Northland Community & Technical College
East Grand Forks/Thief River Falls

ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY GRANT
Progress Report Fiscal Year ‘08

The following report will cover our progress in meeting our Access and Opportunity Goals. In doing so, we will cover our non-salary budget expenditures and preliminary retention and student achievement data.

1). Non-salary Budget Expenditures: $6,480.47

A) Programmatic Events
B) Professional Travel
C) Indirect Costs

A). Programmatic Events
• Self Care Seminar
• Job Seeking Seminar
• Mayville/UND Trip (College Trip)
• Student Focus Groups
• Water Park Pre-Finals Event
• Social Gathering/Events
• Library Workshops

B). Professional Travel
• Washington Trip (Student Senate)
• Access Opportunity (February)
• Front Line Conference (May)
• NWMN Counselors Meeting (February)

C). Indirect Costs
• Office Supplies
2). Goals and Results

Our goals under the Access and Opportunity Grant were focused on the retention of three main groups of underrepresented students: First-Generation Students, Pell Grant Recipients, and Students of Color. (Although at the time this did not include male/female students as underrepresented, we include some preliminary data on male/female student achievement) The goals and current data (as of 6-26-08) are in the table attached.

Although we have been on staff since late December 2007, we have received the full support of our colleagues in both student and academic affairs; through our “intrusive advisement” techniques working in concert with our programmatic events, student activities, and “Early Alerting” we can be confident that we have provided some substantive form(s) of support to approximately the number of student projected in our underrepresented and students of color categories.

We must also make an important note regarding our retention data. At Northland, we have academic programs (such as Farm Business Management) that, due to the nature of the program, register their students much later in the semester. We also frequently see returning students wait to re-register during the summer semester, as they re-assess their financial realities, work, and family commitments. This means that the preliminary data in the table above is merely a “snapshot” of our retention and a more complete picture will become available as we start the fall 2008 semester.

Clearly, we see our work as on-going in the areas of retention and student achievement. While our underrepresented students are keeping pace with our overall student body, we have seen some trends that help to explain student attrition/underachievement. These reasons include: underrepresented students not being fully cognizant of the amount of work that college requires, being overstretched due to competing time commitments (i.e., work, family), and financial realities that prevent students from moving forward with their educational careers.

3) Moving Forward

By reviewing the data, we can see that our efforts moving forward will need to focus heavily on increasing student engagement in academic work and emphasizing academic content in the programmatic events and activities we create. This does not mean that all events must include an academic portion, but it does mean that our efforts will need to include an academic “take-away” that students can use efficiently and effectively in their class work.

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1 In our conversations with students, we have noted several re-occurring themes. Underrepresented students frequently do not understand the amount of time college-level work requires to master; mistakenly thinking that attendance is the primary criterion for grading; having few transferable skills in studying, researching, or writing in a college-level context; and not taking advantage of resources to improve grades in a timely manner to impact their performance.
Events planned for 2008-009 include:

- Academic & Social Needs survey for Fall, 2008 freshmen students
- Study Groups
- Workshops
- Intramurals
- Collaborating with other student entities/groups
- Tours to four-year colleges
- Focus Groups
- Social Activities
- Peer to Peer Mentoring

We should also note that we frequently notice a barrier to retention and student achievement that is not addressed within the context of the Access and Opportunity Grant; the issue(s) of affordability and financial aid are growing concerns for the student populations we are focused on retaining. While this grant is not the realm to address this issue, we feel that this will continue to be a barrier for low-income and first-generation students, and that it may partially neutralize our outreach efforts.

4) Fiscal Year ’09 Preliminary Plans

Later this summer, we will be providing a more detailed narrative about our plans for student retention and achievement. However, we did want to provide a short outline for what we are currently considering for the ’08-’09 academic year.

Advising and Academic/Student Support

We will continue to operate using the “intrusive” advisement model. This model assumes that our students will continue to need academic advisement that is proactive and seeks out underrepresented students to provide necessary support, guidance, encouragement, and advice to enable them to continue in their academic work and excel in their academic performance. In addition to academic advising, we plan to continue to utilize part of the grant funds to provide financial aid advisement to support our underrepresented students.

We have found that getting time in front of students during class time to make presentations on important topics (i.e., study habits, test-taking strategies) shows a marked improvement on student performance. We hope to partner with even more faculty in the upcoming academic year to make as many presentations as possible during a segment of class time to get salient and useful information to students early in the academic year.

Programmatic Events/Campus Involvement

We are aware that an important component of retention is student engagement and involvement. In that spirit, we are involved in planning for programmatic events for the upcoming academic year. We will be planning activities on both campuses to engage students (i.e., barbecues for
students before Northland athletic events, self-care seminars). This planning is in collaboration with our colleagues in academic affairs, the Northland College Retention Committee, Student Life, and the student governments (student senates). Additional activities will also be planned to fulfill the needs identified through the Academic and Social Needs Survey.

Working with our Retention Committee, we are exploring the use of the “GPS LifePlan” to enhance student engagement and performance and we hope to unroll that for our students in the ’08-’09 academic year. We are also hoping to explore the idea of a “success day” at some point during the fall semester. This day would encourage students to learn about the variety of academic and student support offered at Northland and how to effectively utilize these resources for the academic achievement.

In collaboration with the Retention Committee in an effort to indirectly impact our students learn about academic expectations early, we will be contributing our time and services to assist with plans to hold an open house for of school counselors and workforce development professionals during September. This open house would present information about the academic expectations in a community college setting, and hopefully provide a context for prospective students to learn about the character of a Northland education.

Also, we are updating our communications “toolbox” this summer and fall to better communicate with our students. Utilizing social networking sites (Facebook, Myspace), text messaging, and instant messaging will hopefully provide us with a more direct link with our unrepresented students. We plan to continue financial Aid support assistance in personnel. We intend to survey our incoming freshman during New Student Orientation this August and learn what events or activities would be most beneficial for their academic success and achievement.
### Retention Outcomes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall Semester 2007</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 Retention Rate for Fall 2007 Entering Students</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average cumulative GPA for full-time undergraduate students at the end of the first Spring Semester 2008</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td><strong>Fall Semester 2007 Entering: Underrepresented Students</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 Retention Rate for Fall 2007 entering Students</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average cumulative GPA for full-time undergraduate students at the end of the Spring Semester 2008</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average credits earned by full-time undergraduate students at the end of the first Spring Semester 2008</td>
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<td>28.8</td>
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<td><strong>Fall Semester 2007 Entering: Students of Color</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 Retention Rate for Fall 2007 Entering Students</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Average cumulative GPA for full-time undergraduate students at the end of the Spring Semester 2008</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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<td>Average credits earned by full-time undergraduate students at the end of the first Spring Semester 2008</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.7</td>
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<td>Number of underrepresented students that will be provided retention/academic support services</td>
<td>720</td>
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<td>Number of Students of color that will be provided retention/academic support services</td>
<td>125</td>
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<td><strong>Fall Semester 2007 Entering: Male/Female</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 Retention Rate for Fall 2007 Entering Students (Male)</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 Retention Rate for Fall 2007 Entering Students (Female)</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<td>49%</td>
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<td>Average cumulative GPA for full-time undergraduate students at the end of the Spring Semester 2008 (Male)</td>
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<td>Average cumulative GPA for full-time undergraduate students at the end of the Spring Semester 2008 (Female)</td>
<td>2.18</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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The following report will detail our efforts to meet our Access and Opportunity Goals. In doing so, we will cover our programs and outcomes, advising and programmatic efforts, personnel, supplemental instructional, and insights and experiences.

1). Proposed Targets and Outcomes

Retention Program Target Measures
- Number of underrepresented students that will be provided retention/academic support services with the funds specified above: **720**
- Number of students of color that will be provided retention/academic support services with the funds specified above: **125**
- Retention rate and average GPA of underrepresented students that are provided retention/academic support services (first to second fall): **53%; 2.8 GPA**
- Retention rate and average GPA of students of color that are provided retention/academic support services (first to second fall): **44%; 2.3 GPA**

Outcomes
- Actual number of underrepresented students served: **578**
- Actual number of students of color served: **179**
- Retention rate and average GPA of underrepresented students that are provided retention/academic support services (first to second fall): **58.8%; 2.6 GPA**
- Retention rate and average GPA of students of color that are provided retention/academic support services (first to second fall): **56.9%; 2.46 GPA**

2). Advising

As academic advisors, we have found that some underrepresented students can frequently wait too long to seek out help or assistance in their academic work, and find themselves struggling to maintain satisfactory academic progress. However, only part of “intrusive” advisement is getting students’ attention to these issues. A large part of the work of an intrusive advisor is to help motivate and inspire a student “take the helm” of their own academic ship and make positive choices that will improve their long-term academic success. As a part of our goal to provide intrusive advisement services to under-represented students we have used our “Early Alert” process, by which faculty inform Student Services of those students that are underperforming, along with examining Accuplacer scores and referrals from colleagues to identify those students that need extra help to continue successfully in their studies, and we can be confident that our outreach has made a significant impact on retention rates and academic success.
The bigger question will be: how will the provision of these services interact with our students’ long-term academic performance. Intrusive advisement works best when applied directly and frequently. It provides an external motivation and impels a student to focus on their academic work. If there is an absence of such service, how will under-represented students compensate for this motivation? Our hope is that our current students will have internalized this and matured to a point that they will be able to achieve a realistic balance and make the positive choices needed to succeed academically.

3). Programmatic Efforts

As mentioned above, an important piece of our work was to plan, design, and implement social integration and community building activities for under-represented students. During the ’08-’09 academic year, we put on the following activities for students:

**August**
8/25-8/26—Community/Social Integration: Welcome to NCTC ice cream social (400 students)

**September**
9/4—Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (50 students)
9/11—Community/Social Integration: NCTC student luncheon (50 students)
9/16—Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (50 students)
9/20—Football game tailgate (20 students)
9/13-9/14—Cultural Immersion: Trip to MN Renaissance Fair and Science Museum (35 students)
9/15—Movie Night at Northland “Baby Mama” (55 students)
9/17—Constitution Day Voter Registration Drive (40 students)
9/18—Homecoming Dance (45 students)
9/20—Football game tailgate (15 students)
9/24—Intramural Basketball (9 students)
9/24—Intramural Soccer (16 students)
9/24—Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (50 students)
9/22-9/25—“Success Week” Workshops (32 students)

**October**
10/1-10/29—Intramural Basketball (offered 4 times; average of 12 students)
10/1-10/29—Intramural Soccer (offered 4 times; average of 19 students)
10/2—Community/Social Integration: Hispanic Heritage luncheon: (350 students)
10/3—Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (60 students)
10/4—Waterpark Trip (5 students)
10/6—Extreme Entrepreneur Tour (60 students)
10/6—Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (61 students)
10/7—Cultural Immersion: Kevin Locke Folklore Performance (15 students)
10/8—Cultural Immersion: STOMP dance performance (20 students)
10/8—Breast Cancer Awareness Month activity (110 students)
10/9—Football game tailgate (12 students)
10/11-10/12—Cultural Immersion: Walker Art Gallery and Minneapolis Institute of Art trip (18 students)
10/23—Football game tailgate (10 students)
10/25—Paintball trip to Bemidji, MN (11 students)
10/30—Halloween Costume Ball (40 students)
10/31—Halloween Costume Contest and lunch: (162 students)
November
11/1-11/22 Intramural Open Gym (offered 4 times, average of 1 student)
11/3-- Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (60 students)
11/4—Election Night Pizza Party (30 students)
11/5-11/19—Intramural Basketball (offered 3 times; average of 8 students)
11/5-11/19—Intramural Soccer (offered 3 times, average of 19 students)
11/7—NCTC Movie Night at River Cinema (35 students)
11/13—International Dessert Fest (10 students)
11/20—International Film Festival (8 students)

December
12/1-- Community/Social Integration: Finals Week Prep: Caffeine House (60 students)
12/3-12/10—Intramural Basketball (offered 2 times; average of 5 students)
12/3-12/10—Intramural Soccer (offered 2 times; average of 16 students)
12/9-- Community/Social Integration: Minnesota Chili Feed (89 students)
12/10-- Community/Social Integration: NCTC Finals Week Ice Cream Social (250 students)
12/13—Ski Trip to Buena Vista Ski Area, Bemidji, MN (21 students)

January
1/14-1/15-- Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (60 students)
1/21—Intramural Basketball (19 students)
1/21—Intramural Soccer (16 students)
1/24—Intramural Open Gym (4 students)
1/29-- Community/Social Integration: Welcome to NCTC luncheon (350 students)

February
2/4-2/25—Intramural Basketball (offered 4 times; average of 16 students)
2/4-2/25—Intramural Soccer (offered 4 times; average of 18 students)
2/4—Intramural Weight Lifting (2 students)
2/10—Rock n’ Bowl at Bowling Alley (45 students)
2/11—Cultural Immersion: Dr. King’s Dream Theatrical Performance (30 students)
2/11—Laser Tag (22 students)
2/12—Sweetheart Dance (45 students)
2/12-- Community/Social Integration: “Lunch among Friends” luncheon (350 students)
2/17-2/18—MSCSA Advocacy Days Trip to St. Paul (4 students)
2/17-- Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (60 students)
2/19—Movie Night at Northland “The Express” (17 students)
2/23—Soul Food Feed (45 students)
2/26—Movie Night at Northland “The Dark Knight” (21 students)
2/28—Intramural Open Gym (3 students)

March
3/3--Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (50 students)
3/4--Movie Night at Northland “Pride and Prejudice” (9 students)
3/4-3/18—Intramural Basketball (offered 2 times; average of 12 students)
3/4-3/18—Intramural Soccer (offered 2 times; average of 15 students)
3/5--4-year college trip to UND (2 students)
3/17--Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (58 students)
3/18—Movie Night at Northland “Motherhood Manifesto” (14 students)
3/21-3/28—Intramural Open Gym (offered 2 times; average of 2 students)
3/23—“Self Defense for Students” Part 1 Workshop (11 students)
3/24—Movie Night at Northland “North Country” (12 students)
3/30—“Self Defense for Students” Part 2 Workshop (10 students)
3/31—Movie Night at River Cinema (50 students)

April
4/1—Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (50 students)
4/1-4/22—Intramural Basketball (offered 3 times; average of 9 students)
4/1-4/22—Intramural Soccer (offered 3 times; average of 13 students)
4/1-4/30—Get Your Stuff Together Program (37 students)
4/7—Movie Night at River Cinema (50 students)
4/15—Self Care and Stress Management Workshop (6 students)
4/17—MSCSA General Assembly (3 students)
4/17—Movie Night at River Cinema (30 students)
4/21—Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (50 students)
4/22—Earth Day Campus Cleanup and Cookout (42 students)
4/26—“Dia Del Nino” Community Day (25 students)
4/29—Student Focus Groups (34 students)
4/30—“Northland Live” Music Concert (27 students)

May
5/5—Cinco de Mayo Celebration (75 students)
5/6—Graduation Breakfast for ’09 class (116 students)
5/7—Community/Social Integration: Graduation BBQ (350 students)
5/8—Community/Social Integration: “School’s Out” Ice Cream Social (150 students)
5/11—Community/Social Integration: NCTC Coffee House (58 students)

4). Personnel

The Access and Opportunity grant also provided for services from professionals in the faculty and staff at Northland. The grant provided for:

- Two “Student Success Coordinators” (one per campus) that coordinated retention efforts and provided the majority of time to retention and success efforts.
- Partial support for two Financial Aid professionals (one per campus) to assist underrepresented students in identifying and navigating financial aid resources.
- Partial support for the College’s Director of Multicultural Services.
- Eight faculty credits related to supplement instruction efforts to provide intensive, subject-specific tutoring.

5). Supplemental Instruction

As our work continued, we discerned that there was a clear and distinct need for subject-specific tutoring, outside the typical tutoring resources of our Learning Centers. This was particularly the case in some of our Allied Health Science programs. During the ’08-’09 academic year, we featured subject-specific supplemental instruction on both the East Grand Forks and Thief River Falls campuses.
We are happy to report that the large majority of students that took advantage of these supplemental instruction efforts were quite successful in their class completion. In total, 131 students took advantage of the supplemental instruction. Of those, 109 were able to successfully complete their related course. This leaves us with an 82% successful course completion rate.

6). Insights and Experiences

In order to assess our work, we should first give a brief overview of the history and nature of Northland’s Access and Opportunity Grant. In 2007, Northland proceeded to utilize Access and Opportunity funds to hire two full-time “Student Success Coordinators” and to provide support for programmatic activities for social and community integration. As our work began in 2007, we focused on other critical areas of need for under-represented students. These areas included financial aid advisement, and supplemental and subject-specific instruction.

The ultimate goals for Northland were to increase student persistence and enhance academic performance and thus, increase retention, graduation, or 4-year transfer rates. To accomplish this, we provided a palate of services and programs. Foremost among these was our intrusive advisement, in which the Success Coordinators reached out to students proactively to enhance and reinforce positive academic and study habits, and encourage academic discipline and focus. In addition, our work extended to creating and implementing programs and activities designed to increase social and community involvement and integration.

Some salient things can be learned from Northland’s work to increase access and opportunity. First, increasing student persistence is very much a “team effort”. Our work is highly collaborative, and involves the dedication of our Counselors, Financial Aid and Learning Center professionals, faculty, and colleagues in Student Services.

Second, student needs rarely cleave down in simple ways. It did not take long for us to learn that in our intrusive advising, students at Northland grapple with multiple responsibilities and that the realities that students face are unique. In order to address academic concerns or struggles, we have had to help students not only develop healthy and productive study skills, but also help them access a wide array of services to help them balance their responsibilities in order to both make continued enrollment a reality for them, and for them to improve and excel in their studies.

Third, retention efforts are cumulative. That is, there is no magic formula that increases student persistence, and in order to see success, the work must be envisioned as a long-term venture. Critical to the success of our efforts is the ability to develop and forge strong relationships with our students. These relationships come from frequent and regular dialogue and honest communication; in our experience, there is no substitute for this. To continue guiding and steering our under-represented students toward academic success and increasing access and opportunity, Northland will need to continue providing these resources for students.
# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OUTCOMES WORKSHEET

**COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY:** Northland Community and Technical College

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach and Recruitment Programs</th>
<th>Retention Programs</th>
<th>Comparative Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount spent per year:</td>
<td>Amount spent per year: $183,068</td>
<td>Retention Rate for all first-year students (first to second Fall): 49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of New Underrepresented Students to be enrolled as a result of the expenditure specified above:</td>
<td>Number of underrepresented students that will be provided retention/academic support services with the funds specified above: 720</td>
<td>Average college/university first-year GPA: 2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCTC served 578 underrepresented students through the AOS initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of New Students of Color to be enrolled as a result of the expenditure specified above:</td>
<td>Number of students of color that will be provided retention/academic support services with the funds specified above: 125</td>
<td>NCTC served 179 students of color through the AOS initiative</td>
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<td>NCTC students that were provided specific retention/academic support services had an average 2.6 GPA. Retention rate for students receiving services: 58.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retention rate and average GPA of students of color that were provided specific retention/academic support services (first to second fall): 44%; 2.3 GPA</td>
<td>NCTC students of color that were provide specific retention/academic support services had an average 2.46 GPA. Retention rate for students of color receiving services: 56.90%</td>
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**Intrusive Advising**

1. Student Success Coordinators
2. Early Academic Alert Process
3. Early identification of at-risk students
4. Academic enhancement activities

**Learner Support**

1. Supplemental Instruction and Peer Tutoring for English Language Learners
| **Social Engagement and Community Building** | 1. Cultural enrichment and diversity  
2. Service learning activities  
3. Social/Student engagement activities |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Support</strong></td>
<td>1. Financial Aid Specialists</td>
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