



News Release

Missouri Western State College • 4525 Downs Drive • St. Joseph, MO 64507 • (816) 271-5649

Contact: Kristy Hill

Phone: (816)-271-5649

Title: Public Relations/Marketing Director

Email: hillk@mwsc.edu

WESTERN ACCEPTED INTO NEW ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

St. Joseph, Mo. —August 4, 2003— Missouri Western State College is the first four-year institution in Missouri to be accepted into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Moving beyond the boundaries of traditional accreditation, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools launched the AQIP model in 1999 as a new process through which Western can align its accreditation with the quality initiatives identified in its five-year strategic plan.

By participating in AQIP, Western will identify concrete targets and hold itself accountable for redesigning processes and operations to improve the results for the college and its students.

“We are very pleased to be the first four-year college in Missouri to be accepted into AQIP. This continuous improvement component of AQIP enhances our ability to demonstrate our quality outcomes to the wider community,” explained Dr. David Arnold, vice president for academic and student affairs. “Because AQIP is so integral to our day-to-day work at the college, it allows the faculty and staff to remain focused on providing Western students with a high-quality education.”

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Western's strategic planning process positioned the college to join AQIP. "This is a model application: it clearly articulates that Missouri Western understands AQIP and how it will be beneficial to them. They have experience with benchmarking themselves against other institutions and are firmly grounded in quality processes," stated the AQIP Standard and Admissions Panel in a letter to the college.

AQIP infuses the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities. With AQIP, an institution demonstrates that it meets accreditation standards and expectations through sequences of events that fit with those ongoing activities that characterize organizations striving to improve their performance.

Western completed its last traditional accreditation in 1999-2000. However, Western was not content to wait until the next scheduled reaffirmation of accreditation in 2009-2010, according to Dr. Jeanie Crain, special assistant to the president. Instead it chose to align its accreditation with continuous improvement in the AQIP model.

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Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.