Federal Compliance Materials
August 2011

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September 21-23, 2011

Bismarck State College
1500 Edwards Avenue
Bismarck ND 58501
800-445-5073
www.bismarckstate.edu
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Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Bismarck State College publishes all information regarding credits and program length in its annual catalog, which is available in print and online. All courses are assigned credits in accordance with the North Dakota University System (NDUS) common course number system. A matrix of courses, descriptions, and credits is maintained on the NDUS website.

Bismarck State College offers over thirty-five associate degree programs, all of which are approved by the North Dakota University System and follow the System’s expectations for program length. The degrees offered by BSC are:

- Associate in Arts
- Associate in Science
- Associate in Applied Science.

Students in the associate degree programs must complete the degree with a 2.00 institutional and cumulative GPA. The distribution of courses can vary from degree to degree, but each contains a core general education requirement. The Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degree also have a diversity course requirement and an enrichment course requirement.

BSC adheres to the requirement of a minimum of 60 credits for an associate degree. Career and technical programs tend to exceed the minimum, but seldom exceed by more than nine credits. Every effort is employed to keep the length of CTE programs within the limits of best practices. All of BSC’s career and technical programs are approved by the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education. Program curricula are clearly outlined in our catalog and in brochures and other informational items. The BSC catalog is printed in alternate years; a current copy is maintained on the BSC website, for use by students, employees and other stakeholders.

BSC applies tuition on a per-credit basis. Tuition rates are published in our catalog as well as on our website. Mandatory fees are also identified. Nonresident tuition and tuition for distance education courses varies by program, military affiliation, contracts with industry partners, and mode of delivery.

Bismarck State College also offers a single Bachelors of Applied Science degree. The minimum number of credits required for this degree set at 120, again at the bottom of the normal range. Tuition rates may be found at the preceding link.

Program fees have been attached to a few programs that have higher than normal delivery costs and prepare students for high wage employment following graduation. Those program fees are published in the catalog, program brochures, and online.
Institutional Records of Student Complaints

BSC provides students an opportunity for complaints, grievances, and appeals for academic and non-academic issues as outlined in policies and procedures found on the College website, in the current Student Handbook and Planner, and in the BSC catalog. The College strives to provide students multiple access contact points to resolve complaints and concerns with the College. The Student Grievance and Appeal Policy outlines how the student may initiate a grievance or appeal and the process the College uses to reach a resolution. Concerns and complaints are viewed as opportunities to improve.

Types of Complaints - Informal Concerns and Formal Complaints

For informal concerns, students and community members have multiple points of contact including faculty, Department Chairs, Program Managers, Directors, Human Resources, Academic Affairs Office and Student Affairs Office. For many informal concerns, the area that is directly involved responds to the request and remedies the situation as appropriate and necessary.

The type of complaint determines the area that handles the request. Complaints made in writing are considered to be formal complaints. The process for formal complaints is explained in the Student Handbook and Planner, Catalog, and the College website.

Specific procedures are in place for the following grievances/appeals:

- **Grade Appeals** - Students concerned about unfair treatment must first raise the concern with the faculty member. If the matter is still unresolved, the student should discuss the matter with the Department Chair. If further review of the matter is needed the student can go to the Dean of Academic Affairs, then the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs. If the matter remains unresolved, the student can appeal to the Standing Committee on Grade Appeals.

- **Financial Aid Appeals** - Students who have a concern about a decision made regarding their financial aid decision should present their appeal or grievance directly to the Financial Aid Committee.

- **Academic Probation and Dismissal** - A student is notified of academic dismissal by the Registrar. Readmission is subject to completing an Academic Suspension and Readmission Form and the recommendation of the Academic Support Services Office.

- **Code of Student Conduct** - Students violating the Code of Student Conduct will be advised of the finding and the sanctions imposed by the Associate Vice-President for Student Affairs. The process for appealing decisions requires students to follow the Appeals and Grievance Policy.
More specific information about the informal and formal process for student appeals is as follows:

**General Grievance/Appeal Procedure:**

**Informal Process:** The purpose of the informal procedure is to allow the parties involved in a grievance or appealable decision to attempt to resolve the problem themselves through the following steps:

1. The student should attempt to discuss the complaint with the person who appears to be the source of the grievance or who made the appealable decision. This should be done within 10 class days of the incident or situation.

2. If the problem is not resolved in the first step, the student should take the complaint to the respondent’s immediate supervisor.

3. If the problem is not resolved in to the satisfaction of the student through the informal process, the student may enter the formal grievance process. This should take place within 5 class days after talking to the supervisor in step 2.

4. If the student does not initiate the informal process within 10 class days of the incident or situation but at a later date, either the student or the respondent may refer the issue to the formal grievance process.

**Formal Grievance/Appeal Process:**

1. The student shall submit a complaint in writing to the appropriate college Director, Department Chair, or Dean (respondent) of the area responsible for the action which forms the basis of the grievance or appeal. The complaint shall contain a clear and concise statement of the grievance or appeal, the remedies sought and a request for a meeting with the involved person or persons. The complaint must be submitted within 10 class days of the event, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

2. The respondent shall schedule a meeting with the student within 10 class days of receiving the written grievance or appeal, to discuss the matter. A written reply by the respondent to the student indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken shall be attached to the written grievance or appeal.

3. If the student is not satisfied, the student may appeal in writing to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Student and Campus Relations. The grievance or appeal must be filed within 5 class days after the decision of the Director, Department Chair or Dean. The Committee Chair will inform the student and committee members of the specific time and place of the meeting which must be held within 7 class days of receipt of the request.
4. The student shall be given every reasonable opportunity to present the case, including the presentation of written and oral testimony, alone or by witnesses, and all parties will have the right to be assisted by an advisor, friend, or counsel.

5. The Committee Chair shall submit a written report of the proceedings to the student within 2 class days of the decision. The report must include all matters upon which the final recommendations are made.

6. The student may appeal the committee decision to the appropriate Vice President of the College. The appeal must be in writing and within 5 class days of receipt of the committee decision. The appropriate Vice President will uphold, modify, or reject the committee decision, and this will become the final campus decision on the grievance or appeal. A written reply by the Vice President to the student indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken shall be attached to the written grievance or appeal. The student and appropriate college officials shall be notified in writing of the decision within 10 class days after the last consideration of the grievance or appeal.

**Transfer of Credit**

*Transfer Credit*

Students who wish to transfer to BSC from another college or university must complete all of the admissions requirements and must provide the Admissions Office with official and complete transcripts, showing all courses attempted and grades earned, from all colleges attended.

BSC only accepts transfer credit for college-level course work earned from regionally recognized accredited institutions of postsecondary education. All credit hours earned from the institutions that meet this criterion will be accepted, except graduate level course work. The Academic Records Office will evaluate only official transcripts after the student has been accepted, to determine the total number of hours accepted and the suitability and applicability of accepted hours and courses toward BSC graduation requirements.

BSC has a transfer equivalency database that will help students by providing general information regarding transfer course equivalencies from various schools across the U.S. For more information, refer to [http://bismarckstate.edu/current/records/transferinformation/](http://bismarckstate.edu/current/records/transferinformation/).

A student who was suspended from another institution, with a lapse of at least one semester prior to the term in which he/she is seeking BSC admission, may be admitted by completing the Academic Suspension - Readmission Procedures outlined on page 40 of the catalog. Students should complete the above process at least two weeks prior to the beginning of an academic semester to be considered for admission.
Students academically dismissed from a North Dakota University System (NDUS) baccalaureate institution should refer to the NDUS policy regarding re-admission to a NDUS community college.

Students who wish to transfer from Bismarck State College to a college in the North Dakota University System will find that transfer is relatively straightforward because of common course numbering and other System policies. Bismarck State College recognizes the General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement (GERTA) developed to ease and streamline transfer of credit among the colleges and universities of the North Dakota University System. GERTA information is available to BSC students in the college catalog and on the college website. Information may also be found on the NDUS system website regarding transfer. Courses are identified in the print and online catalog. View the Student Policy on Transfer Credit at: http://bismarckstate.edu/uploads/resources/394/TransferCredit.pdf

Students wishing to transfer to a college outside the North Dakota University System are advised to work with the receiving institution to ensure that they take the right courses and can transfer readily.

Transfer Appeal Process

Students may appeal transfer decisions of BSC credit made by a receiving NDUS institution or another institution. This process is initiated by completing an online “Academic Transfer Appeal” form located on the BSC website.

If the appeal is a NDUS institution, it must refer to one of the statewide transfer policies.

1. The General Education Requirements Transfer Agreement (GERTA)
2. Common Course Numbering (CCN)
4. National credit-by-exam programs, including the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) or the DANTES or DSST program.

Verification of the Identity of Students in Distance or Correspondence Education

Bismarck State College uses a secure login and pass code method to verify the identity of students participating in online courses.

Since 2004 Bismarck State College has used an application programming interface (API) that allows our administrative system (CampusConnection) to connect directly to our course management system (CMS), which currently is Pearson eCollege. When a student completes the application/registration process, a secure file is sent to the
CMS with information necessary to create the student account in eCollege. At the same time an email is sent to the student with the login credentials needed to access their courses. This assures that the student who completed that application process and has access to CampusConnection is the only person who receives the eCollege credentials necessary to access the courses and complete the course work.

If a student forgets his login credentials, the help desk will verify identification through a series of questions that only the student would be able to answer such as login ID, email address, course schedule, etc. The only other alternative is for a student to retrieve their password from a “Forgot Password” link on the login page, and the correct password is sent to the email address provided by CampusConnection.

Proctored exams for students taking distance education courses are sometimes required by specific departments or faculty members.

**Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities**

**General Program Responsibilities**

Bismarck State College was granted re-approval to offer Federal Title IV aid through September of 2014. The Program Participation Agreement and the Eligibility and Certification Approval Report are available upon request.

Bismarck State College does not have any outstanding compliance issues, limitations or termination actions related to compliance issues. All disclosure requirement information is posted on the Bismarck State College web site under the About BSC section. The college complies with all Title IV mandated requirements regarding campus crime, fire safety and hate crimes. BSC discloses this information to all enrolled students and all faculty and staff each year via an “Access to Information” pamphlet that is distributed in the early fall.

**Financial Responsibility Requirements**

BSC’s recent audits indicate the college’s Title IV program is in compliance with federal regulations.

At present, BSC is under no limitations or suspensions by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The most recent compliance audit (two-years ending June 30, 2010), conducted by the Office of the State Auditor, found no findings or questioned costs in the college’s compliance with the requirements of the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133 regarding the college’s major federal programs. BSC’s compliance audit is a two-year audit that is combined at the state level with the State of North Dakota. The audit report can be found at: [http://www.nd.gov/auditor/reports/sa_10.pdf](http://www.nd.gov/auditor/reports/sa_10.pdf).

BSC’s annual financial audit is a part of a system audit that is combined at a system level with the North Dakota University System. The latest report (year ending June
30, 2010) can be found at: http://www.nd.gov/auditor/reports/220_10.pdf. BSC had no material findings or recommendations and no concerns have been raised by the Office of the State Auditor, the Commission or the Department of Education as to the college’s financial ratios or finances in general.

Default Rates

Bismarck State College participates in the following federal loan programs: Federal Direct Loan, Federal Perkins Loan and Federal PLUS loan. The US Department of Education calculates default rates for our institution each year. The following is a breakdown of the default rates for the previous five years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Default Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bismarck State College’s default rate is relatively low when compared to most other two year schools on a national level. To reduce and maintain low default rates, Bismarck State College conducts the following default aversion measures:

- Require on-line entrance loan counseling for all new borrowers of a federal student loan. The entrance counseling requirements reviews the borrower’s rights and responsibilities of borrowing student loans. The counseling session provides important borrower information so students understand the student loan borrowing process.

- Collaborate with the National Student Clearinghouse for enrollment reporting purposes. All students who are enrolled at least half time are reported to the Clearinghouse so their previously held student loans do not go into repayment and instead are processed as in-school deferments.

- A link is provided on our financial aid web site detailing important loan information for students who are previous borrowers. The information detailed provides additional resources for students to utilize so they do not go into a default status while attending BSC.

- Require on-line exit loan counseling of all students who withdraw, fall below half time status or do not return to BSC in a subsequent semester. Student borrowers are provided with needed information regarding who and how to contact their loan servicer to stay out of default status.
• Provide a loan repayment calculator on the financial aid web page so students can estimate the monthly payment amount they can expect. This calculator provides instant feedback to the student so they know how much to borrow and minimize the dollar amount borrowed.

Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information

A significant amount of information about campus security can be found on the college website. Crime information is also available on the college website and on the U.S. Department of Education website. The crime report is completed annually by the campus security officer and is distributed in print version to campus offices.

Bismarck State College discloses consumer information on its website.

Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies

Bismarck State College recently changed the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy to meet the new requirements under the Program Integrity Rules that the US Department of Education recently enacted. The newly enacted policy adheres to the guidance set forth under 34 CFR 668.34.

Measures of Satisfactory Progress:

Two measures of satisfactory progress are used:

a) qualitative academic standard (GPA) and

b) quantitative rate of progress (Pace).

Qualitative Academic Standard (Grade Point Average):

Students who receive Federal financial aid (i.e. Pell Grant, Supplemental Grant, Perkins Loan, Work Study, ND State Grant and Federal Direct Loan) are required to maintain a grade point average of 2.00.

At the conclusion of each semester the cumulative grade point average will be evaluated for all students at Bismarck State College. All students must have earned a minimum of a 2.00 grade point average for each semester of attendance. Students not meeting the 2.00 minimum GPA standard will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next semester in which the student enrolls. Students on Financial Aid Warning have access to all financial aid programs for which they are eligible during that semester. If the student does not improve his or her cumulative GPA to at least a 2.00 by the end of the warning semester, the student will then be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification, which terminates financial aid eligibility.

Quantitative Rate of Progress (Pace of Progress):

Maximum Time Frame: All students are expected to complete their degree requirements within 150% of the published length of the program. For example, if a
program requires 60 credits to complete, the student would be allowed 90 attempted credits \((60 \times 150\% = 90\text{ attempted credits})\).

Bismarck State College measures satisfactory academic progress after each semester. Students not meeting the requirement progress guidelines will be placed on a warning status after their first attempted semester. If the student is not making progress after the second attempted semester, the student will be placed on disqualification status. A student has an opportunity to appeal his or her disqualification status. If granted, the student will be placed on a probation status until he or she meets the academic progress guidelines.

Bismarck State College notifies all federal aid recipients of the SAP policy each semester by sending students an email notification with an embedded link to the policy. All students placed on a warning or disqualification status are sent a paper copy of the policy. Those students who are placed on disqualification status and subsequently appeal are also sent a paper copy of the SAP policy.

**Attendance**

Bismarck State College, per federal regulations, is not required to take attendance. However, the college has an attendance policy that states:

Attendance in classes and laboratories is extremely important; therefore, students are expected to attend all class sessions of any course for which they are registered. Students who are registered for a 16-week course but fail to attend at least one class session during the first week of the semester and fail to notify either the faculty member or department chair may be administratively dropped from the class. With courses scheduled for fewer than 16 weeks, the deadline for first class attendance is proportionally shorter and will be defined in the course syllabus. This provides for early identification of class vacancies in closed classes and permits other students to add the class. Students who know they will be absent from class must contact the faculty member or department chair in advance to ensure enrollment.

In limited enrollment programs, faculty have the option to administratively drop students who fail to attend the first day of class and fail to give prior notice to the faculty member or department chair.

Not all faculty follow this policy since it is not mandatory. Students, therefore, are strongly advised not to assume that they have been dropped from a course. Students should review their registration status in a course in question with the Academic Records Office.

Attending classes and laboratories is a student responsibility. Regardless of the reason for the absence, students are responsible for the material that was covered while they were absent.
Contractual Relationships

Bismarck State College does not contract with any outside organization to provide its academic programming.

Consortial Relationships

Bismarck State College does not have consortial arrangements with other institutions.

Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

The State Board of Higher Education under Section 420 Accreditation requires that all NDUS institutions be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Bismarck State College discloses its accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission in its print catalog and on its website.

Program specific accreditations are noted in the print and online catalog academic program sections.

BSC publishes information about its programs and locations in its print catalog and online. Additionally, a variety of other methods are used to inform prospective students about the college and its programs, including:

- the college catalog
- program fact sheets, flyers, brochures
- campus visits
- social media, such as Facebook
- high school visits and career fairs
- direct mailings.

Other stakeholders and current students are communicated with through additional means, such as local newspaper, radio and television, the college website, the Student Handbook and Planner, the campus newspaper, and other materials.

Relationship with other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Bodies

Bismarck State College is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. NCA is a regional accrediting body sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Education. BSC has been accredited since 1966. BSC maintains its regional accreditation through HLC by participating in the Academic Quality Improvement Process (AQIP).

As a member of the North Dakota University System (NDUS), BSC is responsible to the oversight and direction of the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (SBHE). The SBHE, composed of members appointed by the Governor, approves the
delivery of programs and the conferring of degrees, diplomas, and certificates to successful candidates. In addition to regional accreditation for the college, several programs have been accredited or certified by appropriate organizations. These are outlined in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accrediting Agency* or Certifying Organization**</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Date of Last Visit</th>
<th>Date of Next Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF)*</td>
<td>Automotive Collision Technology</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATEF*</td>
<td>Automotive Technology</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATEF*</td>
<td>Automotive Technology (offered at the Missouri River Correctional Center)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)*</td>
<td>Clinical Laboratory Technician</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP)*</td>
<td>EMT-Paramedic</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)*</td>
<td>Engineering Technology</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAACLS*</td>
<td>Phlebotomy Technician</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAAHEP*</td>
<td>Surgical Technology</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated General Contractors of North Dakota*</td>
<td>Carpentry (Residential)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota Board of Nursing*</td>
<td>AAS in Nursing</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota Board of Nursing*</td>
<td>Certificate in Practical Nursing; AAS in Nursing</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American Electric Reliability Corporation</td>
<td>Electrical Transmission Systems</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information on regional certification and program specific certification is found on the Bismarck State College official website. See: [http://www.bismarckstate.edu/about/accreditations/](http://www.bismarckstate.edu/about/accreditations/)
Public Notification of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment

Prior to the arrival of the team for the Quality Checkup Visit at Bismarck State College, we identified various constituencies that should be informed about the accreditation visit. A press release was sent to weekly newspapers in the surrounding area and, on August 7, 2011, an ad was placed in the Bismarck Tribune, the region’s daily paper. In addition, a link to the online third-party comment form was posted on the college’s website.

Other publication methods included an email blast to students through the student listserv, and a notice in the alumni newsletter Connections and the Chamber of Commerce newsletter.

An example of the text of the notice is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public comment requested on BSC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bismarck State College seeks comments from the public by Aug. 21 in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit Sept. 21-23 by a team representing The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges. Institutional accreditation evaluates the college as a whole for its ongoing ability to meet criteria for accreditation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The commission has accredited BSC since 1966 and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. To submit comments, visit the website: ncahlc.org/wrapped/thirdparty.php, or write:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Public Comment on Bismarck State College  
The Higher Learning Commission  
230 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, Ill.  60604 |
| Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of BSC or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed and cannot be treated as confidential. |