

**Western  
Wyoming  
Community  
College**

# Western in *Motion*

**May 2010**

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### 4 AQIP Action Projects

- Internal Communications
- Scheduling
- Reading & Writing Across the Curriculum
- First year students & Academic Success

**Congratulations  
Western Graduates!**

**Commencement is  
Friday, May 21,  
2010**

## Putting it All Together— Information at Your Fingertips

Pulling It All Together—  
Information at your fingertips

With so many activities going on, it can be very difficult to keep track of everything much less understand how all the different pieces fit together. Add to that the fact that different people maintain the varying parts of the information. The result is that most of us see and hear different snips and “nuggets” and then fill in the blanks based on partial facts. This is true both institutionally and publicly. This is truly a recipe for misinformation, confusion, and frustration.

The Internal Communications Action Project team has been working on this topic. There is a strong desire on multiple levels to pull information together in a central location with easy access. This is part of the special detail that Dr.

Leach has the VPs and Assoc. VPs working on.

This type of centralized access is called a Knowledge Management or Dashboard system. Typically these are web-based and accessible anywhere there is internet access. Western just moved forward with purchasing such a system. Although a name has yet to be determined, they system will house:

- Institutional Overview
- Strategic Plan and Updates
- AQIP Institutional Systems Portfolio
- AQIP Action Projects
- Institutional Annual Assessment Report
- Assessment of Student Learning
- Assessment of Student Engagement
- Program Portfolios

This system will take time to build and to get functioning. Phasing will be the key with the Strategic Plan, Systems Portfolio, and Program Portfolios being installed this summer and fall. Although no system is perfect, this will help move the institution toward greater information sharing and transparency with easy access for both internal and external audiences.



## AQIP Action Projects—Moving The Strategic Plan Forward

Sometimes it is hard to understand what AQIP Action Projects are and what purpose they serve. At the very core, AP are designed to help facilitate institutional continuous quality improvement. Western uses the structure to help move its Strategic Plan forward on specific items. Basically, Western has chosen areas of improvement to work on and

has submitted these to the Higher Learning Commission, Western’s accrediting body, with a commitment to follow through with improvement efforts. **Western currently has 4 active AQIP Action Projects:**

**Internal Communications:** This was a “Fix It Now” on the Strategic Plan. The team just wrapped up the first AP. That

AP had a variety of components including identifying Best Practices and conducting Listening Sessions with Dr. Leach. The team just wrapped up a next steps forum and will soon submit a next generation AP focused on *centralizing information gathering and dissemination processes*. CJ Budd is facilitating this project in the coming year.

## AQIP Action Projects cont.

**Scheduling:** This was due to be addressed this year as an item in the Strategic Plan. The Action Project is in place and is designed to move forward in stages with the first step focused on identifying *Western's challenge with scheduling, root causes of the challenge, barriers to addressing the challenge, and possible next steps*. Bud Chew is facilitating this project. Team members include Kay Leum, Rebecca Asplund, Mark Rembacz, Scarlet Skorcz, John Liccardo, Jennifer Allen, Stacie Lynch-Newberg, and Al Calmes.

**Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum:** This Action Project is already a second generation and will be wrapping up this summer. The A-Team will be *analyzing the results of the Assessment of Student Learning through the Goals for Student Success* during their June workshop. Next steps will be based on these findings. The analysis and conclusions along with the next AP will be shared during fall in-service.

**First Year Students and Academic Success:** The B-Team just wrapped up the project on students' goals. As a result, they have moved to the next generation AP focused on *exploring the disconnect between goals and academic performance of first year students*. This AP is detailed in this issue of Western In Motion.



## Adjunct Leadership Academy

Western is now accepting applications for the 2010-2011 **Adjunct Leadership Academy**. The Academy is a unique opportunity for innovative professional development and networking with other adjuncts and full-time faculty. An application form can be found on the Faculty Resources Website.

Ten carefully selected participants will meet on the Rock Springs campus Friday and Saturday, September 17-18 and April 15-16. Among other activities, on-campus experiences will include dinner with division chairs and departmental representatives, time on the WWCC Challenge Course, a variety of guest speakers, and mini-courses on Personal Productivity, Professional Empowerment, Successful Communication Techniques, and Stress Management for Modern Professionals.

In the interim, instructors will work with the textbook *Exceptional Teaching*, the Quality Matters framework, and a *Law 101 for Faculty Members* webinar, among other components. Although the interim experiences will be self-directed, participants will collaborate in an online discussion board to apply these lessons to their professional work both in and out of the classroom.

Graduates of the program will present a capstone project on the morning of April 16 and are encouraged to bring friends and family to the closing ceremony that afternoon. Those who complete the Academy will leave with enhanced professional leadership skills and a greater connection with content-area full-time instructors. In addition, these graduates will be the first Western adjuncts to

receive a 3-credit tuition waiver, a subscription or membership for further professional development, WWCC business cards, and other benefits.

Although the WWCC Adjunct Leadership Academy is based on similar models at other community colleges, our own employees put the *Western* stamp on this project; Jackie Freeze developed the marketing plan; Jennifer Allen, Kim Drane, and Sarah Pauley have made commitments to assist with workshops and presentations; and Karla Leach and Ken Fitschen will guide the graduation ceremony and reception.

**Assessment Team  
Summer Workshop is  
June 16 & 17.**

## In Service as Professional Development

The week of in-service for both fall and spring is jam-packed with activities. It is an exciting time of year and a frustrating time of year. Finding the balance between sharing information and getting core job functions accomplished is hard to do. Aside from a vocal few who just want the week to go away, the vast majority (95%) want the week to be informative, useful, and motivating. These three elements, informative, useful, and motivating, are some of the key elements of any professional development model.

In the last few years, in-service week has been re-tooled to try to strike a balance that works. Accepting the fact that there is no way to get it all in during one week was a big step.

Condensing the information and strategy/planning sessions in the first 2½ days while blocking off the last 2½ days for registration and faculty office hours was another. Another huge step was ensuring the para-professional staff who cannot always participate in in-service week has access to the same information through a pre-in-service session.

The in-service schedule will continue to evolve with a greater focus on professional development that is kicked-off during in-service while still sharing critical information that everyone needs to know. Spring 2010 in-service survey results:

- 98% satisfaction with para-professional session
- 95% satisfaction with motivational speaker on a *substantial* topic

- 97% satisfaction with financial/budget update
- 93%/91% satisfaction with student success updates & student learning breakout sessions
- 96% satisfaction with departmental/divisions meetings
- 89 satisfaction with faculty office hours
- 84% satisfaction with ability to complete other necessary duties

The Fall 2010 in-service schedule is currently being developed. The feedback and comments from the last survey are being used to help develop this schedule. Additional suggestions and recommendations are welcome. Please contact any of the VPs or Assoc. VPs with ideas.

## Student Learning Portfolios—Starting at the Beginning

The journey to try to get a better handle on how well we are doing what we say we are doing in regards to student learning is at a crossroads. The key is finding a method that is embedded within the curriculum that gathers authentic student measures WHILE also having some relevance to the student.

Ten years after the initial concept of student learning portfolios as a method, four years of test driving a new tool (Taskstream), one year of trying it with actual programs and students, and seven months of working with the Curriculum Committee to determine best course of implementation, Western is **moving forward this fall with all new degree-seeking fresh-**

**men.** With so many new students in many different majors, the Curriculum Committee at the request of the Assessment Team has agreed to a club model to see how this will work before adding/changing classes to the curriculum. How and what courses to use will be determined in the next year after some initial data has been gathered from the test drive.

**A vital component to student use of portfolios is faculty support.** Although the students will be the ones to choose what to put in their portfolios, encouragement from faculty is critical. Without students being encouraged to do this activity, other institutions have not had great success. However, those institutions where the faculty encouraged stu-

dents to use their portfolios were quite successful. Additionally, the ability to use programmatic student portfolios becomes more flexible especially in institutions where students change majors early in their academic careers.

Students will be given their accounts in the 12th week to allow for changing classes and late start classes. This will appear for them in their Mustang-Cruiser accounts using their single sign-on. Students still must activate their accounts to get them started. Dianna Renz will be the chief person in charge of orienting students to their portfolios and supporting them through the process.

## Summer Registration Programs

Thank you to everyone who has signed on to help with the Registration Programs. These small programs offer new students a personalized advising experience. Groups of about 30 students learn about the catalog, how to read the schedule and Mustang Cruiser. They meet with academic advisors to build their schedules. Programs are offered at 1 PM and 6 PM.

If you are in Rock Springs this summer, we would welcome your assistance! Faculty pay is \$100 per program. Professional staff are paid to help with evening programs. Childcare is offered at two afternoon programs, and family sessions will be conducted in Spanish at some evening programs. Please contact Becky at 382-1632 with questions.



## New Student Engagement Action Project

The newest student engagement action project was launched on April 1 with a targeted completion date of April 30, 2011. Led by Alumni & Retention with help and support from other stakeholders, the research-based project will focus on first time, full-time students who earned GPAs below 1.75 (the GPA required to maintain federal financial aid). Data to be studied includes high school attended, secondary GPA, ACT composite, program of study, housing option, first generation student, etc.

**6 men completed the Dads Making a Difference welding program this spring.**

In our action exploration of students' previous project, we explored new students' goals. The vast majority of students (85%) declared a goal related to their academic success. New college students do not plan to perform poorly or fail academically, yet some of them earn GPAs below 1.75 in their first year of college. The primary reason for taking on this action project now is to understand the "disconnects" that negatively impact first year student engagement.

From this study, we want to develop more effective student engagement strategies for students to succeed in their first year of college. The research should also help indicate a realistic retention rate for WWCC's first time, full-time students.

Initial data from the action project will be shared at the Fall 2010 in-service session.

### Mileposts on the Journey:

Timetable	Activity
May 2010	Identify first time, full-time students who earned GPAs below 1.75 in their first year at WWCC
June/July 2010	Develop a survey tool; collect survey data from these students about the first year experience
Summer 2010	Analyze data to find similarities between these students
Registration Programs	Ask new first time, full-time students about concerns for their first year of college
Kick Off Day	Ask all participating students about their concerns for Fall 2010 semester

## Spring 2010 Retention Activities

**Midterm Grades:** 1,572 students with no reported D or F grades were emailed a congratulatory message from Dr. Karla Leach, Ken Fitschen and Dr. Jackie Freeze.

**Prerequisite Checks:** Becky and Tammy began checking prerequisites for students who pre-registered for summer and fall government, math, statistics, English, and select science courses. Under a new advising policy, students will be administratively removed from courses if the prerequisite is not met.

**Alumni & Retention:** Emailed 246 May newsletters to family members of current stu-

dents.

**Part-Time Student Newsletter:** A link to the online spring newsletter was emailed to 1,615 part-time students. The newsletter included information about how to check grades and progress to graduation, financial aid information and WWCC's goals for student success.

**Spring Advising Newsletter:** Becky's spring newsletter was sent to all on-campus academic advisors and outreach staff.

