

Annual Update for AQIP Action Project
Missouri Western State University
Using Measurement and Assessment
August 1, 2009

1. *Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.* The Using Measurement and Assessment (UMA) Action Project has two goals: 1) Develop the framework to support institutional research and assessment and 2) Create and implement a comprehensive University assessment plan focused on student learning and mission effectiveness. This report concludes the three year AQIP action project.

In relation to the first goal, the UMA Committee continued its search for a fulltime institutional research director. In hopes of filling that position, the search committee conducted a search for an Institutional Research analyst position and an Institutional Research Director position. When neither search was successful, the search committee was determined to meet this institutional priority and re-considered internal skills and responsibilities. As a result, an existing employee position description was adjusted to remove some current responsibilities and have a fulltime focus on institutional research needs. At the same time, a new office area for Institutional Research was created within the administration building providing a visible location for institutional research and an adequate workspace for completing office responsibilities. Additional training and support for this office are in place. Our Institutional Research Data webpage has been updated to reflect benchmarking data from our peer institutions. A revised University Assessment Plan was finalized. A University Assessment Committee was formed to review the University Assessment Plan and its results.

Regarding Goal 2 – The UMA Committee in conjunction with the Dean's Council and all academic Chairs/program directors are continuing to work toward fully implementing our comprehensive university-wide assessment plan. All academic programs areas worked on updating program assessment plans which are now part of their annual report to Dean and Provost. Program assessment plans and results are being posted to programs websites this summer and fall. Summery assessment information is now being reported to the academic deans and the Provost so informed decisions about curriculum and instruction are made. A summary report will be posted electronically to provide information on mission effectiveness. This information is provided annually to the Missouri Western Board of Governors as evidence of our focus on student learning and mission effectiveness.

Support for developing or improving the use of assessment data tied to student learning and mission effectiveness included offering professional development funding for all faculty and staff. Numerous faculty and staff attended professional meetings focused on curriculum and assessment changes within their programs and services. While traditional academic programs were focused on student learning outcomes, other campus areas were able to use action project funding to develop or improve their unit assessment plan. For example, students services, residential life (campus housing), and disability services were

able to acquire assessment instruments to provide needed data on program delivery effectiveness.

2. *Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.*

To support the progress of this Action Project, a cross-sector (faculty and staff) UMA Committee was created from both volunteers and those with specific interests in the Action Project. All aspects of the campus were represented on this committee. To better focus on goals, committee members were invited to participate in sub-committees working on one goal/objective within the project. To maintain progress, regular committee meetings were held with reports to the larger Strategic Plan Steering Committee.

3. *Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.*

It is important to understand that this Action Project is also part of our University Strategic Plan. Although the formal Action Project status is ending, the role of Using Measurement and Assessment continues as part of our current strategic plan. Further it is important to acknowledge that Western is embedding the work of this Action Project into the institutional budget so its impact is ongoing and permanent.

4. *Describe any “effective practice(s)” that resulted from your work on this Action Project.*

Clear and consistent communications and an involved cross-sector of the campus community allowed the UMA Action Project to support a better understanding of assessment instruments, assessment plans, assessment reporting and use of data for informed decisions about programs, people and future opportunities.

5. *What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?*

The challenges of continually keeping data demands and access current are ongoing. Those challenges can be met by having sufficient resources available (our Action Project was crucial in supporting this need) and effective and regular communications between campus program areas (the UMA committee was instrumental in supporting that process challenge). This Action Project allowed us to identify needs and create an internal organizational structure to support institutional research and assessment needs. Since this Action Project was tightly linked to our Strategic Plan, its impact is ongoing. Missouri Western will continue to develop faculty and staff expertise in the areas of assessment and use of institutional data. Our ongoing goal is to have assessment data available and used by all faculty and staff in decision making situations.