Western in Motion... December 2008

Academic Quality Improvement Program

Dear Western family,

As you pick up this copy of *Western in Motion*, some of you may be asking "Why do I receive these? This is all about teaching students and that's not what I do at Western." Did you know that everything we do at Western is about student success? Not one single activity stands apart from student success. From the heat in the buildings to snow removal to the servers in Mitchell's Cafeteria -- we are all involved in the positive experience that each student has as they attend Western. And, we are all deeply involved in reaching out to new students as they consider Western for their college years.

Our strategic planning process and AQIP address all areas of the college. Our accreditation as an institution of higher learning tells the outside world that the teaching, learning, and student support at Western meets the high standards of the North Central Association. Because we meet these standards, the certificates and degrees earned at Western have value and are accepted as legitimate by employers, other colleges and universities, and the federal government. Not only do these standards review the quality of our faculty and curriculum, they also identify the adequacy of our facilities, space, technology, student support, and student engagement. Every person, every job, and every role is vital to providing a good experience for our students and our community.

So, as you move forward, remember that AQIP and the strategic planning process belong to you and that you are integral to their success, the success of Western, and most importantly, the success of each and every student.

Karla

Vital Few for Student Learning—Writing

After having completed a 3-year A-Team cycle using the AQIP model Action Plan approach to select 2-3 targeted areas of improvement, we are currently in the next round of a 3-year cycle of the Action Project called the “Vital Few for Student Learning.” In the last issue, we identified key areas of focus and discussed the broad concerns. Here are some highlights:

**#1 Writing Across the Curriculum**

**Plan:** This was an area targeted in the last go-around and was kept due to its "ripple" effect into multiple content areas. Emphasize Writing Across the Curriculum. Encourage faculty to assign various types of writing in all sectors of the curriculum. Encourage faculty to use Smarthinking and Turnitin. Track faculty use via surveys and student use. Include adjunct faculty in the conversation. Look for improvement in student writing.

**Activities & Measures:** Beginning in Fall 2005, we have emphasized writing in a variety of ways including in-service, workshops,

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Alumni & Retention: Laurie emailed WWCC full-time and part-time faculty to remind them to talk to students and advisees about the last day to drop full-semester classes. She also emailed thanks to full-time and adjunct faculty for submitting midterm grades (only 5 full-time faculty failed to submit midterm grades by the deadline).

Advising: Becky telephoned 64 students with multiple midterm deficiencies regarding the last day to drop classes.

Midterm Grades: Registration & Records printed and mailed grade reports to all students with D or F grades and to their advisors; 1,243 students with no deficiencies were emailed a congratulatory letter from Dr. Karla Leach, Ken Fitschen and Dr. Jackie Freeze.

Fall Advising Newsletter: Becky’s latest edition was sent to on-campus advisors and outreach staff.

Part-Time Student Newsletter: Part-time student newsletters were emailed to 1,461 students. The newsletter included information about WWCC’s goals for student success, important dates, how to check the progress of their degree or certificate, and helpful hints for online classes.

Pre-requisite checks for proper class placement: Becky and Tammy began prerequisite checks for students who registered for spring government, math, statistics and English classes above pre-requisite or COMPASS levels.

Summer 2009 Registration Program Dates

April
- Thursday, April 30
  Academic Scholarship Recipients
    6:00 PM

May
- Tuesday, May 19
  6:00 PM
- Wednesday, May 27
  1:00 PM & 6:00 PM

June
- Thursday, June 4
  1:00 PM & 6:00 PM
- Monday, June 22
  1:00 PM & 6:00 PM

July
- Thursday, July 9
  6:00 PM
- Monday, July 20
  1:00 PM & 6:00 PM
- Tuesday, July 28
  1:00 PM

August
- Wednesday, August 12
  1:00 PM & 6:00 PM
- Friday, August 21
  International Students
    1:00 PM
- Monday, August 24
  1:00 PM

B-Team Members

Jami Anderson
Becky Asplund
Sandy Caldwell
Steve Davis
Kim Drane-Nash
Ken Fitschen
Jackie Freeze
Rick Kempa
Kay Leum
Christine Lustik
Stacie Lynch-Newberg
Kay Marschalk
Patty Pedersen
Sarah Stanley
Tammy Walker (Recorder)
Laurie Watkins (Chair)

Contact any B-Team member if you have questions or suggestions regarding WWCC’s retention efforts.
and newsletters. The faculty surveys, CCSSE, CCFSSE, student surveys, and student use have indicated that writing is happening across the curriculum to a much greater extent than in 2005. Below are some faculty survey highlights:

**Results: GREAT IMPROVEMENT:**

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<tr>
<th>Writing Assignments</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required some writing assignment</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Faculty</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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As we have continued to discuss WHAT a writing assignment should be, we have moved to developing different tools to help faculty manage writing assignments in “non-writing” focused courses. We all want our students well versed with the ability to communicate competently in our respective fields of study, but how do we as content experts manage that activity? HOW do we grade the writing assignment in the content area when many of us are not writing instructors? As faculty, our focus and energy must be spent on the class we are teaching and substance of the content. Thanks to our GREAT faculty we have scoring guides and rubrics that are 100% customizable on the Faculty Resources website. These were developed by our faculty for our faculty to be used as a tool to help this activity get moving. If you need ideas on getting started or modifying what you are already doing, these are there for you.

**CHALLENGES:** We have made excellent strides with our students having the opportunity to Write Across the Curriculum and with helping them develop the skills needed to write for multiple audiences. Our next step is to identify WHAT our students are still struggling with in the area of writing. Our Assessment of Student Learning has consistently identified Writing as an area to strengthen for our GSS Communicate Competently. The pattern that has emerged has been weaknesses in citation of sources and in writing a cohesive document in terms of narrative, analysis, and summary. We moved to ask these targeted writing items on the Fall 2008 faculty survey, which identified some gaps in faculty emphasis in the classroom.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Writing Assignments 2008 Survey</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Require proper citation</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary, analysis, narrative</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although not every writing assignment uses citation of sources and not every writing assignment will have extensive narrative, analysis, and summary, we can still see a theme that we’ll continue to watch in the next few years. Having the students think in a narrative manner, having them analyze the information and summarize in some meaningful way is well documented as vital for students to experience deep learning.

**Action Plan Follow-up**

Creating a meaningful Program Review Portfolio seems pointless if you never again look at it again. The last piece of your Review Portfolio calls for an Action Plan, in which you create a future-focused vision based on the information you gathered in the Portfolio process. As an AQIP institution, we don’t just file that Action Plan away for safekeeping, we want to use it to make our programs more effective and efficient. Following your Review Year (in which you create a Program Review Portfolio), your program will be “in Follow-up” for three years following the Review Year. The follow-up process asks that you review your Action Plan each fall to determine the direction of your program. Follow-up documentation asks that you report on the action you took in the previous academic year, and create two more years of Action Plan for moving forward. This process will effectively move your program toward its stated objectives until the next Review Year. Business, Chemistry, Criminal Justice, Education, Electricity, Learning Center, PTCE, and Food Services have all completed their second year of follow-up documentation. Financial Aid, Green River Center Administration, and Distance Education have submitted their first year of follow-up documentation.
Are you a new faculty or professional staff member at Western? Is academic advising part of your job description or contract? Do you need to know how academic advising works at WWCC? If you answered “yes” to these questions, you need New Advisor Training! This 5-hour training program introduces new advisors to many aspects of academic advising and provides a framework on which to build.

Some of the fun topics that we cover in training include:

- Academic Advising is Teaching
- How to Begin the Advising Appointment
- How to Read a Degree Audit
- Why Faculty Make Great Advisors
- “Need to Know” Policies

WWCC’s advisor training program consists of two workshops (2 hours each) followed by 1 hour individualized training on using WebAdvisor. Look for your Academic Advisor Training invitation in January! Contact Becky Asplund, Coordinator of Academic Advising, with questions at x1632.