Planning and Feedback Session

The purpose of this session was to gather information from online adjunct faculty across a variety of disciplines.

Group: Online Adjuncts  Date: November 8, 2011  Tool: Survey  # Attendees: 14

1. What would make BSC the first choice for students, faculty and staff?
   - Bismarck State College should be the first choice for students, faculty, and staff because of the quality of the learning environment. The learning environment encompasses learning in the classroom and collaborative faculty, staff, and student activity outside of the classroom.
   - For students: Having the curriculum and degree programs that the student is looking for; having knowledgeable instructors with experience who are excited to teach; providing up to date and providing courses that are based on cutting edge technology. For faculty: Providing textbooks that are not older than 3-4 years old; provide forum for faculty to discuss issues that are encountered in the classroom; provide a policy that instructs faculty to use Turn It In for every class. Also to provide adjunct instructors who teach online access to Microsoft products that are available IT personnel in order to be able to deliver better instruction with latest technology.
   - Job opportunities for graduating students
   - Cost
   - By offering the right courses to open doors both to careers but also academic excellence BSC and build upon its already good reputation.
   - Many former students have expressed to me that they appreciate and valued the low cost of higher education along with updated facilities and knowledgeable professors.
   - BSC is a good place to work, however, needs to do a better job of communicating changes to its adjunct staff. Additionally, personnel evaluating the performance of the adjunct instructors need to experience the difficulty of teaching on line. Talked with several perspective students who have turned away due to cost. The additional cost associate with BSC programs compared to similar programs provided y other on line colleges, turns students who have to pay their own way off.
   - I can only speak to the online environment. In the power programs, the first choice for students is the great programs without much competition. This is true for online, at least in the power programs. Faculty and Staff- BSC has op notch programs with above average pay. My wife teaches online for several institutions on the east coast. BSC has better pay and less binding restrictions.
   - Offering the degrees and programs that students need, and offering competitive salary and benefits packages for employees.
   - Listening and meeting needs of students and staff
   - When answering this question, it should be noted that I can only speak in relation to Bismarck's energy program. The programs that have been compiled for students interested in the energy field is a wealth of extremely valuable information on an industry that is typically overlooked as far as careers go. The energy industry is typically not a
highly advertised job field nor are there many specialized programs in traditional education to provide an individual a start to pursue their goals. From what I have experienced and observed at Bismarck through the ELPW program, is that more than half of the students enrolled are already currently employed in the energy field and are working to either better themselves or satisfy employer requirements. In this case BSC's online program will often be the first choice for a student. Linemen on storm work, traveling maintenance crews, substation operators, etc will never be able to dedicate the time needed for traditional classroom education. The online flexibility has already made these programs the first choice for furthering education over other options. In this industry specifically, I do not see this a trend that will change in the near future, although I do expect an increase in those wanting to work in an energy related field.

- 1. Listening to students' needs and concerns and proving through action that those needs/concerns are addressed
- 2. Listening to faculty/staff needs and concerns and proving through action that those needs/concerns are addressed
- Having students get high-paying prestigious jobs.
- As an adjunct, my perspective is limited. Students: There are two general populations in my classes; those taking classes to get a job and those that need the continuing education hours (or are looking to advance in their current occupation). Helping students meet these two goals seem to be a priority. For distance learning, cost is a factor as well. Faculty: Treating faculty with respect.

2. What is the vital core value that BSC should preserve?

- The vital core value that Bismarck State College should preserve is providing a quality education. This value is why students choose Bismarck State College. They seek learning experiences that will prepare them for careers or further academic study. If we maintain this quality, we will serve students well and students will continue to come to us.
- Providing excellent educational services to its community in Bismarck. Providing a unique online program that provides current employees of the electric industry the opportunity to further their education. Provide those interested in entering the electric industry the tools necessary for them to have a basic level understanding of the electric system so that they can enter the workforce.
- Ability to get a job when you graduate
- Academic excellence

- Academic excellence is the core value that should be preserved. Academic excellence is challenged by two competing values--the idea that an education is the same as job training and compromising quality in order to grow in numbers.
- I believe that BSC does an outstanding job of reaching all students in a variety of career fields.
- Integrity of the program. On line classes can be compromised by the students. Need to develop a method to ensure that the student we instruct is the same person as the one who shows up for the job interview. Many NPPs are starting to discount the value of the online college programs.
- Not sure if it's a core value but..... I think BSC should be the place that someone can get a useable degree from the online classroom where they might otherwise not have that opportunity.
• The two-year degree program fills an important void that the larger universities to the east do not. BSC should be focused on meeting needs the larger universities do not.
• Quality education
• Commitment to the students by by professors, facilitators, and instructors. The online environment can offer an extremely valuable experience to the students, and on the other hand a very disappointing one. It is very obvious to our students when person running the class puts in minimal effort, lack of interest, etc. Dedication to the students in this type of environment is key here. Personally I enjoy the interactions with the students and find that educating and spreading knowledge is extremely rewarding not only to the students I have made a commitment to, but also myself. In the past I have felt a handful of professors I was a student under had either very little time to dedicate or a severe disinterest in the position. Which in turn results in resentful students with poor moral. Dedication is not a value that is easily learned, but more of a quality of an individual. We must all take care in the online environment not to become complaicant and let dedication slip by, as our students will be directly impacted.
• Students first
• High quality education.
• Continual improvement of courses and programs to stay relevant.

3. What is the one thing BSC could change that would substantially improve the college?
• Providing an engineering degree for those interested in pursuing engineering studies with a core in Electrical Power Systems.
• Make sure students can read and write at higher than a 12th grade level when they graduate
• BSC is doing almost everything right now, but it seems the emphasis is on growing in numbers and other values can be compromised in that pursuit.
• Have student final exams proctored at a testing center.
• I think that BSC is on the right track.
• A recent issue I have experienced involved a student who was stationed overseas and employed by the government. This person had issues with compatibility of BSC's online interface. This eventually led to a multitude of issues, the student falling behind, and I would expect a feeling of frustration and lack of interest on the students part. The student did pass with an acceptable grade, but I do feel he could have performed much better if there were technical issues to struggle against. The help desk was made aware of this and hopefully in the future an upgrade of the software will prevent this. I do expect to see more students stationed around the world being involved in online education while continuing a tour of duty. Word of mouth is a make or break deal with many individuals, I suspect if we can provide the same ease to these students out of country that we do to those here, enrollment should increase over time.
• Help today's students as well as staff, accept personal responsibility for their choices, think independently and make informed decision. Also, there needs to be more emphasis on the importance of general education courses and how they are important to a student's intended career. Many students view gen ed courses as "requirements" and do not see these courses as a chance to expand their knowledge and academic interests. If it were not for gen ed courses, I would never have been able to speak in front of a group of people
without wanting to die and I would have no idea what John Stewart is talking about. Seriously.

- Require students to be able to read and write - their writing skills are horrendous.
- From a distance learning perspective in the technology areas, increased use of simulators as a training resource.

4. What are two emerging issues you anticipate BSC will have to deal with to succeed in the future?
   - I think the emerging issues that Bismarck State College will have to address are the same issues that will have to be addressed by all institutions of higher education, expanding distance education options and value. As the competition for students becomes more intense, the colleges that most effectively address distance learning will thrive. After all, many of the students we serve have full time family and/or work obligations that can preclude them from being able to participate in face-to-face classroom settings. The other issue concerns educational value. Stakeholders such as students, employers, and lawmakers want to see students receiving a quality education at a cost that will not create heavy financial debt for years to come.
   - 1. Providing an educational forum for green technology alternatives such as solar and wind energy. 2 Providing an educational forum for energy saving alternatives for home owners and commercial businesses.
- Poor reading and writing skills
- Online class integrity. Rigorous classwork.
- The competition between good-paying jobs and getting an education is one continuing issue, and the challenge to pay sufficient salaries to attract the very best faculty is another issue needing attention.
- * Try to keep our President. He has been a tremendous asset to the growth and success of BSC, I'm afraid another University will steal him away from us.
- There is a new reactor design coming on the market, the school needs to be ready to teach the new design and also some of the current programs need to be updated. We have been teaching the same material for several years.
- I don't see any and here's why. Keep up with and ahead of the online classroom. The emerging issue that most colleges are having to deal with is the online learning environment. Many were hesitant to get on board and some still consider it hokey. They missed the boat. The online classroom is continuing to evolve. By 2014 over 50% of high school classes will be available online. Of course, BSC was ahead of the curve when I started teaching online in 2001. It was years before it became mainstream. If anything, I would say BSC could team up with a university to offer a dual degree from both institutions. Case in point - In 2005 the university of Singapore started offering a dual degree program with MIT. Students filled the program from around Asia to be able to get a degree from MIT without actually having to physically go to MIT. The classrooms did video conferencing with MIT instructor classrooms and vice versa. Mutual benefit for both schools and students.
- Changing demographics in the state due to the oil boom will likely result in a lot of new students who don't speak English as a first language, but desire to better themselves through higher education. BSC needs to position itself to prepare for likely demographic changes in its student body. The flush of oil money in the state budget means that more
funding may be viable to BSC if it positions itself to provide services/degrees/programs that the state will need in coming years.

- meetings needs of labor and employment through educating students; preparing students to meet career goals
- The first issue to success would be the selling and promotion of your energy field program. There extremely large community of energy workers in this country and I would suspect that most of them are not aware of the programs offered here and how they will be able to use this to their advantage. * more in question 5. Second, which is an issue currently and will continue to evolve in the future would be cheating. An online community opens the doors for as much dishonesty as a student feels comfortable putting forth. Turn it in and exam guard are certainly a wonderful step in the right direction. I do not have suggestions at this time to combat this type of behavior, but as with anything else if an individual wants to "beat the system" , they are more than likely working hard enough at it to find a way. To date I have not found concrete evidence of any of my students participating in dishonest behavior, but I am not naive enough to think this does not happen.
- Students today seem to have a difficult time making personal decisions and prioritizing. Communication skills-it is the most common thing I hear employers complain about regarding recent college grads
- Increased environmental concerns; increased energy requirements by the public.
- Technology: The platforms for course delivery (podcasts, simulators)

5. How can BSC become more visible across the country?
- The response to this question in many ways is similar to item 4. As the competition for students becomes more intense, the colleges that most effectively address distance learning will thrive. After all, many of the students we serve have full time family and/or work obligations that can preclude them from being able to participate in face-to-face classroom settings. This requires expanded promotion of distance learning options that transcends traditional recruitment efforts. The other factor concerns educational value. Stakeholders such as students, employers, and lawmakers want to see students receiving a quality education at a cost that will not create heavy financial debt for years to come.
- By continuing to provide the online program that it provides to those interested in the electric system business, but by also challenging itself and the faculty and staff on how to provide a diverse educational program to help meet the needs of students looking for advancement. Also I believe BSC has to do a better job in promoting and advertising its online program to the industry since it has a one of a king online program for those working in the electric industry.
- Advertise on Facebook (2)
- Using the technology that young people are using, whatever that means.
- I believe we have a very strong reputation across the country and within the NDUS system. Keep doing what has been working for BSC, which is making students first and our successful reputation will continue to follow.
- Advertise and publish success stories. For example, how many of the NPPT students have gotten jobs in the industry, how many have gotten licenses from the NRC.
- Social Media, Social Media, Social Media, but not in the way you are currently doing it. Is there a BSC twitter account? I know there is a Facebook account, but I don’t see it
utilized much. You need someone on this fulltime and they need to be active during the day. You guys are basically looking to grow online. Within 100 miles of BSC there are maybe 500,000 people. You have probably tapped the keg on what can be done "locally". Those people already know about you. You could advertise in trade magazines, but for the most part, people that read them already have a degree. My main business is an online business that wholesales to retailers and individuals across the country. My main "face" to the customer is email marketing. That lets them know what's going on, but I can't legally email market to them unless they are already a customer. What was my main face to get them as a customer? TWITTER. I have been on it since its infancy and have almost 30,000 followers. It's FREE. It's not something you can join and forget about. You have to engage. I spend several hours a day on twitter and other social media platforms scouring for potential customers. There are so many facets to be utilized, keyword searches and other ways to drill down and engage potential clients. You have to do it right though or it will be of no benefit. So as much as BSC has been ahead of the game in the Online Classroom Environment, they have been lagging in the Social Media aspect.

- Providing top-tier education in the programs it is best at.
- Online courses and exposure
- One of the most valuable things this institution needs to become aggressive with is promotion. Specifically in the energy industry. I can provide and explanation of this. Most workers in this industry are union, the union is comprised of various levels and officers. Most of these unions do have specific requirements for employees to meet in regards to education, and these requirements are typically controlled by a type of director or board of education. These programs need to be promoted to these union officers as an option. For instance even with a smaller local, the union may only have 500 members, if the director of education were to sign off on a program at Bismarck as one that would meet their education requirements, Bismarck would instantly be promoted by the union itself to its members, increasing enrollment. These smaller local unions then will typically answer to a national. The promotion of our programs to these individuals would absolutely increase enrollment and visibility across the country at an exponential rate. This would not be a difficult task to accomplish, if only a few nationals were to recognize Bismarck as an option to meet minimum education requirements the programs will advertise and sell themselves on a massive level. I absolutely believe this would require little effort and the results would be phenomenal. Without trying to make this an extremely long winded response I would be happy to offer more information to those that are interested in pursuit of this.
- This is just from the perspective of my program: There is significant opportunity for growth across the country. Power system operators and those that support them are required to obtain continuing education hours to keep their jobs (roughly 200 hours every 3 years). The ability to obtain both college credit toward a degree at the same time obtain the continuing education hours is one of the strongest selling points. Similarly, for the people trying to break into the power industry, tools to help them network and find employment (and demonstrated success) would draw in new young students or those looking for a new career. To draw in perspective distance learning students, it would help to have a streamlined way to get an assessment of what prior work could transfer into a program.