

**OGLALA LAKOTA COLLEGE
Kyle, South Dakota**

Site Visit Report: Off-campus Sites

**Prepared for: The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central
Association of Colleges and Schools**

**In preparation for the Commission's visit to Oglala Lakota College
Off-campus Sites April 21, 2009**

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Oglala Lakota College Context

One of the unique features of Oglala Lakota College is its decentralized delivery system of educational services, established when the College was founded nearly forty years ago. A number of considerations influenced development of this system: lack of transportation to a centralized campus, advantages of remaining in one's home environment and working with familiar personnel, and the Lakota values of community and sharing resources.

Oglala Lakota College offers classes in eleven locations; nine on the Pine Ridge Reservation, one in Rapid City, and one on the Cheyenne River Reservation (Appendix A: Map). The nine original College Centers are located in the main population centers of the 7,000 square-mile reservation, which is, in effect, the College campus. Extension Centers were developed to serve the large Oglala Lakota population in Rapid City, South Dakota, and to provide college-level courses for the Lakota inhabitants of the Cheyenne River Reservation.

Table 1
Enrollments and Course Sections Taught by Full-time and Adjunct Faculty
at Each College or Extension Center Spring 2009

| Center | Enrollment Spring 2009 | Number of Course Sections | Taught by Full- time Faculty | Taught by Adjunct Faculty |
|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cheyenne River* | 213 | 52 | 15 | 36 |
| Eagle's Nest | 89 | 19 | 8 | 11 |
| East Wakpamni | 28 | 11 | 4 | 7 |
| LaCreek | 65 | 26 | 14 | 12 |
| Kyle | 201 | 48 | 38 | 10 |
| Nursing | 19 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| Oglala | 54 | 13 | 5 | 8 |
| Pass Creek | 35 | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Pine Ridge | 305 | 76 | 53 | 23 |
| Porcupine | 107 | 31 | 18 | 13 |
| Rapid City | 468 | 113 | 44 | 69 |
| Wounded Knee | 91 | 27 | 15 | 12 |
| Totals | 1,656 | 369 | 200 (54%) | 169 (46%) |

*The geographic remoteness of Cheyenne River from other College Centers has resulted in higher use of adjuncts.

As indicated by table one, Center enrollments vary between twenty-eight and four hundred sixty-eight, and course sections offered at each Center range from five to seventy-six.

Of the course sections offered during Spring 2009, 54% are presented by full-time faculty and 46% are taught by adjuncts.

Instructional Oversight

1. How does the institution oversee and administer the instruction of educational programs and institutional policy at the sites?

The instructional division of the College (Appendix B: Organizational Chart), through the Vice President for Instruction, has oversight of the educational offerings provided at each College Center. Academic and vocational courses of study are housed within their related academic departments at *Piya Wiconi*, and department faculty has responsibility for development, delivery and assessment of their educational programs. Faculty within each department provides instructional delivery within the expectations of Oglala Lakota College policies and mission. This arrangement ensures consistency of the academic programs offered at multiple instructional sites.

2. What personnel and structure at the main campus or system office provide overall institutional oversight of such instruction and assurance of consistency of similar programs offered at multiple sites?

Academic Department Chairs and their supervisor, the Vice President for Instruction, are responsible for oversight of instruction. On-going two-way communication about academic programs and policies occurs through regularly scheduled department meetings, a monthly department chairs meeting, and all- faculty retreats held at least once each semester. Degree programs are centrally administered, but instruction is delivered on a distributed model.

3. How does the institution assure timely availability of coursework required for the particular degree programs at each degree site?

Working in collaboration with the Center directors who conduct student surveys of course needs, academic department chairs develop course schedules, faculty assignments, and instructional delivery. Developmental courses and core curriculum offerings and underclass general education courses, are provided at least once yearly at each College Center. Courses contained within academic majors and upper class courses are provided in a regular cycle based on course rotation through all Centers.

A course offered at any College Center is open to enrollment by all students. Also, the Centers are connected through interactive television to each other and to a central distance-learning classroom at *Piya Wiconi*. For fall semester 2008 21 courses were offered to multiple sites through interactive television (see http://www.olc.edu/~cdelong/pictel/old_schedules/). Final decisions on course schedules and faculty assignments are made by academic department chairs and approved by the Vice President for Instruction.

4. How does the institution ensure that faculty hired to work at its off-campus sites are appropriately qualified and performing in accordance with institutional expectations?

Assurance that full time and adjunct faculty at all instructional sites are appropriately qualified is met through review of credentials first by academic department chairs and faculty, and then by the Vice President for Instruction. Files for approved faculty, including transcripts and a list of courses for which they are approved to teach, are maintained in the Vice President's office. College Policy 61-100 states:

Instructors at Oglala Lakota College should meet the minimum standards of a Masters Degree in the general area being considered. Individuals with less than a Masters degree but a minimum of nine graduate hours and/or teaching experience in that particular field may be approved if they present evidence, through references, excellence in teaching or other work experience that shows potential value for the teaching role. . .

5. How does the institution assure that faculty across sites have a consistent understanding of their role and are similarly oriented to it?

Each fall Oglala Lakota College has an orientation week attended by full-time and adjunct faculty. All faculty, whether full-time or part-time, report to an academic department chair, who is responsible for ensuring orientation of faculty to the expectations and academic policies of the College and Department. Even though they may provide instruction at more than one site, faculty members are centrally administered by a Department Chair and the Vice President for Instruction. Full-time faculty who have taught courses to be offered by adjuncts share syllabi with them to ensure that course goals and outcomes remain consistent across instructors. Center directors acquaint adjunct faculty with non-academic administrative concerns such as attendance, salary, and expense reimbursement.

Academic Services

1. How are the services delivered, managed, and quality assurance maintained at the sites?

Academic advising is a shared responsibility of the faculty and support services, and is an on-going process throughout the student's academic enrollment. Advising opportunities are available to students throughout the academic year at regular, reasonable intervals. For example, academic advising takes place during weeks 10 and 11 each semester and is available from Center Counselors and Faculty. Tutoring in English and Math is provided by Student Support Services and may be requested by any student having problems meeting course requirements. Help with study skills can also be requested.

Each College Center is staffed by a Director and one or more counselors depending on the size of the population served by the Center. Each counselor assists students with general academic advising, course scheduling, orientation and many other services. The nine College Centers located on the Pine Ridge Reservation also have Student Support Services counselors

who offer a variety of academic support services such as tutoring, workshops, general academic advising, career counseling, scholarship information and cultural activities.

2. Describe the reporting and feedback mechanisms that address concerns or problems by students and faculty at the sites.

Reporting and feedback about student and faculty concerns regarding academic issues are addressed through centralized policies and procedures (published at

<http://olc.edu/~dwinters/policymanual/>). For example,

Students with a grievance over a grade that has been assigned them by a faculty member, may avail themselves of the following process to ensure that a careful review of the grade and the basis for it in the instructor's syllabus has been provided. However, in the end, it must be clear that only the faculty member can change the grade given.

Students need to understand that grades have to represent a professional judgment on the level of academic performance and that hardship factors should not lead to a lowering of standards for student performance (Appendix C: PPM 76-200 Grading/Change of Grades).

The process for appealing a grade begins with the student and the faculty member; if this meeting does not resolve the problem, the Center director requests a meeting for the student, the faculty member, department chair, and the Vice President for Instruction. However, final academic decisions related to grades and coursework rest with individual faculty.

As noted above, Oglala Lakota College policies and their related procedures establish standard approaches for responding to academic concerns or problems encountered by students and faculty at the various College Centers. Information regarding these policies and procedures is readily available through the College website and the students' 2008-2009 Academic Planner (Appendix D).

3. How are library and computer services made available to students at the site?

The main College library, *Woksape Tipi* (house of wisdom), maintains branches at each College Center. Each of these libraries is open to both students and the reservation community. The library website (<http://library.olec.edu/index.html>) provides listings of periodicals found at each library as well as an on-line library search mechanism. The Library Resource Technician maintains the various college center libraries by delivering new books, checking in newspapers and other periodicals, reshelving books from each local drop box, assisting students looking for books and articles on the computer, and trouble shooting problems with computer equipment.

Each College Center has a computer laboratory. The Technology Director is responsible for the budget and purchase of all computer technology acquired for all eleven college centers, as well as maintenance of all of these systems spread across the reservation, including the Rapid City He Sapa Extension Center (see <http://www.olec.edu/~cdelong/pictel/techplan07.pdf>) .

The Network Systems Administrator is responsible for the design and operation of the Oglala Lakota College Wide Area Network and the twelve (12) Intranet Local Area Networks (LANs) and two (2) Internet LANs. The Network Administrator is also responsible for the design and operation of the Internet Network Servers that carry all College content to and from the Internet.

4. According to what schedule are these services available?

Academic services at all College Centers are available Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. through 8:00 or 8:30 p.m., and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The shortened time on Friday is due to the limited number of classes meeting on Friday; Centers are then used mostly for study and computing purposes. Some Centers are open on week-ends for classes, computer use by students, and studying. Service delivery occurs through personal contact, e-mail, and phone.

Assessment of Student Performance

1. How does the institution assure that students attending these sites, in particular, the sites being visited, are learning and meeting the educational objectives of their programs?

The assessment program at Oglala Lakota College centrally administered and is college wide across all instructional sites, and consists of four main components: developmental education, general education (core curriculum), academic programs, and college-wide assessments. Oversight of the assessment program is the responsibility of the Director of Assessment, who reports to the Vice President of Instruction. Academic department faculty design, implement, analyze and report assessment in the academic majors, as well as specific assessments of learning in the core curriculum. All learning outcomes and assessments are conducted through the Instructional Division regardless of instructional site.

2. How does the institution go about measuring the learning at the sites?

The learning of students enrolled in developmental courses is measured by on-line pre- and post-testing with Accuplacer, published by the College Board. The tests are administered at the College Centers. Students transition from developmental reading/writing and math to regular college courses on attainment of the College's pre-established pass scores.

Learning in the core curriculum, general education, is assessed through a variety of strategies. Development of skills in reading, writing, mathematics and critical thinking are measured in the context of the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences through on-line administration (at the College Centers) of the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Performance published by the Educational Testing Service. The College also uses locally developed measures to assess core curriculum learning in the areas of writing, computer literacy and Lakota language.

Assessment in the academic major is the purview of faculty in the various academic departments, with annual reports made to the Vice President for Instruction (Appendix E: PPM 77-000: Assessment of Student Academic Achievement).

3. How does it feed back what it learns from assessment at a particular site into strategies to improve teaching and learning at that site? How does it ensure that students attending sites have similar learning to that of students on the main campus?

Assessment results are analyzed and interpreted by department faculty, who, on the basis of the results, determine what improvements/changes should be implemented to better support students' successful achievement of learning outcomes regardless of site location. Once again, the College uses a decentralized delivery system to present centrally-designed and assessed academic programs.

Student Services

1. How are the services delivered, managed, and quality assurance maintained at the sites?

The role of College Centers on Pine Ridge Reservation is essentially to provide place and support for instructional delivery to students; they are, therefore, part of the Oglala Lakota College campus, and the duties of the director of each facility are to maintain the building, supervise staff, and oversee student services. This is also true for the locations in Rapid City and Cheyenne River reservation. Center directors report to the Coordinator of Support Services (day-to-day supervision), their local District Board (oversight—with the exception of off reservation centers at Rapid City and Cheyenne River, which do not have local boards), and to the College President. They work closely in community outreach and are as much community centers as academic delivery sites, while the bulk of their work consists in providing support to students and facilitating faculty work.

College and Extension Center directors meet monthly to discuss common concerns and ensure consistent quality in the services offered at each of the Centers. Counselors meet every other month for the same purposes. These meetings may involve presentations by or discussions with representatives of other college constituencies in areas such as academic advising, program enrollments, assessment, or crisis management planning. Student satisfaction surveys are conducted twice annually as an indirect assessment of the effectiveness of services and facilities at the Centers.

2. Describe the reporting and feedback mechanisms that address concerns or problems by students and faculty at the sites.

Pathways for resolution of student and faculty non-academic concerns or problems are dependent on the specific nature of the problem. For example, concerns regarding registration would require involvement of the Registrar's Office, and financial aid problems would be dealt with by the Office of Financial Aid. College Center staff may act as liaisons for students in problem-resolution. Behavioral issues are handled by Center staff, with referrals made as needed.

Each College and Extension Center has its own student organization, with officers elected at the first fall meeting of the home center student body. The student organizations call meetings on issues of interest to students and plan community activities throughout the year. Generally, Center counselors serve as advisors to student organizations. Local Center Boards work with student organizations to ensure accountability and non-discrimination in proposals and activities of the organizations. The College also has a thirteen member Student Senate, which is the governing body of the student population. The president of the Senate represents student interests to the College Board of Trustees. Finally, eleven student representatives (one

from each College or Extension Center) rotate, four at a time, through service at meetings of the *Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye*, the College forum for addressing college-wide concerns and making consensus policy and procedures recommendations to the President and on to the Board of Trustees.

3. How do the students at the sites connect with admissions, registration, business office, student records and financial aid?

Oglala Lakota College essentially has a “dual-delivery” system for provision of student services. All student services are centrally organized and available through the internet at <http://www.olc.edu/~wwhitedress/student-services/>, and they are also available in paper format through each of the College Centers. Counselors at the Centers assist students with admission applications, faxing the application to the Office of the Registrar where attached documents are examined and a student identification number is assigned.

Registration for beginning students at Oglala Lakota College extends over one week beginning about fifteen days before the first classes of each semester. New students go to the local Centers for academic advising from faculty and counselors, and to complete the registration process with counselor assistance as needed. During the last month of a semester, returning students may pre-register for the following semester by logging on to the College’s Jenzabar website. Returning students are encouraged to seek academic advising from Center staff or faculty after they’ve declared an academic major.

Student financial aid is available through FAFSA, Pell Grants, Oglala Sioux Tribe Higher Education Grants, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, Academic Competitiveness Grants, National SMART Grants, a number of scholarships, and federal work study. Counselors forward completed applications to *Piya Wiconi*, the College’s central

administration center for verification by financial aid personnel. Center directors and counselors disperse financial aid checks and can also assist students having financial emergencies in applying for up to \$250.00 in Angel Lumina funding so they can remain in College.

4. According to what schedule are these services available at the sites?

Student services at all College Centers are available Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. through 8:00 or 8:30 p.m., and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The shortened time on Friday is due to the limited number of classes meeting on Friday, so the Centers are then used mostly for study and computing purposes. Some Centers are open on week-ends for classes, computer use by students, and studying. Service delivery occurs through personal contact, e-mail, and phone.

Facilities

1. How does the institution determine what the needs of students, faculty and administration are at a particular site being planned and how does it go about identifying and improving space to meet those needs?

Site-based needs for facilities improvement generally occur for two main reasons. The first is surveyed or observed need, as was the case with construction of a dormitory at the Pine Ridge College Center. The second reason is population growth, as in the case of the addition of classrooms to the Pine Ridge College Center and He Sapa Extension Center in Rapid City. Central administrative personnel monitor course requests and course enrollments closely to determine the need for improved facilities at the existing College and Extension Centers. For example, the continuing growth of student population at the He Sapa Extension Center in Rapid City is moving the College to consider a second addition to that Center.

2. How does it continue to assess whether existing space at the sites is adequate for its educational and other needs or whether space may need to be improved or upgraded?

Center directors meet regularly with central administrative staff, including the President. At these meetings, issues related to physical plant are shared with administrative staff. Regular inspection tours by Center directors and central administrative personnel help to identify on-going needs for specific facility improvements. Conversely, changes occurring at a College-wide level influence upgrades, as in upgrading interior doors at all Centers as part of the institution's emergency preparedness plan. Computer laboratories have been added at all Centers, and computers are replaced on a planned schedule. Since 1994, the buildings at all College Centers have been replaced with new facilities (see Center plan layouts), and the College maintains a fund to assure regular purchase of new equipment as well as maintenance and repair.

3. How does the institution assure it has dealt with appropriate transportation and parking issues at the sites?

Given the decentralized nature of the Oglala Lakota College campus, students walk, bike or drive to classes. Students are responsible for their own transportation to classes; however, the College provides gas vouchers to students with demonstrated need. These vouchers become particularly important when students have to travel to distant College Centers for classes. Parking is not an issue for the College, and each College and Extension Center has its own off-street parking area near the Center Building.

4. How do students at the sites acquire appropriate textbooks and other materials in a timely manner?

The College Bookstore delivers textbooks to the College Centers during the two weeks prior to the start of classes each term. The Bookstore schedules days when it will be at each

Center with books, and students are notified of these days so they can come in to purchase their books. Faculty and staff have also served to deliver books to the Centers when necessary. After the initial distribution of books, books can be purchased at the Bookstore at *Piya Wiconi*. The process of buying books back at the end of the term works in the same manner.

5. How does the institution address ADA and other related issues at the sites?

Disabilities and related issues are received and addressed on an individual basis. For example, faculty and staff will work with individual students to get the assistance needed, making referrals to other sources as appropriate. Concerns expressed regarding facility compliance with ADA requirements are addressed to the Coordinator of Support Services. At the time this report was prepared, policy regarding disability services was under consideration by the *Piya Wiconi Okolakiciye*.

6. How does the institution receive and address comments or suggestions from faculty and students about individual facilities?

Generally, the first responder is the Center director. However, comments and suggestions from faculty, staff and students regarding a given facility may be addressed to the Center director, the Coordinator of Support Services, the Vice President for Instruction or the President of the College.

Marketing and Recruiting

1. How does the institution confirm that marketing and recruitment information accurately provides sufficient information about individual sites?

The tribal portion of the College mission says the institution will provide the Oglala Sioux Tribe (Oglala Lakota Oyate) as a sovereign people with educated and trained human resources and personnel to assist people in being active, productive members of their families, communities, and of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and to provide the Oglala Sioux Tribe with expertise

and information needed for its development. It is this localized focus that guides the marketing and recruiting strategies of Oglala Lakota College. In accordance with its mission to serve the Oglala Lakota Oyate and the reservation community, Oglala Lakota College does not actively recruit students beyond its service area. Oglala Lakota College is well known in the reservation community. Community outreach activities serve to enhance the Lakota peoples' awareness of the individual College Centers and College programs and services. College personnel participate in career day activities at all reservation high schools.

A key element of local Center staff responsibility is to provide information to students and other interested individuals regarding College programs and services. Provision of accurate and sufficient marketing and recruiting material is centrally controlled. Academic department faculty and chairs develop academic program brochures and status sheets. Administrative personnel and staff prepare more generalized materials.

2. How does the institution ensure that students have the appropriate applicable information for the site they are attending?

Posters regarding registration and other all-College events or processes are prepared by the Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Instruction, and provided to each College and Extension Center at least two weeks prior to the beginning of registration (Appendix F: Registration Posters). Advertisements in the Lakota Country Times provide information about registration. News and information about events at the College are also disseminated through KILI Radio, 90.1 FM on the reservation, and 88.7 FM in Rapid City. Press releases are also sent to the Rapid City Journal and the Tribal College Journal. Some academic departments also prepare and distribute program brochures (Appendix G: Department Brochures).

3. How does the institution answer questions or address comments from individuals about the information related to the site?

Response to questions and comments occurs through several means across the College. Information about a particular College Center is acquired from the respective Center staff. Academic program information is most effectively responded to by faculty or department chairs. Questions or comments about radio and newspaper releases are directed to the Director of Development. In the localized and informal community of Oglala Lakota College, responses may also come from the President and the Vice President for Instruction, who answer their own phones and have open door availability to college staff, students and community members.