
FMD5018 Authentic Learning Activities for the Online Course

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will focus on the variety of meaningful learning activities that can be created for online courses. Online course activities throughout any one single course, should be varied and should offer Learners meaningful, experiential learning opportunities. This course will examine how written activities, research activities, multimedia and web-based activities can be designed and integrated into an online course.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Learners will be expected to:
Examine the characteristics of authentic learning activities.
Analyze the elements of problem-based learning, project-based learning, and case-based learning activities.
Evaluate the aspects of writing assignments in an online course.
Design a writing assignment appropriate for an online course.
Propose alternative assignments to the traditional research report.
Design an alternative research assignment.
Investigate multimedia tools that have the potential of being integrated into a course assignment.
Design a course assignment that utilizes a form of multimedia.
Analyze the characteristics of web-based course activities.
Design a web-based course assignment/activity for an online course.
Examine the characteristics of spreadsheet and database applications.
Design a course activity that utilizes a spreadsheet or database application.

COURSE CONCEPTS:
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
Authentic learning activities
Problem-based learning
Project-based learning
Case-based learning
Writing assignments
Alternative to research reports
Multimedia tools
Web-based activities
Spreadsheet & database applications
FMD5019 Internet Search Skills

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The topics covered in this course include how a search engine works, types of search engines, search strategies, using operators for effective searching, when not to use a search engine, search engine alternatives, search engines vs. directories, evaluating website content.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Learners will be expected to:
Understand how a search engine works.
Define the term search engine
Evaluate the pros and cons of search engines
Select the correct search engine for a query
Define the term Metasearch engine
Compare and contrast a Metasearch engine and a directory
Define the term Invisible Web and use it effectively
Identify specialty search engines
Correctly utilize a graphical search engine
Examine and evaluate effective search strategies
Identify and utilize Boolean operators
Examine alternatives for search engines
Evaluate web site content

COURSE CONCEPTS:
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
Search engines
Metasearch engines
Search directory
Invisible web
Specialty search engines
Graphical search engines
Search strategies
Boolean operators
Evaluate web site content
FMD5020 Creating Syllabi

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
To improve course design and distance mentoring, this course emphasizes curriculum development. During this course, Learners review information sources, distance education issues, interactivity, assessment, learning activities and syllabus construction. This course is designed for Faculty Mentors revising a present NCU course or designing a new course in a specialization. Course revisions and course topics must receive the approval of the chair of the department.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Learners will be expected to:
Evaluate the syllabus components that are critical for Learner success. 
Examine the core components of NCU syllabi. 
Analyze course topics and activities as they relate to specific syllabi components. 
Examine the role of critical thinking in designing learning outcomes. 
Analyze the cue words in Bloom’s Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking Skills. 
Create Learning Outcomes for an NCU course. 
Demonstrate a working knowledge of the MSB Faculty Center and ACQWeb Directory. 
Evaluate possible text books for inclusion in a course. 
Explore online databases for full text articles. 
Assess the process for utilizing online databases. 
Evaluate government resources suitable for a course. 
Analyze and critique the unique features of government databases. 
Demonstrate a working knowledge of Internet search strategies. 
Identify and evaluate Internet resources for a course. 
Evaluate the characteristics of a good discussion forum. 
Organize course content into appropriate modules. 
Design discussion questions/discussion prompts utilizing Bloom’s higher order thinking skills. 
Analyze the critical components of a constructivist learning environment. 
Design course learning activities utilizing a constructivist learning approach. 
Analyze the issues involved in learner assessment in an online course. 
Assign point values to learner activities. 
Design assessment rubrics for learner activities. 
Inspect and critique a course syllabus for completeness. 

COURSE CONCEPTS:
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
Syllabus components 
Critical thinking 
Bloom’s Taxonomy
Learning outcomes
MSB Faculty Center and ACQWeb Directory
Online databases
Government databases
Internet search engines
Discussion forum contents
Constructivist learning approaches
Assessment of learning activities

FMD5022 Tips and Tricks with Technology

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will focus on presenting skills that will aid the online instructor with the use of productivity tools in the Microsoft Office suite (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, and Outlook). The course will present those features of software programs that are often under utilized or unknown. The goal of the course is to help participants make the most of using Office products effectively and efficiently.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Learners will be expected to:
Evaluate ways to manage digital files
Develop a system of efficiency with managing digital files
Understand the basics of Windows as an operating system
Examine tips for utilizing Microsoft Word
Analyze and develop ways to become more proficient in Microsoft Word
Examine tips for utilizing Microsoft Excel
Analyze and develop ways to become more proficient in Microsoft Excel
Examine tips for utilizing Microsoft Access
Analyze and develop ways to become more proficient in Microsoft Access
Compare and contrast the functions of a database and spreadsheet
Examine tips for utilizing Microsoft PowerPoint
Analyze and develop ways to become more proficient in Microsoft PowerPoint
Examine tips for utilizing Microsoft Outlook
Examine tips for utilizing the Internet
Analyze and develop ways to become more proficient in Microsoft Outlook
Analyze and develop ways to become more proficient in utilizing the Internet

COURSE CONCEPTS:
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
Managing Files
Windows
Windows Explorer
Microsoft Word
Microsoft Excel
FMD5024 Classroom Management

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
The topics covered in this course include plagiarism, meaningful feedback to learners, handling a difficult student, encouraging participation, strategies for student retention, overall classroom management and time saving tips.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
Learners will be expected to:
- Define copyright and fair use.
- Examine issues regarding intellectual property.
- Identify procedures for protecting work and materials.
- Define plagiarism.
- Understand the reasons why learners may plagiarize.
- Describe ways to prevent plagiarism.
- Analyze the competencies for online instructors.
- Identify successful instructional strategies for online teaching
- Understand privacy issues and concerns in an online environment
- Suggest strategies for dealing with online student behavior
- Examine strategies to encourage student participation
- Discover ways to foster online discussions
- Recognize the needs of students in order to foster student retention
- Describe strategies for effective file management and record-keeping

**COURSE CONCEPTS:**
Learners will understand the major concepts of:
- Copyright and fair use
- Intellectual property
- Plagiarism
- Online Instructor competencies
- Strategies for successful online teaching
- Privacy issues
- Dealing with online student behavior
- Encouraging online student participation
- Fostering online discussions
- File management and record keeping
FMD Dissertation Management

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

To ensure effective dissertation mentoring, this course focuses on the essential tasks required of NCU dissertation committee chairs and committee members. The course is designed to familiarize mentors with NCU dissertation policies and procedures. Guidance and preparation to actively serve on dissertation committees is provided. The roles and responsibilities of committee chairs and members, the dissertation handbooks, ethical research practices, and the NCU dissertation tracking system (DTS) are examined. Useful tips and suggestions for mentoring dissertation Learners are offered.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

3.1 Examine personal expectations of doctoral Learners.
3.2 Assess various mentoring styles as related to the dissertation process.
3.3 Explore strategies for encouraging Learners throughout the research process.
3.4 Analyze NCU handbooks that contain critical information for the dissertation process.
3.5 Evaluate the various components of the Dissertation Tracking System.
3.6 Review the Institutional Review Board process at Northcentral University.
3.7 Examine the federal requirements for training in human subjects protections through the CITI course.

COURSE CONCEPTS:

4.1 Expectations of doctoral Learners
4.2 Mentoring styles
4.3 Strategies for encouraging Learners
4.4 The NCU Dissertation Handbooks
4.5 The NCU Dissertation Tracking System
4.6 The Institutional Review Board

Samples of Actual Staff Professional Development Activities during 2006

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Training and Professional Development</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
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<td>New Hires</td>
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<td>New Staff Orientation</td>
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<td>Academic Program – Education</td>
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<td>Academic Program - Psychology</td>
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<td>Departmental – ELRC</td>
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<td>Administration (1)</td>
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<td>Administration (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director of Military</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
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### 5.7 Scholarly and Professional Activities

Summarize each faculty member’s scholarly and professional activities for the last five years in a table similar to Figure 5.6. Another consideration to this example could be to add a column for classroom activities and take credit for developing case studies and exercises as scholarly activities. Figure 5.6 is an example that assumes the Boyer model. If your school uses another model or
process to determine scholarly activities, please describe your process. List the faculty member’s name, highest earned degree and any professional certificate held. Professional certificates must be the result of a written test monitored and graded by a professional organization (e.g., a Certified Public Accounting examination).

The School of Business and Technology Management has adopted ACBSP’s Scholarly and Professional Activities Reporting system. Please see appendix 3.

6. **Educational and Business Process Management**

In order to prepare business graduates for professional careers, the curriculum must encompass subjects dealing with the specifics of the global workplace and the more general aspects of global society. Since business graduates must be equipped to interact with other members of society, adapt to societal changes, and serve as business advocates, student must be encouraged to study global topics that will prepare them for these challenges.

Given these academic demands, business schools and programs are encouraged to be innovative and to provide flexible curriculum options. Two of the major goals of the curriculum should be the development of intellectual curiosity and the creative capacity for independent thought and action. However, regardless of their major, all business graduates are expected to have received a general exposure to economic institutions, the complex relationships that exist between business, government, consumers and a basic knowledge of the functional areas of business. Thus, business students share common professional requirements. For this reason, certain common subject matter and areas of specialization are expected to be covered in baccalaureate and graduate degree programs in business schools and programs.

Financial resources, physical facilities, libraries and other learning resources, equipment including computing hardware and software, and resources at off-campus sites must be adequate to support a strong curriculum and excellence in teaching.

6.1.1 **Educational Design**

a. **How do you develop the design and introduction of educational programs and offerings?**

The Curriculum Committee is comprised of members of the Northcentral University academic community and may include School Chairs, fulltime mentors, lead mentors, adjuncts, the academic Vice President and/or Provost, instructional designers and academic administrators as appropriate. The Northcentral University Board of Directors (BOD) must approve new programs after approvals are received from the Curriculum Committee and the Academic...
Affairs Committee. New specializations or courses are first approved by the School specific curriculum committee and then Academic Affairs.

Curriculum Development- Guidelines for new program, specialization, or course

1. Appropriateness to Mission
   Determine if the planned curriculum development or revision is mission appropriate for the program, school, and university

2. Is there a Need?
   a. Evaluate the proposal considering the school's mission, goals, and objectives;
   b. Ensure that the proposed new program/specialization/course would not cause harmful competition with any existing program or specialization at another School with NCU.
   c. Avoid unnecessary course or program duplication while encouraging interdisciplinary linkages
   d. Ensure that the proposed program/specialization/course will address a defined market need.

3. Will we be able to deliver quality?
   a. Completing the program/specialization/course will enable Learners to fulfill the program/specialization/course goals, outcomes and objectives.
   b. Completing the program/specialization/course will help the Learners fulfill their own educational goals.

4. Is it Feasible?
   a. Does the School have the resources to maintain the program/specialization/course at the level of or above the level of quality the School currently maintains? This includes funding, faculty, equipment, staff, and administrative space allocation.
      1. Evaluate the existing resources and potential needs regarding staffing, technology, ELRC, equipment, and facilities;

5. Will it meet our governing compliance?
   a. The design of the program/specialization/course is not in conflict with state or federal law, statutes or regulations. The University’s affiliation NCU/HLC and ACBSP is in compliance.

6.1.2 Degree Programs

a. How long does it take for a full-time student to complete the degree?
   Based on Graduation Statistics for the School of Business and Technology, the average time to completion is:
   1. BBA = 2.68 years
   2. MBA = 2.01 years
   3. DBA = 2.60 years
   4. PhD = 3.28 years
b. **What are the delivery methods (classroom, correspondence, independent study, computerized distance learning, etc.)?**
All programs at Northcentral University are delivered 100% online. Northcentral University employs the concept of active self-directed learning. NCU developed its academic programs, delivery format, and services with the belief that self-directed learning empowers the individual to take increasingly more responsibility for their learning process.

### 6.1.3 Common Professional Component (CPC)

a. **How does your curriculum design address the Common Professional Component (CPC) outlined below?** The School of Business and Technology Management has adopted a grid which is place in all “Core” business courses that show the percentages of the CPC being completed in each course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of CPC Topics Addressed in this Course</th>
<th>Percentage of Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Finance</td>
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<td>TOTAL (estimate of percentage of course)</td>
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b. **How do you determine the appropriate coverage of the Common Professional Component (CPC)?** All programs in the School of Business and Technology Management have been regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and approved by Northcentral University Curriculum Committee for appropriateness.

### 6.1.6 Education (Design and Delivery) Evaluation

The school and/or program must provide evidence that ongoing educational programs and offerings meet design requirements. These observations, measures and/or indicators might include: enrollment and participation figures, student evaluation of course/instructor, success rates, attendance rates, dropout rates,
complaints, student feedback, and observations by school and/or program leaders. This is only a partial list of examples.

**How is your ongoing program of assessment and improvement developed and conducted?** The university prides itself on being an institution of continuous improvement. The university has an established “Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Plan” that governs all programs. Northcentral University Philosophy of Institutional effectiveness and Learner Outcomes is:

The American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) has developed nine “Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning.” NCU understands that although these Principles were developed primarily for instructional assessment; however, many of them are applicable to broader types of assessment of non-instructional units. These principles provide an overarching umbrella for NCU’s assessment program.

The AAHE Principles are:
1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
2. Assessment is most effectiveness when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

NCU’s guiding principles provide for the University’s unique online, adult culture and provide a common direction for the University’s Institutional Effectiveness and Learner Outcomes Assessment activities.

NCU’s Principles are:

1. A searching spirit must be encouraged so that the atmosphere of a continuously improving scholarly community may develop
2. The assessment process used must be based on quality mentoring and learning, and institutional support
3. The assessment process should consider best practices in evaluating educational effectiveness
4. The assessment process must be open to all participants.
5. Faculty must have final authority in their areas of expertise related to learning outcomes
6. The assessment process functions with administrative sanction through an established matrix of interconnected and interdependent effectiveness and assessment tasks
7. Faculty must take a leadership role and the administration must be supportive
8. The administration supports this process through policy and procedure initiatives that in turn strengthen curriculum, program, and institutional effectiveness.
Below is Northcentral University’s Continuous Improvement Model:

**Continuous Improvement Model**

Learners Are Central to the University’s Actions

- **Do**
  - Offer Programs & Services

- **Plan**
  - Vision & Values
  - Strategic Priorities & Goals
  - Mission Statement & Purposes

- **Assess**
  - Institutional Effectiveness Evaluation
  - Learner Outcomes Assessment

- **Improve**
  - Policies & Procedures
  - University Operations

a. What types of observations, measures and/or indicators do you use to evaluate and improve program and offerings? Northcentral University tracks numbers dealing with both institutional effectiveness and learning outcomes, to improve programs.
6.2.1 Education Support Processes

Describe how the business school or program’s education support processes (counseling, advising, placement, tutorial, computer facilities, equipment, classrooms, office space, and libraries) are designed, managed, and improved. Include all locations and the Internet:

a. **What are you key education support processes and their principal requirements and measures, such as usage rates, success rates and student and stakeholder feedback?** Learner support services include Enrollment Advisement, Academic Advisement, Learner Services, Information Technology, Electronic Learning Resource Center, Accounting, and Financial Aid. Following application, a prospective Learner is assigned an Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisor evaluates transfer credits before the applicant is accepted. Upon acceptance, the Learner is guided through the development of his/her degree program by the Advisor, who coordinates program requirements, course requests, and oversees academic progress throughout the Learner’s program. While the Learner interacts academically with a variety of Faculty Mentors, the same Academic Advisor assists the Learner throughout the degree program, maintaining an on-going relationship until graduation.

The Learner Services department fulfills a different role from the Academic Advisors. Learner Services Advisors proactively interact with Learners to encourage motivation, attitude, and problem avoidance. The Learner Affairs Advisor, through personal contact creates rapport, and acts as a coach while monitoring the Learners’ progress to ensure that studies are continuing smoothly. Learner Services Advisors help Learners understand best educational practices and procedures so that Learners benefit fully from the University’s distance learning opportunities. Learner Services provides an automated welcome letter outlining NCU services.

Learner support services encompass all departments from enrollment advisement to financial aid and use a wide range of measurement tools.

6.2.2 Business Operation Processes

Describe how the business school or program ensures effective management of its key business operation processes (Financial resources, secretarial and other administrative services, marketing, information services, public relations, etc.). Include all locations and the Internet:

a. **What are your key business operation processes?**
   - Information and Technology
   - Facilities
b. **How do you set measures and/or indicators and goals?** The School of Business and Technology relays on historical data such as pre and post course surveys and a biannual Noel Levitz Satisfaction survey to set the benchmarks for our measures and indicators. As a continuous improvement university, the school then sets realistic goals based on these benchmark, Learner feedback, and recommendations of the schools advisory board.

c. **How do you monitor performance?**
Through the uses of a dashboard, that monitors key indicators like enrollment, drops, completion statistics, and student satisfaction. The School of Business and Technology Management also relays on data derived from in house surveys like pre and post course surveys and external surveys like the biannual Noel-Levitz Satisfaction survey to set benchmarks and enhance programs. The school monitors faculty performance through pre and post surveys and peer reviews.

d. **How do you evaluate and improve business operation processes to achieve better performance, including cost and productivity?** The School of Business and Technology Management evaluates and improves its business operation process with use of the university’s established “Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Plan.” This plan provides the groundwork for continuous improvement with a model of “Plan,” “Do,” “Assess,” and “Improve.”

“Plan” includes the formal strategic planning process conducted every 5 years, with updates conducted on an annual basis. The University’s philosophy and distance learning principles are checked for currency. Values of the institution, i.e. those beliefs that the University holds in high regard, are reviewed. Next the vision statement for the future time period being considered is defined, describing the future state, which the institution endeavors to attain. The nature of a vision means it will probably not be achieved before it is changed, but revisions to the University’s vision are an impetus for re-evaluating the strategic plan. The University’s mission statement is reviewed and changed as necessary to be compatible with and supportive of the evolving vision. A modification in the University’s mission took place June 6, 2003. Objectives, which are necessary for the University to approach its vision and fulfill its mission, are developed to clarify the University’s intentions for the future. Strategies are determined, providing focus and guidance for performance tasks to be accomplished during the time period being considered.
“Do” consists of the University offering its programs and services. This part of the cycle consists of the daily operations of the University: instruction, academic support, learner affairs, institutional support, etc.

“Assess” involves evaluating both Institutional Effectiveness and Learner academic achievements. Institutional Effectiveness looks at the operations of the University and determines whether the mission is being achieved. Learner Outcomes Assessment involves University course and program level academic activities, and measures whether the Learners are achieving their educational goals. Academic Program Reviews are formally conducted every 3-5 years (per program). Program Assessment occurs annually. Course assessment is ongoing. Faculty mentor and staff evaluations have been revised and become embedded in the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Timeline. The Campus Climate Survey is now part of the institutional culture, providing valuable staff, faculty and Board feedback regarding the University’s services.

“Improve” uses the feedback from the “Assess” efforts. Information gathered is analyzed, and opportunities for improvement defined. The results may identify changes needed to the University Mission Statement (modified in March of 2003), changes to the University Policies and Procedures, changes to the organizational structure, and changes to the University budget and allocation of resources. Feedback information influences planning efforts, programs and services offered, and evaluation/assessment activities.

e. How do you use the following type of information to evaluate your key business operation processes:

1.) Feedback from students, stakeholders, faculty, and staff? This information is used to assist in the development of programs, specializations, and courses. Feedback from students is also used to assess our faculty and learner support.

2.) Benchmarking? The use of benchmarks helps the university and the school develop best practices and gage performance. Setting of benchmarks helps the school and university in every aspect of continuous improvement.

3.) Data from observations and measurements? This data is benchmarked against like data to evaluate performance.

6.3 Enrollment Management

6.3.4 Academic Policies for Probation, Suspension, and Readmitting
Learners who are not making academic progress will be placed on academic probation. Academic progress is defined as a GPA that falls below the minimum standard (2.0 for undergraduate and 3.0 for graduate). An academic probation notice is sent to the Learner by the academic advisor, and the Learner is given 24 weeks to bring the GAP back to standards [Learner Handbook, Sec. 2.13.1 – 2.13.3 See Appendix 6].

Learners are subject to probation and/or dismissal from NCU for lack of academic progress (academic probation/dismissal) or for violating published University policies, including continuous enrollment and plagiarism, among others (administrative probation/dismissal). [Learner Handbook Sec. 2.13.4]

If a Learner feels that there are mitigating circumstances, such as documented serious illness, natural disaster or ADA (American with Disabilities Act) related issues, he/she has the right to appeal the probation/dismissal decision. The appeal will be reviewed by the School Chair and/or Dean of Learner Services, and a final decision will be rendered. [Learner Handbook Sec. 2.13.5].

NCU has a reinstatement policy for learners that fall under the category of 1) temporary voluntary withdrawal; 2) academic progress dismissal (they may conditionally accepted as a non-degree student and must successfully complete 9 credits before re-entering their program); 3) dismissal due to outstanding financial obligations that can now be met, or non-adherence to NCU’s continuous enrollment policy. Learners dismissed due to academic integrity or code of conduct violations may not apply for reinstatement. [Learner Handbook Sec. 2.13.6].

6.3.4b How many students were subject to academic sanctions during the self-study year? We do not currently have a report that shows the number of Learners on academic probation status throughout the year. The report is being recommended for development in January 2007.

6.3.4c Academic Policies for Recruiting, Admitting, and Retaining Students
b) What policies and procedures do you have in place addressing admitting students?
1) Basis of admission and Transfer Policy [NCU Catalog Sec. 6]: Enrollment Dept. and Registrar’s Office:

The NCU catalog describes the basis for admission for each of NCU’s degree programs, along with a description of the procedure for applying on-line. For the masters and doctoral programs, the Applicant must hold a Bachelors degree from a regionally accredited institution, and they must present all official transcripts of all colleges previously attended. [NCU Catalog Sec 6.3].

NCU has a transfer policy that allows it to consider transfer of relevant coursework earned at a regionally accredited college/university. For the Masters
program, a maximum of six (6) credits may be eligible for transfer, while the PhD program allows for transfer of up to thirty (30) credits. Special conditions apply for transfers from nationally accredited institutions, for learners previously enrolled in a doctoral program, and for learners who hold international transcripts, including but not limited to standards for English language proficiency. All students from countries where English is not the primary language must present proof that they can communicate effectively via a minimum required TOEFL score. In addition, foreign transcripts earned at institutions accredited by the Ministry of Education are subject to review by ACCRAO in order to establish U.S. degree equivalency. [NCU Catalog Sec.6.3 and 6.5].

2) Transcript evaluation and Letter of Acceptance:

After the Registrar’s office compiles all official transcripts, Applicants are evaluated by an academic advisor, to a) ensure that the basis of admission has been met; b) determine which credits are eligible for transfer and/or waiver; c) to craft a degree plan that adheres to the Learner’s degree program. If accepted into the program, the academic advisor will notify the learner via a Letter of Acceptance and Enrollment Agreement, which states the required credit hours to complete the program and highlights NCU’s essential policies and procedures [Academic Advisor Handbook, Sec 4-8].

d) What policies and procedures do you have in place addressing retaining students?

NCU focuses on student retention in various ways, including but not limited to:

- One academic advisor is assigned to the learner from the time of evaluation through the time of graduation (changes occur in cases where work volumes or attrition require a redistribution of the learners).
- As additional layers of support, the Learner Services advisor and the IT staff assists new and existing learners in navigating their websites and resolving technical difficulties.
- There are system-generated alarms that the advisors use to check for academic progress, six weeks from each course start date. If the Learner has not posted any assignments, a “non-participation” notice is sent out reminding the student of the importance of posting work in a timely manner.
- The Learner Services advisor assists Learners in accommodating medical emergencies that fall under ADA (American with Disabilities Act).
- The University has a 90-day continuous enrollment policy that allows Learners to accommodate professional and personal circumstances as they arise.
- NCU has an “Incomplete” grade policy that gives a Learner the right to petition a 90-day extension from the mentor if 75% of the assignments have been successfully completed.
• Military Leave of Absence Policy allows Learners under military deployment to apply for a leave of absence – they are temporarily withdrawn and may be reactivated upon the end of their tour of duty.
Appendix 1

Northcentral University
Organization Chart
Appendix 2

Northcentral University
STRATEGIC PLAN
2006 – 2011
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PURPOSE OF THE NCU STRATEGIC PLAN

The purpose of planning is to help achieve a desired future. Northcentral University (NCU) conducted its first strategic planning process starting in October 1997. The Strategic Plan was updated in summer 1998 and March 1999.

In December 2000, the Strategic Plan was expanded to include strategic awareness and marketing information. These were developed utilizing stakeholder and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analyses in which all staff members participated. A subsequent brainstorming session identified potential markets, products and delivery methods.

Beginning in September 2001, Northcentral University again conducted a strategic planning process. It started by re-examining and revising the University Philosophy, Distance Learning Principles, Values, Vision, and Mission statements. Review and redefinition of the Objectives and Strategies followed. Throughout these efforts, we reevaluated who we are and what we desire to achieve in the future. NCU challenged its assumptions and institutional paradigms. The University recognized that it was assessing its practices, identifying areas for improvement, and was also planning for the future regarding programs and services to offer and support.

In May 2002, the Strategic Plan was updated to reflect the University’s intentions for the time period of 2002-2007. Revised statements defining the University Philosophy, Distance Learning Principles, Values, Vision, and Mission resulted from this strategic planning process. The Objectives and Strategies provided direction for activities identified to achieve the University’s short- and long-term goals. The Strategic Plan 2002-2007 was the document reviewed by the accreditation team from the Higher Learning Commission, who recommended initial accreditation status for the University.

In 2003, NCU reviewed and reconsidered its overall approach to strategic management. In October, 2003 the Strategic Plan 2002-2007 was updated to reflect this new approach to strategic planning and management.

In September 2004, the Strategic Plan 2002-2007 was once again updated to reflect organizational goals in light of achieving initial accreditation status and in anticipation of the addition of new academic programs and growth in enrollments.

In February 2006, the NCU Executive Council decided to update the strategic plan and planning process to be more responsive to the new HLC Self-Study criteria and to reflect marketplace and internal NCU realities in the 2006 through 2011 timeframe. This revision of the NCU Strategic Plan 2006-2011 is the result.
OVERVIEW OF NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY

Northcentral University is a private 100% online distance learning institution of higher education. NCU offers bachelor, master and doctoral degree programs in Business & Technology Management, Education, and Psychology.

As a distance learning institution, Northcentral University believes that its approach to higher education and the Learners it serves are different from the environment found in traditional colleges and universities and other online institutions. Our motto was “We put people first in distance learning” and formed the cornerstone of our philosophy when dealing with online Learners. In 2004, we adopted a new motto “The better way to earn your degree”, reflecting the summation of comments received from many satisfied NCU Learners.

This overview describes who we are and how we are unique.

Who is NCU?
- First -- A teaching institution
- Learner centered
- Provides higher education opportunities through web-based distance learning methodologies
- Focuses on adult Learners
- Uses active self-learning concept
- Faculty mentors are facilitators of learning activities
- Provides Learner support resources
- Conducts continuous improvement

Distance Learning

Distance learning is education where the Learner and the mentor are not at the same place. Our Learners and faculty members are located throughout the world. Courses are not held at fixed meeting times or locations. Instead Learners and faculty mentors interact as needed during a course term. NCU primarily engages in asynchronous computer-mediated communications in a text-based higher education learning environment. Learners and faculty mentors communicate one-on-one through the Learner web site, e-mail, telephone, fax, regular mail, video-conferencing, and occasionally face-to-face.

NCU’s distance learning programs feature the following details:
- Traditional higher education courses in recognized academic disciplines
- Use standardized college textbooks and online resources
- University defined course outlines and faculty developed course syllabi
- Courses taken over 12-week term
- Provide flexibility to complete courses in less than 12 weeks and begin course(s) at next term start
- Traditional coursework required with Learner outcomes assessment and evaluations by faculty mentors
- Learner-centered
- Learners and faculty mentors interact one-on-one via electronic communications
- Faculty mentors are facilitators, guides, consultants, evaluators
- NCU stresses Active Self-Learning where each Learner takes responsibility for
• his/her own learning

NCU has defined courses and programs. Learners must include courses to satisfy general education and/or content area requirements. They choose from an array of courses to study a concentration or specialization in depth, or they may take a variety of courses in a field for a generalized breadth of knowledge. All of our courses have qualified instructors assigned as Faculty Mentors.

**Adult Learners**

The average Learner at Northcentral University is a 43-year old mid-career professional. The adult Learners at NCU have different needs and expectations than the “traditional” 18-24 year old student who attends residential colleges and universities. Our Learners have indicated that they desire the flexibility of our distance education programs. Most of our Learners work full-time, and may be involved in business travel. They are seeking higher education knowledge and degrees to enhance their career opportunities and qualifications. These Learners also have peer support through work associates, family and friends. Many are members of professional or community organizations. Our adult Learners bring lifelong experiences to their learning processes, and are interested in applying their education rather than just gaining knowledge of theories and facts. They are mature individuals who take on the responsibilities of time management, motivation, and self-dedication to their studies.

Our adult Learners are discriminating in their endeavors, and have explored options for higher education. During the admissions process, our Learners become aware of our approach. Those who feel that distance learning does not match their needs or learning style will not pursue enrollment at NCU. Thus the Learners who select our program possess self-actualization traits necessary for success.

**Active Self-Directed Learning**

NCU employs the concept of active self-directed learning. NCU developed its academic programs, delivery format and services with the belief that self directed learning empowers the individual to take increasingly more responsibility for their learning process.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis, and new courses begin the first of each month. This flexibility allows new Learners to begin their program of study at twelve different entry points throughout the year. New Learners are provided a Degree Plan when they are accepted into the program based upon their prior studies and their future goals. This Degree Plan constitutes a degree contract between the Learner and the University. Learners are sent syllabi electronically and may order course texts online. Generally, new Learners begin their studies taking one or two three-credit courses. NCU terms are twelve weeks in duration, depending on the type of course. For instance, all doctoral level research and dissertation courses are twelve weeks in length. A Learner may accelerate the twelve week course of study, as long as the assignments contained in the syllabi are successfully completed. Working one-on-one with a Faculty Mentor allows for this high level of flexibility. Once a course is completed, Learners may request to start the next course on the first of the following month.

NCU Learners are adults, the majority of whom are working. Self directed learners are able to transfer learning in terms of both knowledge and skill acquisition from the course(s) to their
workplace or appropriate situation. NCU ensures that Learners are involved in various learning activities, have effective online learning resources, are able to electronically dialogue with other learners and their Faculty Mentors. Depending on the program, the specialization and the course, assignments vary. NCU places a heavy emphasis on problem solving, critical thinking, research, the ability to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes, and written communication. NCU monitors syllabi development utilizing lead faculty and an instructional specialist. Learning outcomes, learning objectives and assignments are carefully developed to ensure evaluation and assessment integrity.

NCU emphasizes a learning environment that is meaningful, purposeful, but also participatory and engaging.

Faculty Mentors

NCU’s Faculty Mentors guide and stimulate the active learning process in one-on-one communication. They act as facilitators, not as lecturers. Through this style of mentoring, they recognize individual learning styles and needs, encourage contact, and emphasize the relevance of the material to the individual's career and personal life. The Faculty Mentor provides guidance, answers questions, and evaluates the individual Learner's work.

The University's Faculty Mentors have academic backgrounds that qualify them to work with adult Learners in assigned courses. Most Faculty Mentors have terminal academic degrees from recognized accredited universities, and have teaching or professional experience in their field. Faculty Mentors have diverse backgrounds and are drawn from business and industry, professions, and the academic community to assist Learners in reaching their educational objectives. They are selected for their interest in promoting active self-directed learning, professional expertise, career experience, academic background, and ability to communicate knowledge and experience to distance Learners. Faculty Mentors receive orientation and ongoing faculty development training and are able to achieve faculty rank at NCU based on their academic and professional achievements.

Interactivity

Traditionally, universities consider Learner-to-Faculty Mentor and Learner-to-Learner interactivity as contributing to learning achievement. NCU Learners communicate with their Faculty Mentors throughout their course, often using electronic methods and web-based communications. Our Learners indicate that they receive more personal attention than they have experienced in traditional campus classrooms because of this direct interaction. Our Faculty Mentors indicate that they get to know and understand the Learners as individuals.

Opportunities are provided for Learner-to-Learner interactivity through the University’s discussion forums. Most of our adult Learners have their own support systems with work peers and professionals. Our Learners are independent, and are not necessarily looking for socialization through NCU. They focus on interaction for the purpose of enhancing their learning. Learner interaction occurs with the course content, with researching issues, with application of experiences to concepts, and with professional associates. Learners may also seek interaction with coworkers and other learning support activities outside of the University (e.g. professional societies and associations, conferences, workshops, seminars).
Learner Support and Services

Northcentral University provides a variety of support and services to its adult Learners. This is where NCU implements a personal approach to higher education.

When a Learner becomes enrolled, an Academic Advisor is assigned. The Academic Advisor guides the Learner through their degree program by coordinating degree plan requirements, course requests, and academic progress. During each course, the Academic Advisor monitors the Learner’s progress and will communicate with and provide support to Learners who are falling behind. While the Learner will have different Faculty Mentors for the courses, the Academic Advisor is a constant support to the Learner throughout the degree program.

Northcentral University has Learner Affairs Advisors to support Learners with the University’s distance learning process. Learner Affairs Advisors introduce Learners to NCU practices and procedures through personal contact and by providing a detailed formal letter after the Learner has been accepted. The NCU Learner Handbook is provided to Learners, and they can refer to the online web site Learner orientation area. Learner Affairs Advisors also monitor Learner’s progress and help with non-academic problems.

The Electronic Library Resource Center (ELRC) provides library services and research assistance to NCU Learners and Faculty Mentors throughout the world. The primary ELRC task is to support student learning by providing resources, tools, writing help, and reference works that clearly support the curriculum so that the NCU Mission may be fulfilled. Among the services provided, the ELRC assists Learners wanting to access local libraries, grants access to databases for research, offers e-Reference to answer questions and supply research tips, makes available interlibrary loans and document delivery, e-reserves, guides and quizzes, provides a Dissertation Center, subject guides for Internet searching and course specific links to resources. The Director of Information Services is available to answer reference questions and provide one-on-one instruction in the use of the Internet, tips on database navigation, citation verification, and other reference tools.

The NCU Writing Center, created in 2004, provides Learners and Faculty Mentors with information on essay styles, citation help, research processes, grammar quizzes, composition and revision tips, and additional Internet resources. The NCU Writing Center provides courses, tutoring, guides, quizzes, and links to writing resources available on the Web. NCU’s service helps Learners explore the academic writing process and research. Faculty Mentors refer Learners to the Writing Center when writing issues arise during a course. A team of Faculty Mentors, library web developer, and the Director of Information Resources developed the Writing Center site in the Electronic Learning Resource Center (ELRC). The Center’s staff works to give Learners a place to improve their writing. Additions to the site occur when specific needs arise among Learners, or at the request of mentors.

Financial Assistance

The Financial Assistance Office assists applicants and Learners with financing their NCU education. In general, many people find the subject of finances stressful. The Financial Assistance Office staff provides personalized advising that not only alleviates the anxiety Applicants and Learners may experience, but also helps them move toward their goal of attaining their education at NCU. The variety of interest-free payment plans and private education loans
offered by NCU meet the needs of most Learners. The Financial Assistance Office provides guidance to Applicants and Learners by helping them evaluate the financing options available as well as explore other financial resources they may not realize are available to them. In addition, the Financial Assistance Office notifies Learners through mass email about new outside scholarship opportunities and resources as they become available. Outside scholarship opportunities and resources are also posted on the NCU website which Applicants and Learners are encouraged to peruse.

**Institutional Effectiveness & Learner Outcomes Assessment**

NCU continuously evaluates its programs and procedures to ensure that its practices are meeting the needs of our Learners. Our continuous improvement model and efforts consider all aspects of institutional effectiveness and Learner outcomes assessment, and include a complete cycle of plan, do, check, and improve. We regularly review and revise our strategic plan, programs, courses, and support areas.

Our programs encourage success and the development of lifelong learning patterns. Each University course has specific learning objectives and outcomes, contained in the course outline and syllabus, which articulate the educational achievements to be accomplished. Learner assessments are included as part of each course. Our Learners and faculty mentors indicate that essential skills for business and lifelong learning (higher order thinking, working independently, and effective writing and computation skills) are more rigorously evaluated in distance learning program outcomes. At the start of each course, Learners are asked about their expectations. This also provides an introduction of the Learner to the faculty mentor. At the end of each course, Learners complete an End of Course Questionnaire to give the University feedback about the course. This is used to alert the department chairs to any problems about a course or faculty mentor. Periodically program reviews are conducted to update program objectives and confirm that expected outcomes are being satisfied.

As a teaching institution, Faculty Mentors and staff are encouraged to become members of professional organizations, attend conferences and workshops, and participate in NCU faculty and staff development to keep current and improve individual effectiveness. Faculty Mentors and staff read journals and publications to stay current on approaches others have taken in various aspects of distance learning in higher education. NCU regularly assesses whether our methods, programs, and courses are meeting the needs of our Learners. We are also constantly looking for ways to be more effective in institutional functions without losing sight of who we are and what we aspire to achieve. If we find better approaches, we develop and implement the new methods, programs, and courses to meet the needs of our Learners.

**Summary**

Adult Learners tend to be more selective about how and where they receive their education. They care about price, but also about the responsiveness of colleges to their unique needs and questions. They also care about academic rigor, and gaining higher learning that will update their knowledge to expand their professional opportunities. They are seeking information updates or a change in their long-term career situation through educational achievement.

The faculty and staff at Northcentral University are dedicated professionals who are committed to providing quality education. NCU continues to set a standard for online distance learning by not
requiring residency, and by providing affordable, innovative educational opportunities for the adult self-Learner. We are keeping in focus the importance of learning outcomes in our approach of providing higher education.
FOUNDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic planning process reevaluates the identity of Northcentral University and the goals the institution desires to achieve in the future. NCU’s philosophy, values, vision, and mission statements define the context of the University.

- The **University Philosophy** presents a concise statement of educational doctrine.
- The **NCU Values** represent beliefs that the University holds in high regard and deems important in higher education.
- The **Vision** statement describes the future state of the University, which the institution endeavors to attain by advancing and enhancing distance learning.
- The **Mission** statement defines the purpose of the University against which the institution will evaluate the effectiveness of its educational programs and services to improve delivery and support.

University Philosophy

Northcentral University believes that higher education is of fundamental importance to a free society and to the continued development of democratic values, individual liberty, and an appreciation for cultural diversity in society. The University endeavors to expose Learners to these global purposes through its learning processes. For education to succeed there must be an ongoing partnership among Learners and educators, with the needs of the global community in mind.

A Learner-centered approach to its operations is utilized, where individuals are valued. Our motto has evolved from “We put people first in distance learning” to “The better way to earn your degree”, reflecting the fact that Learners understand, appreciate, and articulate that NCU is indeed “the better way”.

Values

Northcentral University recognizes that the values we embrace guide our organizational culture and our expectations of the behavior of the members of the institution. To achieve our Mission and Vision, NCU affirms its values of Learner Focus, Integrity, Innovation, Respect for Others, Teamwork, Leadership, and Performance.

**Learners**

Our Learners are our clients. We are deeply committed to meeting the needs of our Learners, and we constantly focus on putting people and their educational needs first in distance learning.

**Integrity**

We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards in relationships with our constituencies.

**Innovation**

Innovation is the key to improving the quality of our educational programs and services.
Respect  We recognize that our people are the cornerstone of our success. We value our diversity of thought and action as a source of strength, and we are committed to treat people with respect and dignity.

Teamwork  We know that to be a successful university a community of Learners, mentors and staff must work together, frequently transcending organizational and geographical boundaries.

Leadership  We believe that leaders exhibit standards for others to follow. Leaders achieve difficult goals, envision new and innovative educational delivery systems, and challenge outdated concepts of learning.

Performance  We strive for continuous improvement in our performance. We define and measure outcomes and take corrective action to ensure that our passion for excellence is never compromised.

Vision Statement

Northcentral University is committed to being a premier higher education distance learning institution. This end will be achieved through an uncompromising passion for excellence in providing educational opportunities for adult Learners that fosters integrity, critical thinking, professional knowledge, a global view, and leadership for a changing world.

Mission Statement

The University mission statement was adopted on June 6, 2003 and modified slightly in October 2005 to improve clarity.

“Northcentral University uses distance learning methodologies to provide adult learners throughout the world with opportunities to earn bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in recognized academic programs to enable them to acquire the competencies and to apply the knowledge and skills needed to participate and function effectively in modern society.”
STRATEGIC AWARENESS

In 2002, to assure that the strategic plan was grounded in reality and supported by those responsible for implementation, the faculty and staff of NCU participated in an in-depth stakeholder analysis to document who had a stake in NCU’s strategic success and what was the nature of that stake. Furthermore, faculty and staff identified the University’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), as well as consideration of the potential impact of changes in these factors on all stakeholders. This exercise contributed to shared involvement, contribution of new ideas, and ownership for the participants in the 2002-2007 Strategic Plan process.

In 2006, the Executive Council chose to build on the previous work and update both the Stakeholder Analysis and SWOT Analysis. Our experiences since 2002 also lead us to believe that both analyses can be streamlined and conveyed in language that gives more operational guidance to NCU’s strategic objectives, goals, and institutional strategies.

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders are groups and individuals who have a mutual interest with NCU in the success of NCU as an institution. The mutuality of interest creates “wants” – some formal and documented and others less tangible -- on the part of the stakeholder and NCU.

For the purposes of strategic planning, it is critical to examine and understand the strategic impact of these relationships and mutual interests. Stakeholder relationships may be an area of strength or may offer opportunities for NCU; relationships may also be weak or offer threats to NCU. Stakeholder analysis supports and provides input to SWOT analysis and helps to identify strategic objectives, goals, and business strategies.

Table 1 shows stakeholders by categories, giving examples of stakeholders for each, and summarizes the mutual interests of the stakeholders and NCU. The table is not intended to be definitive but to offer guidance to the SWOT analysis and definitions of strategic objectives, goals, and strategies for 2006-2011.

In 2002, the discussion sparked by the stakeholder analysis led to a recommendation by the staff that the University set up an advisory council with representatives from various segments (marketing, library services, public relations, employers, government, etc.). These individuals would offer functional advice and critical input, as well as lending their credibility and prestige to the University. The council would also provide a reality check to tell how the University appears to an outside viewer. In lieu of appointing a new council, the Board of Directors was asked to fill this role. During 2003 – 2005, we discovered that the Board’s time was consumed with other matters, and this idea, while still valid, was not being addressed. The Executive Council is now pursuing an approach whereby we will ask representatives of educational partners (businesses, community colleges, etc.) to join a council. We envision several councils, perhaps focused on each school and its specific academic programs. We expect a test council to be deployed in 2006 and later expansion of the councils, if the advice and input from council members meets expectations.
Once the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan is completed, the Executive Council will ensure that key stakeholders are identified and addressed through specific strategies and action plans.

**TABLE 1 – NCU STAKEHOLDERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>What is at Stake?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Applicants, Learners, Alumni, Employers, Educational Partners (other educational institutions, Military, law enforcement, businesses, associations, for-profit partners such as CITE and Mind-Streams)</td>
<td>Customers want NCU to provide degree programs that offer academic excellence and are valued in the global workplace. NCU wants customers to recognize the benefits of our degree programs and be willing to compensate NCU appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local publics</td>
<td>Prescott and Prescott Valley city governments, area civic organizations, local citizens</td>
<td>Local publics want NCU to provide jobs, pay taxes, purchase services, and enhance the value and quality of life in the area. NCU wants to attract and retain staff, attract local area Learners, receive city/county services, support local service businesses, and generally, be viewed as a responsible corporate citizen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credentialing agencies</td>
<td>AZ Private Post Secondary Board, HLC, U.S. DOE, APA, ACBSP and other discipline accrediting bodies, Veterans Administration and other Federal and state regulating bodies, foreign ministries of education</td>
<td>Credentialing agencies want NCU to maintain academic standards and comply with regulations affecting academic quality, consumer protection, and Federal educational funding. NCU wants to maintain credentialing as evidence of academic standards and compliance with various regulations, to maintain access to educational funding, and to maintain a positive reputation for customers of higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founder and Owner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Founder and owner wants NCU to maintain educational excellence, realize sustained growth and profitability, and provide a return on investment. NCU, inseparable from its founder and owner, wants the same things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Members of the Board of Directors want to participate in NCU’s governance, contribute to NCU’s success, and receive acknowledgment and prestige of association with NCU. NCU wants members to contribute ideas, expertise, and contacts that provide quality governance and help NCU achieve its mission and strategic objectives and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>Staff, Faculty Mentors</td>
<td>Employees want compensation, benefits, rewards and recognition commensurate with performance and contribution, a sense of belonging and contributing to NCU’s success, and acknowledgment and prestige of association with NCU. NCU wants employees to contribute knowledge, expertise, and skills to help NCU achieve its mission and strategic objectives and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia</td>
<td>Traditional colleges and universities, non-traditional (including online) institutions, community colleges, academic and professional organizations</td>
<td>Academia want NCU to provide recognized academic programs and courses that offer convenient articulation opportunities, transfer policies and procedures that favor student success, and “fair” competition as a choice of customers of higher education. NCU wants reciprocal relationships with academia that offer the opportunity for articulation, student transfer, and recognition of NCU as an academic partner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suppliers | Educational services (MBS, Herff Jones), business services (Staples, printers), financial services (banks, auditors, student loan providers, third party servicers), IT services (hardware, software, systems support), marketing services (agencies, publications, Internet sites, search engines) | Suppliers want financial stability, profitability, and growth so that NCU will continue to rely on their products and services and compensate them fairly and on time. NCU wants suppliers who provide products and services that NCU cannot produce internally and who provide them at reasonable costs and on reasonable terms.

ELRC suppliers | Amigos, EBSCO | ELRC suppliers want continued growth of NCU and fair use and growing use of their services. NCU wants ELRC resources that support delivery of a quality academic experience for Learners and Faculty Mentors.

### SWOTT Analysis

In 2002, NCU conducted a SWOT analysis in a series of weekly meetings, each focusing on one of the macro-environmental forces that influence the University. The entire Prescott-based staff participated, and suggestions from remote faculty members received via email or conference call input were also included. The external forces considered included Political/Legal, Social, Economic, Technological, and Academic Competitive environments.

Using the 2002 analysis as the baseline, the Executive Council in 2006 chose to identify NCU strengths and weaknesses overall and to organize the opportunities and threats in an Environmental Scan where the external environmental factors are Political/Legal, Social/Cultural, Economic, Technological, Academic Competitive, and Student Demographics. The goal was to focus on a few factors that are of utmost strategic significance instead of producing long lists of important but less meaningful factors. In addition, the SWOT concept has been extended to consider Trends in the internal and external environment that can further impact strategic planning. The results of the SWOTT Analysis are summarized below.

As with the Stakeholder Analysis, once the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan is completed, the Executive Council will ensure that key internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats, and organizational and marketplace trends are identified and addressed through specific strategies and action plans.

**Strengths** – Internal NCU strengths that offer marketplace opportunity and competitive advantage

- NCA accreditation and AZ licensure
- Differentiators that define the NCU brand
  - 100% online with no residency requirement
  - Monthly starts
  - One-on-one Faculty Mentoring
  - Flexible terms with ability to finish early and accelerate education
  - Individualized degree programs with choices of concentrations/specializations and courses
Weaknesses -- Internal NCU weaknesses that offer impediments to marketplace opportunity and competitive advantage

- Lack of sufficient trained staff to support growth
- Lack of a business continuity plan
- Number of senior faculty is inadequate to support growth
- Top-down decision-making processes rely on President/Owner
  - Decisions often do not rely on data and research
  - Operational impacts are often not considered
  - There is no structure or process to voice and hear differing opinions and constructively handle conflict
  - Operational coordination is often ad hoc and there is no structure for operational governance
- NCU’s niche positioning lacks strong appeal to the broad market

Opportunities – External, marketplace opportunities that NCU can strategically participate in and take advantage of.

- Need for college education at undergraduate and graduate levels is strong in the U.S and worldwide
- Emerging technologies (streaming and VOIP) and growth in the use of broadband in the U.S. can enhance Learner experience
- Distance learning use is growing and seen as viable alternative to classroom
- Organizations (business, other schools, military, etc.) are willing to partner to offer academic programs to their constituents
- NCU can create brand recognition and differentiate our position with niche markets

Threats -- External, marketplace threats that can strategically inhibit NCU.

- Infrastructure is susceptible to outside disasters (loss of phone lines, power, building)
- Distance learning competition from traditional institutions, non-traditional online universities, and newcomers for both Learners and faculty
- NCA’s perception of NCU may limit expansion of schools and programs

Trends – Events that point a strategic direction for NCU.

- Increasing numbers of potential online learners both in the U.S. and Internationally (examples include active Military and veterans; workers displaced from traditional industries; worker needing advanced knowledge/skills to keep up in information driven industries; and international Learners seeking American education and degrees)
- Increasing acceptance of online education
- Increased competition in distance learning/online education
- Continuing cost increases for higher education exceeding the rate of inflation
- Increasing flexibility by NCA regarding online universities
STRATEGIC MARKETPLACE

In 2002, NCU staff participated in a brainstorming session to identify markets and the actions that might be necessary to tap those markets. At that time, it was recognized that some markets might be addressed right away while others might be more appropriate in the future. The markets and ideas were organized into three categories: new or niche markets for current programs; new programs for emerging markets; and new ways to reach existing markets.

In 2006, the Executive Council reviewed the list and noted those markets and products/services that had been addressed (e.g., Military personnel, graduate degree programs in education) and ideas that need refinement or to be abandoned as the mission and focus of NCU becomes clearer. We used a four window pane screening tool that evaluates current and new markets and products/services as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTS/SERVICES</th>
<th>CURRENT</th>
<th>NEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURRENT Markets</td>
<td>Market Penetration Strategies</td>
<td>New Product/Service Development Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW Markets</td>
<td>New Market Development Strategies</td>
<td>Diversification Strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Ansoff Matrix by H. Igor Ansoff.

Current Programs to Current Markets

We believe that further expansion of our current degree programs in business, education, and psychology are possible in market segments already served, including:

- **Major corporations and businesses** -- where the employer understands the value of education to improving the workforce and tuition reimbursement is available to employees.
- **Military personnel and governmental employees** -- seeking more education for career advancement or opportunities for a second career.
- **Law enforcement personnel** -- also seeking career advancement or a second career and often working irregular shifts and long hours.
- **Education professionals** -- often required to obtain higher education degrees to increase compensation or move into administrative positions.
- **Mental health professionals** -- also required to obtain higher education degrees to move into administrative positions or as a prerequisite to obtaining licensure.
To further penetrate these market segments will require continuing focus on the competitiveness of NCU’s degree programs and constant brand building to ensure that target audiences know and prefer NCU.

**Current Programs to New, Emerging Markets**

We believe that it is possible to address the needs of other market segments with current degree programs, including:

- **Community colleges**, who are seeking articulation partners offering opportunities for bachelor’s degree completion programs for their associate degree graduates.
- **Colleges and universities** currently employing adjunct faculty with bachelor’s and master’s degrees who are seeking to improve the educational credentials of faculty.
- **U.S companies** with significant overseas staffs, and their families, who desire a degree from an American university.
- **Families of U.S. military personnel** who move frequently or are stationed overseas.
- **Religious and humanitarian organizations** which have staff members located overseas.
- **A diverse mix of individuals:**
  - Individuals living in areas that are remote to traditional, campus-based colleges and universities or are homebound/care-givers, but are served by the Internet and are seeking higher education degrees.
  - Individuals who are seeking a career change for self-expression or due to down-sizing in their industries.
  - Individuals who consider themselves part of a minority (e.g., based on national identity or ethnicity, mental or physical limitations, or age) and would prefer the anonymity and convenience of online education.

To address these market segments, NCU will need to figure out how large each segment might be, how accessible each segment is, if the segment can be reached economically and served with existing degree programs, and if each segment fits NCU’s mission and vision over the planning horizon.

**New Programs to Current Markets**

We believe that new programs will be required to remain competitive and continue to serve the needs of current market segments, including:

- **Expansion of concentrations and specializations** within existing degree programs as we discover industry-recognized needs for specialized knowledge and education. Recent examples include specializations of homeland security in the School of Business and gender studies in the School of Psychology.
- **Expansion of degree programs** within existing schools to further meet the needs of each market.
  - Bachelor of Education to address the shortage of degreed teachers in K-12 educational systems.
  - Doctor of Psychology to address the needs of mental health professionals seeking a more practical, career-focused degree program.
• **Post graduate certificate programs** that fulfill the need for advanced skills and knowledge among working professionals and that may encourage seeking an advanced degree.

• **Cohort-based programs** – either new degree programs/specializations or certificate programs – formed in partnership with businesses, government, educational entities, or professional organizations and addressing specific knowledge or skill needed by professionals in the partnering institution.

To address the emerging needs of current markets, NCU will need to assess the size, needs, and interest of partners and invest in new degree programs, specializations, and programs adapted to the special needs of current market segments and specific partners.

**New Programs to New Markets**

We believe that new, emerging markets throughout the world will need to be identified and addressed with new programs that fit specific needs, including:

• **International markets** where students are seeking degrees from American educational institutions and foreign ministries of education can be engaged in support of NCU and our degree programs.

• **Healthcare** where the shortage of primary caregivers is acute, market demand is increasing, and current professionals are seeking to upgrade credentials to move into administrative roles.

• **Online charter high schools** where students are already familiar with online education and may be seeking dual high school/college enrollment as they prepare for their college careers.

• **Professional development curricula** for groups where continuing professional education is required (attorneys, doctors, dentists, real estate brokers and agents, financial planners, accountants), and individuals are seeking online options.

To address the emerging needs of new, emerging markets, NCU will need to develop international and industry partnerships where joint program and market development can create a “win-win” and invest in new degree programs, specializations, and programs adapted to the special needs of emerging market segments.
Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

During the 2006 strategic planning discussions, the Executive Council identified goals, objectives, and strategies focusing on six strategic areas:

- Marketplace
- Academics
- Financial
- People
- Infrastructure
- Service
Marketplace

**Goal** – Expand Northcentral University enrollments by focusing on needs for higher education in the worldwide marketplace, selecting opportunities consistent with NCU’s mission, and developing and deploying appropriate educational programs and communications/recruiting strategies.

**Objectives** – From a base of 2,329 enrolled Learners at the end of 2005 and projected enrollment of 4,000 at the end of 2006, grow at a sustainable rate and achieve between 7,000 (15% annual growth) and 13,000 (35% annual growth) at the end of 2011.

**Strategies**

9. Continue expansion of our current degree programs in business, education, and psychology in market segments already served, including major corporations and businesses; military personnel and governmental employees; law enforcement personnel; education professionals; and mental health professionals.

10. Identify the size and ease of access to new segments and address their needs with current degree programs, including community colleges (degree completion); colleges and universities (improve educational credentials of faculty); U.S. companies with significant overseas staffs, and their families; families of U.S. military personnel; religious and humanitarian organizations; and a diverse mix of individuals (remote to educational institutions, home bound, career change, or prefer convenience and anonymity).

11. Identify and develop new programs required to remain competitive and continue to serve the needs of current market segments, including: expanding concentrations and specializations within existing degree programs; expanding degree programs within existing schools; offering post graduate certificate programs; developing cohort-based programs.

12. Identify new, emerging markets throughout the world and addressed with new programs that fit specific needs, including: international markets; healthcare; online charter high schools; professional development curricula for continuing professional education.

13. Maintain focus on the competitiveness of NCU's degree programs, positioning and differentiation of the NCU brand, and brand building to ensure that target audiences know and prefer NCU.

14. Evaluate whether to offer Federal financial aid as a way to expand the current market and enter new market segments, to offer additional financing opportunities for our Learners, and to meet our enrollment objectives.

15. Develop and deploy an enrollment management plan that tailors recruiting, retention, and student development tactics for all targeted segments, especially underserved learners throughout the global community.

16. Improve the admissions and initial enrollment process with a goal of decreasing average processing time (“applicant” to “enrolled” status) to 30 days or less.

Academics

**Goal** -- Northcentral University will excel in teaching and learning.
**Objective** -- NCU will maintain current good standing with both Arizona Post Secondary and the HLC. NCU will be reaffirmed by the HLC in 2008.

**Strategies**

1. Maintain a successful and sustainable student learning assessment program.
2. Continue the self study process, involving all University constituents.
3. Encourage best practices for online course learning and online course delivery via industry and HLC standards.
4. Enhance online and automated learner and alumni support services.
5. Support and enhance current program review processes.
7. Expand current program specializations to address Learner and industry needs.
8. Foster a safe, respectful online environment for NCU's diverse Learner population.
9. Nurture and support a climate of academic leadership and professional development of academic staff and mentors.
10. Enhance Learner academic growth opportunities via the one on one Learner-Mentor relationship.

**Financial**

**Goal** -- Northcentral University will ensure the integrity of its finances providing a basis for sound financial decision making.

**Objectives** –

4. NCU controls its financial resources and allocates them in a way which reflects its mission and purposes.
5. NCU is recognized as a sound and creditworthy institution using accepted financial ranking methodologies pertaining to comparable “for profit” businesses and universities.
6. NCU has in place appropriate internal and external mechanisms to evaluate its financial management, draw conclusions and make adjustments in a logical and timely manner.

**Strategies** --

3. Use GAAP procedures as the basis for internal financial statement preparation.
4. Perform financial analysis using the following criteria:
   a. NCU will maintain a minimum Primary Reserve Ratio of .40X.
   b. NCU will maintain a Net Income Ratio of 3-5%.
   c. NCU will maintain a Return on Net Assets Ratio of 3-6%.
   d. NCU will maintain a Viability Ratio of 1.25X-2.0X.

4. NCU will maintain a minimum cash balance sufficient to provide an ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances.

**People**

**Goal** -- To attract and retain faculty and staff of high quality.

**Objective** -- From a base of 70 staff, 262 faculty mentors, and 6 fulltime faculty mentors in March 2006, we will take steps to ensure there is an appropriate and sustainable number of faculty and staff to support and serve each of the University’s academic programs and administrative functions. Therefore, when NCU achieves between 7,000 and 13,000 Learners at
the end of 2011, we expect to have a minimum of 700 faculty mentors, 14 fulltime faculty, and 150 staff (including 22 to 40 Academic Advisors and 12 to 20 Enrollment Advisors).

**Strategies –**

8. Develop and deploy a recruitment plan to identify, attract and retain faculty and staff of high quality.
9. Hire qualified faculty and staff regardless of their geographic location.
10. Develop an institutional recruitment and hiring strategy.
11. Hire an experienced Human Resource Professional and establish a Human Resources Department to oversee the University’s HR practices, policies and procedures.
12. Establish fair and equitable compensation plans for faculty and staff.
13. Establish and promote a plan that offers clear professional development opportunities for both faculty and staff.
14. Provide a positive work environment - one that manifests a highly proactive interest in faculty and staff development and in promoting a dynamic, supportive, intellectual community.

**Infrastructure**

**Goal** -- Develop a facilities and technological infrastructure that directly supports the mission and growth of Northcentral University.

**Facilities Objective** -- Maintain an annually updated facilities master plan that reflects strategic University priorities; always adhering to construction and technological best practices.

**Strategies --**

9. Complete construction of the first new building and provide furnishings and equipment necessary to conduct business.
10. Maintain campus facilities and exterior areas in a manner that promotes a positive University image and work environment.
11. Proceed with buildings 2-7 in anticipation of need.
12. Design new buildings, with user involvement, to be flexible in order to accommodate multiple functions.
13. Building design will utilize emerging technologies that support the University mission.
14. Building design will provide for a healthy and productive work environment, encourage the efficient use of energy, and preserve open space and natural landscaping around buildings.
15. Emphasize dedicated exterior and interior space for gathering, recreation, and athletic activity.
16. Ensure that facility requirements are included as part of the business continuity plan.

**Technology Objective** -- Provide reliable Information Technology resources that enable the University’s educational mission and support University management.

**Strategies --**
8. Provide 24/7 University operations through a technology environment that encompasses access, stability, performance, redundancy, security and disaster recovery.
9. Ensure the Compass system remains a state-of-the-art, enterprise-wide, technology platform that is web-accessible from anywhere, available at all times, and easy to deploy and manage.
10. Research new technologies and develop methods to apply them to NCU requirements.
11. Maintain a technological infrastructure that supports the current and growing technology environment and is able to expand and support integrated uses of technology in educational, work and home environments for Learners, Mentors, and Staff.
12. Promote superior management capability by applying best industry practices that provide for audit and regulatory compliance.
13. Establish technology standards with enough flexibility to respond to specific requirements throughout academic and administrative areas.
14. Provide for a secure technology environment that is part of the business continuity plan.

Service

Goal -- Continue to improve service quality and efficiency to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction while enrollments steadily grow.

Objectives – Identify all points of organizational contact and the service requirements of prospective Learners, Learners, and Faculty Mentors, as well as NCU staff, and develop the sustained ability to provide the required service.

Strategies –

4. For each process and service requirement, establish service metrics, a measurement plan, and continuous improvement plan, then implement and measure progress.
   a. IT -- Build and maintain an ability to respond to IT issues on a 24/7 basis.
   b. IT -- Ensure that web site access – public, Learner, Mentor, and Administrative sites – are available via the Internet on a 24/7 basis.
   c. Enrollment Services -- Ensure that prospective Learners receive follow-up responses from their initial inquiries and follow-up contacts within 1 business day.
   d. Financial Aid -- Continue to improve the variety of financial assistance services that respond to the financial needs of Learners and Applicants.
   e. Registrar – Ensure authenticity of Learner documents, adherence to NCU’s academic policies and procedures, and outside governing bodies’ rules and regulations.
   f. Learner Affairs – Provide proactive communication and timely response to Learner queries, complaints, and ensure adherence to NCU academic policies and procedures.
   g. Accounting – Ensure that financial information is kept and reported accurately, timely, and consistently to Learner accounts and to NCU management.
   h. Mentor Affairs – Provide support to academic programs in identifying and training qualified mentors.
   i. Academic Affairs -- Ensure that Faculty Mentors respond to assignments from Learners within 5 days maximum and are complying with NCU’s best practices in online mentoring.
   j. Human Resources – Ensure that staff receives a response to compensation and benefits inquiries within 2 business days.
k. Academic Advising – Ensure that applicants are evaluated in compliance with NCU’s admissions policies. Provide timely service to Learner inquiries. Follow academic retention methodologies.

5. Survey prospective Learners, Learners, Faculty Mentors, and staff annually to assess customer satisfaction, including both the timeliness and quality of NCU services.

6. Use feedback from surveys to develop training that improves future customer satisfaction.
NCU Planning Cycle

The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan represents the Executive Council’s direction for the long range planning for NCU. The plan will be incorporated into a planning cycle for the University as shown in the diagram below.

The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan will be reviewed with the NCU Board of Directors and will be communicated to all NCU staff and Faculty Mentors. The philosophy, values, mission, and vision will be shared with current and prospective Learners and the public.

The strategic plan guides annual planning. The Executive Council will ensure alignment of annual plans with the strategic plan during each annual planning cycle. Departmental plans and budgets will be guided by the strategic plan and annual goals, objectives, and programs and projects envisioned to have operational impact during that year.

The Executive Council will review operational results each quarter to ensure that annual objectives and goals are being achieved and that spending corresponds to plans and budgets.

The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated each year.
Appendix 3

Northcentral University
Scholarly and Professional Activities
Appendix 4

The School of Business and Technology
Management’s
2006 – 2007
Strategic Plan
FOUNDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic planning process reevaluates the identity of the School of Business and Technology Management (SoBTM) within Northcentral University and the goals the school desires to achieve in the future. NCU’s philosophy, values, vision, and mission statements define the context of the University Strategic Plan.

- **The University Philosophy** presents a concise statement of educational doctrine.
- **The NCU Values** represent beliefs that the University holds in high regard and deems important in higher education.
- **The Vision** statement describes the future state of the University, which the institution endeavors to attain by advancing and enhancing distance learning.
- **The University Mission** statement defines the purpose of the University against which the institution will evaluate the effectiveness of its educational programs and services to improve delivery and support.
- **The SoBTM Mission** statement is completely aligned with the University’s mission. SoBTM mission defines the purpose of the School within the University.

**Northcentral University Philosophy**

Northcentral University believes that higher education is of fundamental importance to a free society and to the continued development of democratic values, individual liberty, and an appreciation for cultural diversity in society. The University endeavors to expose Learners to these global purposes through its learning processes. For education to succeed there must be an ongoing partnership among Learners and educators, with the needs of the global community in mind.

A Learner-centered approach to its operations is utilized, where individuals are valued. Our motto has evolved from “We put people first in distance learning©” to “The better way to earn your degree©”, reflecting the fact that Learners understand, appreciate, and articulate that NCU is indeed “the better way”.

**Values**

Northcentral University recognizes that the values we embrace guide our organizational culture and our expectations of the behavior of the members of the institution. To achieve our Mission and Vision, NCU affirms its values of Learner Focus, Integrity, Innovation, Respect for Others, Teamwork, Leadership, and Performance.
Learners  Our Learners are our clients. We are deeply committed to meeting the needs of our Learners, and we constantly focus on putting people and their educational needs first in distance learning.

Integrity  We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards in relationships with our constituencies.

Innovation  Innovation is the key to improving the quality of our educational programs and services.

Respect  We recognize that our people are the cornerstone of our success. We value our diversity of thought and action as a source of strength, and we are committed to treating people with respect and dignity.

Teamwork  We know that to be a successful university a community of Learners, mentors and staff must work together, frequently transcending organizational and geographical boundaries.

Leadership  We believe that leaders exhibit standards for others to follow. Leaders achieve difficult goals, envision new and innovative educational delivery systems, and challenge outdated concepts of learning.

Performance  We strive for continuous improvement in our performance. We define and measure outcomes and take corrective action to ensure that our passion for excellence is never compromised.

Vision Statement

Northcentral University is committed to being a premier higher education distance learning institution. This end will be achieved through an uncompromising passion for excellence in providing educational opportunities for adult Learners that fosters integrity, critical thinking, professional knowledge, a global view, and leadership for a changing world.

The SoBTM Mission Statement

Northcentral University’s School of Business and Technology Management focuses on preparing the adult learner, through the use of distance learning methodologies, for successful professional careers by providing high-quality business programs with specializations designed to meet the high demands of the contemporary global business environment.
The SoBTM Programs Mission Statement & Objectives

**The Bachelor of Business Administration** - degree program provides Learners an opportunity to acquire fundamental knowledge and skills related to the basic business functions. Learners also have an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge of a specific business function.

The objectives for the Bachelor of Business Administration degree program are to:

1. provide Learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and function effectively in a business and administrative organization;
2. familiarize Learners with the fundamental bodies of theoretical and applied knowledge of business represented in the core courses
3. provide Learners an opportunity to concentrate their learning in areas such as accounting, marketing, and management as represented in upper level courses;
4. enable Learners to integrate formal academic learning with their business related experiential learning so that meaningful personalized learning results that relates to their personal or professional needs;
5. encourage Learners to experience self-improvement and professional growth and;
6. expose Learners to the global business environment.

**The Master of Business Administration** - The MBA degree program prepares learners to advance to higher levels of leadership in business. Advanced coverage of classic and contemporary theory in business administration is blended with key practical skills all managers need to succeed. Exposure to best practices in the business world enhances comprehension of the challenges and opportunities facing modern business leaders and the various stakeholders they serve. The objectives for the MBA degree program are to:

1. present Learners who are managers and prospective managers with the conceptual overview of modern theory and practice in each of the key areas of managerial responsibility;
2. integrate this formal academic learning with their business-related experiential learning so that meaningful personalized learning results;
3. enable them to experience self-improvement and professional growth and;
4. expose them to international business.

**The Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration (Ph.D)** - degree program is predicated upon the fact that the need has never been greater for business leaders who can contribute to the knowledge base of contemporary business. Ph.D. Learners gain the skills to meet that need through rigorous reflection on their professional experiences, in-depth exposure to the insights offered by the world’s leading organizations, review of classic and cutting edge theory and research, and mastery of methods and techniques to identify, assess, understand and communicate strategically critical knowledge. As stewards of the discipline of Business Administration, Ph.D. Learners focus upon the
creation of new knowledge in Business Administration. The objectives of the Ph.D. program are to:

1. equip Learners to effectively undertake scholarship and systematic inquiry within the context of peer review and a specialized field of study within business administration;
2. provide Learners (via the dissertation) an opportunity to conduct original research that establishes the learner's research competence and;
3. provide Learners an opportunity to become stewards of the discipline by producing an original contribution to the body of knowledge in Business Administration and by communicating that contribution via the dissertation.

**The Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.)** - The D.B.A. serves as preparation for advanced positions of leadership in business, government, philanthropy, and policy and advocacy organizations. The D.B.A. emphasizes the application of research as a means to solve organizational problems and to devise and to execute strategy that is effective and ethical.

D.B.A. learners gain the skills to advance to top leadership positions and to retain them through rigorous reflection on their professional experiences, in-depth exposure to the insights offered by the world’s leading organizations, review of classic and cutting edge theory and research, and mastery of methods and techniques to identify, understand, apply, and communicate strategically critical knowledge.

As stewards of the discipline of Business Administration, D.B.A. learners focus upon the communication and application of knowledge in Business Administration. The objectives of the D.B.A. program are to:

1. equip Learners to effectively undertake scholarship and systematic inquiry within the context of practical organizational problems related to a specialized field of study within business administration;
2. provide Learners (via the dissertation) an opportunity to conduct original research that establishes the learner's research competence and;
3. provide Learners an opportunity to become stewards of the discipline by producing a practical solution to an organizational problem and by communicating that solution via the dissertation.
SoB&TM believes that further expansion of our current degree programs in business, are possible in market segments already served, including:

- **Major corporations and businesses** -- where the employer understands the value of education to improving the workforce and tuition reimbursement is available to employees.
- **Military personnel and governmental employees** -- seeking more education for career advancement or opportunities for a second career.
- **Law enforcement personnel** -- also seeking career advancement or a second career and often working irregular shifts and long hours.
- **Education professionals** -- often required to obtain higher education degrees to increase compensation or move into administrative positions.

SoB&TM to further penetrate these market segments will require the School to continue focus on the competitiveness of NCU’s degree programs and constant brand building to ensure that target audiences know and prefer NCU.

**Current Programs to New, Emerging Markets**

SoB&TM believes that it is possible to address the needs of other market segments with current degree programs, including:

- **Community colleges**, who are seeking articulation partners offering opportunities for bachelor’s degree completion programs for their associate degree graduates.
- **Colleges and universities** currently employing adjunct faculty with bachelor’s and master’s degrees who are seeking to improve the educational credentials of faculty.
- **U.S companies** with significant overseas staffs, and their families, who desire a degree from an American university.
- **Families of U.S. military personnel** who move frequently or are stationed overseas.
- **Religious and humanitarian organizations** which have staff members located overseas.
- **A diverse mix of individuals**:
  - Individuals living in areas that are remote to traditional, campus-based colleges and universities or are homebound/care-givers, but are served by the Internet and are seeking higher education degrees.
  - Individuals who are seeking a career change for self-expression or due to downsizing in their industries.
  - Individuals who consider themselves part of a minority (e.g., based on national identity or ethnicity, mental or physical limitations, or age) and would prefer the anonymity and convenience of online education.

**New Programs to Current Markets**

We believe that new programs will be required to remain competitive and continue to serve the needs of current market segments, including:
• **Expansion of concentrations and specializations** within existing degree programs as we discover industry-recognized needs for specialized knowledge and education. Recent examples include specializations of homeland security in the School of Business.

• **Revamp the MBA program** – By late 2006, the School wants to complete revamp its MBA program. This would update the current program to include courses such as, Supply Chain Management, Statistics, International Business, and Economics.

• **Post graduate certificate programs** that fulfill the need for advanced skills and knowledge among working professionals and that may encourage seeking an advanced degree.

**Goals/Objective/Strategies**

**Goal** – To make the SoB&TM excel in teaching and learning.

**Objective:**
1. Maintain current good standing with both Arizona Post Secondary and HCL;
2. Seek a secondary accreditation through ACBSP

**Strategies**

- Maintain a successful and sustainable student learning assessment program. – Ongoing
- Continue the self-study process for both ACBSP and HLC. – Ongoing
- Encourage best practices for online course learning and online course delivery via industry and HLC standards. – Ongoing
- Enhance online and automated learner and alumni support services. – Ongoing
- Support and enhance current program review processes. – Ongoing
- Expand current program specializations to address Learner and industry needs
- Create an OM specialization by February 2007
- Foster a safe, respectful online environment for NCU's diverse Learner population. – Ongoing
- Nurture and support a climate of academic leadership and professional development of academic staff and mentors. – Ongoing
- Enhance Learner academic growth opportunities via the one on one Learner-Mentor relationship. – Ongoing
- Revamp current MBA program by Aug, 2006
- Gain ACBSP accreditation by May 2007
- Complete Syllabi revision by March 31, 2007
Appendix 5

Electronic Learning Resource Center’s 2006 Plan
Northcentral University

Electronic Learning Resource Center
Plan
2007-2010

January 2007

505 W. Whipple Street
Prescott, AZ 86301
(928)541-7777 (888)327-2877 FAX (928) 541-7817
www.ncu.edu
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Introduction

The Electronic Library Resource Center (ELRC), a department of Northcentral University, provides library services and research assistance to NCU Learners, Faculty Mentors, and staff. Among the services provided, the ELRC assists Learners wanting to access local libraries, grants access to databases for research, offers e-Reference to answer questions, supplies research tips, makes available interlibrary loans and document delivery, obtains copyright clearance for e-reserves, provides Course Guides, and Internet links to outside resources. The ELRC resides at http://learners.ncu.edu/elrc http://mentors.ncu.edu/elrc and http://admin.ncu.edu/elrc. A Web site at http://www.ncu.edu/elrc provides information on resources to the general public. These sites are identical except that the public site does not allow access to licensed databases or tools.

“Libraries have traditionally played an important role in supplying high-quality information services and products used by people seeking to learn. They have always provided facilities that promote and encourage learning. The Internet has transformed the American culture into a learning society, an anytime, anywhere cornucopia of learning opportunities. The Internet gives the public a very available, encyclopedic source of information. With the Internet at home, school, work, or through a library, it is simple for anyone to look up virtually any topic and immediately find many resources that offer relevant information in just a few clicks” (Lippincott, 2005b).

The primary ELRC task is to support student learning by providing resources, services, guides, quizzes, tools, and reference works that support the curriculum so that the NCU Mission may be fulfilled:

NCU Mission

“Northcentral University uses distance learning methodologies to provide adult learners throughout the world with opportunities to earn bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in recognized academic programs to enable them to acquire the competencies and to apply the knowledge and skills needed to participate and function effectively in modern society.”
Changes to the ELRC

Significant Changes in the ELRC

- Major reorganization of the ELRC site to improve navigation and connect all the ELRC sites (2004/2005)
- Revised the public ELRC site (2/24/2005); Revised the public ELRC to comply with Brand Standards Guide (4/2006)
- Added major ELRC links to opening Learner screen (2005)
- Created a database to provide a management system for updating and creating pages [http://mentors.ncu.edu/security](http://mentors.ncu.edu/security) (2004)
- Created a database for Course Guides (2004)
- Created a database for Writing Center (2004)
- ELRC Web sites checked for accessibility (2005- to date)
- Added a blog to replace the static, monthly ELRC News to encourage interactivity and timely dissemination of information (6/2005)
- Created ELRC logo (2005); created new header for the ELRC (4/2006)
- Created online ELRC statistics area on NCU Admin site (2005)
- LiveStats (for evaluation of ELRC usage)
- Added search functions to ELRC sites (2004)
- Added search trail (Breadcrumbs) to ELRC sites (2004)
- Updated site map (2004- to date)
- Redesigned ILL request and e-reserve forms (2005)
- Purchased software to validate Web links
- Purchased design software (InterDev, Macromedia Captivate, Jspell Iframe)
- Improved request forms for online reference questions and requests for materials (2005)
- Added the Databases FAQ information (2005)
- Added Research Papers to the Dissertation Center (Benchmark material from Mentor committees) (2005)
- Acquired a new scanner for sending more documents electronically (2005)
- ReadIris Pro 10 software acquired for Interlibrary Loans
- Acquired eBrary access (12/7/2004)
- Added PsychiatryOnline to support Psychology program (key reference tool) (2005)
- Added CurrentResearch@Northcentral University (provides access to full-text NCU dissertations)
- Added Electronic Journals in the Field of Education [http://aera-cr.asu.edu/links.html](http://aera-cr.asu.edu/links.html)
Added FirstSearch: ERIC, WorldCat, WilsonSelectPlus subscriptions (AMIGOS – regional consortium)
Added links to Global Scholar, Google Print and SearchEdu
Added links to D-Space, Oaister and other open source university depositories of scholarly works
Added Guides & Quizzes made interactive (2005)
Created ELRC Brochure for Learners and mentors (7/2005). Distributed to new Learners and mentors
Created ProQuest Brochure for Learners and mentors (7/2005) explains ProQuest searching
Automated welcome letter from the ELRC to Learners and mentors. (5/1/2003)
Adopted a policy for e-Reserves, Academic Integrity, e-Collection Development, interlibrary loans, late fees, dissertation policies and procedures, Conditions of Use of ELRC.
http://admin.ncu.edu/elrc/dw_template.asp?parent_id=154
Revised the Dissertation Center in conjunction with the Dissertation Project (2006)
Revised the NCU Writing Center following the hiring of a Writing Center Coordinator (2006)
Revised Course Guides, working directly with the Faculty Mentors and coordinating with the syllabi
EzProxy Software installed to alleviate most access issues for library databases and tools (June 2006)
Full text ProQuest Digital Dissertations 7/2006
Safari Technology Books Online 7/2006
PsycARTICLES 7/2006
PsycBooks 7/2006
Addition of a second reference librarian, 9/2006
Addition of Social Sciences Citation Index 11/2006
Addition of ILLiad and Odyssey for interlibrary loan management 11/2006
Additional databases added to FirstSearch: ArticleFirst, WorldCat Dissertations, eBooks, EconLit, Education Abstracts, Electronic Collection Online (ECO), and Applied Science and Technology Abstracts.
Writing Center and Dissertation Center spun-off into separate entities under the Writing Program
Database Index added 12/2006
Reorganized Course Guides 12/2006
Launch of ILLiad and Odyssey for interlibrary loan management 2/1/2007

Strengthening the ELRC requires continuous improvement over the next few years. Improvements are based on input from the NCU Strategic Plan, surveys, emails, messages, comments (blog), and other informal interaction with Learners, mentors, and staff. This long-range plan addresses areas of strategic concern in that process.
PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Donna Meyer, Director of Information Resources
Ed Salazar, Reference Librarian/ELRC Web Programmer
Jennifer Hill, Reference Librarian/ILL
Donna James, mentor (M.L.S. – ALA degreed librarian)
Sharon Seymour, outside reviewer (M.L.S. – ALA degreed librarian)
Learners/Alumni via the ELRC website
**ELRC MISSION, GOALS, VALUES**

**ELRC MISSION:**
The Electronic Learning Resource Center (ELRC) facilitates the research activities of NCU graduate and undergraduate Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff members. The ELRC strives to provide learning opportunities designed to encourage the development and expansion of information skills and provides resources to support student learning.

**GOALS**

- To actively support the learning process.
- To enhance Learner, Faculty Mentor, and staff learning opportunities by providing access to appropriate resources, reference works, and guides.
- To communicate with Learners, Faculty Mentors, and staff through a variety of avenues.
- To assess Learner, Faculty Mentor and staff research needs based on surveys, discussions, personal profile information, and comments.
- To prepare guides and quizzes or other Web based tutorials to address the expressed research needs of Learners, mentors and staff.
- To foster independent research.
- To enable Learners to acquire the competencies and to apply the knowledge and skills needed to participate and function effectively in modern society.

**VALUES**

**ELRC PROMOTES THE FOLLOWING:**

- Nurturing cooperation and the sharing of resources among libraries.
- Building an innovative organization guided by Learner, Faculty Mentor and staff needs.
- Being an efficient, cost-effective, valued, and viable part of the University.
- Creating an environment that fosters learning.
- Locating, evaluating, and using information.

**ELRC STAFF BELIEVE IN:**

- Assuring that Learners, mentors and staff receive expert courteous service with a "can do" attitude.
- Serving the information needs of Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff.
- Maintaining flexibility of response to Learners, mentors and staff and providing timely and knowledgeable follow-up on requests.
- Working in a supportive team environment that maintains a sense of humor and encourages an individual's sense of accomplishment at NCU.
The ELRC continually evaluates resources to ensure the best possible tools can be accessed. Northcentral University holds a strong commitment to provide Learners, Faculty Mentors, and staff with information literacy skills to enable them to make full and appropriate use of a wide-variety of information resources. The ELRC evaluates Learner, Faculty Mentor and staff needs to assure development and improvement of services and resources.

“The library’s role in instruction is assuming a newfound importance in our information-laden environment, and critical research skills and strategies are more important now than ever. Library services and resources are changing, and with the growing number of distance learners, the library must evolve into a proactive entity reaching out to students [and faculty] instead of a passive entity, awaiting visitors” (Buchanan, 2000).
ELRC PLAN
ELRC Response to Growth Plan

“Northcentral University (NCU) uses distance learning methodologies to provide adult learners throughout the world with opportunities to earn bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in recognized academic programs to enable them to acquire the competencies and to apply the knowledge and skills needed to participate and function effectively in modern society”. – NCU Mission Statement

ELRC MISSION:
The Electronic Learning Resource Center (ELRC) facilitates the research activities of NCU graduate and undergraduate Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff members. The ELRC strives to provide learning opportunities designed to encourage the development and expansion of information skills and provides resources to support student learning.

The rapid growth of NCU requires careful planning so that resources and staff continue to meet Learner, Faculty Mentor, and staff needs. The areas of concern that drive planning include:

- Ensuring resources support for new programs, specializations, and courses
- Continuing to provide timely and helpful response to reference questions (library staff)
- Ensuring that Interlibrary loans are provided in a timely manner (library staff)
- Ongoing website expansion and improvement. (library staff and IT)
- Staffing levels remain sufficient to meet Learner, Faculty Mentor, and staff requirements for resources and support services from the library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projected Personnel Needs</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library technician</td>
<td>6500 Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 reference librarian</td>
<td>5000 Learners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Database Acquisition

To provide the necessary resources for research, the ELRC Library continually reviews database, references, and tools. Feedback and requests for specific databases from Learners receive serious consideration. Through the review process Learners, chairs, staff, and mentors provide input and recommendations.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION I:** Expanding the NCU Library and Establishing Access to Appropriate Resources for Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff at NCU.

**RATIONALE:** The expansion of the library for the support of NCU’s Mission and the programs offered is of primary interest to Learners, Faculty Mentors, staff, and administration. The ELRC is funded by the University to create patron-centered access to resources, interlibrary loan, document delivery, information skill guides and quizzes, and course related guides. The library includes patron initiated document delivery, and the continual upgrading and enhancing of online resources.

“Libraries and digital information resources can play a critical role in the education of today's students. Libraries license access to electronic journals, which provide key readings in many courses, and set up electronic reserve systems to facilitate easy use of materials. Libraries are an important resource for assignments that encourage students to go beyond the course syllabus. They provide access to the marketplace of ideas that is a hallmark of American higher education. Since much of the learning in higher education institutions takes place outside the classroom, libraries can be one important venue for such learning. The library can play a critical role in learning directly related to courses, such as writing a paper, and processes related to lifelong learning, such as gathering information on political candidates in order to make informed choices in an upcoming election. Libraries provide collections, organized information, systems that promote access, and in-person and virtual assistance to encourage students to pursue their education beyond the classroom” (Lippincott, 2005a).
MAJOR STRATEGIES

I.1 Add access to full-text databases that support NCU programs and curricula
For updates see “Changes to the ELRC” page 4-5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products Under Review for Future Consideration</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBSOhost Psychology &amp; Behavioral Sciences Collection</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProQuest’s Terrorism: An International Source File</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial Solutions Article Linker or SFX</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Measurements Yearbook</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEEE/IEE Electronic Library Online</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald Full-Text</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwell Full-Text</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSTOR</td>
<td>Currently will not provide service to online institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I.2 Negotiate access to electronic resources
- Evaluate database usage (CONTINUING STRATEGY)
  [http://mentors.ncu.edu/elrc/stats/](http://mentors.ncu.edu/elrc/stats/)
- Negotiate with AMIGOS or other vendors for best pricing (CONTINUING STRATEGY)
- Evaluate other databases to assure program support (CONTINUING STRATEGY)
- Collect Learner, Chairs, Faculty Mentor and staff comments about research needs. (CONTINUING STRATEGY)

I.3 Develop relationships to increase availability of resources
- Work closely with the Office of Mentor Affairs and chairs, Lead Faculty, and Faculty Mentors to support learning and teaching (e-Reserves, Course Guides, tutorials, e-Reference, journals and ebooks)
- Further develop relationships with regional academic libraries for resource sharing
- Continue to explore access to library material through the Internet (D-Space, Google Print, Google Scholar, etc.) adding appropriate links to material that supports student learning.
- Use ILLiad for interlibrary Loan (ILL) (software management for ILL, statistics, and web interface for articles and status of ILL requests) - 2007
- Use Ariel and Odyssey for document delivery
- Recommend local resources based on Learner/mentors location
- Work with other university library staff to negotiate Learner/mentor access to local collections
• Provide $25 annually for fees incurred by Learners accessing local collections (Future goal to raise this amount to $50)
• Locate used books through Amazon.com for international Learners who do not have access to university libraries or a public library system (Academic libraries do not allow ILL to international Learners). Encourage international Learners to explore eBrary and other eBook sources.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION II**: Encourage and Support Student Learning, Expand Training and Staff Development

**RATIONALE:** Continuing education is a major emphasis of the ELRC. Based on the requests of Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff, Guides & Quizzes have been greatly expanded in the ELRC sites. Workshops and conferences keep ELRC staff members abreast of recent issues in distance education and librarianship. Professional development enhances the capabilities of the ELRC staff to provide reference service and improvements to the web site and resources. Workshops for NCU staff are held frequently to introduce new resources and services in the ELRC.

“The following elements could be considered essential for the library distance education gateway: library contact information, personalized where possible; listings of remote access databases and e-books with some guidance for their use and information on authorization as appropriate; some electronic means of posing reference questions; and specific instructions for …interlibrary loan procedures. Desirable information would include subject or course-specific resource pages and information for distance education faculty” (Nicholas & Tomeo, 2005). The ELRC provides these elements.

**MAJOR STRATEGIES**

**II.1 Provide easy to navigate and supportive ELRC web sites** *(CONTINUING STRATEGY)*

“A library’s Web site can provide a powerful forum for communicating with users about changes occurring in local collecting practices and their relationship to larger issues of scholarly communication” (Hahn & Schmidt, 2005).

• Maintain access and evaluate current usage *(CONTINUING STRATEGY)*
  [http://mentors.ncu.edu/elrc/stats/](http://mentors.ncu.edu/elrc/stats/)
• Utilize software and programming resources to improve the Web sites *(CONTINUING STRATEGY)*
  InterDev (2004)
  Macromedia Captivate (2005) for interactive guides and quizzes
Camtasia (2006)
PhotoShop
PowerPoint
SQL for ELRC database

- The source files that comprise the websites are managed in a source library management tool called Perforce (http://www.perforce.com). This tool allows the IT team and ELRC Web Librarian to check files in and out, providing control and reporting capabilities for system changes and release management.

- Based on the needs of Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff develop new and/or expand existing ELRC examples, guides and quizzes utilizing ideas from staff, Faculty Mentors and Learners. (CONTINUING STRATEGY)
  Guides & Quizzes (Flash and HTML tutorials and quizzes)
  Course Guides
  NCU Academic Integrity Quiz and Citation Help

- Assure accessibility of library sites, resources, and links (W3C compliant)

"Web accessibility means that people with disabilities can use the Web. More specifically, Web accessibility means that people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web, and that they can contribute to the Web” WAI, 2001).

II.2 Assure access to information

- Search capability in the ELRC
- ELRC News Blog (current information, information strategies, database access updates, writing tips, ELRC resources, Mentor information, and What’s New)

  “Compared to asynchronous discussion forums such as newsgroups and bulletin boards, Ferdig & Trammel (2004) contend that blogs are more successful in promoting interactivity that is conversational; a mode of interaction more conducive to improved student and teacher relationships, active learning, higher order thinking, and greater flexibility in teaching and learning more generally” (Williams & Jacobs, 2004). “An increasing number of libraries at educational institutions have created blogs to promote a wide range of services and collections” (McKiernan, 2005).®

- Database FAQs
- Toll-free number to assist Learner and mentors with reference and access issues (2006) 888-828-ELRC (3572)
- EZProxy added to eliminate most access issues. (2006)
- Use ILLiad for interlibrary loan management and copyright clearance (2007)
- Work closely with Faculty Mentors to support learning and teaching, i.e., e-Reserves (2005), Course Guides (2000- to date), tutorials (2000- to date), e-Reference (2000- to date) ELRC News Blog (2005 to date).

II.3 Provide Information Skill strategies that meet priority needs of Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff (CONTINUING STRATEGY)
According to the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), an information literate person is someone who can recognize when information is needed and has the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (ACRL, 2001).

- Work with Office of Mentor Affairs to developed FMD courses with input from Faculty Mentors that integrate information skills
- Consult with chairs or Lead Faculty on integrating information skills into Learners’ curriculum
- E-Reference and Guides & Quizzes provide “teachable moments” to help patrons recognize information needs, evaluate and use information
- Toll-free number for reference assistance provided 888-828-ELRC (3572)

II.4 Provide ELRC and staff development

- Conference/workshop/training attendance (ACRL, Internet Librarian, Off-Campus Library Services, HLC Assessment Workshop, LITA, Illiad training on-site, Illiad online training)
- OCLC ILLiad Implementation Kickoff, 10/9/2006
- Illiad on-site training 11/29/2006
- Illiad virtual training December 12 -14, 2006
- Illiad sharing at University of Arizona 12/15/2006
- Courses (CNT120 Introduction to Operating Systems, CNT123 Managing a Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Network, MCSA/E Certification)
- Presentations by ELRC staff (Internet Librarian 2002, LITA 2006)
- Allstaff Workshops on ELRC’s updates (quarterly)
- Admissions Workshops (Marketing of the library resources)
- Allstaff emails on additions to the ELRC
- ELRC News Blog (available on Learners, Faculty Mentor and staff sites)
- Announcements on the Learner and Mentor sites
- ELRC Manual
STRATEGIC DIRECTION III: Explore the trends and developments in distance education and particularly in best practices of virtual libraries.

RATIONALE: The rapidly changing world of distance education and virtual libraries requires the exploration of trends and developments in the field. “Some forward-thinking institutions have, in fact, made substantial use of their Web sites as communications vehicles for informing their users about a wide range of issues, actions, and resources. Presumably, they are acting to assist those users in understanding and adapting to the rapidly changing collections librarians are managing” (Hahn & Schmidt, 2005).

MAJOR STRATEGIES

III.1 Subscribe to appropriate discussion forums and periodicals (CONTINUING STRATEGY)

Discussion Forums and Electronic Communications:
- ARIEL-L
- DEOS-L
- Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog on behalf of Charles W. Bailey, Jr.
- ILI-L@ala.org on behalf of Information Literacy Instruction List
- Mary Ellen Bates Search Tip of the Month
- Marylaine Block (RSS feed and email)
- Off-Campus Library Services
- Inside Higher Ed
- UB Daily from University Business
- DLS Newsletter (Distance Learning Section of ALA)
- CLS Newsletter (College Libraries Section of ACRL)

Journals:
- Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning
- College & Research Libraries (Association of College and Research Libraries)
- LITA
- American Libraries News
- ACRL News
- Information Today

Blogs (accessed using SharpReader aggregator):
- ACRLog
- OCLC News
- BlogwithoutaLibrary
- ShiftedLibrarian
- RSS4Lib
- Blog.xrefer.com
- Connect. EduCause.edu
- Search Tip of the Month – Ellen Bates
• UsefulUtilities (EZProxy)
• Amigos.org
• LibraryCrunch
• FreeRange Librarian
• ResourceShelf
• DigitalReference


III.3 Establish and maintain communication with other librarians at other universities (CONTINUING STRATEGY) (University of Arizona, Prescott College, Yavapai College)
  • Acquire library agreements with academic libraries

III.4 Read and evaluate literature on distance learning and best practices for libraries (CONTINUING STRATEGY) See sources above.


**STRATEGIC DIRECTION IV: Increase Communication, Cooperation, and Innovation in the Library Community of NCU Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff**

**RATIONALE:** ELRC contributes greatly to the support of learning provided through the programs offered by NCU. The ELRC provides leadership in research, resources and information skills education. The mission of the ELRC includes promoting skills for locating, evaluating and using information. An essential strategy remains: To communicate and encourage innovation and utilization of the ELRC by Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff.
The best method for maintaining and evaluating a library site is to conduct usability tests. Before rewording and re-designing the library site, the ELRC performs its own research and analysis of the results. The ELRC uses surveys and usability tests to evaluate major changes to the Web sites.

“Digital reference interactions may be less encumbered by biases and stereotypes based on speech patterns (accents) and physical appearances” (Ellis, 2004). This characteristic of e-reference provides for more equitable reference service for the diverse learning community at NCU. “The global reach of the World Wide Web helps create connections between many people with diverse opinions and interests. This strength, …the ability to reach a large audience [has] fostered a phenomenon known as weblogs” (Embrey, 2002). The ELRC News Blog provides a forum for Learners, mentors, and staff to interact with the ELRC staff and one another.

MAJOR STRATEGIES

IV.1 Keep patrons up-to-date on cutting edge technology and critical issues facing libraries (CONTINUING STRATEGY) ELRC News converted to Blog in 2005

IV.2 Provide leadership in the development of instruction resources for Learners and mentors (CONTINUING STRATEGY)

- Mentor Center
- ELRC Mentor Web site http://mentors.ncu.edu/elrc
- ELRC News Blog
- Mentor Welcome Letter
- E-Reference (online form)
- ILL requests (Illiad)
- Course Guides
- E-Reserves (integrated into Course Page Resources)
- ELRC links within Course Pages
- ELRC News Blog
- Guides & Quizzes
- Mass emails to Faculty Mentors
- Announcements on the Mentor site

IV.3 Provide leadership in the development of information skills education (CONTINUING STRATEGY)

- Work closely with Faculty Mentors to support learning and teaching (e-Reserves, Course Guides, tutorials, e-Reference)
- Consult with Lead Faculty on creation and revision of syllabi with research assignments
- Provide assistance to Learners through various communication tools to provide encouragement and to promote independent information skills.
IV.4 Develop and promote sharing of expertise among libraries in distance learning. Establish relationship with a number of librarians in distance learning environments and campus based academic libraries.

IV.5 Promote the ELRC through messages, mass emails, newsletters, telephone contacts, the ELRC web site, ELRC News Blog, video conferencing, brochures, messages, and announcements. (CONTINUING STRATEGY)

IV.6 Research models of service and test or pilot new initiatives with Learners, Faculty Mentors and staff.

- Future opportunities – explore pod-casting, streaming video, knowledge base, learning object database, wikis, instant messaging, and other means of accessing the ELRC Web sites or reference service.

IV.7 Revise ELRC Policy and Procedures as needed. These policy updates are reviewed and voted on by the Academic Affairs Committee.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION V: Organize and Help Implement the Marketing of NCU and the ELRC

RATIONALE: The promotion of libraries and successful library services is considered of paramount importance to NCU. There is a need for the ELRC to advocate for itself and publicize its services among its patrons and in the general distance learning community.

MAJOR STRATEGIES

V.1 Provide leadership in marketing the ELRC

Methods used to promote the ELRC
- NCU branding of ELRC pages (2006-2007)
- ELRC Brochure (2005)
- ProQuest Brochure (2005)
- Mass emails or messages to Learners or mentors
- Announcements on Learner or mentor sites
- ELRC News (Blog) (2005)
- Input provided for changes to the public site concerning ELRC (2005)

V.2 Evaluate the results of advocacy efforts (CONTINUING STRATEGY)
- Learner surveys
- Mentor surveys
• Post-Course surveys

**V.3** Increase recognition of the value of ELRC within the NCU community, distance learning community and the local library community

• Work more closely with Faculty Mentors to support learning and teaching (e-Reserves, Course Guides, tutorials, e-Reference)

• Use input from surveys, blog comments, emails, messages, and phone calls from Learners, staff and mentors to make decisions regarding services and resources.

• Workshops for staff

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**STRATEGIC DIRECTION VI: Improve ELRC’s Financial Position**

**RATIONALE:** Funding is a key issue faced by all libraries, and ELRC is no exception. The university provides monetary commitment and support of the ELRC. Expansion of services depends on increased revenues as enrollment increases. ELRC must promote the visibility of the resources and encourage knowledge and understanding of its patrons of the usefulness of the ELRC.

**MAJOR STRATEGIES**

**VI.1** Promote the resources accessible to Learners, mentors and staff. *(CONTINUING STRATEGY)*

**VI.2** Explore agreements and/or contract for services with other universities

**VI.3** Seek diversified funding and grants available to private institutions

**VI.4** Prepare proposals for additional services and resources within Strategic Planning guidelines and budgeted funds.

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E-mail Electronic Learning Resource Center at elrc@ncu.edu

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http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?page_id=6067&bhcp=1


http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6261428.html


Appendix 6

Learner’s Handbook