

Annual Assessment Report for 2007-2008 Overview and Summary

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Academic
Quality Improvement
Program
The Higher Learning Commission NCA



*Blending Continuous Quality Improvement
with College and University Accreditation*

Overview

The purpose of the Annual Assessment Report is to provide an overall picture of the assessment process and identify areas to target for improvement.

By using multiple means of assessment and focusing on the use of results, we will be able to target areas for improvement as well as ways to improve the systems that support these areas.

Assessment Program

Assessment and use of results should occur at all levels of the institution through a comprehensive, integrated and cross-functional approach. All programs should incorporate multiple means of assessment through a combination of direct, indirect, internal, and external measures.

- **Course-Level:** credit and non-credit
- **Program-Level:** instructional, administrative services, and student support services
- **Curriculum-Level:** 5 *Goals for Student Success* give direction to curriculum-level assessment
- **Institutional-Level:** Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

Course-Level Assessment

The Process:

- Assesses 4-7 content-specific student learning outcomes for each course, supports assessment of the 4-7 broad program-level learning goals and at least 1 of the 5 *Goals for Student Success* that are met within the course.
- The KEY is measurable student outcomes that can be documented in the Assessment Record.

The Results:

Ten of 33 instructional programs (30%) submitted course-level documentation through the Assessment Record, an improvement over last year.

Strengths:

- The Assessment Record forms emphasize the connection between course-level assessment and program-level goals.
- The annual activity of analyzing course-level data in regards to program goals provides additional significance to classroom instruction.
- Because the Assessment Record provides data over time, courses and their programs can identify strengths and target areas for improvement.

Challenges:

Some are still struggling to see the usefulness of keeping the annual Assessment Record. The perception of “more paperwork” is pervasive.

Opportunities:

The Assessment Record has helped to establish a culture of tracking assessment results and evaluating course-level goals that are integrated with the program-level goals and Goals for Student Success.

Program-Level Assessment

The Process:

- Three-pronged approach includes Review Portfolio, Follow-up Document, and Assessment Record.
- Emphasizes the assessment of program-level goals and demonstrates how they support student learning and/or Guiding Principles at the program-level.
- Provides the opportunity to contemplate and reflect about *what works* and *what does not work* within our programs.
- Celebrates successes and strengths of the program.

- Determines the needs and future direction of the program.

The Results:

Refining the Program Review Process to include the 5 year Review Portfolio, 3 years of Follow-up, and annual Assessment Record means we are receiving more meaningful information from programs. Thirteen programs were asked to conduct reviews of their programs in this year; five programs completed the review portfolio. Sixteen programs (36%) submitted their annual Assessment Record, an improvement from last year. Sixteen programs submitted Follow-up documentation on their action plans from previous years' Review Portfolios.

Strengths:

- Programs developed clear program-level goals and made efforts to assess or develop plans to assess those goals.
- Programs identified a connection to WWCC Guiding Principles and/or Goals for Student Success.

Challenges:

Some programs still struggle to give clear, actionable goals; this affects their ability to create a measurable assessment plan that contains "Criteria for Success" and suggests "Use of Results."

Opportunities:

Improved directions in the Program Review Manual help programs accomplish the Review Portfolio. The new Assessment Reporting forms will allow programs to collect on-going assessment data to strengthen future Program Review Portfolios. The new Action Plan Follow-up process will encourage continued focus on areas for targeted improvement.

Curriculum-Level Assessment

The Process:

- Measures the general education of WWCC students through assessment of the *Goals for Student Success: Communicate Competently, Retrieve Information, See Issues from Multiple Perspectives, Solve Problems, and Develop Life Skills*
- Multiple methods of assessment, including student samples, national exams, surveys, and other information are used in this comprehensive approach.

The Results:

This is a well-developed process that uses the *Goals for Student Success* as a framework to provide valuable information about how well students are learning during their time at Western. Data are gathered, evaluated, and analyzed by the Assessment Team, which recommends curriculum-level changes based on the results. See results in the table to the left.

Institutional-level Assessment

The Process:

Western uses an *Academic Quality Improvement Program* approach in an effort to develop and maintain a systematic and on-going process of collecting and analyzing data and information that:

- ✓ results in **continuing improvement**
- ✓ demonstrates that the College is effectively accomplishing its **Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles**
- ✓ **systematically** evaluates or reviews **services and functions** of the College to insure support of the College's Mission

The Results:

Although a fully developed process to assess the institution has not been completed, the AQIP Categories are closely aligned with the College's Guiding Principles and serve as

a basis to begin the process. Following the AQIP model, WWCC has selected three Action Projects, which will give Western the opportunity to create a cross-institutional climate of continuous quality improvement.

ACTION PROJECT 1: Vital Few for Student Learning

Based on data gathered by the Assessment Team, they determined three focus areas for improving student learning:

1. Writing across the curriculum
2. Computer competency
3. Word processing across the curriculum

SUMMARY: Writing across the curriculum has seen great momentum among full-time and part-time faculty. Students also report an increase in this area. This progress is encouraging, but the Assessment Team determined it necessary to continue focus on this area. A computer competency assessment tool was discovered and implemented. As a result of scores from the assessment, a computer class requirement was added for all degree-seeking students. Word processing assignments have been expanded in classrooms of full-time and part-time faculty. Assessment of word processing skills now occurs in ENGL 0950, 0955, and 1010 courses during the first week of each semester.

ACTION PROJECT 2: Adjunct Connections

SUMMARY: To address the issue of disconnected adjunct instructors revealed in the 2005 CCSSE data, the College hired a part-time Faculty Resources Facilitator, who...

- Maintains a master list of adjuncts who have taught classes in the past two years and collaborates with IT to maintain an e-mail distribution list for adjuncts.
- Plans and coordinates mandatory annual in-service sessions for all adjuncts.
- Produces the *Adjunct Connection* newsletter, which is disseminated via e-mail twice each semester.
- Collaborates with the WWCC webmaster to maintain the Faculty Resources Website.
- Facilitates and chairs the Adjunct Advisory Board, which provides feedback regarding adjunct issues.

ACTION PROJECT 3: Part-time Student Connections

SUMMARY: To address the issue of disconnected part-time students revealed in the 2005 CCSSE data, the College formed the Building Student Connections Team in August 2006. Due to the complexity of the impacts with part-time students, the Building Student Connections Team is looking more broadly at retention and student engagement. In the next year, using data from a variety of sources, the Building Student Connections Team will likely develop a more manageable action project related to some aspect of student engagement.

You Should Know:

- The Annual Assessment Report is available online at the Assessment website. You can also ask for a copy from the Instructional Support Office.
- This was Western's third compilation providing a "big picture" showing how well we are doing what we say we are doing (meta-assessment).
- The next Annual Assessment Report for the 2008-2009 Academic Year should be out in summer 2010.
- The Assessment Team and Building Student Connections Team will continue to share the most current assessment results with all the College community through newsletters, in-service activities, and workshops.

Moving Forward

This is a review of the processes of and results from the 2007-2008 academic year at WWCC. As the College moves forward in its efforts to conduct and share meta-assessment ("the big picture"), it will continue to evolve in the way it uses self-evaluation. In the next years, the College will implement more broad-scope assessment of the institution and work toward developing a strategic plan for future

growth. The following groups are an important part of the processes and data analysis that allow the institution to take a critical look at itself.

ASSESSMENT TEAM: The Assessment Team conducts curriculum-level assessment at WWCC.

Leesa Lee, Business/Health and Wellness *Jeff Braegger*, Technology & Industry
Susan Bates, Social Sciences and Fine Arts *Linda Linn*, Humanities
Dragan Skropanic, Math and Science *Jenny Daniel*, Nursing (Rawlins)
Liane Lamb, Developmental Education *Christine Lustik*, Distance Education
Bret Zerger, Student Success Services *Al Calmes*, Outreach (Evanston)
Laurie Watkins, Associate VP of Student Success Services
Sandy Caldwell, Associate VP of Student Learning, Permanent Chair
Dianna Renz, Learning Assessment Associate, Permanent Member
Kay Cooley, Instructional Support Assistant, Permanent Secretary

BUILDING STUDENT CONNECTIONS TEAM: The Building Student Connections Team conducts assessment on student engagement and retention issues.

Jami Anderson, Developmental Education *Becky Asplund*, Advising
Steve Davis, Financial Aid *Rick Kempa*, Faculty
Kay Leum, Registration & Records *Christine Lustik*, Distance Education
Stacie Lynch Newberg, Faculty *Kay Marschalk*, Children's Center
Patty Pedersen, Faculty/Outreach *Sarah Stanley*, Faculty
Kim Drane-Nash, Student Development Center
Sandy Caldwell, Associate VP of Student Learning
Laurie Watkins, Associate VP of Student Success Services, Permanent Chair
Tammy Walker, Student Support Assistant, Permanent Recorder

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: The Executive Council reviews assessment results and recommendations from the Assessment Team, Building Student Connections Committee, and through the Strategic Planning and AQIP processes. The Executive Council is composed of the following members:

President; Vice Presidents of Administration, Student Learning, and Student Success Services; Associate Vice Presidents of Student Learning and Student Success Services