

**Western
Wyoming
Community
College**

Western in *Motion*

October 2009

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AQIP Action Projects

- Internal Communications
- Student Engagement
- Student Learning

1—2 Years

Time until WWCC starts the Systems Portfolio Process

This will be a 75-100 page public portfolio describing fundamental institutional systems.

66%

Percentage of our students who transfer to UW with associate degrees.

President's Message

Dear Western Family,
Starting on September 26, we celebrated Western's 50 years of service to southwest Wyoming. During the activities, many people told me of their experiences while attending Western. Many of the stories are very moving and personal. Lives that were on the verge of being derailed were set back on the right track. Lives that had been derailed were given a second chance. Consistently, their stories focused around the people who touched their lives while they studied at Western. This last week was about the past – now it is time to become present and future-focused.

Your Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees at their October 12 meeting for adoption. Work groups will continue moving forward to align activities and efforts with the Strategic Plan. Many of the groups have worked through the process of developing challenge state-

ments; other groups will take on that task this Fall. For each strategic initiative, action plans, timelines, priorities, implementation steps, and assessment measures will be established by the work group.

The Wyoming Community College Commission also went through the process of developing a strategic plan during the Spring and Summer. The plan you developed last Fall is very similar in its focus with the exception that the Western plan is at the local level and the state plan addresses needs that overarch the seven community colleges in the State. When you reviewed the draft, I am certain that you saw the crosswalk between the two plans.

Thank you for your input and implementation of our strategic initiatives. As our alumni noted, the power of Western is the people pulling together to meet the needs of our

students and community.

Thanks for keeping *Western In Motion*,

Karla Leach

220

Number of people who participated in Strategic Planning sessions



Assessment—A Language of Its Own!

As employees of this college, most of us come to work every day with the intent to do a good job as each of us contributes to help WWCC fulfill its mission.

At WWCC we are fortunate to have our Guiding Principles and Goals for Student Success to help us keep our core pur-

poses in front of us. But how do we as an institution, as programs, as faculty and staff know how well we are doing what we say we are doing? How do we, as a part of the social structure, identify our gaps in service and our opportunities to evolve and adapt as society continues to evolve? At Western we attempt to

approach this in a multi-faceted way using a variety of assessments conducted across the institution. The very nature of this results in a complex system that impacts different employees in different areas at different times with varying amounts of involvement.

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Assessment-A Language of Its Own!

Seems only reasonable that there exists varying levels of understanding and “buy-in” across the institution. In other words, using assessment as a tool at the course and program level that “crosswalks” with broader institutional initiatives may seem confusing, overwhelming, and bureaucratic. Luckily, WWCC has great employees who have taken the time to think about this and have requested an “Assessment 101” overview in this newsletter. Below are a few terms to help translate the “language of assessment:”

Assessment for Continuous Improvement—An on-going, systematic process using assessment tools that are designed to feed the results directly back into revising the course, program, or institution with the goal of improving student learning.

Concept Maps—Graphical representations that can be used to reveal how students (or other target audience) organizes their knowledge about a concept or process. They include two parts: 1) Concepts, represented by circles & boxes, and 2) relationships between concepts, represented by a line connecting the two concepts.

Direct Assessment of Learning—Measures based on student performance or demonstrates the learning itself. Examples include scoring performance on tests, papers, or the execution of lab skills. These can occur within a class, across multiple sections of a course, and across years.

Embedded Assessment—Gathering information about specific goals, objectives, or competencies that is integrated into the teaching-learning process. This can be implemented to assess individual student performance or can be aggregated to provide information about a course or program.

Criteria for Success (Standards or Benchmarks)—Established level of accomplishment that all students are expected to meet or exceed. Criteria for Success (CFS) do NOT imply standardization of a program or of testing. Performance or outcomes CFS may be met through multiple pathways and demonstrated in various ways.

Formative Assessment—The gathering of information about student learning during a course or program that is used to guide improvement in teaching and learning. For example, posing a question in class and determining different correct and incorrect responses. In-direct Assessment of Learning—Use of perceptions, reflections, or secondary evidence to make inferences about student learning. Examples include, surveys of employees, students & stakeholders; students’ self-assessments, and admissions to specialty programs.

Institutional Assessment—Uses the institution as the level of analysis. Gen-

erally includes direct, indirect, internal, and external assessments designed for improvement and accountability. Ideally, institution-wide goals and objectives, i.e. Guiding Principles would serve as a basis for the assessment.

Program-level Assessment—Uses the department, unit, or program as the level of analysis. Ideally, program goals and objectives serve as a basis for the assessment. Assessments typically include direct, in-direct, internal, & external measures.

Rubric—Scoring tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for student learning. A rubric divides the assigned work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the work associated with each component, at varying levels of mastery.

Summative Assessment—Gathering of information at the conclusion of a section, course, or program to improve learning. Impacts the next section or student cohort taking the course or program.

Value-added—Increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or curriculum. May focus on the individual student or on a student cohort. Examples include pre-and-post tests including longitudinal or cross-sectional designs.

“Sometimes it is just the language of assessment that seems to make program assessment difficult.” Bruce Anderson

“...most of us are so confused [with the lingo] that we just walk away...” Jan Torres

AQIP Action Project Updated: *Vital Few For Student Learning*

In June, the Assessment Team conducted a Strategy Forum to move the Student Learning action project forward based on the most recent data analysis. As a result, the initiative of Mapping Computer Use Across the Curriculum was retired. GREAT WORK. As we shared in the August in-service session, we’ll continue to focus on *Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum*. These projects are in full swing with different activities that will occur

throughout the year. Thanks to all the faculty who participated in handing out the reading flyer to students! For a complete outline of the Student Learning Action Project, go to www.wvcc.edu/assessment.



Identity Crisis??? You decide!!!

First 10 votes win a prize!!

The Assessment of Student Learning Team (AKA the A-Team) needs your help! The institution has evolved in the assessment and institutional improvement processes in such a way that the name A-Team doesn't really fit anymore. The A-Team is not the only assessment that happens at WWCC, which has served as a point of confusion.

Initially, the A-Team was very much the College's attempt to move to a culture of informed decision-making. At that time, developing the Goals for Student Success and using these curriculum-level learning goals was a starting place for WWCC to begin building an improvement model framework.

Now, Western is moving this concept forward by developing an institutional assessment framework to measure

how well the institution is meeting its Mission as illustrated in the Guiding Principles. The recent Strategic Plan is an example of this move to comprehensive assessment and institutional improvement. The Building Student Connections Team (B-Team) is another assessment team focused on student engagement. Of the four levels of educational assessment (institutional, curriculum/co-curriculum, program, and course), the A-Team's role is to focus primarily on curriculum-level assessment. This does lead us to the identify crisis. With the name the "Assessment Team", the concept of assessment for the institution becomes relegated to a group whose job is to oversee only one critical aspect.

Let's go to a vote of the people.

The first 5 people who vote will get a free lunch at T-REX. The next 6-10 voters will get a beverage of your choice from T-REX.

Rank your TOP THREE choices:

- _____ Leave it alone!
(Assessment of Student Learning)
- _____ Advancing Student Learning Team
- _____ Promoting Student Learning Team
- _____ Improving Student Learning Team
- _____ Teaching and Learning Team

_____ Write in

Return to Kay Cooley in room 1310 or email at kcooley@wwcc.wy.edu.

SENSE: Second Time Around

"With the influx of new students, colleges must contend with high rates of entering student attrition—nationally, nearly 50% of entering students drop out before the second year. Other students stay in school, but struggle with developmental courses. In response to this challenge, SENSE helps colleges examine the experiences of entering students, to discover why some succeed and others do not, and to find ways of improving entering student retention and outcomes." SENSE Survey of Entering Student Engagement

Recently, WWCC administered the

SENSE survey to students who completed the first 3 weeks of classes in over 40 foundation courses. The SENSE survey asks students about their first impressions of the College; intake processes such as admissions, placement, registration, orientation, and financial aid; how they spend their time as they begin college; how they assess their earliest relationships and

interactions with instructors, advisors and other students; what kinds of work they are challenged to do; how the College supports their learning in the first few weeks; and so on. The results from the 2008 survey were used to make changes in the Summer 2009 Registration Programs and WWCC's in-service sessions. We expect to receive the new survey results in Spring 2010.

*Duplicated headcount

1,160
Students in courses
selected for SENSE
survey*

Registration Programs

WWCC faculty and staff worked together during the summer months to provide small, personalized advising sessions for new students. Teams led by Jackie Freeze (Mustangs), Kay Leum (Paints), Rebecca Asplund (Clydesdales), and Laurie Watkins (Palominos) included over 60 faculty and staff members. Each team received help from additional faculty advisors and support staff at the August 24 program. In total, **442 students** and **262 guests** attended the 2009 summer programs.

Special thanks to: Ann Rudoff, Barb

16
Summer 2009 New
Student Registration

James, Bernie Lovato, Brad Russell, Brandi Moore, Brenna Reynolds, Bret Zerger, Bruce Anderson, Bud Chew, Chris Kennedy, Chris Propst, Christine Lustik, David Bodily, Deirdre MacDonald, Dorothy Harton, Dustin Conover, Erik Hamm, Eve Henderson, Janet Johnson, Janet Wilm, Jeff Braegger, Jennifer Allen, Jennifer Sorensen, Jenny Daniel, Jeri Kunz, Jerry Thomas, Joe Mueller, Joe

Uriarte, Jon Schrade, Karen Flaim, Karlana Sheehan, Kathy Luzmoor, Ken Fitschen, Kevin Holdsworth, Kim Drane-Nash, Laura Chew, Laura Grossnickle, Leesa Lee, Lou Flaim, Mark Rembacz, Marty Metz, Pam Rood, Paul Johnson,

Peg Larson, Perry Ninger, Rick Kempa, Rick Reynolds, Sandy Caldwell, Sarah Pauley, Sharon Taylor, Stacey Hanson, Stacie Lynch Newberg, Steve Davis, Sue Bates, Sunny Thomas, Tammy Walker, Tom Murosky, Val Toomey, and Wera Warner.

Students were extremely positive. "My adviser was really nice and really helpful, patient." "It went a lot faster than I expected." "I got the help I needed to figure everything out." Parent evaluations were also supportive. "Very informative – good job." "If you wanted info on anything, you could ask." "I felt they really cared."

Please share your suggestions for 2010!

Student Engagement Action Project

Use multiple opportunities to explore and revisit students' goals.

Target project completion date: **April 30, 2010**

Mileposts on the journey:

- Summer 2009 Registration Programs serve as an opportunity to explore and revisit goals with new full-time students **DONE**
- Kick Off Day in August 2009 serves as an opportunity to explore and revisit goals with new and returning students **DONE**
- Faculty use Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 courses to communicate with students, build relationships and revisit students' goals **IN PROGRESS**
- Academic advisors use pre-registration appointments in November and April to communicate with students, build relationships and revisit student s' goals **FORTHCOMING**
- Develop and implement multiple tools during full academic year to measure students' goals **ACADEMIC GOALS WERE TRACKED FROM PROSPECTS TO APPLICANTS TO RESERVATIONS AND ATTENDANCE AT THE SUMMER REGISTRATION PROGRAMS**



New students at the summer Registration Programs completed an online event evaluation. They were asked, “**What is your personal goal for your first semester at Western?**” Many students focused on academics (“get good grades and pass all classes” and “learn a lot and do well”). Others expressed concerns about time management and adjustment (“try not to let things get over my head,” “meet new people” and “become familiar with college life”). New and returning students were asked about their current enrollment goal and personal goal for the semester on their Kick Off Day admission tickets.

The Student Engagement Action Project's objective is to provide multiple opportunities for faculty and staff to explore and revisit goals with students. If we better understand students' goals, then we will have greater success with students accomplishing their goals at WWCC, and the College will have a greater sense of how well we are fostering goal attainment.

Summer / Early Fall 2009 Retention Activities



Prerequisite Review: Checks were done to ensure students enrolled in math, English, government, biology, and chemistry met prerequisites. Letters were sent, and some students were administratively removed from courses.

College Studies Institute – Students who tested into 2 or more developmental courses for FA09 semester were invited to attend the 2-week August program. Instruction was given for reading, math, English and training on campus resources.

Alumni & Retention Phone Cam-

information!

Grade Check for Student Athletes:

Rick Reynolds, Athletic Student Engagement Coordinator, asked faculty to report grades for all student athlete after the 5th week of classes. As a result, at least one student athlete was benched pending academic improvement.

Alumni & Retention: Collected parent emails during housing check-in, and emailed September newsletters to 295 families of current WWCC students.

paign: Student Support staff made phone calls to 120 students who completed SP09 semester in good standing and who were not registered for FA09; as a result, 31 returning students were advised and registered.

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

Advisor Lists: Updated lists were emailed to 80 academic advisors to encourage advisor/advisee communication.

Family Weekend President's Brunch: Current students and their families were invited to attend the College's 50th anniversary events as well as a brunch with President Leach and other College staff.

Extended Advising Hours: Becky Asplund's advising hours are 9 AM to 6 PM on Thursdays. She is available for office appointments and by phone for local and outreach students.

