

## Executive Summary

This report prepared for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) focused visit scheduled for May, 2009, summarizes the history of Oglala Lakota College (OLC) and its relationship with the HLC. In particular, it answers the concerns which were expressed in the report following the HLC Comprehensive Visit to OLC in March 2003. This report describes how OLC continues to meet the requirements for shared governance, faculty evaluation, and clear lines of authority as set out in HLC's Accreditation Handbook (2003 criterion one, subsection 1d). Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye, the Lakota culture based shared governance system, instituted in 1980, is described in detail and demonstrates the ways in which faculty, staff, students, and administration participate in program and instructional design, in course development and content, and in the formulation and recommendation of OLC policies and procedures. Also included is a detailed description of the mechanisms by which faculty oversees its own governance, curriculum, programs, evaluation, assessment, and other shared responsibilities.

Principles of shared governance are an integral part of Lakota society which invites everyone to participate in decision-making. The principle of we are all related, *mitakuye oyasin*, is the basis of Lakota society. For example, Lakota people address each other using kinship terms whether or not they are biologically or legally related. The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye and its five governing committees combine the Lakota culture of participation and relationship within an institution of higher education. To provide evidence about the effectiveness of both the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye shared governance and faculty governance structures, Oglala Lakota College conducted a survey of its 63 faculty and 108 support staff, from November 2008 to January 2009 (appendix B). The

first eight survey items relate to employees' satisfaction with the level of their participation and involvement in governance and other issues affecting the college. Items nine to thirteen ask about employees' satisfaction with supervision, lines of authority, and job autonomy. Of 171 employees, 125 or 73.1% responded to the survey. Among faculty, the response rate was 77.8%. Among staff, the response rate was 68.5%. The survey results show that a large majority of faculty and staff support the existing governance structure; they support their level of participation and the style of supervision and mode of evaluation they receive. Neither faculty nor staff believes they are unduly interfered with in performing their job duties.

The Oglala Lakota College Board of Trustees voted unanimously at its meeting on January 29, 2009, to support OLC's shared governance including the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye. Oglala Lakota College meets the HLC requirements for governance, evaluation, organizational structures, and climate as set out in the HLC Handbook of Accreditation. We therefore respectfully submit this report and anticipate a favorable result with regard to the focused visit.

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## Introduction

### *Reasons for the Focused Visit*

In spring 2003, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association (NCA) granted continued accreditation to Oglala Lakota College (OLC) and scheduled the next comprehensive evaluation for spring 2013. HLC stipulated that OLC submit a progress report in May 2005 on assessment, general education, and instructional program review and a monitoring report on strategic planning in May 2007. Both reports were submitted and accepted by the HLC (Team resource room).

This report is OLC's self-study in preparation for the focused visit. It addresses the following areas of concern and specific issues as outlined in the Team Report submitted to the HLC following the March 2003 comprehensive visit (p. 23 and 24): faculty governance, faculty comprehensive evaluation system, organizational structure and climate.

### *Process by which the Report has been Prepared*

Preliminary discussions regarding the focused visit began in the fall of 2007. President Thomas Shortbull sought input from consultants in spring 2008. Further discussions took place in May, July, and August of 2008, and in September, a task force was formed to conduct a self study. The task force represents faculty, department chairs, students, directors of instructional sites, support staff, committee chairs, and Dr. Gerald Giraud, the Vice President for Instruction. The task force met regularly as described in the minutes (Team resource room).

The focused visit task force conducted a survey in which all OLC employees were invited to respond anonymously to items on governance, evaluation, and

organization/climate. All 171 Oglala Lakota College employees had the opportunity to participate in the survey; 63 of these are faculty members and 108 are support staff. The survey allowed employees to respond to closed and open response items (Appendix B). The results are discussed in detail in later sections of the report and on page 41. A summary of quantitative and qualitative responses to each survey item is included in Appendix G.

### *The Organization of the Report*

This report seeks to provide insight into the history of Indian Education, the reasons for the formation of Oglala Lakota College (OLC), and the importance of Lakota cultural principles which underlie OLC's organization. This report also details OLC's relationship with the North Central Association (NCA) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) before responding to the concerns expressed in the HLC Team reports of 1998 and 2003.

In this report the term "Indian" will be used in preference to the term "Native American" to refer to the original inhabitants of the United States. This terminology is congruent with the usage in official documents and is preferred by many Lakota people.

## History of Oglala Lakota College and its Relationship with the North Central Association and the Higher Learning Commission

### *The Tribal College Movement and Indian Education*

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of tribal leaders and educators took action to address the long standing failure of mainstream educational institutions in educating North American Indian people. Non-Indian schools, curricula, and teachers were often carrying out the assimilation policies of the federal government by forcibly suppressing and eradicating native cultures, language, and history. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, numerous government reports, e.g. the Meriam Report (Meriam, Lewes, and Others. *The Problem of Indian Administration*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928), Udall Report (United States. Task Force on Indian Affairs, *Report to the Secretary of the Interior by the Task Force on Indian Affairs*, Washington, 1961), Presidential Task Force on Indian Affairs ("A Free Choice for American Indians, *Report of the President's Task Force on American Indians*, December 1966), and the Kennedy Report (US Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy – A National Challenge*, Washington, 1969) documented the many shortcomings and poor quality of instruction that was delivered to Indian people by the existing educational system. The reports also identified the need to revive and strengthen native social systems as the necessary prerequisite and foundation of learning.

The Tribal College movement was the response to the shortcomings of the existing post-secondary educational system. It insisted on Indian control of Indian education and called for incorporating native culture, history, and language in the curriculum. By structuring tribal colleges to be congruent with native principles of being

and relating, the founders of the tribal college movement believed that Indian colleges would succeed in educating Indian people for professional occupations within their communities where dominant culture institutions had failed.

In 1971, Oglala Lakota College (OLC) was chartered by the Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST). It was one of the first institutions of higher education established on an Indian reservation. Its mission and goals have changed little over the years and include a significant component to foster and revitalize Lakota culture and language. An enduring challenge to OLC has been to adapt mainstream higher education structures to create and enhance culturally appropriate higher education, as it has been of other Tribal Colleges and Universities. OLC has done this successfully while meeting the requirements imposed by government and accrediting bodies.

Oglala Lakota College achieved candidacy status for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in 1979 and was accredited for the first time in 1983. Two important principles formed the basis of OLC's organization and structure: one was the decentralized model of instructional delivery, and the other was a governance structure which allowed everyone to participate in the decision-making process. Decentralization allows Indian people to be educated in their home communities and local staff forms a cultural bridge between students and faculty, many of whom are non-Indian. The college community debated how to create the kind of governance structure which would accommodate the “. . . dual mission of maintaining tribal identity and acquiring knowledge and skills for mainstream society. . .” (Badwound, Elgin, *Leadership and American Indian Values: The Tribal College Dilemma*, Journal of American Indian Education, vol. 28, Number 1, October 1988).

The result was the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye, a Lakota concept denoting a group of people working toward renewal of Lakota ways of living and relating. The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye is a structure of governance, which incorporates the Lakota value system to allow everyone input into the organization. Principles of shared governance are an integral part of Lakota society which invites everyone to participate in initiating charges to Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye, for example, new or modified policies and programs, and the consequent decision-making relevant to these proposals. The principle of we are all related, *mitakuye oyasin*, is the basis of Lakota society. For example, Lakota people address each other using kinship terms whether or not they are biologically or legally related. The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye and its five governing committees combine the Lakota culture of participation and relationship within an institution of higher education.

The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye governance system thereby satisfies in a contextually meaningful way the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation criterion 1b, which calls for the accommodation of diversity. Faculty has an appropriate and effective role in this governance structure.

The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye committee (as distinguished from the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye governance structure) represents faculty, staff, and students in equal proportions, and oversees the work of five governing committees (see Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye By-Laws, appendix E). It reviews the proposals forwarded to it from the five governing committees, which are Instructional, Institutional, Assessment, Student Services and Institutional Activities. Almost all of the proposals concerning curriculum

and instructional programs originate in the academic departments; they are reviewed by the Instructional Affairs Committee and, if approved, forwarded to the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye committee. There are no instances on record of a proposal from an academic department, forwarded by the Instructional Affairs Committee, being rejected by the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye committee. It is more common that the Instructional Affairs Committee or the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye ask for clarification and resubmission of a proposal.

OLC is unique in that it affords an avenue for input from an oversight group which represents all college constituents. Only after the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye is satisfied with a proposal from its governing committees will it be forwarded to the college President for consideration. If the President is in agreement, the proposal is presented to the Board of Trustees (BOT). A further strength of OLC's shared governance structure is that in the event of an unresolved disagreement between Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye and the college President, the by-laws provide an opportunity for a representative from the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye as well as the college President to present to the BOT.

#### *Oglala Lakota College Governance and the Higher Learning Commission*

The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye form of governance has effectively served the governance needs of Oglala Lakota College for almost 30 years. The system has endured with only minor changes in its structure since its formation in 1980. It serves as a unifying force in that all OLC constituencies work together and stay informed about matters of importance. Solutions to any issue are improved because they take into account a variety of viewpoints.

Higher Learning Commission teams favorably commented regarding the governance system of OLC in the 1983, 1988, and 1993 comprehensive visits. In 1983 the visiting team found that, “. . . the [Piya Wiconi] process is guided by an excellent set of By-laws.” The report continues,

The strength of this governance structure lies in the broad base of grass roots involvement. The effectiveness is evidenced by the levels of support given the college by the tribe, the continued interest of respected community leaders, the community involvement obtained through the ten elected boards, and the commendable responsiveness of the institution to community needs, concerns and ideas. The staff has extensive input into governance through the PWO and its committees, a system which is working well and growing in effectiveness. (NCA – HLC Report of a Visit to Oglala Sioux Community College, 1983, p. 14; Team resource room)

The 1993 HLC visiting team’s report states (Team resource room):

The College’s governance process appears to be well developed. All groups at the College feel a strong sense of inclusiveness in decision-making. It is clear to the Evaluation Team, that administrators, faculty, students, and community persons believe their voices are heard as the College makes decisions which affect its future.(p.27)

Faculty governance as a concern surfaced in the HLC Team Report of 1998 (Team resource room). The findings are summarized on page 79, under concern 1:

Perhaps the most significant need of the College relates to the matter of faculty control of academic courses and programs. The current Senate includes staff and

student members in addition to faculty membership. In a meeting with the Senate, the Team found more members of the latter two categories than from the faculty. There is a growing sense of urgency among the faculty for the need of a faculty governance structure through a faculty senate that has ultimate control over the development of courses and the design of programs and the curriculum generally. (p. 79)

We believe that this concern reflected a misunderstanding of the Lakota based philosophy of participation and incomplete understanding of the pathways of faculty control of academic courses and programs. Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye receives recommendations; it does not generate them. All academic recommendations are vetted first in the Instructional Division. For example, new courses are proposed through academic departments, then approved by the Vice President for Instruction, then reviewed by the Instructional Affairs Committee of Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye that always has a faculty majority. The whole Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye then provides its consent and forwards it to the President. This process has guaranteed that faculty have primary oversight of academic courses and programs. If community, student, staff, or even Board members want to see OLC develop particular courses or programs, the proposals are assigned to the appropriate department by the Vice President for Instruction, and the process is, and always has been, followed.

Another factor that seems to impede understanding of governance and other operations at Oglala Lakota College (OLC) is the intimacy of the governance process at OLC, as compared to the more formal and hierarchical structures in place elsewhere. We all know each other, interact frequently in various settings, and expect that each member

of the community is accessible to all other members. For example, the President and Vice Presidents answer their own phones, and can typically be visited without a prearranged appointment. Also, the entire college staff, both faculty and non faculty, join together every month for a community meeting and meal. Our community in 2008-2009, is 63 faculty, 108 support staff, and around 1,500 students. The required or preferred modes of interaction of the larger society do not always seem as crucial here. Oglala Lakota College is an informal community by cultural practice, by preference, and by virtue of its size. Sometimes, outsiders find these characteristics wonderful and are envious; sometimes, they find it bewildering.

We understand HLC accreditation requirements to call for shared governance rather than specifically a faculty senate. Shared governance has existed throughout the college's life span. We believe therefore that OLC was and is in compliance with the criteria for accreditation in this regard. However, after the 1998 HLC visit, some members of the College faculty decided that there was a need to emphasize issues common only to faculty. They organized a Faculty Society which is described in the 2003 OLC Self-Study Report, p. 14. This organization was intended for all full time and adjunct faculty as a way to advocate for faculty views and professional development and to discuss faculty concerns. Members of the Society chose to maintain an independent and vigorous voice on issues and, therefore, decided to operate as an ex officio group, not as part of the official governance system of Oglala Lakota College. Members defined their goals as seeking to express the concerns of the faculty through the existing governance system and committees (OLC Self-Study Report, 2003, p. 14, Team resource

room). No issues or concerns of the Faculty Society were ever brought to the existing governance system and committees, the college President, or to the Board of Trustees.

The Faculty Society had been in existence since 2002, but the 2003 HLC Team found insufficient progress had been made with regard to the issue of Faculty Governance. Although the Faculty Society was the faculty's response to the 1998 HLC Team's concern, by 2003 some faculty found that the Faculty Society did not meet its expectations and expressed this to the 2003 HLC Team. However, it is important to note that the Faculty Society was not meant to supplant Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye, nor was it intended as a separate faculty governance structure. It was an ex officio group akin to an association, not a governance body. Oglala Lakota College maintains that the existing Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye governance structure upholds the principle of shared governance as required by the Higher Learning Commission, and affords faculty appropriate voice in governance.

In 2000, prior to the scheduled 2003 comprehensive visit, President Shortbull, asked HLC for an Advisory Team Visit to assist OLC in resolving issues regarding the functional relationship between the President and members of the Board of Trustees concerning Board Governance. Under "Concerns, Advice, and Recommended Actions," the Advisory Team suggested twelve avenues to address the concerns and called for a monitoring report in six months (Advisory Team Report, 2000, p. 12, Team resource room). OLC complied with the suggestions made by HLC, and its monitoring report to the Commission was accepted. The next comprehensive visit took place in March of 2003 as scheduled. The 2003 HLC Team confirmed that, ". . . the College has responded

favorably to all twelve suggestions . . .” made by the 2000 Advisory Team (2003 Team Report, Advancement Section, p.4, Team resource room).

*The 2003 Higher Learning Commission Comprehensive visit and subsequent events*

During the March 2003 comprehensive visit, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Team found that the issue of faculty governance had been inadequately resolved (2003 HLC Team Report, p. 6 under e. and g, Team resource room). Faculty Governance is again addressed in the Advancement Section under 3.

. . . faculty report that it is not empowered and nothing tangible results from its meetings. The President’s position is that faculty has not presented a document outlining a structure or purpose. He informed the Team that he would consider official recognition if the faculty would produce specific intentions . . . (pages 3 and 4)

Following the 2003 HLC visit, faculty discontinued the Faculty Society and focused on developing a more formal structure for an Oglala Lakota College Faculty Senate. Throughout 2004, faculty worked on a set of by-laws which was presented to President Shortbull and the College Board of Trustees in January 2005 (Appendix D).

President Shortbull and OLC board members wanted clarification on several issues (Board of Trustees Minutes, January 22, 2005; Team resource room); among these were the potential for divisiveness a faculty senate would bring to the college community; other questions concerned the exact purposes of the faculty senate. Some board members wondered how the new faculty senate would relate to the existing Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye governance structure. Members of the faculty senate responded to the concerns, and the OLC Board of Trustees approved the by-laws of the newly created

faculty senate at their meeting on February 22, 2005 (Team resource room). The newly created faculty senate would operate in conjunction with Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye, not supplant it. Between February and April 2005, the faculty senate did not engage the governance structure, and Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye operated as before.

In fall 2004 and spring 2005, a program review of the Human Services Program was conducted following Oglala Lakota College (OLC) policies and procedures (PPM 37-000/1 Evaluation of College Units, Team resource room) as described in the Progress Report on Assessment, General Education, and Program Review (May 2005, p. 39, Team resource room) submitted to HLC. The then current and past chairpersons of the Human Services Department were involved in a study of Human Services enrollment, curriculum, and avenues for advancement of Human Services graduates; for example, obtaining professional certification and Master's degree credentials. The advantages of a professionalized Bachelor in Social Work degree were also investigated and presented to the Board of Trustees. The College Board of Trustees elected to replace the Human Services program with the more professionalized Social Work degree and work toward a fully accredited Social Work program. One of the requirements of accreditation of a Social Work program is appropriate credentials of its teaching faculty. None of the existing five (5) Human Services faculty had qualifications required by the new degree. OLC contracts are for one academic year; OLC does not have tenure. With the change in program, the chairperson resigned, two faculty members were transferred to other departments, and two were released at the end of their contracts. Non-renewed faculty did not avail themselves of the College's comprehensive grievance policy and procedures (PPM 65-500/1 Employee Complaints and Grievances, Team resource room).

The Human Services program review, the non-renewal of two faculty members, and the approval of the new Faculty Senate coincided in spring of 2005. By April 2005, the newly created senate, led by faculty who wanted to stand in solidarity with their non-renewed colleagues, called for a no-confidence vote against President Shortbull. Because such a vote had serious political implications for the College, President Shortbull met with the Faculty Senate and advised the members that its actions were inappropriate and that consequences may follow if the senate members persisted in their actions.

On May 12, 2005, after review of relevant documents and advice of legal counsel, the Board of Trustees voted to end the Faculty Senate status as an official college body, because its members exceeded their authority as defined by the BOT when it approved the Faculty Senate by laws (BOT minutes 5-12-2005, Team resource room). No personnel dismissals or other actions against faculty occurred as a result of these events. On January 29, 2009, the Oglala Lakota College Board of Trustees formally voted and accepted unanimously the motion to defend the College's shared governance including the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye.

The next section of the report addresses the issue of faculty and shared governance at Oglala Lakota College. Issues of governance and faculty voice unique to tribal colleges and Oglala Lakota College are discussed and analyzed.

## Faculty and Shared Governance at Oglala Lakota College

This section of the report focuses on the role of faculty in governance at Oglala Lakota College (OLC) and discusses tensions, complications, and institutional processes through which faculty exercise their proper role in governance. It describes the primacy of Indian control of higher education as a fundamental principle of tribal colleges, and the structure of OLC operations as it relates to shared governance and faculty involvement specifically. The section concludes with an analysis of Oglala Lakota College shared governance in light of American Association of University Professors (AAUP) statements on governance.

### *Indian Control and Faculty Participation in Governance*

Chapter 20 of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 2008 reiterates the status and funding of tribally controlled colleges, and defines a tribally controlled college as:

. . . an institution of higher education which is formally controlled, or has been formally sanctioned, or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes . . .

and

- (1) is governed by a board of directors or board of trustees a majority of which are Indians;
- (2) demonstrates adherence to stated goals, a philosophy, or a plan of operation which is directed to meet the needs of Indians;
- (3) if in operation for more than one year, has students a majority of whom are Indians; and

(4)(A) is accredited by a nationally recognized accreditation agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority with regard to the quality of training offered . . .

This definition underlines the primacy of Indian control, and a mission specifically directed at the needs of Indians. These two fundamental concepts together express the ideal of tribal colleges--that Indian people determine the needs of Indian people in regard to higher education. Number 4(A) above adds the requirement that to qualify for funding under the act, a tribally controlled college must be accredited. These two requirements can naturally create tension as we see in this focused visit related to governance at OLC. The principle of Indian self-determination in higher education, upon which the tribal college movement was founded, can require adaptations of mainstream higher education society's ideas of faculty governance of colleges, particularly where a majority of tribal college faculty is non-Indian.

At Oglala Lakota College (OLC), Indian control is manifested in a board of trustees who are tribal members elected by tribal members, local boards in each district of the reservation elected by tribal members, and the community-grounded organizational structure of the college. The OLC internal governance structure allows both the local community and the college community to have a voice in decision processes. Great care was shown in protecting faculty control of curriculum when the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye structure was created in 1980.

The ideal of Indian self-determination and control of higher education for Indian people and the mission and vision of OLC are closely aligned. It is important to note that the tribal college movement is very young, beginning only four decades ago (see history

of tribal colleges section of report). Considering the brief history of tribal colleges and Oglala Lakota College (OLC) in particular, it is clear that the governance structure of OLC is highly developed and affords an appropriate voice for faculty.

The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye governance system (described elsewhere in this report) was instituted early in the College's development. It has been evaluated by Lakota people and College faculty as consistent with Lakota cultural values and faculty shared governance. The governance structure is an ingenious construction designed to balance the need for Indian control and self determination in higher education and the crucial role faculty play in higher education. Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye meets these dual needs.

Worthy of closer consideration is point 2 of the enacting legislation that defines a tribal college as a college that "Demonstrates adherence to stated goals, a philosophy, or a plan of operation which is directed to meet the needs of Indians." Note the final phrase which clearly and explicitly references a plan of operation which is directed to meet the needs of Indians. The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye governance structure is an operational plan that meets the needs of Indians and that was developed by Oglala Lakota Indian people in collaboration with non-Indian staff and faculty under the "governance of a board of directors or board of trustees a majority of which are Indians".

### *Academic Organization*

As is typical in institutions of higher education, faculty is organized into several departments along lines of common and related disciplines and curricular content. The Instructional Division of the college is directed by the Vice President for Instruction and is currently comprised of the following departments; each is headed by a chairperson, a director or, in education, a dean. Current departments and leadership is as follows:

Applied Science/Vocational Education	Director
Business	Chair
Education/Teacher Education	Dean
Foundational Studies / Adult Basic Education	Director
Graduate Studies	Director
Humanities and Social Science	Chair
Information Technology	Chair
Lakota Studies	Chair
Math and Science	Co-Chairs
Nursing	Director
Social Work	Chair
Agriculture and NR Extension	Director

Departmental affiliation and organization shift from time to time due to a number of considerations including funding, program reviews, shifts in the focus of the discipline, and changes in degree offerings.

Departmental faculty authority includes primary control over curriculum, degree requirements, approval of faculty credentials, hiring of faculty, and related academic issues such as syllabi review and course instructional materials. In addition, a faculty peer review evaluation program has been implemented and is discussed in more detail in a later section. Proposals for changes in curriculum, degree requirements, and degree programs almost always arise from the departmental faculty; but no matter where proposals originate, the appropriate academic department is responsible for development of curriculum, instructional methods, and degree requirements. A recent example is the

creation of a Bachelor Degree in Social Science, which was proposed by faculty of the Humanities and Social Science Department. The proposal was presented to the Instructional Affairs Committee and approved. The proposal was reviewed by the Vice President for Instruction and the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye and approved. From there, it went to the college President and to the Board of Trustees, which approved the proposal.

Determination of departmental leadership varies and is influenced by factors such as funding, expertise, and credentials. Business, Humanities, Information Technology, and Lakota Studies currently have chairs elected by the respective faculty. Because of funding, characteristics of program functions, and necessary credentials, Applied Science and Foundational Studies have Directors, who are vetted and hired as directors by administration. Because of grant funding, necessary credentials, and programmatic functions, the Math and Science Department has co-Chairs, who are principal investigators on ongoing and periodic grants that fund the department. Factors that influence individual department administration and leadership are discussed in more detail in the next section

#### *Factors that Influence Internal Academic Organization*

Where possible, department heads are elected by the full-time faculty of the department. In areas with special requirements, academic leaders are chosen by the Vice President for Instruction and the President, after consultation with appropriate staff and faculty. Faculty members serve on the selection/hiring committees (PPM 61-300/1 Full-Time Faculty Screening/Hiring, Team resource room).

As Oglala Lakota College (OLC) has explained in previous reports to the Higher Learning Commission, (OLC Monitoring Report Strategic Planning, Technology Plan,

and Facilities Plan, May 2007, Team Resource Room), federal funds and federal grants are a primary source of funding for OLC. Two college departments, Applied Science/Vocational Education and Math and Science, have been supported by ongoing grants. Because these departments are grant funded, organization and administration of the department must be consistent with funding requirements, and funding is dependent upon credentialed and qualified administrative leadership. For example, the National Science Foundation grants that support the faculty of the Math and Science Department require credentialed and experienced leadership who become primarily responsible for administration of grant funds. Thus, selection of administrative and management personnel must be made based on the necessity of grant performance and the resulting continuation in funding. Where appropriate, these department chairs and directors are selected from qualified and interested faculty.

Accrediting requirements also influence departmental administration. For example Nursing, Social Work, and Education accrediting bodies all require that department administrators have certain qualifications and credentials. Nursing program approval, for example, requires a full time director who has at least a master's degree and has primary responsibility for budgets and other administrative duties. While Nursing program faculty have been consulted and involved in the selection of the Director, the final choice must be made from qualified candidates and involve college administration.

Beside funding and accreditation requirements, Oglala Lakota College's community-based organizational model influences departmental organization and leadership requirements in ways not always present for academic administrators elsewhere. The college is embedded in the community through 11 instructional sites

located in 9 districts of the Pine Ridge Reservation, and in Rapid City, and Eagle Butte on Cheyenne River Reservation. These sites (called College Centers) are administered by Center Directors and staff who are also community members who have a deep investment and sense of ownership in Oglala Lakota College.

The ability of academic department chairs to collaborate and negotiate with community members who staff and administer the College Centers is essential. For example, the community based delivery of college courses requires cooperation among department chairs, faculty and center staff in regard to scheduling, advising students, providing student support services, and effective delivery of instruction. Because the majority of faculty is not from the community, inherent tensions arise between the legitimate interests of the community and the legitimate academic concerns of faculty. OLC expects that departmental chairs will negotiate these tensions effectively. Therefore, the ability to collaborate and negotiate issues with administrative and student services staff is an important attribute of departmental chairs, and must be a factor in their selection and retention.

#### *OLC Shared Governance and Accepted Standards*

The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities is often cited in discussion of governance issues. The following commentary evaluates Oglala Lakota College governance in light of key points in the Statement.

The AAUP statement is not prescriptive in terms of faculty governance structure: “Joint effort in an academic institution will take a variety of forms appropriate to the kinds of situations encountered.” (page 136 Team resource room). The AAUP statement

thus acknowledges the appropriateness that shared governance has been worked out within the context of the college mission, tribal and Indian control, Lakota cultural values and mores, and the expectations of the broader community of higher education. Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye is the form of shared governance agreed upon and practiced by the Oglala Lakota College community.

The AAUP statement supports the primary role of faculty in determining curriculum and instruction: “When an educational goal has been established, it becomes the responsibility primarily of the faculty to determine the appropriate curriculum and procedures of student instruction” (AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, 1940, page 136, Team resource room). Oglala Lakota College has structured its governance to assure that faculty has primary responsibility for curriculum, degree requirements and instructional processes. As described elsewhere in this report faculty, along with academic officers, are empowered to govern the academic and instructional operations of Oglala Lakota College. Strong policies are in place to protect the authority of faculty in assigning grades and making decisions with regard to instruction (PPM 76-200 Grading/Change of Grades Policy, Team resource room).

The specific concerns which are the subject of the Focused Visit are addressed one by one in the next section of the report.

## Response to the 2003 HLC Comprehensive Visit Report

The Assurance Section of the Report of a Comprehensive Visit to Oglala Lakota College (March 23-25, 2003) includes the following points to be addressed by the 2009 focused visit:

1. Faculty Governance – the College must demonstrate that it has addressed the following:

- a. mechanisms have been established for effective faculty participation in the decision-making process.
- b. the faculty have been empowered to effectively address faculty issues
- c. such as curricular program development and review, evaluations, assessment, delivery at academic sites, distance education, faculty development, faculty position acquisition and elimination, tenure/program/ranks.

2. Faculty Comprehensive Evaluation System—the college must demonstrate that it has addressed the following:

- a. processes and procedures developed for a comprehensive evaluation of all full and part-time faculty
- b. designation of appropriate College personnel to conduct faculty evaluations
- c. mechanisms developed to include student and academic personnel inclusion in the evaluation process
- d. inclusion of feedback mechanisms
- e. inclusion of evaluations in the College assessment program

f. detailed plan and implementation of the uses of the evaluations.

3. Organizational Structure and Climate—the College must demonstrate that it has addressed the following:

- a. clear lines of authority
- b. staff and faculty empowerment to perform assigned duties
- c. integration of regional center personnel into appropriate and clear central campus reporting lines – consider that the sites are primarily academic delivery units.
- d. evidence that the climate encourages open and free participation in the operations of the College by all personnel.
- e. faculty governance and empowerment
- f. evidence that the College President has refrained from micromanagement
- g. evidence that the Board of Trustees continues to refrain from micromanagement
- h. evidence that there are effective mechanisms for student participation

The following sections address these points in order.

## Faculty Governance

### *Effective Faculty Participation in Decision Making*

Oglala Lakota College has always had a governance structure that satisfies the requirements outlined under Criterion One: Core Component 1d): “The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.” In particular, evidence supports that “the board enables the organization’s chief administrative personnel to exercise effective leadership,” and that “faculty and other academic leaders share responsibility for the coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of academic processes” (Chapter 3 of the “Handbook of Accreditation).

Oglala Lakota College has a number of mechanisms in place for effective faculty participation in the decision-making process. Faculty participates in meaningful ways within their departments, where decisions regarding curriculum and academic processes are made. Faculty members also serve on governance committees through the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye system and on a number of operational committees such as the Faculty Development Committee, Faculty Peer Review Committee, Graduate Studies Committee, Institutional Review Board, and Strategic Planning Committee. Faculty concerns may also be brought to the attention of the administration through department chairs who meet regularly with the Vice President for Instruction. Any faculty member can address the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye through the appropriate standing committee and request consideration of academic or other matters affecting the community. The faculty meets as a group in instructional division meetings and at the semi-annual faculty retreats. Issues discussed in these forums can then be brought back to the academic

departments, the Vice President for Instruction, Instructional Affairs Committee and Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye for consideration by the President and Board of Trustees.

The Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye system of governance is the most important formal avenue for decision making and it has been in existence for almost thirty years. It functions according to a set of by-laws (Appendix E) and conducts its work through five standing, i.e. governance, committees. The standing committees are the Institutional Development Committee, Instructional Affairs Committee, Assessment Committee, Student Services Committee, and Activities Committee. Committees do their work through subcommittees that work on specific tasks. The Instructional Affairs Committee, deals with curriculum and program development, instructional policy, and pedagogy. The Institutional Development Committee is concerned with long-term planning, goals and objectives, and accreditation. The Student Services Committee reviews and recommends policies and procedures as they relate to students including admissions, requirements, costs, and graduation. The duties of the Assessment Committee are to monitor assessment of student achievement, program reviews, and institutional performance. Finally, the Activities Committee plans and organizes the social functions of OLC including graduation activities. Note that the majority of the Instructional Affairs and Assessment Committees are faculty members, and faculty are also involved significantly in the Institutional Development Committee.

Each fall, College employees choose a particular committee to serve on. Committee choices often coincide with job duties so that registrars, for example, choose to serve on the Student Services Committee, and faculty chooses the Instructional Affairs Committee. The inclusion of a cross section of work roles on one committee has the

positive effect of preventing a narrow viewpoint and allows multiple dimensions of an issue to come to light. Another positive outcome of this system of governance is that members of a department or office are informed of all issues and concerns addressed in committees and are able to bring this information back to their colleagues who serve on different committees.

In addition to the standing, operational, and ad hoc committees, the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye committee is a representative group of people from all areas of the college community. It is composed of four elected members each from faculty, staff, and students for a total of twelve (12) voting members and five (5) ex officio members. Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye refers issues to its standing committees for response, reviews recommendations from its standing committees, and recommends new policies to the President. In rare cases where Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye and the College President cannot resolve a disagreement, the by laws allow for the President to present the matter to the Board of Trustees along with a designated spokesperson to speak for the position of the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye. Essentially, Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye functions as a second pair of eyes on the recommendations from the five standing committees. Only on rare occasions is a recommendation from the standing committees rejected; more frequently, Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye will send a recommendation back to the originating standing committee for additional work and clarification. Tables 1 and 2 summarize faculty representation on governance and operational committees for the past three years. Also relevant on this issue is the Higher Learning Commission staff analyses of the 2005 Progress Report and the 2007 Monitoring Report (Team resource room), which

acknowledged and expressed approval of the inclusiveness of the Oglala Lakota College system of governance.

*Table 1. Percentage of Governance Committee members that are faculty*

<b>Committees/Year</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>
Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye	4 faculty	4 staff	4 students
Institutional Development	22%	25%	64%
Instructional Affairs	75%	75%	83%
Assessment	63%	64%	64%
Student Services	12%	10%	10%
Activities	25%	21%	30%

*Table 2. Percentage of operational committee members that are faculty*

<b>Committee/Year</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>
Faculty Development	100%	100%	100%
Faculty Peer Review	100%	100%	Not yet established
Instit. Review Board	63%	37%	29%
Strategic Planning	57%	57%	57%

Results from the Employee Survey of December 2008 indicate a high level of agreement with statements referencing participation in governance (see Table 3. For complete survey results see Appendix G).

*Table 3. Response to statements referencing participation in governance.*

<b>Selected Employee Survey Results</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Faculty %</b>	<b>Support Staff %</b>
1. I am satisfied with my level of participation in the governance of OLC	Agree:	55.1	63.5
	Strongly Agree:	32.6	32.4
2. Participation in governance committees	2008-2009	95.9	79.7
3. I feel my attendance at committee meetings is important	Agree:	40.8	54.1
	Strongly Agree:	51.0	36.5
4. I attend my committee meetings most of the time	Agree:	28.6	45.9
	Strongly Agree:	63.3	28.4

7. In general, I believe the PWO system of shared governance works well at OLC	Agree:	49.0	56.8
	Strongly Agree:	32.7	25.7

*The Faculty have been Empowered to Effectively Address Faculty Issues*

Regarding the concerns listed by the Higher Learning Commission, each item will be addressed separately below. We believe there are no barriers to faculty empowerment with regard to any of the issues mentioned by the 2003 report.

*Curricular Program Development and Review*

As outlined in the previous section on academic governance, Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye and the standing committee structure, it is clear that faculty is the primary authority in continuous curriculum and program development and review (minutes of academic department meetings, Team resource room). Almost all proposals for curriculum changes, new courses and new academic degrees originate in academic departments. When new academic degrees are proposed by administration, faculty in academic departments design curriculum, determine degree requirements, and recommend necessary resources. The pathway for approval of curriculum and degree requirements is academic department to Instructional Affairs Standing Committee, to the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye committee, to administrative review, to the Board of Trustees. A majority of the Instructional Affairs Committee members are faculty members. Almost all curricular proposals that arise from academic departments are ultimately approved through this process. Faculty does have primacy in curricular program development and review. Policy and procedures governing this process have been in existence at Oglala Lakota College since 1980 and these are followed (PPM 70-200/1 Course Curriculum Development Process, Team resource room).

### *Evaluations*

For a thorough discussion of this concern, see the narrative beginning on page 33.

### *Assessment*

The membership of the college wide Assessment Committee is predominantly faculty members. Departments and individual faculty members determine assessment of program outcomes and individual course objectives.

### *Delivery at Academic Sites*

The instructional division of the college, through the Vice President of Instruction, has final authority with regard to course scheduling, faculty assignments, and instructional delivery. Individual faculty has primary authority in delivering course instruction within the expectations of Oglala Lakota College policies and mission. College center directors support the process through surveys of student course needs and requests. College center directors, in collaboration with academic department chairs, propose course schedules each semester, but final decisions on course schedules and faculty assignments are made by the Vice President for Instruction in consultation with academic department chairs (PPM 72-100 Determining Course Needs/Schedule Policy, Team resource room).

### *Distance Education*

Academic administration and faculty originate academic policy proposals, including policies and procedures associated with distance education. A subcommittee of the Instructional Affairs Committee is working on a revised distance education policy based on best practices and the needs and expectations of Oglala Lakota College (OLC) students.

Distance education at OLC follows policy PPM 72-500 (Team resource room), which was developed by faculty in a sub committee of the Instructional Affairs Committee. At this time, the policy is being revised. OLC uses several technologies in its course delivery such as internet and Moodle as a platform for on-line delivery. In addition, OLC also uses picture-tel technology, which allows several course delivery sites to be connected by television and audio transmissions.

### *Faculty Development*

Faculty development is grant-funded and is overseen by the Faculty Development Committee which approves proposals from faculty. Membership of this committee is elected by full time faculty. In addition, when there are professional development funds available from other grants, the principal investigator may approve an application for professional development funds.

For many years, Oglala Lakota College has had the assistance of the Bush Foundation to fund faculty development activities. Faculty are afforded opportunities to participate in such things as the Kellogg Institute for Developmental Education, College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), and other professional conferences. Some faculty members were funded to advance their educational credentials. Faculty has organized semi-annual faculty retreats supported by Bush Foundation funds for the last fifteen years. Proposals from faculty for professional development funds are approved by the Faculty Development Committee based on relevance to teaching and learning, to scholarship and research, community building and communication, among other topics (Mission and Purposes of the Faculty Development Committee, Committee Minutes, Team resource room).

The Faculty Development Committee is currently developing proposals for future funding. With the imminent end to Bush grant support, other grant funds are being sought, along with proposals for funding of faculty development from other sources.

#### *Faculty Position Acquisition and Elimination*

Academic administration and faculty have appropriate and primary voice in determining the number and placement of faculty positions, determining the appropriate qualifications of faculty, and in hiring and non renewal of faculty members.

Recommendations for adding or eliminating faculty positions come primarily from the Instructional Division. Where reductions are necessary due to budget constraints or program changes, department chairs and department faculty are consulted in the decision making process. Faculty vacancy position descriptions and requirements are determined by academic department chairs and the Vice President for Instruction, with input from appropriate faculty. Academic department chairs and departmental faculty review applications, conduct interviews and recommend candidates to fill vacant positions. Final hiring decisions are made by the Vice President for Instruction, the President, and approved by the Board of Trustees. Recommendations for renewal of faculty contracts originate primarily within departments based on evaluation by academic department chairs and the Vice President for Instruction (PPM 61-300/1 Full-time Faculty Screening/Hiring Policy; 65-200 Separation Policy; Team resource room).

If faculty members believe any personnel action is unfair or contrary to Oglala Lakota College policy, they have access to a grievance policy which affords hearing by a committee comprised of 2 persons selected by grievant and 2 persons selected by college administration. Faculty grievants may choose faculty colleagues for the grievance hearing

committee (PPM 65-500/1 Employee Complaints and Grievances Policy/Procedure, Team resource room).

*Tenure/Program/Ranks*

Like other Tribal Colleges and Universities, and many private and public institutions, Oglala Lakota College does not have a tenure system nor does it intend to institute one as it is considered inconsistent with the goals and mission of the Oglala Lakota College. Faculty receive annual contracts as prescribed by PPM 62-100/1 Employment Contracts (Team resource room). The recently adopted faculty peer review evaluation allows for multi-year contracts and the honorary use of academic titles. In addition, renewal of yearly contracts is the typical practice.

## Faculty Comprehensive Evaluation System

### *Processes and Procedures for a Comprehensive Evaluation of Faculty*

Oglala Lakota College faculty members are evaluated through yearly performance review by appropriate academic department chairs, academic administrators, and student course and instructor evaluations. Changes involving peer review have recently been implemented in faculty evaluation as described below.

Oglala Lakota College faculty has long been evaluated through student course evaluations. In the late 1990's, a course and instructor evaluation survey was adopted and approved by the faculty. The current survey has been in use since then. Students are encouraged and have the opportunity to complete course and instructor evaluation surveys. Over time, various course evaluation administration procedures have been implemented, with varying success in terms of response rate and timely reporting of results. Currently and for the recent 4 academic years (8 semesters), course evaluations are available to students online. This affords a timely reporting of results to faculty, department chairs and administration, and results are typically available to faculty within a few weeks of the end of a semester. However, student response rates have been decreasing. College administration is exploring student course evaluation options for consideration by faculty.

In academic year 2006-2007, faculty and academic administration collaborated to develop a new faculty peer review evaluation policy and procedure (PPM 76-530/1 Full-Time Faculty Evaluation, Policy and Procedure). The evaluation criteria and procedures were developed by a committee of faculty selected by the faculty, in collaboration with the Vice President for Instruction. The policy developed by this faculty committee was

vetted to all faculty, and a formal vote of the faculty indicated general support for the proposed evaluation process. The Board of Trustees approved the policy and procedure in December 2007 (Appendix F).

The new faculty evaluation procedure is being implemented beginning in spring 2009. Detailed processes for implementation were developed by the Faculty Peer Review Committee, members of which are selected by faculty and appointed from faculty by administration. The new faculty evaluation procedure focuses on performance and professional development, and gives faculty the opportunity for multiyear contracts and title.

*Designation of Appropriate College Personnel to Conduct Faculty Evaluations*

Under the newly adopted faculty evaluation policy, full time faculty annual evaluations are intended to be a collaborative opportunity for developmental planning between department chair and faculty member. Faculty are afforded the opportunity to present self evaluation, and department chairs discuss opportunities for development and, if necessary, areas where improvement is necessary. The Vice President for Instruction reviews faculty evaluations. Applications by faculty for multiyear contracts are evaluated by the faculty peer review committee, using procedures developed by the committee. After action by the peer review committee, applications for multiyear contracts are reviewed by the Vice President for Instruction, who makes recommendation to the President.

### *Mechanisms to Include Student and Academic Personnel in the Evaluation Process*

As outlined above, the evaluation process of both full time and adjunct faculty include s students, departmental faculty and department chairs, and the Vice President for Instruction.

### *Inclusion of Feedback Mechanisms*

Faculty and department chairs receive print-outs of student evaluations. Departmental chairs and faculty engage in annual performance reviews. Chairs observe faculty teaching and provide feedback.

### *Inclusion of Evaluations in the College Assessment Program*

The aggregate student course evaluation results are included in the Institutional Assessment Report available in the Assessment Office web pages.

### *Detailed Plan and Implementation of the uses of the Evaluations*

The recent development of the Faculty Peer Review Evaluation policy sets out a detailed plan for faculty evaluation and the consequences of the evaluation process for faculty. See previous sections of this report for a detailed discussion.

More work needs to be done to develop the best use of the student course evaluation process in the overall assessment program of the institution. At the present time, the Director of Assessment and the Assessment Committee are reviewing the College's existing course assessment form and delivery method for appropriateness to college needs. They will also review samples of course evaluations gleaned from other institutions and commercial sources. Faculty will ultimately be involved in deciding the most appropriate evaluation tool.

## Organizational Structure and Climate

### *Clear Lines of Authority*

Oglala Lakota College (OLC) operates through clear lines of authority as indicated by a revised organization chart (appendix B). The lines of authority in the organization chart are honored in formal decision making, employee performance issues, work assignments, and planning.

### *Staff and Faculty Empowerment to Perform Assigned Duties*

As previously described, the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye and committee structure affords a high level of involvement in all institutional decision processes by faculty, staff, and administration. OLC empowers its employees to perform their assigned duties as is reflected in the Employee Survey results. See Table 4.

*Table 4. Response to statements related to work empowerment.*

<b>Statements related to empowerment</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Faculty %</b>	<b>Support Staff %</b>
5. I am adequately informed about issues that affect my work	Agree:	44.9	48.6
	Strongly Agree:	34.7	31.1
6. I am adequately informed about issues that affect the College	Agree:	57.1	47.3
	Strongly Agree:	22.4	28.4
8. The expectations of my job are clear to me.	Agree:	34.7	36.5
	Strongly Agree:	61.2	62.2
9. I feel my job performance is evaluated appropriately	Agree:	49.0	54.1
	Strongly Agree:	32.7	32.4
10. I look to my immediate supervisor for direction in my work.	Agree:	47.0	37.8
	Strongly Agree:	42.9	45.9
11. I know who my supervisor reports to.	Agree:	42.9	37.8
	Strongly Agree:	53.1	55.4
12. When I have a problem as an employee, I know how to proceed.	Agree:	36.7	52.7
	Strongly Agree:	42.9	37.8
13. I am able to carry out my assigned job duties without undue interference.	Agree:	32.7	45.9
	Strongly Agree:	55.1	43.2

Both faculty and support staff have a high percentage of agreement with the statements relating to empowerment. All survey results can be found in quantitative

tables and a rendition of verbal responses for faculty and support staff respectively in appendix G. The 125 completed questionnaires have been placed in the Team Resource Room for examination.

### *Integration of Regional Center Personnel into Appropriate Reporting Lines*

Given the definition of tribal colleges set forth by Chapter 20 of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 2008, which states that a tribal college is one that “demonstrates adherence to stated goals, a philosophy, or a *plan of operation* which is directed to meet the needs of Indians” the lines of reporting for Oglala Lakota College centers are appropriate for Oglala Lakota College’s mission and context

College center directors report to the coordinator of support services and to the college President. They also work with locally elected boards of community members, who provide advice and support for college operations in the community. In addition, some college center directors oversee Head Start sites in their respective communities. The centers are not only academic delivery units but also function as outreach centers into communities. Staff members participate in community outreach, but the bulk of their work involves providing support to students and instructional delivery.

College centers on Pine Ridge reservation are primarily instructional sites; they are, therefore, part of the Oglala Lakota College campus, and the duties of the director of the facility are to maintain the building and oversee student services. This is also true for the locations in Rapid City and Cheyenne River reservation. College center staff does not oversee or supervise academic programs, course content, or pedagogy. Qualified college center staff may teach courses on an adjunct basis, in which case they are supervised in that role by the appropriate department chair.

### *The Climate Encourages Open and Free Participation by all Personnel*

Oglala Lakota College personnel, including faculty, are free to express their viewpoints and participate in discussions of issues affecting the college. There are no adverse personnel actions or retaliation from supervisors or administration resulting from such exchanges. Lakota values hold that all staff are free to talk and able to voice their viewpoints in appropriate respectful ways. In line with the informal nature of Lakota culture and the small size of the college, supervisors, Vice Presidents, and the college President are accessible to all employees for informal talks. Interaction among employees and administrative staff is frequent and open. Chains of command are not impediments to anyone talking to the President, the Vice Presidents, or other supervisors. For example, the President and Vice Presidents answer their own phones, and are typically available without appointments. In many ways, this informality and non-hierarchical interaction is the most effective way to communicate and it is consistent with Lakota culture.

### *Faculty Governance and Empowerment*

Both issues have been addressed under the faculty governance section of the report above. The Board of Trustees and the College President take the position that adequate avenues for participation of all constituencies are in place to satisfy the HLC requirement of shared governance.

### *Evidence that the College President has Refrained from Micromanagement*

There is no evidence that the College President interferes with or has impeded faculty or staff from performing their duties. Nor is there any evidence that he has not been compliant with policies and procedures.

*Evidence that the Board of Trustees Continues to Refrain from Micromanagement*

With regard to this concern, the 2003 HLC Team wrote:

The Board of Trustees had been engaged in micromanagement, especially in regard to personnel decisions. A new policy manual has been written which correctly delineates Board policy responsibilities and delegates management including that dealing with personnel, to the President of the College and his staff. The Team, during its visit, affirms that this is now operational. Indeed, the Board engaged a process facilitator to provide counsel on Board meeting processes and procedures. (2003 HLC Team Report, p. 9, B. d.)

This same policy continues to guide Board action and micromanagement does not occur. The Board of Trustees does hire and evaluate the President. The President states that there has been no micro management by the Board of Trustees since the 2003 comprehensive visit. The President also states that the college has a committed and supportive Board of Trustees.

*Evidence that here are Effective Mechanisms for Student Participation*

Student organizations have existed at each of the local instructional sites since the beginning of the college. They organize student activities at each center and elect one representative to the Student Senate (Appendix I, Constitution and By-laws of the Student Senate under OLC; Team resource room), The Student Senate represents the OLC student body and elects one of its members to the OLC Board of Trustees as a voting member. One student from each of the local student organizations also sits on

each Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye governance committee, and 4 students are part of the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye review committee.

## Summary of Employee Survey Results

Oglala Lakota College has conducted an employee survey with regard to the three areas of concern expressed by the 2003 HLC Team. Data collection took place from November 2008 to January 2009, and all full time faculty and staff had an opportunity to fill out a questionnaire containing fifteen (15) items (appendix B). Twelve of the questions allowed for responses on a Likert Scale with additional spaces for qualitative answers. Both sets of answers can be found in Appendix G.

Of the 171 OLC employees, 125 filled out the questionnaire for an overall response rate of 73.1%. Two (2) of the 125 employees, or 1.6% did not answer the question regarding their employee classification. Forty-nine (49) of 63 identified faculty responded to the survey for a response rate of 77.8%. Of 108 support staff employees 74 responded for a response rate of 68.5%.

The survey indicated that a large majority of faculty and support staff participates in committees and are satisfied with their level of participation. Employees overwhelmingly consider their attendance at committee meetings important and attend most of the time. Most employees agree they are adequately informed about issues that affect their work and the college in general. About 80% of employees think the Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye system of shared governance works well at OLC. Most understand their job duties and agree that they are evaluated appropriately. Over 90% of employees look to their supervisor for direction and know who their supervisor reports to and how to proceed when they have a problem. About 90% of employees agree or strongly agree that they carry out their job duties without undue interference.

The quantitative results of the employee survey show that the overwhelming majority of faculty and support staff favor the governance system and processes that are in place at OLC. Qualitative responses are helpful in that they show the different orientations of employees and point to areas in which improvements can be made.

### Conclusion

We believe that the evidence presented in this report indicates that the system of shared governance in place at Oglala Lakota College (OLC) works well and is supported by a large majority of faculty and staff. OLC meets the needs of the Oglala Lakota communities it serves while meeting the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission. Furthermore, OLC has instituted a much improved system of faculty evaluation and is working on refining it. The organizational structure and lines of authority have been clarified and strengthened, and there is no evidence of micromanagement by the administration or other supervisory personnel.

We, therefore, respectfully, anticipate that the Team will agree that OLC's governance, evaluation, organizational structure, and climate are consistent with the criteria established by the Higher Learning Commission.