

## IOWA COLLEGE STUDENT AID COMMISSION

### Northeast Community College (Nebraska) Application for Postsecondary Registration Renewal November 2014

#### **STAFF ACTION:**

**Approve Northeast Community College's request for registration in Iowa for a two-year term that begins on November 17, 2014, and ends on November 17, 2016.**

As a condition of registration, the College must:

- Report the Iowa location at which a distance education student will complete a field experience within 90 days of the College's approval of the Iowa site.

#### **Registration Purpose**

Revised Iowa Code Sections 261B.2 (definitions) and 261B.3 (effective July 1, 2012) require a school to register with the Commission if a person compensated by the school conducts any portion of a course of instruction, including by in-person, distance education, or correspondence method in this state or if the school otherwise has a presence in this state. Presence means a location in Iowa at which a student participates in any structured activity related to a school's distance education course of instruction. Presence also means an address, location, telephone number, or internet protocol address in Iowa from which a school conducts any aspect of its operations. Staff required Northeast Community College (NCC) to apply for registration to offer distance education programs to Iowa residents because the College compensates Iowa-resident, adjunct faculty who teach remotely in the College's online programs from an Iowa location.

#### **Institutional Information**

NCC is a public postsecondary educational institution whose main campus is located at 801 East Benjamin Ave., Norfolk, Nebraska. The school's chief executive officer is Dr. Michael Chipps, at the same address. The College applied for registration in Iowa only to offer distance education programs. Therefore, it has no Iowa contact person. Since the College is an instrumentality of a state, it is not appropriate for the College to register with the Iowa Secretary of State as a corporation conducting business in Iowa. Therefore, it has no Iowa resident agent.

*Physical Facilities:* Not applicable for a distance education program provider.

*Accreditation:* Northeast Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a regional accrediting agency recognized by the federal Department of Education.

*Federal Stafford Loan 3-Year Cohort Default Rate (FFY 2011):* 11.2%

For comparison purposes, the FFY 2011 3-year national average cohort default rate is 13.7%.

*Graduation Rate:* 43%.

*Average Loan Debt upon Graduation:* \$5,372 (for students who graduated in 2012).

*Record Preservation:* Permanent record of all the student's courses, credits and grades earned is kept in the Registrar's Office. This permanent record includes all courses taken while enrolled at any level at NCC. Retention of records at NCC is governed by policies established by the Nebraska State Records Administrator, and aligns with the retention and record disposition policies of the University of Nebraska. Student transcripts are retained permanently.

*Transcript Requests:* Any current or former student may request a transcript by contacting:

Kathy Stover, Registrar  
Northeast Community College  
801 East Benjamin Ave., P.O. Box 469  
Norfolk, Nebraska 68701-0469  
(800) 348-9033, ext. 7265 (phone)  
(402) 844-7396 (fax)

<http://www.northeast.edu/Records-and-Registration/pdfs/Transcript-Request-Form.pdf>

*Instructional Methodology:* Distance education. Online classes are provided utilizing a Learning Management System platform. Delivery is asynchronous. Northeast offers eleven degree programs entirely online, which are identical to the degree programs offered on campus. Teaching an online class is part of the faculty member's teaching load for a full-time instructor, or is a special assignment for a part-time instructor. Students enter the online courses through the My Workspace portal. My Workspace includes access to online courses, course guides for each online course, a storage area to upload personal files, a list of announcements relative to each online course, a calendar that includes all events and due dates for a course, opportunities for a student to enter private appointments that cannot be viewed or removed by faculty or other students. Students also access course syllabi, course materials, discussion groups, email with faculty and students, quizzes/tests and grades through this portal. Instructor contact information, method of communication, and office hours (when faculty are available for support or questions) are provided in the syllabus. Office hours are expected of any faculty teaching for NCC. Support services are also readily available through the My Workspace home page or via e-mail at [helpdesk@northeast.edu](mailto:helpdesk@northeast.edu). NCC provides an online video tutorial that explains how its online courses work <http://www.northeast.edu/Northeast-Online/>.

Regardless of delivery method, the College expects classes to meet the same learning objectives of traditional program courses and have the equivalent level of expectation and rigor.

*Student Learning Resources:* Northeast Community College's online student may access library resources by several methods. Students may access over 70 online databases, "Films on Demand," a collection of over 7,000 full-length videos, a comprehensive collection of

distinguished classical recordings, approximately 96 periodicals online, and over 40,000 eBooks through the online catalog. Tips, guides and tutorials are available to assist students who are conducting research using library resources. Students at a distance may also use the regular interlibrary loan of materials. Students may use “Serials Solutions” to help determine the best database to search for a subject, or to see if the library has full text access to a particular electronic journal. The Library provides a list of research and reference tools including websites Library staff have evaluated. Library staff provides support and assists online students through the use of e-mail, video chat, or telephone.

Students at a distance also have access to student support services. An advisor is assigned to online students. Online students also receive assistance through the Guidance, Progress, and Success (GPS) Center as do on-campus students. The Library Orientation, Learning Skills for Success, and Career Planning courses/training have been created within the Learning Management System, the College’s online learning platform, and are available to students at a distance. The College’s New Beginnings is a unique program that supports single parents, single pregnant women, displaced homemakers, and individuals enrolled in non-traditional programs. Services offered under this program may include individual support, peer mentoring, financial assistance, workshops and support groups, and newsletters. The College Store has recently purchased new bookstore software that will allow students to order and pay for books online. Implementation of the online store is anticipated for the fall 2014 semester. Students from a distance work with the Financial Aid Office either online or via phone to obtain federal financial aid or scholarships. Online students also have access to tutors and a writer’s clinic online, via web conferencing tools, or by phone. An online student taking six credit hours or more is eligible for free, short-term counseling. However, because the student is at a distance, only the initial problem solving portion of the counseling can take place via a phone call. Students may learn about the online services the College provides at <http://www.northeast.edu/Support-Services/Online-Support-Services/>. All of these services (with the exception of coursework for success, or mandatory placement courses) are available to online students at no charge. The College also maintains a useful, “one-stop” website for student resources at <http://www.northeast.edu/Current-Students/>.

*Curriculum Evaluation and Development:* NCC has written guidelines for faculty outlining the procedures to implement and revise courses. Faculty has the responsibility to assist in the planning and development of courses and programs. The College has adopted a syllabi template that faculty use to develop the syllabus for each course. Proposals for the development of new or revised courses and/or programs should include information from industry advisory committees, objectives, state guidelines, justification of need, evidence of transferability of credit or acceptance by other institutions or agencies, course syllabi in the approved format, and the resources needed for implementation and continuation. Requests for new or revised courses are approved by the Educational Services Standing Committee, which includes a cross section of faculty, and is approved by the President’s Counsel, which also has faculty representation. Programs offered by NCC are reviewed every seven years by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE). After reviewing the programs, the CCPE makes recommendations for continuation, improvement, or dissolution. NCC conducts an internal program review midway CCPE reviews.

NCC faculty are responsible for the assessment of their courses and programs using a common reporting matrix that documents the competencies a student should have achieved at the conclusion of the program, the measures to document that achievement, the expected

results, the actual results, the analysis of the results, and recommendations for improvement. Faculty members are active participants in the Assessment Sub-Committee, which provides leadership and direction for the evolution and sustainment of assessment practices across the curriculum. Faculty are also an integral part of the General Education Sub-Committee, which provides assistance and direction to accomplish the goals of general education courses and identify expected student learning outcomes.

*Student Complaints Process:* NCC encourages a student with a complaint about a college staff member, a college policy or procedure, or an action or position taken by the college to initially discuss their concerns with a faculty advisor, instructor, counselor from Student Services, or any college staff member. The staff member will attempt to resolve any complaint between the particular college department or staff member and the complainant. The student should continue to pursue any unresolved issues by contacting the Director of Student Conduct in writing, and following the college chain of command through the College President.

Should this process fail to give the student satisfactory resolution, the student should continue to pursue the issue in accordance with NCC's formal grievance procedures. Student Services counselors are available for assistance in filing a formal grievance. The College's grievance procedures and policies are maintained in the office of the Vice President of Student Services, and in the Student Handbook <http://www.northeast.edu/Current-Students/pdf/Student-Handbook.pdf>.

### **Distance Education Programs Offered In Iowa**

The total, **estimated** cost of tuition, fees, books and supplies for each program is listed below.

#### *Undergraduate Certificate Programs (based on curriculum of 16 credit hours)*

- Business – Insurance Services \$2,638
- Business – Entrepreneurship \$2,260

#### *Undergraduate Diploma Programs (based on curriculum of 30 or more credit hours)*

- Business \$4,144

#### *Associate of Arts Degree Programs (based on curriculum of 60 credit hours)*

- Criminal Justice – Corrections (61-64 credit hours) \$8,036
- Criminal Justice – Law Enforcement (61-64 credit hours) \$8,036
- Accounting (64-67 credit hours) \$8,413
- \*Academic Transfer (60 credit hours) \$7,533
- Business Administration (62-65 credit hours) \$8,162
- Behavioral Science (61-64 credit hours) \$8,036
- Agriculture Transfer to University of Nebraska at Lincoln (70-78 credit hours) \$9,793
- Elementary Education (55-58 credit hours) \$8,538
- Education Paraprofessional (62-63 credit hours) \$7,911
- Social Science (62-65 credit hours) \$8,162

\* The associate degree with a concentration in academic transfer is designed for students who may be unsure of their career goals but who intend to continue their education at a four-year institution after attending Northeast Community College. Depending on a student's general interest area, either an associate of arts degree or an associate of science degree may be applicable. Students are advised to work closely with advisors at Northeast Community College and with the transfer office of their four-year institution as they plan their coursework.

### *Associate of Applied Science Degree Programs*

- †Administrative Assistant \$8,287
- †Business – Entrepreneurship \$8,413

*Education Programs:* All NCC education programs culminate in an associate degree and are therefore non-licensure programs.

*†Field Experiences:* The Associate of Applied Science Administrative Assistant, and Business Entrepreneurship Programs include a cooperative internship (Co-op). This experience integrates a student's classroom study with an on-site work experience related to the student's program of study. It is designed to bridge the gap between the classroom and work. Students are awarded college credit not for working, but for demonstrating what they learned during their internship experience.

In addition to receiving college credit, students in a cooperative education internship are paid at a wage commensurate with their training and experience. Students' employment should conform with federal, state, and local laws. In most instances, a Co-op occurs during the summer months from mid-May until early August. Students work 40 hours a week for 12 weeks, but arrangements can be made for fewer hours if necessary.

The coordinator's primary role is to ensure that both the employer and the student are benefiting from the Co-op experience. Typically, the coordinator is an instructor in the student's program of study. Coordinators help students establish career goals, refer students to available co-op opportunities, and develop progressive and meaningful training plans with employers. A Northeast faculty member makes several visits to the business to meet with the student's work supervisor to discuss the student's progress, what skills the student is using, student attendance at work, and other administrative topics.

### **Registration Compliance**

As required by Iowa Code Section 261B.4, the College disclosed its institutional policy on refunding tuition charges for withdrawn students, which is not governed by Iowa law or rule.

Administrative rules specifically require the school to comply with the requirements of Chapter 261.9(1) "e" through "h".

- Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(e) requires a school to maintain and disseminate a drug and alcohol abuse policy that includes sanctions for violation of the school's policy and information about the availability of drug or alcohol counseling or rehabilitation. Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(f) requires a school to maintain and disseminate a sexual abuse policy that includes information about counseling opportunities and reporting instances

of sexual abuse to school officials and law enforcement. These requirements duplicate policies and disclosures required by the federal Department of Education for a school that participates in the federal student aid programs. The College complies with the requirements of Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(e) and (f), and discloses these policies and services to students in multiple locations on its website at:

- ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/Student-Code-of-Conduct.aspx>.
  - ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/Health-and-Wellness/Drugs-Free-Schools-and-Communities-Act.aspx>.
  - ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/Health-and-Wellness/Alcohol-Poisoning.aspx>.
  - ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/Health-and-Wellness/Campus-Taskforce-on-the-Reduction-of-Alcohol-Related-Problems.aspx>.
  - ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/Health-and-Wellness/Drug-and-Alcohol-Policy.aspx>.
  - ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/Current-Students/pdf/Student-Handbook.pdf>.
  - ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/Campus-Safety/Resources-Guide.aspx>.
  - ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/Campus-Safety/Sex-Offenses.aspx>.
  - ✓ <http://www.northeast.edu/About-Us/pdfs/Policies/2000/2080.pdf>.
  - ✓ <https://www.northeast.edu/Health-and-Wellness/Emergency.aspx>.
- Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(g) requires a school to maintain a special policy concerning institutional charges for members of the Iowa National Guard or reserve members of the U.S. Armed Forces, or the spouse of such a member if the member has a dependent child, when the service member or spouse must withdraw from the school because the service member has been called to active (Iowa) state or federal military duty or service. During the registration application review process, the College strengthened its existing military deployment policy, which permits an impacted student to request a full refund of tuition and fees, to ensure that Iowa resident students enrolled in its online programs are aware of their specific options under Iowa law. The College affirms that it will work with any impacted student no matter the length of the deployment, that it will provide the benefit to eligible students who are impacted by a state call to military duty or service, and that it will provide the benefit to the spouse of a deployed service member with a dependent child. The College will disclose these options to an Iowa- resident online program student via email from the student's College advisor.
  - Iowa Senate File 2225 created a new Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(h). This new law, generally effective July 1, 2012, requires a school to develop and implement a policy for employees who, in the course of their employment, attend, examine, counsel, or treat a child and who suspect the physical or sexual abuse of that child. By cross-reference from existing administrative rules for registration [283-21.2(261B), subsection 7], this new policy now applies to Iowa's registered schools that have compensated parties working for the school at an Iowa location. The Board of Governors of Northeast Community College adopted an administrative policy #BP-3260 that complies with Nebraska Revised Statute 28 section 28-711. This provision of Nebraska law requires any school employee or other person with reasonable cause to believe a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect to report the incident to law enforcement or to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). If the DHHS receives the report, Nebraska law requires the DHHS to immediately ensure that it is reported to law enforcement. The College will disclose this policy to employees at <https://www.northeast.edu/About-Us/Policies.aspx>.

*Student Consumer Information:* In its registration application, the College affirms its willingness to comply with the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 261.9, as stipulated by Iowa Code Section 261B.4(8). Chapter 261.9 requires disclosure to students of information about the school's programs, charges, tuition refund policy, whether a certificate or diploma awarded by the school is applicable toward a degree program the school offers, and the identity of the school's accrediting agency. These disclosures are duplicative of the federal Department of Education's student consumer information disclosure requirements for a school that participates in the federal student aid programs. The College provides these disclosures in its Catalog at <http://www.northeast.edu/Degrees-and-Programs/pdfs/2013-Catalog.pdf>.

NCC affirms on the application that it will comply with the provisions of Iowa Code Section 261B.7. Effective July 1, 2012, these provisions of Iowa Code were modified to state that, provided the school does not claim "approval" or "accreditation," the school must disclose to students that it is registered by the Commission and provide Commission contact information for students who have questions or complaints about the school. These disclosures will be provided to Iowa resident online students at <http://www.northeast.edu/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/Additional-Resources-for-Filing-Student-Complaints.aspx>.

*Financial Responsibility:* CMU submitted a copy of an independent audit report dated October 5, 2012, and issued by Dana F. Cole & Company, LLP for the institutional fiscal years ending June 30, 2012 and 2011. The auditors stated their opinion that the College's financial statements present fairly the respective financial position of the College.

- A public institution is not required to calculate a composite score to measure its financial responsibility. A public institution is considered financially responsible if its debts and liabilities are backed by the full faith and credit of the state.
- A public institution is not required to determine the percentage of its revenue that is derived from Title IV student financial aid.

*Full-Time Iowa Resident Faculty Member or Program Coordinator:* Northeast Community College has no full-time, Iowa-resident faculty providing instruction in its online programs. Administrative rules effective January 15, 2014, do not impose this requirement on a school that applies for registration in Iowa solely for the purpose of offering distance education programs.

The College does employ four part-time, Iowa-resident adjunct faculty to provide instruction in its online programs, as follows:

- Laren Emenhiser-Harris – Art; M.A.H in Art History and Philosophy; 20 years experience as an art curator and curatorial researcher.
- Laura Lofton – Art; Master of Education; 14 years K-12 teaching experience; licensed K-12 teacher.
- Jeff Peiffer – History/sociology; Master of Arts, 21 years K-12 teaching experience; 10 years community college teaching experience.
- Carla Winqvist – Early Childhood Education; Masters in Early Childhood Education; 21 years experience as an early childhood educator and administrator.

*Instructional/Supervisory Staff Qualifications:* Staff reviewed the academic credentials of approximately 39 full-time College faculty listed in its catalog who teach in subject matter pertinent to the College's online associate, diploma, or certificate programs, as well as resumes for the four Iowa adjunct faculty. Of the 39 full-time College faculty, all but one have a master's degree. The single exception, a mathematics instructor, has a baccalaureate degree and experience teaching at the College since 1997.

Staff accessed a portion of the College's Self-Study Report <http://www.northeast.edu/About-us/Accreditation/References/Self-Study-Final.pdf> provided to the Higher Learning Commission and dated 2013. This report addresses teaching and learning quality, resources, and support. In that document, the College states that, as of fall 2012, it employed 116 full-time faculty and 242 adjunct faculty members. The average length of service of full-time faculty was 13.6 years in 2012.

The College has established credentialing standards for its faculty that are consistently applied to both full-time and adjunct. The following criteria are considered:

- Degree appropriate to the level of instruction and credit hours in subject area required.
- Certification and/or licensure required.
- Related work and/or teaching experience.

Assurance of faculty credentialing is a joint responsibility shared by NCC's Vice President of Educational Services and academic deans, and supported by the Human Resources office.

*Commitment to Iowa Students and Teach-Out:* NCC provided a written letter from President Michael Chipps, Ph.D., committing to the delivery of qualify online programs to Iowans, and agreeing to provide a teach-out or provide alternatives for students to complete their program at other institutions in the unlikely situation that NCC closes one of the programs offered online.

*Student Complaints:* None.

## **Compliance with Iowa Code Chapter 714**

### *Section 714.18 – Evidence of Financial Responsibility*

Not applicable. CMU is a public institution eligible for an exemption from financial responsibility as a postsecondary educational institution authorized by the laws of a state to grant degrees under Iowa Code Section 714.19, subsection 1.

### *Section 714.23 – State Tuition Refund Policy*

Not applicable. Iowa's tuition refund policy for withdrawn students applies only to for profit institutions.