Dear Students and Employees:

We have just past the fifth week of the semester. I am taking this opportunity to encourage every student to check-in with their instructors to evaluate their academic progress. At this point in the semester, there are opportunities to improve academic performance.

As I contemplated writing this article, I spoke with NCTC Counselor Kelsey Blowers who gladly shared student comments collected from the Student Focus Groups. The following comment caught my attention:

“Very nice to have grades updated regularly. Have all faculty put grades on D2L,” NCTC Student at Student Focus Group, Fall 2007

This statement rings true for Northland; it is nice to have regular updates and a common delivery method would be convenient. We are moving in the right direction:

Currently, there are many faculty members using D2L as an integral part of their courses. They easily include the grade book feature which allows students to view their grades in real-time.

Secondly, a significant portion of the faculty is exploring the possibilities of using D2L and may soon be using the grade book feature to post grades for students.

Lastly, there are cases where D2L is not an effective means of communicating grades to students, and some faculty members may not make use of D2L.

Although D2L does provide an updated list of the assignments and the students’ performance on the assignments, some integral components of the grade may not be included. Due to the cumulative nature of participation and attendance, these grade components may not be added to the grade book until the end of the term. With these components missing, D2L may not be providing an accurate account of student progress.

All faculty members may not be using D2L for grading purposes but every faculty member has a grading system that can be used to evaluate each student’s current progress.

Students, make an appointment with your instructors to discuss your progress, even if you can see your grade on D2L. The valuable feedback you receive from your instructors will far exceed the “box score” report you receive from D2L. Progress reporting is important for everyone. Although the methodologies vary, instructors are the BEST source for an accurate report on academic progress.

Norma A. Konschak, CPA, M.ACC
Interim Dean of Academic Affairs
# High School Vs. College
from Lehigh Carbon Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In High School</th>
<th>In College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• You have a designated lunch period</td>
<td>• You hope to get a chance to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Your parent’s pay for “stuff”</td>
<td>• You pay for “stuff”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No food is allowed in the halls or rooms</td>
<td>• Food is provided at events so students will come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effort counts</td>
<td>• Results count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Classes ran from 8-3</td>
<td>• Classes can run from 8-9PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Report cards are sent</td>
<td>• You view your grades on line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make up tests are often available if there is a conflict</td>
<td>• Make up tests are seldom an option and need to be requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A grade of D or higher allows you to pass</td>
<td>• The department standard may require a C grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You wear your backpack on one shoulder to be cool</td>
<td>• You wear your backpack on both shoulders to save your back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## You Came……..We listened

The Student Dialogues, or Focus groups, that were held on both campuses in the fall revealed some common themes. Students asked to be treated in a certain way by their peers and by faculty and staff at NCTC. Here are some common courtesy reminders for everyone.

1. Be understanding of the individual learning style of each student.
2. The Commons areas are great for food and fun. Be aware of language that might offend others.
3. Patience and understanding are qualities that are appreciated.
4. Have compassion for student’s school and life commitments.
5. Be non-judgmental of each other.
6. A friendly smile is always appreciated.
7. Sincere care and concern go a long way to make everyone feel welcome.
8. Mutual respect and sympathetic listening are valued.
Myth Vs. Reality
Some answers from the Student Dialogues

- It should be quiet in the Commons areas
- I get different answers to my questions from different people
- Advertise promotions and activities
- Faculty is not available
- We need book lists sooner and more ways to purchase books
- I don’t want to take unnecessary courses
- What classes do I need?
- It is an open gathering space that still respects the needs of each student
- Be sure the person you are asking is the right source and understands your question
- The Pioneer, posters, TVs, and student e-mail are used to inform.
- Faculty have posted Office Hours and will respond the e-mails as soon as possible
- MnSCU has passed legislation that will address student issues with costs, textbooks, and services...coming soon!
- All programs at NCTC have required courses listed on our website
- Feel free to discuss this with an advisor in Student Services

High School Vs. College
from Lehigh Carbon Community College

In High School
- Most of the time, you take classes assigned to you
- Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material
- Often you need to know “what”
- If you make mistakes you can often sweet talk your way out of it or put the blame elsewhere.
- Teachers may remind you of due dates and assignments
- Some study time was built into your schedule
- You do homework............

In College
- You are responsible to know what classes you need for your program
- Testing is usually infrequent and covers large amounts of information
- Critical thinking is stressed and you need to explore “why”
- The weight of the blame will land squarely on your own shoulders—be accountable.
- Instructors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus
- You are responsible for organizing your study time
- You study......................
Smart Women, Smart Choices...... Is it time for a change?

If you or a woman you care about has had experiences while drinking or partying that no one wants to repeat, it might be time for a change. The Smart Women Smart Choices program can help a woman do just that.

To learn more about the program, check out www.ipartysmarter.com the home of the Smart Women Smart Choices Program.

High School VS College
from Lehigh Carbon Community College

In College
- The professor expects everyone has read the material, done some problem solving, and does not go over the material point by point.
- You must purchase your own books and cost is $25-$175/text
- Instructors expect you to approach them if you need assistance.
- Instructors expect you to obtain any missed information.
- Instructors want to you listen and take good notes by identifying the important points.
- Instructors want you to learn to process the information, understand it, and apply it to tests and real life!

In High School
- The teacher took much responsibility to help you learn and told you what you should learn from reading assignments.
- Your textbooks were given to you at the beginning of the year.
- Teachers approach you if they think you need assistance.
- Teachers provide you with information you missed if you were absent.
- Teachers often write on the board to be copied in your notes.
- Teachers may tell you what is going to be on the test.

You Came........We listened

The Student Dialogues (Focus Groups) that were held on both campuses in the fall revealed some common themes/questions.
The following are responses to some of your questions:

Why do students have to pay for printing?
The first 400 sheets a student prints each semester are free. After printing 400 sheets in a semester, students are charged .03 per sheet. NCTC is no longer able to absorb all the costs for printing. Pcounter has been initiated to help cut down printing wastes and to make people more accountable for what they print. More information is available at www.northlandcollege.edu/technology/printing/faq.php#1.

Students would like pre-paid meal plans.
Pre-paid cards for Taher are available. Check with Taher staff to purchase.

Provide more scholarships, including scholarships awarded for fall semester.
The NCTC Foundation is working hard to provide as many scholarship opportunities as possible for the students of NCTC. The idea of providing scholarships to returning students for fall semester is an excellent idea and one that has been discussed by the Foundation. However, it is a process that may take awhile to implement as the Foundation has moved from overseeing scholarships for one campus to two campuses. While we are working to expand the scholarship opportunities on the East Grand Forks campus we continue to look for additional opportunities for the Thief River Falls Campus. During the 2007-08 academic year the Foundation will award approximately $93,000 in scholarships.
Is Stress Affecting Your Health?

(from the American Counseling Association sponsored by the ACA Foundation)

Stress is something we all face, yet many of us don't really understand what stress is or appreciate the problems it can cause.

Stress is actually a combination of two separate things. The first is the "stressor," the situation that triggers the physical and emotional reactions that we feel. It might be a family problem, a money issue or just that traffic jam going to work.

Our "stress response" is our natural response to a stressor. Our bodies release chemicals that increase our breathing, heart rate, alertness and muscle response. That reaction is inherited from our ancient ancestors for whom survival meant reacting quickly to the threats they encountered. We call it the "fight or flight" response.

But while that was a good reaction back when the stress source was a bear or similar life-threatening situation, today's problems are seldom so immediate or quickly resolved. Instead, we often face prolonged or repeated stress over which we have little or no control.

For many of us, repeatedly facing stressful situations can leave us feeling constantly nervous or exhausted, and can result in very real physical and emotional ailments.

How do you know that stress is negatively affecting your life to the point where you need help? The warning signs can include changes in both behavior and physical well-being.

Stress-related behavioral changes might include anger or impatience over relatively minor things. You might find yourself unable to relax, anxious almost all the time, sleeping poorly and experiencing sexual problems. Major changes in eating, whether no appetite or constantly overeating, are also common reactions. Excessive stress can make it difficult to make decisions or set priorities. You may make more mistakes or become accident-prone.

Physical ailments, such as frequent headaches and neck or back pain, can also be stress-related symptoms. You might find yourself suffering from frequent indigestion, diarrhea or constipation. Shortness of breath, heart palpitations, or skin problems like acne or psoriasis can also occur.

Excessive stress is not a problem to be ignored. It has been linked to a variety of serious health and emotional issues. If you find yourself facing high levels of stress that are affecting your health or overall quality of life, seek help. Your family physician or a counseling professional can offer assistance in helping reduce or cope with unhealthy stress in your life.

"The Counseling Corner" is provided as a public service by the American Counseling Association.

You Came……..We listened

The Student Dialogues (Focus Groups) that were held on both campuses in the fall revealed some common themes/questions. The following are responses to some of your questions:

Can D2L and Netmail be integrated so students only have to log in once?
Unfortunately, D2L and student e-mail are two separate programs and cannot provide single login.

Can you have a class to familiarize students with D2L?
There are a variety of ways students can become more familiar with D2L including the following:

Resources in Person
Attend the training sessions scheduled the first week of each semester.

On the TRF Campus contact Holly Deschene at holly.deschene@northlandcollege.edu and on the EGF campus contact Karleen Delorme at karleen.delorme@northlandcollege.edu.

Resources on the Web
Watch the videos or print/follow the step-by-step instructions for each tool posted on the D2L Help Resources page: https://www.northlandcollege.edu/desire2learn/resources/

Resources in D2L
Each semester all currently registered students are automatically enrolled into the ORI 1001 01 D2L Orientation Course. The intent of this course is to assist students to become more familiar with D2L's tools before beginning work in an actual course. It is highly recommended that students click through each of the tool links (Content, Discussions, Dropbox, Grades, Quizzes, Surveys) to become familiar with how each tool works. Each tool has information posted to demonstrate how the tool works and what students could expect to see if the instructor has chosen to use the tool. This is not a required course and students will not receive a grade for this course.
Don't Let Sports Add Stress To Your Family Life
from the American Counseling Association
sponsored by the ACA Foundation

Spring means more outdoor activity for most kids and today that often means organized sports programs. Whether it's baseball, soccer, track, or the numerous other athletic opportunities available in most communities, organized sports can offer children opportunities to be active and have a good time.

Unfortunately, there's also increasing evidence that too often organized athletic activities for kids mean increased pressure and stress because winning is being over-emphasized.

There are a number of reasons for such developments. The example too often seen in professional sports is one contributing factor. From increased fighting to reports on steroid and growth hormone usage, winning at any cost is the example our kids are witnessing.

On a more personal level, parents often add pressure for their children to perform well and be a "winner." Most national youth sports associations now report frequent incidents of fights or abusive behavior involving parents and coaches.

More subtly, parents may, though usually with good intentions, place such a high emphasis on athletic achievement that a child may feel a failure unless he or she is winning and making Mom and Dad proud.

Is there an over-emphasis on athletic achievement in your family? Try answering yes or no to the following questions:

3 ! Our family's life revolves around our children's sports activities.
3 ! When my children win I reward them with gifts and verbal praise.
3 ! When my children lose I may tease them, put them down, or not speak to them.
3 ! My children's athletic activities get more of my attention than their academic achievements.
3 ! I push my children to train harder and not be "lazy".
3 ! I usually say "WE are playing against..." not, "My son is playing against..."
3 ! I often brag about my child's athletic accomplishments.
3 ! I get angry and upset when my child's team loses.

If several of these statements describe you, or you do things like get upset with coaches and other parents, make fun of other teams, almost lose control at competitions, or experience mood swings related to your child's sports success, you're probably putting far too much pressure on your child.

Your school counselor or a local mental health counselor can offer suggestions for getting sports into proper perspective. Sometimes informal, unstructured sports experiences might be healthier.

Whatever the answer, athletics should be a positive, enjoyable activity for our children, not a situation where stress is a constant and winning is everything.

You Came……..We listened

The Student Dialogues (Focus Groups) that were held on both campuses in the fall revealed some common themes/questions. The following are responses to some of your questions:

Is there someone who can help me pick a major or provide career counseling?
Yes - Individual career counseling is available in the counseling office on both campuses. Group sessions are also offered – watch the “Pioneer” for dates. A free online interest inventory is also available at www.northland.kuder.com. Contact a NCTC counselor for an appointment or to obtain access codes for the interest inventory.

EGF Campus Kate Schmalenberg, Counselor (218) 773-4533 kate.schmalenberg@northlandcollege.edu
TRF Campus Kelsy Blowers, Counselor (218) 681-0779 Kelsy.blowers@northlandcollege.edu

Advertise specific technical programs in addition to the liberal arts programs.

In the past NCTC has focused more on general advertising than specific program advertising. We have reviewed this philosophy and are taking steps to begin advertising specific programs. Several ads that target specific programs, rather than lumping together all NCTC programs by saying "over 80 different programs to choose from" have been created. This is a labor-intensive process, so faculty have been asked to provide messages they would like shared in ads for their programs. Testimonials from students in each technical program are also being collected. We hope to have audio/video/photos/ and ad copy ready for a third of the programs by mid-May.