SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Committee on Academic and Student Affairs

AGENDA ITEM: I – D

DATE: April 2-3, 2014

SUBJECT: Institutional Accreditation – NSU

Northern State University has been informed by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) that the institution’s initiation and expansion of distance education up to 100% of total degree programs is approved. A copy is attached (Attachment I). In addition, the National Association of School of Art and Design (NASAD) Commission on Accreditation voted to grant membership to Northern State University. A copy is attached (Attachment II).

RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Information.
July 15, 2013

President James Smith  
Northern State University  
1200 S. Jay St.  
Aberdeen, SD 57401-7198

Dear President Smith:

This letter is formal notification of the action taken concerning Northern State University by the Higher Learning Commission. At its meeting on July 1, 2013, the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) acted on the items below. This letter serves as the official record of this action, and the date of this action constitutes the effective date of your new status with the Commission.

**Action.** IAC concurred with the evaluation findings and approved the initiation and expansion of distance education up to 100% of total degree programs. Under the Commission's revised distance and correspondence education stipulations, effective immediately, this approval will be indicated as: "Approved for distance education courses and programs."

On April 19, 2013, the Commission revised its requirements for approval of distance delivery. The new stipulations replace the initiation and expansion categories of 5%, 20%, or 100% of total degree programs.

If the current Commission action includes changes to your institution's **Statement of Affiliation Status** (SAS) or **Organizational Profile** (OP), the changes will appear in these documents on the Commission's Web site within three weeks of the date of action. The SAS is a summary of your institution’s ongoing relationship with the Commission. The OP is generated from data you provided in your most recent Institutional Update.

If you have questions about these documents after viewing them, please contact Karen J. Solomon. Information about notifying the public of this action is found in Chapter 8.3-3 and 8.3-4 of the **Handbook of Accreditation, Third Edition**, available at [http://ncahc.org/Information-for-Institutions/institutional-reporting-of-actions.html](http://ncahc.org/Information-for-Institutions/institutional-reporting-of-actions.html).

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank you and your associates for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

*Sylvia Manning*  
President
Commission Review of Distance and Correspondence Education

In a review of the Higher Learning Commission for continued federal recognition, the U.S. Department of Education required a policy change related to New Programs Offered Through Distance Education (see Commission policy on Institutional Change - INST.F.20.040). The Board adopted this policy change on April 19, 2013, and it is effective immediately.

This change means that Commission approval of distance delivery by an institution reporting or seeking approval for distance or correspondence offerings will now include approval to initiate distance education or correspondence courses, even a single course and even if those courses do not add up to a program. (To be clear: we will approve the first course, but not subsequent courses, and then the first program.)

This change also means that the Commission will no longer exempt the first four certificates an institution may offer through distance or correspondence education; an institution must seek approval for the initiation of programs when it initiates its first certificate program offered through distance or correspondence education.

Due to these changes, the Commission has worked to simplify the approval process for distance-delivered offerings. Transition to this streamlined process for determining scope of distance-delivered offerings will be complete by September 1, 2013. A new Distance Delivery Substantive Change form will be available September 1. The Commission will continue to accept the old form until December 31, 2013.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) policies outline when institutions need to notify the Commission about distance-delivered instruction and when they need to seek approval. This document defines the characteristics of distance delivery and specifies when institutions must notify the Commission or seek approval for distance delivery.

Commission Definitions for Distance-Delivered Courses and Programs

The Higher Learning Commission uses the following definitions for the purpose of applying its policy on distance delivery to its accredited and candidate institutions:

- **Distance-delivered courses** are those in which all or the vast majority (typically 75% or more) of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication, correspondence, or equivalent mechanisms, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other.

- **Distance-delivered programs** are those certificate, diploma, or degree programs in which 50% or more of the required courses may be taken as distance-delivered courses.

Reporting and Seeking Approval for Distance-Delivered Offerings

The chart below identifies the brackets for determining the scope of distance education and correspondence education by an institution. The Commission determines the appropriate bracket for each institution. Such determination is based on information provided by the institution in its Institutional Update to the Commission or when it seeks and receives approval of a proposed change. Programs new to the institution may require approval by the Commission following the Commission's policy on institutional change prior to their being offered to students and regardless of the method of delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bracket</th>
<th>Scope of Distance-Delivered Offerings (A bracket number is determined for both types of distance-delivered offerings: distance and correspondence education)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Approved for courses and multiple programs (certificate, diploma, or degree).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Approval limited to courses and one program (certificate, diploma, or degree).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Approval limited to courses only. No programs (certificate, diploma, or degree).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Institution has not been approved. No courses or programs (certificate, diploma, or degree).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Audience: Institutions

Official Commission Procedure

© Higher Learning Commission

Process: Substantive Change

Contact: 800.621.7440

Published: July 2013

Version 01 – 2013-07

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Commission Procedure: Review of Distance and Correspondence Education

*Once approved for courses and programs, the institution does not need to seek further approval for expansion.*

Higher Learning Commission policy requires an institution to seek the Commission’s prior approval if the institution plans to initiate or expand its distance-delivered offerings as described below. When initiation or expansion is anticipated, an institution must submit a substantive change request.

**Initiation** occurs and a review is required when the institution:

- plans to initiate its first distance education or correspondence education course;
- plans to initiate its first distance education or correspondence education program, even when it has been approved to offer distance education or correspondence education courses;

**Expansion** occurs and a review is required when the institution:

- plans to increase its current activity in distance education or correspondence education to more than one degree program.

In addition, the Commission may require a substantive change evaluation if the institution:

- has never had a focused review of distance or correspondence education under the previous policy regarding distance education and is now offering one or more programs; or
- has a significant annual increase in enrollment.

In addition to reviewing distance-delivered courses and programs through its substantive change processes, the Commission evaluates delivery whenever it comprehensively reviews an institution. In these comprehensive reviews, the Commission examines the institution’s capacity to provide education to its students and the quality of its performance in doing so, whether via distance delivery or traditional face-to-face modes. Comprehensive reviews examine curriculum, staffing, support services, access to appropriate laboratory and library resources, and all other facets of quality higher education.

**Questions**

For general questions on approval of distance-delivered courses or programs, send an e-mail to changerequests@hlcommission.org or call 800.621.7440 x137. For institution-specific questions, contact the Commission staff liaison assigned to the institution by calling 800.621.7440 and asking to be transferred to the liaison.

**The following are the Federal definitions (2009) of distance and correspondence education:**

**Correspondence education means:**

1. Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.
2. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.
3. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced.
4. Correspondence education is not distance education.

**Distance Education** means education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:

1. The internet;
2. One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, Fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
3. Audio conferencing; or
4. Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3).
November 8, 2013

Peter Kilian  
Chair, Department of Art  
Northern State University  
1200 South Jay Street  
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Dear Professor Kilian:

The NASAD Commission on Accreditation, at its October 2013 meetings, voted to grant Membership to Northern State University. The enclosed Commission Action Report provides the official description of this action and, if applicable, any requests for additional information. A copy of the Commission Action Report is being sent to the individuals listed below, along with a notice of the NASAD policy regarding strict confidentiality.

This action is taken upon review of Northern State University according to accreditation standards in effect in October 2013. As a member of NASAD, the institution is responsible for participating in all revisions and additions to the standards as well as maintaining its curricular programs in the visual arts and design current with NASAD standards as these are developed.

Please accept our congratulations on behalf of the Association.

With best wishes for the success of your program, I remain

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Samuel Hope  
Executive Director

cc: James M. Smith, President  
Northern State University  
Thomas Hawley, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Northern State University  
Alan D. LaFave, Dean, School of Fine Arts  
Northern State University

11250 Roger Bacon Drive  
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Email info@arts-accredit.org  
Web Site nasad.arts-accredit.org
National Association of Schools of Art and Design  
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21  
Reston, Virginia 20190-5248

COMMISSION ACTION REPORT

This document provides the official action of the Commission as indicated in the cover letter of the same date.

November 8, 2013

NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY  
Department of Art

Action:

The Commission voted to accept the response and grant Membership with the degree listing indicated below.

The Commission also took action regarding new curricula, as outlined elsewhere in this report.

NASAD Degree Listing:

Bachelor of Arts – 4 years: Art (Advertising Design, Fine Arts, Multimedia Design).  
Bachelor of Science – 4 years: Art Education.  
Associate of Science – 2 years: Digital Design.

Next Full Review:

2018-2019 Academic Year

New Curriculum:

The Commission voted to grant Plan Approval for the following degree:

   Associate of Science – 2 years: Digital Design.

When three transcripts are available for this program, the institution should submit an application for Final Approval for Listing. Instructions for submitting Final Approval for Listing applications are found in Policies and Procedures for Reviews of New Curricula. This document may be downloaded from the NASAD Web site at http://nasad.arts-accredit.org (see “Accreditation Procedures” and beneath that “Other Procedures”).
NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Art
NASAD Commission Action Report
November 8, 2013
Page 2

Commendation:

The Commission commends the institution for the thoroughness of its response and efforts to meet NASAD standards.

[Signature]
Samuel Hope
Executive Director

SH:ck