



Western in Motion

Happy Holidays



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WWCC Guiding Principles

- Learning is Our Purpose
- Students Are Our Focus
- Employees are our Most Important Resource
- The Community is Our Partner

President's Message

Dear Western family,

I have the worst cold in history. No, I don't really know, nor can I determine a way to figure out the magnitude of this cold. However, whenever we are dealing with a problem, it is undoubtedly 'the worst I have ever seen or felt – EVER!' Last night, I was looking through the remedies for headaches, pains, runny noses, and coughs to 'cure' my cold. As you know, none of these will 'cure' the cold, they will simply ease the symptoms until the cold runs its course and I survive.

As an organization, we must be aware of whether we are trying to address the symptoms of a problem or are we trying to address the problem itself and the conditions that brought about the problem. The latter requires systemic thinking – the careful analysis of a condition to determine underlying causes and conditions that provide fertile ground for a particular condition to reoccur repeatedly.

This is the next phase of our AQIP process. We are now challenged to identify the underlying causes for the targeted areas of improvement in which teams are currently developing action projects. We are also on the verge of developing our first Institutional Systems Portfolio. Through these efforts, we must document that we understand that we are addressing the systemic

problem and not the symptoms resulting from the problem.

Now, back to my cold – we've observed that I have a runny nose, sore throat, and headache... and, I am taking medicine to

combat those symptoms. But systemically, HOW do we keep the cold from running through all of our employees next time?

Increased hand washing. Eating more fruit and drinking more water. And, encourage employees to use their sick

leave to prevent the spread of germs. Excuse me – I have to sneeze.

Stay well, Western; and, remember that the journey is not about how to fix today, but rather how to prevent today's problems from reoccurring tomorrow and next year . . . and, with our next set of students.

Karla Leach

Monkey-ing Around with Surveys

Survey Monkey provides a resource for WWCC to easily create and disseminate surveys to students, faculty, industry partners, community members, and other stakeholders. The Survey Monkey system also allows survey facilitators to quickly analyze survey results, providing relevant and expedient information for data-informed decision making at the College. Genuine feedback from various groups is essential for many decision-making bodies and programs at Western.

Western has purchased an institutional account with Survey Monkey. Dianna

Renz is the account administrator, but several other programs also work with Survey Monkey, including Distance Education, Admissions, and Registration & Records. If your program might benefit from the information provided by a survey, Dianna can get you started. In her role as Learning Assessment Associate, she has experience designing focused survey questions, developing an appropriate invitation method for your target audience, and providing an analytic report of the results. Like any other online program, Survey Monkey has a variety of options for users, and it's helpful to understand how these options work. Since a one-on-one training is not

always practical, Dianna will be working this spring to provide a document including survey-creation tips and guidelines for using Survey Monkey. The Survey Monkey password will be modified annually as part of our effort to maintain confidentiality and anonymity for audiences.

Fall 2010 Student Learning Survey Results

Western faculty members have made extensive efforts to encourage Active Reading in their content areas, and also to assign Writing Across the Curriculum. Recent results from our internal student survey illustrate the impact of faculty efforts. It takes time for students to complete the college experience; even very focused students take approximately two years to fulfill the requirements of their programs. Therefore, external data sources, such as nationally standardized tests and surveys, transfer data, and other methods of assessment, are slow to reveal the outcome of our campus-wide concentration. However, *the positive influence of the collective faculty endeavor is clear*

Computer Programmer Russell Bates deserves some recognition: In preparation to teach COSC 1200 as an adjunct in the spring, Russ attended Professional Development workshops in Active Reading in the Content Area and Writing Across the Curriculum; through conversations in these workshops, he developed plans for Active Reading and informal writing within his upcoming curriculum.

from the results of the Student Learning Survey, given by the Assessment of Student Learning Team at the six-week point of each semester.

When students were asked whether their instructors were assigning active reading strategies in the classroom, *their overwhelming response was positive*. In a list of eight possible strategies, students reported *statistically significant* increases in all but one of the strategies, as compared to Fall 2009. When asked if the strategies were useful in their studies, 58% of students responded positively, an increase of six percentage points over Fall 2009. Several students commented on the particular usefulness of the SQR3 strategy: "the question part helps the text get a little more relatable and easier to read..." and "the more I use it, the better I remember the information."

When asked if they were given writing assignments (formal or informal) in courses other than English, *student response was overwhelmingly positive*. Eighty percent of students agreed that writing occurs across the curriculum. Even more positive: 83% of first-year students say they have writing

assignments in courses *other than English*, as compared to 75% in Fall 2009.

Thanks to several years' worth of data from a variety of sources, the Assessment of Student Learning Team identified Reading and Writing as two areas for improvement. Western faculty members have responded as professionals in their fields, incorporating Active Reading and content-based writing assignments into their curriculums in *meaningful* ways, which benefits student learners. **Keep up the good work!**

MyFolio, Your Folio, Our Folio

In order for Western to maintain accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission, we must gather data that provides evidence of student learning at our institution. Therefore, all graduates must provide samples of their work and take several nationally standardized assessments. In the past, we've gathered this evidence through methods such as Assessment Day; however, this mandatory event, which offered little benefit to the student, often resulted in lackluster efforts. In this past year, the Higher Learning Commission declared that all institutions must make a more concerted effort to gather and evaluate *authentic* student work samples from *throughout* the student experience at the institution.

In order to satisfy our own desire for genuine student work samples that are representative of the student experience at Western, and fulfill the demands of our accrediting body, the Assessment of Student Learning Team has worked for the past ten years toward a goal of providing students with an electronic portfolio at the initial point of college enrollment. This solution allows students an online "filing cabinet" to use during their time at Western, and also offers an opportunity to design a dynamic e-portfolio which can demonstrate their best work to transfer institutions or for purposes of employment.

In August 2010, Western purchased almost 1300 student accounts through Taskstream.com, an e-portfolio provider researched by the Assessment of Student Learning Team. These three-year accounts

were purchased with ARRA (American Recovery & Reinvestment Act) funds, which provided **one-time funding** for "strengthening education, driving reforms, and improving results for students" (ARRA.funding.com). The new MyFolio method is mandatory for incoming freshmen, but other students are also opening their MyFolio accounts; over 1000 accounts have been activated to date.

These 1000 students have been entered into support clubs through Mustang Cruiser. The support clubs provide a way for students to receive information regarding MyFolio and the Assessment Requirement for graduation. Within the Mustang Cruiser support clubs, the Shared Files section includes a step-by-step getting started guide; the Bookmarks section includes several samples of published student portfolios and a pre-recorded online orientation; the Message Board provides space for students to ask questions of the MyFolio facilitator; and the E-mail Members function allows the facilitator to send periodic reminders to student users.

Currently, the Education and Nursing programs are using MyFolio extensively; other programs, such as English and OIS, are currently exploring the possibilities of MyFolio. The Nursing program helped to test-drive the MyFolio accounts last year, and their students were able to complete all graduation requirements online at their convenience, rather than attend Assessment Day. This is the model that we'll employ this year as well, implementing an online section of

HMDV 2411, the Assessment Requirement for graduation. In this "course," students will select which of their student samples they'd like to submit for curriculum-level evaluation, take the standardized assessments online, and receive instructions for publishing the portfolio.

Want to learn more about MyFolio at Western? Contact Dianna Renz or Kay Cooley, either of whom can give a brief presentation to you or your class.



Systems Portfolio—Next Steps in AQIP

STARTS in *January 2011*—ALL employees participate!

In the last newsletter, we discussed the idea and timelines behind the Institutional Systems Portfolio that is *required* by HLC/AQIP. This process will kickoff for everyone in January with scheduled time during the in-service week to share WHAT and HOW we'll proceed. In the meantime, Dr. Leach has appointed who will **CO-CHAIR** each of the nine category teams.

Category	Co-Chairs
Cat 1 Helping Students Learn	Ann Rudoff Emma Chaput
Cat 2 Other Distinctive Objectives	David Tate Lu Sweet
Cat 3 Students Needs and Other Stakeholders	Laurie Watkins Al Calmes
Cat 4 Valuing People	Ken Fitschen CJ Budd
Cat 5 Leading & Communicating	Bruce Anderson Anna McClure
Cat 6 Supporting Institutional Operations	Derek Robinson Therese Yerkovich
Cat 7 Measuring Effectiveness	Jackie Freeze Dianna Renz
Cat 8 Planning Continuous Improvement	Sandy Caldwell Marty Kelsey
Cat 9 Building Collaborative Relationships	Joe Mueller Nancy Johnson



The co-chairs will lead our college community through the development and creation of this document over the next 12-18 months. The idea behind this document is to provide a **unified voice** regarding the essential processes, results, and improvements that Western has made

or intends to make in the next steps of the quality effort. Particular attention should be given to those areas that will likely be addressed within the next 2-4 years. Fortunately, Western has spent time and energy in the last several years focusing on strategic planning and making systemic impacts through using AQIP Action Projects or other initiatives for long-term improvements and quality.

Strategic Plan and AQIP Work Hand-In-Hand

October 2009 was the start of WWCC's first official Strategic Plan. Recall that this document was developed using a very specific process that allowed for input across the institution over a period of one year. The result was a shared view of what the College needed to address immediately and within the next 3-5 years. Within the seven identified initiatives there are 18 specific objectives to address. Several the objectives have either been addressed, are currently being addressed, or have timelines for when they will be addressed.

The AQIP method has been implemented to develop concrete actions and timelines for addressing the different issues as they move up the priority list. An example of HOW Western is combining the efforts of the Strategic Plan with AQIP is the Scheduling Action Project. This item existed as an issue in the 1990s and has not been directly addressed successfully since then. As a Strategic Plan item, AQIP says that the institution **MUST** address the issue. Using this item as a declared AQIP Action Plan, a team is in place that has begun the process to move this critical issue forward with actionable steps, outcomes, and manageable timelines.



Scheduling Action Project team at their retreat Dec. 2010.

Building Student Connections

Students Respond to Second-Year Student Assessment

More than 200 second year students completed the Noel-Levitz pilot assessment for a 28% response rate. This student cohort will be tracked for progression with credits attempted and credits earned during FA10 and SP11 terms and enrollment status for SP11 and FA11.

Based on students' self-reported responses to survey questions, we gathered information on motivational patterns, coping skills, specific needs and interests, and satisfaction with their educational experience at WWCC.

Some results:

- 95% of students "find themselves thinking about what I'm learning in class even when I'm not in class"
- 91% of students were satisfied with the level of interaction with their instructors
- 91% of students were satisfied with the degree of academic challenge in their classes
- 82.8% of students plan to continue with the major they have selected
- 71% of students were satisfied with the level of communication with their academic advisor
- 54.5% of students plan to study more this year than in their first year (only 3.9% plan to study less)

"Next to the quality of instruction, academic advising is consistently the next most important area of the college experience to students."

Five Year Trend Study – National

"The faculty members student identify as having had a powerful influence on their thinking and on their lives are those who helped them make connections between the curriculum and their personal lives, values and experiences."



MAP-Works Adds to WWCC's Student Success "Toolbox"

Through the federal College Access Challenge Grant, all Wyoming institutions are funded to implement the

Educational Benchmarking (EBI) MAP-Works retention tool. The goal of the Challenge Grant is to increase access and persistence in higher education for Wyoming residents. MAP-Works provides a survey in week 3 and at week 8 that first time students take online. Students are asked about their study time, effort, difficulties, and resources. Upon survey completion, students receive a multimedia report on how they are doing compared to their peers. WWCC counselors will also see the results with red, yellow and green color-coding to identify and intervene with students who are most likely to drop out or have poor academic performance.



The MAP-Works program allows students to tell us what is on their minds at a very early date. This will help us get the right person the right information to make interventions and keep students on track. The program also has an aggregate reporting function to help WWCC look at "common denominators" for why students don't return. We know that their reasons are not just academic, and now we have a reliable way of uncovering problem areas. "MAP-Works has been researched and perfected over a 20 year period, so it has been thoroughly tested and proven. It really works," says Joseph Pica, President of EBI. Casper College and

Sheridan College have both increased retention rates using this tool.