

Western
Wyoming
Community
College

Western in *Motion*

March 2010

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Vital Few for SL Update	2
Strategic Plan	2
AQIP Update	3
Registration Programs	3
Student Connections	4
Retention Activities	4
Western Gives Back	4

AQIP Action Projects

- Internal Communications
- Student Engagement
- Student Learning

**Assessment Day
Tuesday, April 13**



President's Message

Dear Western Family,
We have quickly found ourselves at the midpoint of the Spring 2010 semester. We have accomplished so much and yet have so much momentum moving forward. The institution reached a new enrollment high peaking at over 4000 students. At the same time, we have developed a living, changing Strategic Plan with AQIP Action Projects (AP) in full swing. Coming quickly this spring, summer, and fall is the update to the Strategic Plan, the College Re-visioning process, a new Scheduling Action Project and the planning of the WWCC Systems Portfolio for our continued accreditation with The Higher Learning Commission.

In the last newsletter, I shared the connection among WWCC's Guiding Principles, Strategic Plan, and AQIP Action Projects. I detailed the Internal Communications Action Project with a promise to

share the Student Engagement and Student Learning Action Projects this spring. Below you'll find the current activities on those Action Projects:
Student Engagement AP: Use multiple opportunities to explore and revisit students' goals. Integrated student goals as part of the summer registration programs and fall kick-off day; Surveyed students during the fall and spring semesters regarding goals;
Currently using pre-registration days in Nov and April to build student relationships in part through exploring goals.
Student Learning AP: Identify and improve upon weaknesses and gaps in student learning across the curriculum targeting writing and reading. Writing continues to be promoted as a cross-curricular activity. Active, engaged reading is being emphasized as a fundamental skill in the content area; Multiple resources are now available to faculty on the Faculty

Resources Website including MLA/APA guides and best practices for implementing active, engaged reading strategies. Other tools such as Smarthinking and a new student reading pamphlet have been heavily promoted for both students and faculty; Surveys of both faculty and students indicate that writing has made significant improvements with active, engaged reading beginning to show some changes. With so much happening during this tremendous enrollment spike, I want to say thank you for all your continued hard work to meet the needs of our students and communities. Thanks for keeping *Western In Motion!*

Karla Leach

Re-visioning: April 7-8, 2010

With so many changes occurring with the new Wyoming Community College Commission Mission and Strategic Plan for the community colleges along with our own new Strategic Plan, it is time for us to review WWCC's Vision Statement. Margaret Benson of Wyoming Communications Group was here last December to do some initial fact finding and meet with

various employee groups. She will be back on April 7-8 to move us through this process.

What is the difference between a mission statement and a vision statement? These two concepts are intricately tied and should be considered in concert. In short, a **mission statement** should articulate the College's purpose and should very briefly and suc-

cinctly answer the question "Why do we exist?"

On the other hand, a **vision statement** is about inspiration and should be used to create a picture of the College in the future. A vision statement should briefly and succinctly answer the question "Where do we want to go?"

Vital Few for Student Learning Update

WRITING: For several years the Assessment of Student Learning Team (A-team) has encouraged faculty members to focus on Writing Across the Curriculum, with notable success. In the chart below, full-time **faculty report** increasing use of writing assignments across the curriculum.

	Fall 2009	Spring 2010
Formal Writing	68%	84%
Informal Writing	64%	75%
Writing with Citation	72%	84%

In fall 2009, 77% of **students report** having writing assignments outside of their English classes. In Spring 2010, that number stayed consistent at 79%. How do students *feel* about writing assignments in the content areas?

- “In my government and history classes, writing helps put the knowledge in long-term memory.”
- “I enjoy writing assignments as it helps to understand the concepts in class.”

READING: Four years’ worth of results from standardized tests and surveys give reason for concern about our students’ reading abilities *after* graduation from Western. It’s important to note that our students enroll with reading skills comparable to other students across the nation; however, they graduate with reading abilities *below* those of other students finishing the sophomore year.

The second Vital Few focus, therefore, is Active Reading Across the Curriculum. In its summer session, the A-team created an Action Project to advance this goal: facilitate our students’ abilities to become active, engaged readers. The team agreed to:

1. Provide in-service forums on Active Reading in the

content areas.

2. Provide an Active Reading brochure to students in entry-level courses.

In the chart below, full-time **faculty report** increasing use of active reading techniques. Survey results show a dramatic change in just 1½ years.

How do students *feel* about using active reading techniques?

	Fall 2008	Spring 2010
Previewing	14%	30%
Outlining	17%	52%
Annotating	16%	48%
Journal/Log/Notebook	5%	37%

Surveys given in the sixth week of the fall and spring semesters show an appreciation for Active Reading. **Students report** that it takes more time to use the techniques, but they see a direct benefit in their studies.

- “Helps me stay focused and centered on the topics in class”
- “Previewing is helpful in all of my classes...it helps me to better understand the material.”
- “Annotating has helped me immensely, and in more than just my English class.”

Associate VP for Student Learning, Sandy Caldwell, presented this information on our Vital Few for Student Learning to the **Board of Trustees** during their March 8 meeting. The Board shared our concerns about the declining reading scores of our graduates. However, they were impressed by the comprehensive plan to directly address the issue, and pleased to see encouraging results.

Strategic Plan: Where are we now?

It was a year in the making, but together WE created WWCC’s first ever Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan, which is directly tied to the Guiding Principles, was officially adopted by our Board of Trustees in October 2009 with many actions well underway. There are three “Fix it Now” immediate initiatives:

- Internal Communications (AQIP Action Project)
- Technology Support (Strategic Initiative 6)
- External Communications and Marketing (Strategic Initiative 3)

In terms of the long-term direction of the College, there are seven major Strategic Initiatives:

1. Increase Enrollment and Improve Retention (AQIP Action Project)
2. Strengthen and Develop Programs (AQIP Action Project)
3. Engage the Community
4. Maintain and Enhance Facilities
5. Attract and Retain Quality Faculty and Staff
6. Address Changing Technology Needs
7. Develop a Fiscal Stability Plan

Within these initiatives there are 18 specific objectives to address. Many of these have clearly stated challenges and action steps in place such as “Improve Retention,” which has an active AQIP Action Project on students’ goals. Others, such as Scheduling, are just beginning to move forward. Bud Chew will be leading a team to

identify the challenge and root causes that must be addressed to move forward.

As we all move through our busy day-to-day work processes with deadlines to meet and exams to grade, it is so easy to lose sight of how the Strategic Plan helps us intentionally choose our direction. When each of us serves on a team or participates in activities geared toward these initiatives, we really do make an impact. Sometimes making the time and committing to the actions is difficult both in terms of the sacrifices made and adjusting to the changes. At the beginning of Fall 2010, we’ll move to the next step of updating the SP. This activity is so important, because it allows us to celebrate the accomplishments we have made and to re-focus on our challenges ahead. An official update will be presented to the Board Of Trustees in October or November 2010.

6

The number of WWCC’s 18 Strategic Objectives that still need the challenge defined & root causes identified

AQIP Update and Systems Portfolio

The AQIP process has three distinct cycles through which participating institutions move:

- 1 year cycles: Action Projects and (starting in year 5) annual update to the Systems Portfolio
- 4 year cycles: Strategy Forum (conducted in Feb. 2009) and Systems Portfolio/Appraisal
- 7 year cycle: Quality Check-up Visit and Reaffirmation of Accreditation with The Higher Learning Commission (not until 2014)

Action Projects Status: Western currently has three active Action Projects. These are in varying stages of completion with updates and revised APs forthcoming. We will soon be adding the new Scheduling Action Project as identified in the WWCC Strategic Plan. Commitments to Action Projects are due to The HLC by April 1, 2010.

Systems Portfolio Development: This will be our newest big project and is VITAL to our continued good standing with HLC. The Systems Portfolio is really the platform through which we self-evaluate our institution. This is a 100 page (maximum) public document that

allows us to look at our key systems and processes. It is designed to be a valuable resource and should effectively supply us with a credible, ready-to-use accountability report to serve both internal and external purposes.

We will move forward in earnest with the development of the Systems Portfolio this summer and fall. The document is comprised of **nine categories** that we will address using cross-institutional teams for each of the categories. Once the initial document is created, a Systems Appraisal team provides written, actionable feedback for improvement. From there, we move into annual updates of the portfolio until a new Systems Portfolio is developed in 4 years.

Categories of WWCC's Systems Portfolio:

1. **Helping Students Learn** (GPs: Learning is our Purpose & Adapting to Change Defines our Future)
2. **Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives** (GPs: Students are Our Focus, Community Is Our Partner, & Employees are Our Most Important Resource)
3. **Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholder**

4. **Needs** (GPs: Students are Our Focus & Community is Our Partner)
5. **Valuing People** (GP: Employees are Our Most Important Resource)
6. **Leading and Communicating** (GP: All)
7. **Supporting Institutional Operations** (GP: Students are Our Focus)
8. **Measuring Effectiveness**
9. **Planning Continuous Improvement** (GPs: Adapting to Change Defines Our Future & Ethical Standards Guide Our Actions)
10. **Building Collaborative Relationships** (GPs: Community is Our Partner)

Take the "Chronicle of Great Colleges to Work for" Survey
3/22-4/16

Summer New Student Registration Programs

WWCC is committed to providing high quality advising as fundamental to student satisfaction and academic success.

Please help us begin the advising relationship with new students at the summer Registration Programs. Students have the opportunity to meet with their permanent advisors at Kick Off Orientation Day.

We need your help! Select a team and contact Becky Asplund at x1632 to sign up.

Faculty pay is \$100 per session. Professional / administrator pay is \$100 per evening session. Dinner is provided between double programs.



© Sorrel

Mustangs - Jackie Freeze

Monday, May 17 - 6 PM (no stipends paid)
Tuesday, June 8 - 1 PM & 6 PM
Wednesday, June 23 - 1 PM & 6 PM



Palominos - Laurie Watkins

Tuesday, July 13 - 1 PM & 6 PM
Thursday, July 29 - 1 PM & 6 PM



Clydesdales - Becky Asplund

Wednesday, August 4 - 1 PM & 6 PM
Thursday, August 12 - 1 PM & 6 PM

International Team

Friday, August 20 - 1 PM (no stipends paid)

All Teams

Monday, August 23 - 1 PM (no stipends paid)

Building Student Connections

What goals do students bring to Western?

In the Student Engagement action project this year, new students attending the summer registration programs were asked *“What is a goal you want to accomplish during your first semester at Western?”* The question was included in the registration program survey. The same question was repeated on the entry ticket for all students attending Kick Off Orientation Day and on Mustang Cruiser for all students during pre-registration in November.

Their response? Overwhelmingly, 85% of WWCC students gave an academic goal (“Get good grades.” “Pass all my classes.” “Maintain a high GPA.” “Get my general courses done.”). The next most common goal from 27% of students related to personal development (“Grow as a person.” “Have fun and meet new people.” “Learn to live on my own.” “Find myself!”). Only 7% of students gave a goal related to their

major (“Learn more about diesel mechanics,” “Get started on my nursing degree.”) while 3% listed a goal related to athletics (“Be an effective addition to the wrestling team.”) Some students listed goals in more than one category.

4,121
Total Credit
Headcount Fall 2009

The next step? Expand this action project by providing support services and intervention to help students reach their goals.

Building Student Connections Team Members

Contact any team member if you have questions or suggestions about WWCC’s Student Engagement efforts.

Amy Carter (Para Liaison)
Ann Rudoff
Becky Asplund
Bruce Anderson
Christine Lustik
Deirdre MacDonald
Dudley Gardner
Jackie Freeze
Jami Anderson
Kay Leum
Ken Fitschen
Kim Drane-Nash
Nish Ferrero
Patty Pedersen
Rick Reynolds
Sandy Caldwell
Sarah Pauley
Stacie Lynch-Newberg
Steve Davis
Tammy Walker (Recorder)
Laurie Watkins (Chair)

Retention Activities

December Graduates: All WWCC December graduates were emailed a congratulations letter from Alumni & Retention that included a link to the alumni update form.

January Registration Programs: Attended by 99 new students and 20 guests. Thanks to all who helped!

Prerequisite Checks: Becky and Tammy completed checking for all students who registered for spring government, math, statistics, English, and select science courses. Some students were administratively removed from courses.

Registration & Records: Issued “not attending” and “poor attendance” letters to students and their advisors based on faculty reporting.

Alumni & Retention: Emailed 251 February newsletters to family members of current students.

Advisor Lists: Updated advisee lists were emailed to 81 academic advisors to facilitate communication with advisees.

Western Gives Back



2010
“Walk for
Western”
Team

2009
“Relay for Life”
Team

