



March 17, 2011

Robert A Vartabedian
President
Missouri Western State University
4525 Downs Drive
St. Joseph, MO 64507-2294

Dear President Vartabedian:

Enclosed is a copy of Missouri Western State University's *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. It begins with a concise Executive Summary, intended for those general readers that do not require a high level of detail. Your Systems Appraisal Team of quality experts provided extensive detail in the full report by identifying nine distinct groups of what they view as your institution's *strengths* and *opportunities for improvement*, one group for each of the nine AQIP Categories. We are also emailing your institution's AQIP Liaison a copy of this full *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*.

To receive maximum benefit from your Systems Appraisal, you and your colleagues should plan to invest substantial time in discussing it, considering the team's observations and advice, and identifying which actions will best advance your institution.

To comply with federal requirements, we need the CEO of the institution formally to acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and to provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Limit your acknowledgement and comments to a maximum of two typewritten pages, and understand that your response will become part of your institution's permanent HLC file, to be shared with future peer reviewers who review your institution (including the next Systems Appraisal team, the next Quality Checkup visit team, and the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation panel). Email your response to AQIP@hlcommission.org; call me or Mary Green (at 800-621-7440 x130) if you have any questions about it.

We know you will gain real value from the Systems Appraisal Feedback and the activities it will stimulate within your institution, and we are proud to be working with you as you continue along the never-ending path to improvement.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Spangehl, Vice President for Accreditation Relations

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

March 16, 2011



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Elements of the Feedback Report	4
Strategic and Accreditation Issues	6
Using the Feedback Report	8
Critical Characteristics Analysis	9
Category Feedback	11
<i>Helping Students Learn</i>	11
<i>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</i>	17
<i>Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs</i>	22
<i>Valuing People</i>	26
<i>Leading and Communicating</i>	31
<i>Supporting Institutional Operations</i>	34
<i>Measuring Effectiveness</i>	38
<i>Planning Continuous Improvement</i>	42
<i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i>	45

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight **Missouri Western State University's** achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

Category 1 Helping Students Learn

- Western Missouri State University outlines procedures that enable students to enter the University and complete a degree program. There is sufficient evidence for accounting, identifying and providing support services to students across the university. Data presented reflects the degree of satisfaction students have with the level and quality of education obtained at Western.

Category 2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

- Missouri Western has provided many opportunities to become interactive with various groups of external stakeholders. There is evidence of much success realized in programs, initiatives, and activities to support Western's success.
- The shared governance mechanisms, such as the Faculty and Staff Senates, do not appear to play a part in an otherwise strong approach to including stakeholder input regarding non-instructional objectives and related performance. It is unclear that systematic processes are in place to assess the various stakeholder groups; it is unclear how the data and input are utilized across the institution in determining strategic objectives.

Category 3 Understanding Students' And Other Stakeholders' Needs

- Missouri Western State University uses a variety of both informal and formal, standardized methods to measure student and stakeholder satisfaction. Results are quite favorable in comparison to peer institutions. It, however, is unclear that Western has developed systematic and comprehensive processes associated with this category. There is an opportunity to develop more frequent measures and processes that lead to tracking student satisfaction over time.

Category 4 Valuing People

- In the area of Valuing People, an opportunity exists for the university to design and develop more systematic processes that can be replicated throughout the institution (e.g. succession

planning for key positions, a standardized process for determining training needs, employee recognition programs as well as identification of processes to improve key work processes).

- Western provides many examples illustrating how it values people within the institution; there are many positive examples of acknowledging, rewarding, recruiting, monitoring, and retaining current employees. There, however, is a need to discuss results and trend data in greater detail rather than general statements presented throughout this category; there is a need for more information about results and data which drive the creation of improvement strategies, the impact and assessment of those strategies and, in general, a need to relate specific data to the questions presented within the category.

Category 5 Leading and Communicating

- Western reports many individual activities but would benefit from placing more emphasis on the processes that lead to these interventions.
- Western has developed a robust set of communication tools to reach a variety of stakeholders. There, however, may be an opportunity to examine the directionality of communication to determine if communication flows in both directions within the organization - top-down and bottom-up.
- The institution is to be commended on its presidential succession planning efforts. There, however, is an opportunity to strengthen the leadership development program via a more formalized succession planning process.

Category 6 Supporting Institutional Operations

- Western provides many positive examples of activities supporting institutional operations. There were a number of "odd font characters" present in the figures used to represent information and data results; throughout this category, there is a consistent need for additional information which would relate specific data to the questions presented within the category rather than the many general statements present.
- Although Western identifies numerous strategies to collect and disseminate information to a variety of groups, it is unclear what processes are actually in place to identify and act on the needs of students and other stakeholders.

- Western is adept at using its Action Projects to foster improvements in its operations. Although these projects have been helpful, Western might be even more successful if the desired performance results were clearly articulated to all stakeholders.

Category 7 Measuring Effectiveness

- Western identifies numerous processes for the dissemination of data related to its operational effectiveness. Although these processes are clearly articulated, they seem disaggregated to the unit level rather than a reflection of the processes of the institution as a whole. The institution may be better served if there is some campus-wide aggregation of processes related to operational effectiveness.
- Throughout this category, MWSU provided illustrations of efforts resulting in positive efforts by committees, departments and the unit. There are multiple examples illustrating how the infrastructure collects data, analyzes data, and shares that data across the University. The University needs, however, to develop a systematic and coordinated approach to assessing and reviewing data at the highest level of the institution and to use that information in strategic planning.

Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement

- There is evidence present to support that Western has a solid strategic planning process in place and has made a number of recent improvements aligning their Action Projects to the AQIP Categories.
- In planning for improvement across the institution, Western cites many efforts which have resulted in positive efforts by committees, departments and the unit. There, however, is an opportunity to provide a clear, coherent planning process for documenting how the institution sets targets for strategic decisions and directions. There are far too many broad and general statements and information provided throughout this category.
- Western would benefit from documenting a process for setting targets for strategic direction that have been identified. Throughout this section, information is provided as reporting results to assessment strategies; however, that information is more closely aligned to addressing planning issues. This appears to arise from a decentralized approach where individual implementation teams make decisions and report progress, rather than having an

institutional-level coordinated review and approval process which would assure institutional goals are met and avoid duplication.

Category 9 Building Collaborative Relationships

- Western provided multiple examples illustrating how the institution's efforts are focused on building and maintaining collaborative relationships. There is an opportunity to provide additional information, specific data, or specific processes the institution utilizes to create, identify, and build those collaborative relationships. Throughout the category, there are far too many broad and general statements; these statements provide an appearance of lacking evidence of systematic assessment of these efforts.
- Western has developed a number of diverse relationships which benefit both the institution's efforts as well as the regional economy. The institution is to be commended for these efforts and actions; however, there remains a lack of information about whether Western is driving these changes or merely describing activities engaged in by diverse constituents at the University. The institution reports many efforts focused on collaborative relationships; however, the portfolio presents little information describing the processes used to create, identify and build these relationships.

Accreditation issues and Strategic challenges for **Missouri Western State University** are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

ELEMENTS OF Missouri Western State University's FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

Executive Summary: Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis: Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If accreditation is essential for your institution then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified both of these kinds of issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview and the feedback it provided for each Category, as well as by reviewing the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic issues offers a framework for addressing ongoing improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

Critical Characteristics: Your Systems Portfolio's Organizational Overview provides context for the team's knowledge of your institution's identity, mission objectives, strategic goals, and key factors related to improvement. Critical Characteristics are those features most important for understanding the institution's mission, environment, stakeholders, competitive position, goals, and processes. Characteristics having the greatest relevance to each Category are identified in the Report.

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the team attempted to identify the broader issues that present the greatest challenges and opportunities for your institution in the coming years. These are all strategic issues, ones you need to grapple with as you identify your institution's strategies for confronting the future and becoming the institution you want to be. The team also examined whether any of these strategic issues put your institution into jeopardy of not meeting the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation expectations.

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*. An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institution's systems and processes under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the

Criteria and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that Missouri Western State University has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the Criteria will serve as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies. The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues to assist Missouri Western State University in prioritizing and taking action on the important broad challenges and opportunities it faces. From these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, shaping strategies that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. Implementing these strategies may call for specific actions, so AQIP's expectation that your institution be engaged in three or four vital Action Projects at all times will help encourage your administrators, faculty, and staff to turn these strategic goals into real accomplishments. Knowing that Missouri Western State University will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

- Western collects a lot of data and has numerous processes in place to measure effectiveness. As the institution continues to mature in the AQIP process, it will be important to use a coordinated and systematic review process to identify desired targets then use collected and long-term data to determine if the institution is in fact meeting the desired targets.
- Western identifies numerous processes for the dissemination of data related to its operational effectiveness. Although these processes are clearly articulated, they seem disaggregated to the unit-level rather than a reflection of the processes of the institution as a whole. The institution may realize improve service if there are campus-wide aggregation of processes related to overall operational effectiveness.
- There is an opportunity for the institution to examine data critically, over time, and in comparison to peers as it also takes a critical view of itself (See Critical Characteristic OV7).

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

The AQIP *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* is intended to initiate action for improvement. It is therefore important that the Report produced by the Systems Appraisal Team stimulate review of organizational processes and systems. Though decisions about specific actions are each institution's, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement. At the next Strategy Forum an AQIP institution attends, its peers will examine in detail how it is using the feedback from its Systems Appraisal.

An organization needs to examine its Report strategically to identify those areas that will yield greatest benefit if addressed. Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of the Report may be: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most important aspects of Missouri Western State University, its current dynamics and the forces surrounding it, and its internal momentum and aspirations, at least as team members understood them. This section also demonstrates that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes Missouri Western State University distinctive. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public.

Item Critical Characteristic

OV1a Missouri Western State University is an open admission institution with a statewide mission in applied learning. Western's current offerings include 58 bachelors and six associate degree programs, two undergraduate and four graduate certificate programs, and two Masters of Applied Science and six Masters of Applied Arts.

OV1b Western is a signatory institution to the Missouri General Education Articulation Agreement that allows smooth transfer of the completed general education 42-credit core of classes.

OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.

OV2a The Western Institute offers life-long learning opportunities, continuing professional education opportunities, and self-enrichment courses. Western offers a variety of credit,

- non-credit, and dual credit courses and programs, online and distance education courses, and services for business such as customized training programs.
- OV2b Western has instituted a state-of-the-art Griffon Alert system (\$1.2 million) that has redundant warning and communication systems, electronic locks on all classroom doors, emergency phones in all classrooms, outdoor alarm systems, and outdoor emergency stations.
- OV3 MWSU utilizes data for process improvement which is evidenced through program evaluation, faculty evaluation, student surveys (NSSE/SSI), degree audit and program accreditation.
- OV4 MWSU values its employees as evidenced through educational assistance, comprehensive benefits package, health and wellness programs and soliciting and responding to input through employee focus groups. Western provides a full tuition waiver for employees seeking undergraduate coursework and an 80 percent tuition waiver for eligible employee dependents.
- OV5 MWU uses a continuing Action Project, Communicating Quality started in 2004 to organize its communication with stakeholders. These communications are directed to the four state area surrounding MWU and includes alumni. Every two years the University conducts a Community Impact Survey along with its other strategies to gather data and engage stakeholders.
- OV7 MWSU views itself as a data driven university. As a continuation of a 2007-2009 Action Project – *Using Measurement and Assessment* – WMSU increased its focus on data resources, use of assessment data, and reports. The creation of a matrix of assessment tools allows the College to utilize data to manage efficiencies, improve processes and benchmark with peer institutions.
- OV8 In a system where tuition is linked to the Consumer Price Index, MWSU is demonstrating a strong and necessary commitment to continuous improvement by aligning its strategic planning process with AQIP processes.
- OV9a Western's focus on applied learning encourages student internships with regional employers resulting in meaningful, authentic learning experiences and frequent employment offers prior to graduation. Eighty-nine percent of FY 09-10 graduates

participated in these applied learning experiences. In some cases, partners paid full tuition support for students willing to commit to two years of employment upon graduation.

OV9b Western values strong collaborations and partnerships. Notable efforts include working closely with employers (e.g. providing field experiences, the “Hire a Griffon” effort supporting local student employment) and supporting the statewide P-20 Council (encouraging degree attainment). Other partnerships include collaborations with school districts, community colleges, health care providers, business and industry, and the state.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these “strengths and opportunities” sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing or outstanding opportunity for improvement* (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Helping Students Learn identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty

and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1 Helping Students Learn:

Item Critical Characteristic

OV1a Missouri Western State University is an open admission institution with a statewide mission in applied learning. Western's current offerings include 58 bachelors and six associate degree programs, two undergraduate and four graduate certificate programs, and two Masters of Applied Science and six Masters of Applied Arts.

OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.

OV2a The Western Institute offers life-long learning opportunities, continuing professional education opportunities, and self-enrichment courses. Western offers a variety of credit, non-credit, and dual credit courses and programs, online and distance education courses, and services for business such as customized training programs.

OV3 MWSU utilizes data for process improvement which is evidenced through program evaluation, faculty evaluation, student surveys (NSSE/SSI), degree audit and program accreditation.

OV7 MWSU views itself as a data driven university. As a continuation of a 2007-2009 Action Project – *Using Measurement and Assessment* – WMSU increased its focus on data resources, use of assessment data, and reports. The creation of a matrix of assessment

tools allows the College to utilize data to manage efficiencies, improve processes and benchmark with peer institutions.

OV9a Western's focus on applied learning encourages student internships with regional employers resulting in meaningful, authentic learning experiences and frequent employment offers prior to graduation. Eighty-nine percent of FY 09-10 graduates participated in these applied learning experiences. In some cases, partners paid full tuition support for students willing to commit to two years of employment upon graduation.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1 Helping Students Learn.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1P1	S	Western has identified nine common learning objectives for all students (Figure 1.1). These objectives are linked to the institution's 42 credit hour general education requirement which crosses five categories of content: Basic Skills, Natural Science, Social Science, Humanities and Physical Health (Figure 1.2).
1P2	S	Western's program learning objectives are developed by the faculty based on discipline specific standards and with input from advisory councils. Plans are reviewed at the department, college and university levels.
1P3	S	Western's faculty proposed new programs based on changes in their discipline and/or feedback from employers, advisory councils, students and other faculty members. Western has established a formal process for program approval (Figure 1.3) which requires new programs to be aligned with the university strategic goals.
1P4	S	Western makes extensive use of advisory committees and field experiences in most programs. Students are encouraged to participate in applied learning experiences, such as clinical, internships, student/faculty research, study abroad and service learning. The institution indicated

- that 89 percent of all Western's graduates complete an applied learning experience.
- 1P5 O Western is involved in state-wide efforts for curriculum alignment between secondary and higher education. An opportunity exists to more effectively assure that students have the knowledge and skills required in their collegiate work; results of these efforts have yet to be analyzed.
- 1P6 S Western communicates preparation and learning requirements and helps students select programs of study through the university web link, the MWSU Catalog, advising, career inventory testing, and the UNI 101 course.
- 1P7 S Western students are assisted in program selection through multiple venues: orientation, counseling, enrollment in UNI 101, interest inventories, career fairs and through contact with the Center for Academic Support.
- 1P8 S University policies call for students to complete developmental courses in sequence through continuous enrollment and to complete the general studies courses by the end of 60 credits of study. There are additional processes in place to assist students who are underprepared for college work which include reviewing ACT scores along with high school and college GPA, and providing academic support services and tutoring.
- 1P9a S Western uses the College Student Inventory (CSI) to identify academic preparedness and potential risks. Academic Advising works with faculty through the Early Alert System to address academic issues of individual students.
- 1P9b O The College Student Inventory (CSI) provides an opportunity for the university to encourage more students to participate in the UNI 101 course; the program has potential for additional growth at the institution.
- 1P10 S Western describes various services the institution uses to meet the needs of high risk incoming students; special courses, mentoring, intrusive advising, and meetings with students and parents prior to the start of

classes are among the strategies being employed to assist these students.

- 1P11 S Western has publications and systems in place for defining, documenting and communicating across the institution including: The *Western Catalog*, *View Book*, and *Student Handbook*, course syllabi and administrative and faculty review of program objectives. In addition, each semester students are required to meet with their academic advisors to plan schedules.
- 1P12 O It is unclear how the effectiveness of the delivery systems utilized across the institution (e.g., face-to-face, blended, or the online delivery through WebCT) are assessed. An opportunity exists for the institution to explore the use of distance education technology as a means of outreach to a larger constituency.
- 1P13 S Western uses the following systems to ensure programs are up-to-date and effective: annual unit reports, comprehensive program reviews every five years, professional accrediting agencies and advisory councils.
- 1P14 O Changing or discontinuing programs and courses is determined through annual and five year reviews; however, the portfolio does not present an institutional plan to ensure courses or programs get into the evaluation pipeline.
- 1P15 S Preparation for addressing the learning support needs of Western students and faculty in student learning, development, and assessment processes include: the Center for Academic Success, professional development days, a Sophomore Jump program, Noel-Levitz and faculty surveys.
- 1P16 O Western's curricular and co-curricular goals are driven through implementation of a new framework instituted by the first Vice President for Student Affairs hired in January of 2010. An opportunity exists for adoption and implementation of the "involvement theory" model to assist in aligning co-curricular and curricular objectives over time.

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| 1P17 | S | Western uses a combination of methods to assess student mastery of both program learning objectives and the general education curriculum. All graduating students are required to take the ETS Proficiency Profile as a measure of competency in general education and an exit exam in the discipline of the major. Other academic units use program specific exams, student portfolios or state licensing exams. |
| 1P18 | S | Academic department faculty members develop and maintain assessment plans of student learning. Student learning outcome results are reported annually and exist as part of the more extensive five-year program review. |
| 1R1 | S | Western uses the ETS Proficiency Profile, NSSE, SSSI, ETS Major Field, Licensure Exams, Portfolios and Praxis to measure student learning (Figure 1.5) |
| 1R2 | S | Based on the results of trended data on ETS Proficiency Profiles and NSSE examinations, it appears that Western has been making progress in reducing the number of students deemed “not proficient” in reading, writing, and mathematics over the past four years (Figure 1.6 & 1.7). |
| 1R3 | O | Although Western utilizes numerous tests to assure students are meeting program objectives, student performance on the standardized tests reflects inconsistency in some disciplines over time. Additionally, Western does not provide results for learning other than that which is based on standardized testing. |
| 1R4 | O | Although Western surveys alumni to determine whether students have acquired the knowledge and skills required by stakeholders, it is unclear how many alumni responded or how other stakeholders are able to provide feedback. An opportunity exists to improve the alumni feedback process which would articulate results by program and develop other key measures of success. |
| 1R5 | S | Data presented indicates positive performance results for learning support processes. Results from the 2010 SSI indicate that Western’s |

students are more satisfied than students at other four-year public institutions in the Midwest in 7 of 9 subscales.

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| 1R6 | S | Western continues to compare favorably with its comparative groups for exit exam scores as measured by ETS, Praxis, and other nationally normed major field study tests (Figures 1.16A, 1.16B, & 1.17). In addition, the University's graduation rate is higher than that of the other four-year open enrollment institutions in Missouri. |
| 111 | S | Western shows improvement in retention rates with an increase from 69.9 percent in 2003 to 79.4 percent in 2010 (Figure 1.19). Additionally, developmental math pass rates have increased from 49percent in Spring of 2007 to 85 percent in Fall of 2009 (Figure 1.20). |
| 112 | S | Western uses strategic planning, shared governance and teams to identify which processes and outcomes need to be improved and also provide the continuing accountability requirements to encourage goal attainment. |

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:

Item Critical Characteristic

- OV1a Missouri Western State University is an open admission institution with a statewide mission in applied learning. Western's current offerings include 58 bachelors and six associate degree programs, two undergraduate and four graduate certificate programs, and two Masters of Applied Science and six Masters of Applied Arts.
- OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.
- OV2a The Western Institute offers life-long learning opportunities, continuing professional education opportunities, and self-enrichment courses. Western offers a variety of credit, non-credit, and dual credit courses and programs, online and distance education courses, and services for business such as customized training programs.
- OV2b Western has instituted a state-of-the-art Griffon Alert system (\$1.2 million) that has redundant warning and communication systems, electronic locks on all classroom doors, emergency phones in all classrooms, outdoor alarm systems, and outdoor emergency stations.
- OV3 MWSU utilizes data for process improvement which is evidenced through program evaluation, faculty evaluation, student surveys (NSSE/SSI), degree audit and program accreditation.
- OV5 MWU uses a continuing Action Project, Communicating Quality started in 2004 to organize its communication with stakeholders. These communications are directed to the four state area surrounding MWU and includes alumni. Every two years the University conducts a Community Impact Survey along with its other strategies to gather data and engage stakeholders.
- OV9a Western's focus on applied learning encourages student internships with regional employers resulting in meaningful, authentic learning experiences and frequent

employment offers prior to graduation. Eighty-nine percent of FY 09-10 graduates participated in these applied learning experiences. In some cases, partners paid full tuition support for students willing to commit to two years of employment upon graduation.

OV9b Western values strong collaborations and partnerships. Notable efforts include working closely with employers (e.g. providing field experiences, the “Hire a Griffon” effort supporting local student employment) and supporting the statewide P-20 Council (encouraging degree attainment). Other partnerships include collaborations with school districts, community colleges, health care providers, business and industry, and the state.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2P1	S	Western has identified a variety of non-instructional processes which include athletics, grants and sponsored programs, the Western Institute, the Institute for Industrial and Applied Sciences, the Regional Development Center and alumni services. These key non-instructional processes and activities link closely with Western’s mission as a regional educational leader focused on economic and social needs.
2P2	S	Western utilizes a variety of strategic planning and other formal processes with input from various boards and groups to determine major non-instructional objectives. The stakeholders (including parents, alumni, donors, and grant and business partners) serve on advisory boards that provide input on determining goals and objectives that align to the strategic plan.
2P3	S	Western employs a variety of medium in communicating expectations; these include print, electronic, billboards, websites, annual reports, a weekly e-newsletter and the <i>Western Magazine</i> . Information on Western’s progress is shared through the <i>Annual Update on the Strategic Plan</i> ;

- each unit also prepares an individual update on its activities related to the strategic plan.
- 2P4 O Although Western describes a general process for assessing stakeholder needs, it is unclear if a campus-wide systematic coordinated process tied to the university strategic plan is in place to assess needs of each of the stakeholder groups. Additionally, it is unclear how recommendations are implemented once identified.
- 2P5 O Although Western describes a systematic process for identification of staff needs within the department of athletics, it is unclear that a similar process/approach exists within other areas of the institution. It is also less clear how faculty members are specifically involved in determining needs. Departments are surveyed regarding the needs for development resources but formal faculty groups such as the Faculty Senate were not mentioned.
- 2P6 O Western conducted focus groups for faculty, staff and administration in 2009; however, it is unclear how this information has been used in accomplishing strategic objectives in valuing people. There is an opportunity to involve both the Faculty and Staff Senates in this process.
- 2R1 O While data is collected and reviewed via various departments, it, however, is unclear how data is aggregately reviewed or how the data informs the institution's strategic plan.
- 2R2 S Western has completed a successful Capital Campaign that surpassed its target, has had positive impacts on several measures on the community where it resides, including a \$183.5 million impact on the regional economy, and reports activity in both grants and sponsored programs. There has also been an increase in alumni membership.
- 2R3a S Western received a "Circle of Excellence Award for excellence in fundraising—overall improvement from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. Western is the only open admission institution in Missouri to be placed on the 2009 President's Higher Education Honor Roll by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

- 2R3b S Surveys indicate that Western's alumni outreach efforts, sports records, grants and sponsored program results are higher than other regional open admission institutions. In the most recent NSSE results, Western performed better than other institutions for Active and Collaborative Learning.
- 2R4a S The Western Institute provides training and educational experiences for regional stakeholders in the areas of enrichment, dual credit, and professional coursework. The MWSU Regional Development Center serves regional K-12 school districts. This is evidenced through the Biotechnology Mobile Lab which allows advanced academic opportunities to middle and high school students. In addition, the MWSU Regional Professional Development Center provides professional development and instructional enhancement to public school teachers.
- 2R4b O Western provides examples of successes with external stakeholders, however, it is unclear how the cited institutional efforts with external stakeholders strengthens the university. Additional explanations of how these efforts relate to the university's mission and goals would be helpful.
- 2I1a S Western has seen recent improvements to the Griffon Indoor Sports Complex, the addition to Remington Hall (the campus science and mathematics teaching facility), and is currently renovating Argenstein Hall for more classroom and laboratory space.
- 2I1b O The opening of two large facilities that support non-instructional and instructional objectives were reported as improvements along with the geographic expansion of alumni activities. There is an opportunity to provide data which support improvements in key non-instructional areas such as grants, athletics, community enrichment, economic development, and alumni services.
- 2I2 O A culture of inclusion is reported as helping in the selecting and setting of targets for continued improvement. There, however, is an opportunity to administer and report the results of a climate survey to measure the degree of improvement in Western's culture.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:

Item Critical Characteristic

- OV1a Missouri Western State University is an open admission institution with a statewide mission in applied learning. Western's current offerings include 58 bachelors and six associate degree programs, two undergraduate and four graduate certificate programs, and two Masters of Applied Science and six Masters of Applied Arts.
- OV1b Western is a signatory institution to the Missouri General Education Articulation Agreement that allows smooth transfer of the completed general education 42-credit core of classes.
- OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.

- OV2a The Western Institute offers life-long learning opportunities, continuing professional education opportunities, and self-enrichment courses. Western offers a variety of credit, non-credit, and dual credit courses and programs, online and distance education courses, and services for business such as customized training programs.
- OV3 MWSU utilizes data for process improvement which is evidenced through program evaluation, faculty evaluation, student surveys (NSSE/SSI), degree audit and program accreditation.
- OV5 MWU uses a continuing Action Project, Communicating Quality started in 2004 to organize its communication with stakeholders. These communications are directed to the four state area surrounding MWU and includes alumni. Every two years the University conducts a Community Impact Survey along with its other strategies to gather data and engage stakeholders.
- OV7 MWSU views itself as a data driven university. As a continuation of a 2007-2009 Action Project – *Using Measurement and Assessment* – WMSU increased its focus on data resources, use of assessment data, and reports. The creation of a matrix of assessment tools allows the College to utilize data to manage efficiencies, improve processes and benchmark with peer institutions.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 3 Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1a	S	Western uses a variety of national, formal norm-referenced data gathering tools to identify and analyze student needs. These include the Noel-Levitz SSI and CSI, Educational Benchmarking Institute Resident Assessment, Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange, ETS Proficiency Profiles and Major Field Tests. In addition, every campus unit has an assessment plan using various data collection strategies.
3P1b	O	The portfolio indicates that Information from surveys are “reviewed by faculty, staff, administration, and students and recommendations are

- made to appropriate entities on campus.” It is unclear which entities receive the recommendations and how a course of action is selected regarding the needs identified by the surveys. It is also unclear how unit plans are linked to the institutional strategic planning process.
- 3P2 S As a result of an AQIP Action Project in 2010, Western created a new position—Vice President for Student Affairs and a new model for student services delivery. Subsequently, the Student Affairs Leadership Team has been created and meets weekly to discuss issues and concerns. The Center for Student Engagement (CSE) was created specifically to unify the various student clubs and organizations.
- 3P3a S Western completed its first alumni survey regarding attitudes toward MWSU, pride in their alma mater, recommendation for future students, involvement and attitude toward giving.
- 3P3b O Although Western employees gather information from meetings with stakeholder groups, it is unclear if systematic processes are in place by which to determine if action is warranted. Currently, it appears it is left to each individual or unit to make this assessment.
- 3P4 S Western uses a variety of strategies to build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders. Traditional magazines, e-zines, newsletters, and annual reports are produced by the OPRM, Alumni Office, Athletics Office, the Western Institute, University Advancement, and the Foundation. The institution offers a number of credit and non-credit opportunities for community members; hosts business conferences; and, sponsors musical theater, concerts, art shows, play, and film and guitar festivals.
- 3P5 S Western uses a variety of tools and assessment to measure student and other stakeholder satisfaction (Figure 3.2) in addition to its strategic planning process and market research. Marketing research, selected reports, surveys, and Western’s Strategic Planning process help guide the identification of needs and opportunities for offerings and services.

- 3P6 O While the portfolio indicates that each individual department at Western has their own process for handling complaint information, there does not appear to be any mechanism for collecting and analyzing these complaints at the highest level of the university.
- 3R1 O Western uses an impressive list of instruments to periodically determine the level of satisfaction of students and stakeholders (Figure 3.2). An opportunity exists to use complaint data and other information not found in a survey format.
- 3R2 SS Western uses the Noel-Levitz SSI to measure student satisfaction. Results indicate that Western students are more highly satisfied than students in its regional and national comparison groups. The university is commended for developing an excellent three-day orientation program to assist students in their transition to college.
- 3R3 S Data from Figure 4R1 and data from NSSE (2009) indicate Western students' perception of their relationship with other students, faculty, and administrative personnel compare favorably with data from other institutions.
- 3R4 O Although alumni satisfaction survey results show positive perceptions; there is an opportunity for Western to develop a more comprehensive approach for other stakeholder areas as there are limited data reported.
- 3R5 S Participation in selected Western events has increased over the past few years. Partnerships with other key stakeholders have resulted in new facilities that are useful to all partners.
- 3R6 SS Results from the SSI indicate that student satisfaction at Western is higher when compared to other four-year Midwestern institutions, with strengths in Student Centeredness, Campus Life, Instructional Effectiveness, Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness, Campus Services, Academic Advising Effectiveness, and Campus Climate. Likewise, Western's retention rate for first-year students returning for their second year is higher than the national average for open admissions schools according to data from the ACT.

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| 3I1 | S | Western has improved the orientation advising and course over-ride processes resulting in a higher level of satisfaction. An impressive list of improvements is provided in Figure 3.3. |
| 3I2 | S | Western uses a shared governance model with each group incorporating its own strategic plan to that of the university. These plans are updated on an annual basis. |

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

Valuing People explores your institution's commitment to the development of your employees since the efforts of all of your faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4 Valuing People:

Item Critical Characteristic

OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.

- OV2a The Western Institute offers life-long learning opportunities, continuing professional education opportunities, and self-enrichment courses. Western offers a variety of credit, non-credit, and dual credit courses and programs, online and distance education courses, and services for business such as customized training programs.
- OV4 MWSU values its employees as evidenced through educational assistance, comprehensive benefits package, health and wellness programs and soliciting and responding to input through employee focus groups. Western provides a full tuition waiver for employees seeking undergraduate coursework and an 80 percent tuition waiver for eligible employee dependents.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 4 Valuing People.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4P1	S	Western has a comprehensive position description development process that is regularly updated and maintained by the Human Resources office. This process includes: regular reviews of positions, assessment of positions and new credentials, review of industry standards and market surveys.
4P2	S	Western uses search committees for full-time exempt positions and for some non-exempt positions. These search committees include employees from the hiring units, other units, and student and community members, as appropriate. The University has a comprehensive hiring process which is inclusive of many stakeholder groups.
4P3a	S	Western created a campus-wide Budget Advisory Council (BAC) which maintains communications across the institution relative to challenges and opportunities specific to the state's revenue support. The institution provides various employee incentives, such as, free wellness fair, health screening, employee and dependent tuition reduction and professional opportunities.

- 4P3b O It is unclear how Western recruits or hires employees. While the University articulates several retention efforts and has identified a comprehensive hiring process, an opportunity exists to develop an institution-wide recruitment process and procedures. There is a lack of evidence that a formal or consistent employee orientation or training process has been established to address Western's history, mission, and values.
- 4P4 S Western provides a variety of opportunities for engagement of its faculty and staff. Each new employee is matched with a mentor. All employees receive an appropriate handbook, guide, numerous publications, and web resources for understanding institutional history, mission, and values. In addition, the mission, vision, values, and history are clearly prominent throughout the campus.
- 4P5a S The President's Cabinet reviews each personnel change. In general, when a vacancy is anticipated, the Cabinet-level administrator determines whether the vacancy merits replacement, redefinition, or reallocation.
- 4P5b O Although Western describes a process for filling positions once they become vacant, it is not clear that there is a systematic process in place for identification of successors to key positions. A formal succession planning process may assist the institution in identification of internal personnel and their development plans for growth into key positions.
- 4P6 O Although the institution utilizes cross functional teams, Western recognizes that opportunities exist to address employee productivity and job satisfaction. It is not clear that there is currently a systematic and standard process in place throughout the institution for identification of these opportunities.
- 4P7a S The institution has definitive policies and procedures in place for the campus; adherence to these policies and procedures is monitored through governance processes and annual evaluations.
- 4P7b O Although Western identifies three opportunities for employees and other constituents to report ethical concerns, it is not clear how these concerns

are handled once submitted; beyond a means for entering a complaint, it is not clear what happens once they have submitted or how they are used to inform the institution of changes they may need to make to existing policies.

- 4P8 O Although Western surveys various groups to determine training needs, it is unclear that this is a systematic process (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation). Additionally, it is unclear how often this is accomplished, the depth to which it is conducted, nor the degree to which the survey-feedback results in actual training. This is an opportunity for the university to seek a more comprehensive process for determining staff training needs. It is unclear how Western aligns training with short and long term planning and how training strengthens instructional and non-instructional services.
- 4P9a S Specific budget allocations support professional development requests with funds allocated at the department, college/school, and division levels. Several training and development opportunities are available to all employees and accessed through creative funding streams and by utilizing technology. A wide range of professional development opportunities are available and participation is encouraged for all university employees. Professional organization participation is also encouraged.
- 4P9b S Encouraging employees to further their education, offering Western undergraduate tuition waivers, and allowing employees to schedule coursework both outside of the regular work day and during regular working hours should increase employee satisfaction as well as benefit the institution through staff with higher degree attainment.
- 4P10 S Western employees participate in an annual performance review that includes a process of goal setting and concludes with a performance evaluation within the context of the goals set and met.
- 4P11 O Due to budget constraints, Western has suspended a number of employee recognition awards. In February 2008, the University

- contracted with a compensation consultant to conduct a market salary survey and compensation plan for the staff and administration. While the portfolio indicates that they conducted two salary studies in a five year period, there is no indication of a plan for addressing deficiencies found. An opportunity exists to reinstate these opportunities in the future through diverse funding streams.
- 4P12 O Although Western describes various meetings and associations in which faculty and staff can participate, it is not clear how participation in these meetings serves to actually motivate Western's employees. Opportunity may exist to identify alternative methods of employee motivation.
- 4P13 S The University provides a sense of well being to its community through access to health and wellness activities, an enhanced emergency alert system and a contingency plan to address issues that would be a result of natural disasters to hazardous waste spills.
- 4R1 O Although Western identified examples of instruments used to collect information, the results of that information and the impact the data has on the institution are not clear.
- 4R2 S In 2008, a university-wide employee survey was conducted to determine employee needs and interests resulting in six areas for improvement. Western has an opportunity to track other dimensions of valuing people.
- 4R3 O Western states it encourages all employees to participate in wellness programs with more than 300 having participated in wellness screening; with 522 personnel there may be opportunity for greater engagement in these programs.
- 4R4 S Recent NSSE data indicate that Western students rate the quality of relationships higher or nearly the same to comparable institutions. Western faculty ranked higher than comparison groups in teaching/ research activities, professional activities and believing in student community involvement than that of their peers.

- 411 O Western has an opportunity to provide evidence in the form of a scale or a measure where improvements were made based on specific interventions. Strategies resulting in a process are presented but the impacts of those measures are not shared.
- 412 S Western faculty, staff and administration work collaborative to identify opportunities to maintain quality instruction and student support services in a period of on-going state budget cuts.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Leading And Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5 Leading and Communicating:

Item Critical Characteristic

OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.

OV5 MWU uses a continuing Action Project, Communicating Quality started in 2004 to organize its communication with stakeholders. These communications are directed to the four state area surrounding MWU and includes alumni. Every two years the University conducts a Community Impact Survey along with its other strategies to gather data and engage stakeholders.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5 Leading and Communicating.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5P1	S	Western communicates the missions and vision via the Strategic Plan and the associated annual report card. Through shared governance and leadership groups, the mission and values are reviewed and aligned to unit goals.
5P2a	S	Western aligns mission, vision and values through implementation of the strategic plan, AQIP action projects and shared governance.
5P2b	O	It is not clear how the leaders set directions in alignment with the elements of the Strategic Plan. There is an opportunity to more clearly articulate the relationship of planning efforts to the communication of mission, vision, and goals.
5P3	S	Western uses a variety of feedback mechanisms to determine needs of stakeholder groups. These survey methods include open forums, written surveys, meetings, employer surveys, advisory committee meeting feedback and community impact surveys.
5P4	O	The University maintains a strong focus on student learning. However, the University does not articulate a clear process for determining opportunities in the future. An opportunity exists to explore implementing an environmental scanning process.
5P5	S	Western's shared governance model allows participation of a variety of constituents in decision making. The use of a Budget Advisory Council

- during fiscal difficulties for the institution created a sense of engagement in making the necessary budget reductions.
- 5P6 S Western uses information from a variety of sources to determine the best practices and procedures to accomplish institutional goals and describes processes for gathering and using data and information that support decision making at all levels. The Office of Institutional Research at Western generates, analyzes, and shares relevant information to help meet decision-making needs. When data and analyses are needed for special projects, Western responds by accessing the necessary resources.
- 5P7 S Western communicates the status of the strategic plan through the Strategic Plan Steering Committee meetings, numerous print publications, governance groups, forums, strategic plan web pages, and the *Annual Progress Report on the Strategic Plan*. The various leadership and governance groups meet routinely.
- 5P8 O Although Western has many strategies in place to communicate its mission, vision, and values there seems to be a higher priority placed on what appears to be top down communications rather than the development of a shared vision. Western has an opportunity to improve the communication process.
- 5P9a S Western offers funding for faculty and staff to participate in professional development leadership activities.
- 5P9b O There is an opportunity for the institution to establish a Leadership Institute where participants can self-select or be encouraged through nomination.
- 5P10 O Although Western is proud of the stability provided by recent Presidents and the thoughtful Presidential transitions that have occurred, there is an opportunity for the institution to systematically promote job enrichment and cross-training to reduce the vulnerabilities to unexpected personnel needs at other levels of the organization.

- 5R1 O Although Western describes several processes that are used to collect data including surveys and focus groups, the portfolio does not provide evidence of these results.
- 5R2 OO While Western collects data from a number of surveys (e.g., Personal Impact Survey, annual marketing survey, Valuing People focus groups, etc.), the quantitative results were not shared in the portfolio; there is no indication that the results were analyzed for changes over time.
- 5R3 O While Western has indicated higher student satisfaction compared to national norms in a few areas, no quantitative results were shared in the portfolio and there is no indication that the results were analyzed for changes over time.
- 5I1a S Western has made a number of improvements in the area of communication - most of these are in the area of online strategies and training in technology. The institution has also made improvements in the area of leadership including: enhancing the role of the Enrollment Development Team; instituting the Budget Advisory Council; redesigning the structure of Student Affairs; and, full implementation of the Safety Plan.
- 5I1b O It would be helpful if there were a measure that tracked the perception of leadership and communication effectiveness so improvements could be identified more clearly.
- 5I2 S Western has made a concerted effort to work across units in a team approach. It has developed an AQIP Action Project *Money Matters for Life* to increase the number of students eligible for aid, reduce the number of students with unnecessary debt, and improve the Western default rate.

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

Supporting Institutional Operations addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's

processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

Item Critical Characteristic

- OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.
- OV2a The Western Institute offers life-long learning opportunities, continuing professional education opportunities, and self-enrichment courses. Western offers a variety of credit, non-credit, and dual credit courses and programs, online and distance education courses, and services for business such as customized training programs.
- OV2b Western has instituted a state-of-the-art Griffon Alert system (\$1.2 million) that has redundant warning and communication systems, electronic locks on all classroom doors, emergency phones in all classrooms, outdoor alarm systems, and outdoor emergency stations.
- OV7 MWSU views itself as a data driven university. As a continuation of a 2007-2009 Action Project – *Using Measurement and Assessment* – WMSU increased its focus on data resources, use of assessment data, and reports. The creation of a matrix of assessment tools allows the College to utilize data to manage efficiencies, improve processes and benchmark with peer institutions.

OV8 In a system where tuition is linked to the Consumer Price Index, MWSU is demonstrating a strong and necessary commitment to continuous improvement by aligning its strategic planning process with AQIP processes.

OV9a Western's focus on applied learning encourages student internships with regional employers resulting in meaningful, authentic learning experiences and frequent employment offers prior to graduation. Eighty-nine percent of FY 09-10 graduates participated in these applied learning experiences. In some cases, partners paid full tuition support for students willing to commit to two years of employment upon graduation.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6P1	S	Westerns student support services are informed via data analyzed from feedback from Student Governance Associations, the Western Board of Governors, Budget Advisory Council, numerous national and internal surveys and assessments, faculty and staff evaluation, facilities usage data, as well as departmental specific data.
6P2	S	Critical administrative support service needs of faculty, staff, administrators and other stakeholders are identified through the institution's organizational structure, shared governance, strategic planning, surveys of faculty and staff, program reviews, and accreditation reports.
6P3a	S	Emergency notifications are provided through a comprehensive, redundant, multimedia system collectively called the Griffon Alert. The University Police Department also maintains a web site for two-way communications that contributes to the safety and security of students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the campus.

- 6P3b O An opportunity exists for a behavioral intervention team or any other process for proactively identifying issues related to campus physical safety and security.
- 6P4 O The institution provides a process, key procedures, and key individuals and groups across the campus to manage the student and administrative support services. An opportunity exists to identify and define those processes that directly impact these service operations.
- 6P5 O Although Western's web-site has links to many data sources it is not clear that a standard and systematic process is in place for the documentation of support services designed to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation, and empowerment. While Western has web pages with FAQs, there was no evidence in the portfolio to show that its support processes encourage knowledge sharing, innovation or empowerment.
- 6R1a S Western has identified measures for student and administrative support services for various areas within the institution (Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2).
- 6R1b O Although Western identifies numerous measures of student support services processes, it is unclear whether the institution has set target benchmark levels of performance for these measures.
- 6R2 O Western has seen a number of improving trends for student support service results (Figure 6.3); these include: gross application increases, student enrollment, and credit hour increases as well as an increase in graduate enrollment. Although Western provides a large group of longitudinal numbers on the performance measures, it is unclear how these numbers support services to students and other stakeholders. The institution has not provided any analysis of the data presented.
- 6R3 S Western clearly documents results of numerous support services projects for students and the campus including major renovation of space, new construction, IT upgrades to Banner and Oracle, and improved not-for-credit offerings.

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| 6R4 | O | The institution identifies and responds to changing student needs through feedback received from numerous areas. There is an opportunity for the institution to provide results regarding how the university uses information and results to improve services. The university provides selected examples; however, it is unclear how the institution identifies and responds to improve services. |
| 6R5 | S | Results from the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) indicate that Western compares favorably to other Midwestern 4-year public institutions and is one of 19 schools selected to receive the “Circle of Excellence Award” for excellence in fundraising – overall improvement. |
| 6I1a | S | Through its AQIP Action Project—Expansion of Available Courses Offered by Distance Learning Technologies, Western provides support for faculty to develop online courses and greater use of online support services. Other improvement examples include: The University police department has partnered with the St. Joseph Police Department using mobile data software; AQIP Action Project; and systematic and comprehensive processes and results support institutional operations. |
| 6I1b | S | Western now uses an enterprise-wide resource planning system which fully integrates the systems of Admissions, Registration, Financial Aid, Student Accounts, Financial Administration, and Human Resources. |
| 6I2 | O | The expansion of the Enrollment Development Team (2007) has resulted in that team being a key component of ensuring a transparent environment for decision making and information sharing. There is an opportunity for the institution to broaden its improvement processes beyond the Enrollment Development Team. |

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at

the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7 Measuring Effectiveness:

Item Critical Characteristic

- OV1a Missouri Western State University is an open admission institution with a statewide mission in applied learning. Western's current offerings include 58 bachelors and six associate degree programs, two undergraduate and four graduate certificate programs, and two Masters of Applied Science and six Masters of Applied Arts.
- OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.
- OV3 MWSU utilizes data for process improvement which is evidenced through program evaluation, faculty evaluation, student surveys (NSSE/SSI), degree audit and program accreditation.
- OV7 MWSU views itself as a data driven university. As a continuation of a 2007-2009 Action Project – *Using Measurement and Assessment* – WMSU increased its focus on data resources, use of assessment data, and reports. The creation of a matrix of assessment tools allows the College to utilize data to manage efficiencies, improve processes and benchmark with peer institutions.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 7 Measuring Effectiveness.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
7P1	S	MWSU has intentionally focused its attention on accountability through an effective Strategic Planning Process, the AQIP Action Project – <i>Using and Measuring Effectiveness (2007-2009)</i> , creating an Institutional Research position and administering several national, state and local assessment instruments.
7P2	S	Western has outlined how planning and improvement efforts are supported by data reviewed on a regular basis from the President's Cabinet, various committees, and advisory councils.
7P3	O	Western's Strategic Plan, the AQIP Action Project Using Measurement and Assessment, and annual unit and employee reporting processes ask units to identify data and performance needs. Although the institution makes numerous determinations of data needs at the unit level, it is unclear from the portfolio how these unit data needs are linked to institutional processes.
7P4a	S	Western analyzes and shares data and information on overall performance through formal and informal processes including reports for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the Higher Learning Commission (Annual Institutional Data Update), the Missouri Department of Higher Education, legislative requests, monthly Board of Governors' meetings, annual reports on the strategic plan, department/unit annual reports and five-year reviews.
7P4b	O	In 2005, the College completed a course review process aligning with six applied learning categories. An opportunity exists to review this process.
7P5	S	Comparative results from the NSSE, the SSI, and the ETS Proficiency Profile are examples of Western's use of comparative data. Western uses both comparative data for other Missouri state-supported open admission

and regional institutions, as well as national peers and results from the NSSE, SSI and ETS.

- 7P6 O While MWSU mentions that departments and units are required to use a report template that requires data and information be aligned with institutional goals and mission, it does not describe the process used to review those templates at the top level of the institution.
- 7P7 S Western assures the timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and security of information systems and related processes through the use of a Technology Management Team composed of personnel from various departments throughout the institution. The team has been responsible for a number of implementations and upgrades and provides guidance and oversight of security and accuracy across the campus.
- 7R1 O Although MWSU uses a number of measures to assure unit effectiveness and these measures relate to the core priorities for the institution, it is unclear how these unit-based measures link to overall effectiveness and how best practices are identified.
- 7R2 S Western provided several concrete examples of university-wide evidence of how it measures effectiveness. Western's system of measuring effectiveness and institutional data storage enables faculty, staff and administration to respond to internal and external data request.
- 7R3 O MWSU states that they compare themselves to public Missouri institutions, it is not clear how frequently these analyses are conducted nor the types of comparative measures that are being monitored.
- 7I1 S Through an AQIP Action Project WMSU has been able to focus their assessment priorities and develop a more comprehensive approach to the type of assessments conducted. Western continues to use its Action Projects as a strategy to improve institutional effectiveness. In addition the university cites its efforts around improvement of its ERP as a example of improvements in assessing effectiveness.

- 712 O The Western infrastructure is one of interdivisional teams that routinely collect, manage, analyze, and use data to meet institutional and stakeholder needs. There is an opportunity for the University to share examples of how it meets these needs. Although the portfolio states that Western employees, Board of Governors, alumni and community work together as a “family,” it is unclear how this is actually works, or is accomplished.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Planning Continuous Improvement examines your institution’s planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution’s processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement:

Item Critical Characteristic

- OV1b Western is a signatory institution to the Missouri General Education Articulation Agreement that allows smooth transfer of the completed general education 42-credit core of classes.
- OV2b Western has instituted a state-of-the-art Griffon Alert system (\$1.2 million) that has redundant warning and communication systems, electronic locks on all classroom doors, emergency phones in all classrooms, outdoor alarm systems, and outdoor emergency stations.
- OV3 MWSU utilizes data for process improvement which is evidenced through program evaluation, faculty evaluation, student surveys (NSSE/SSI), degree audit and program accreditation.

- OV4 MWSU values its employees as evidenced through educational assistance, comprehensive benefits package, health and wellness programs and soliciting and responding to input through employee focus groups. Western provides a full tuition waiver for employees seeking undergraduate coursework and an 80 percent tuition waiver for eligible employee dependents.
- OV5 MWU uses a continuing Action Project, Communicating Quality started in 2004 to organize its communication with stakeholders. These communications are directed to the four state area surrounding MWU and includes alumni. Every two years the University conducts a Community Impact Survey along with its other strategies to gather data and engage stakeholders.
- OV7 MWSU views itself as a data driven university. As a continuation of a 2007-2009 Action Project – *Using Measurement and Assessment* – WMSU increased its focus on data resources, use of assessment data, and reports. The creation of a matrix of assessment tools allows the College to utilize data to manage efficiencies, improve processes and benchmark with peer institutions.
- OV8 In a system where tuition is linked to the Consumer Price Index, MWSU is demonstrating a strong and necessary commitment to continuous improvement by aligning its strategic planning process with AQIP processes.
- OV9a Western's focus on applied learning encourages student internships with regional employers resulting in meaningful, authentic learning experiences and frequent employment offers prior to graduation. Eighty-nine percent of FY 09-10 graduates participated in these applied learning experiences. In some cases, partners paid full tuition support for students willing to commit to two years of employment upon graduation

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
8P1	S	Western's vision, mission and values guide the strategic planning process and it is inclusive of the college community. The strategic planning

		committee meets quarterly to monitor the progress. AQIP Action Projects are designed to assure continuous quality improvement and are linked back to the strategic plan
8P2a	S	Short and long term strategies are developed by individual units and teams with oversight of the President's Cabinet.
8P2b	O	It is unclear if a process is in place that would ensure strategies and recommendations made by one department do not adversely impact another department or duplicative efforts.
8P3	S	The University identifies seven action areas as part of the strategic plan; each area had identified short and long term goals, objectives and action plans.
8P4	S	Western coordinates and aligns institutional strategies and action plans with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee; the committee coordinates all planning processes and engages internal and external stakeholders.
8P5	O	There is an opportunity for the University to systematically examine peer institutions and other entities to set measures and performance targets.
8P6	S	Western designates funds each year to the Strategic Plan Implementation Fund to assist in promoting the plans goals and objectives.
8P7	S	Western employs a full time risk manager, invested in the Griffon Alert System and has a fully staffed campus police department that collaborates with the city police force.
8P8	O	While Western indicates they do value people and support staff through tuition waivers and mentoring programs, the institution did not specifically address the issue of how it develops and nurtures employee capabilities to meet the changing requirements demanded by its organizational strategies and action plans.
8R1	O	Although Western reports on a number of its actions, it is unclear whether there are benchmarks around the effectiveness of the planning process overall.

- 8R2 S Western’s Annual Report on the Strategic Plan indicates the accomplishments of specific objectives for each goal. AQIP Action Projects focus on specific performance results.
- 8R3 O It is unclear, from the portfolio, how Western develops its performance strategies and action plans. Although there are two identified areas that will need institutional attention in the future, they do not appear to be part of any planning process.
- 8R4 O While the Institution benchmarks with peer institutions through several surveys and databases, it is unclear how this data informs the planning process.
- 8R5 O An opportunity exists for Western to develop a systematic process for planning continuous improvement across the institution.
- 8I1 S Western identifies several recent improvements in the seven strategic plan opportunity areas.
- 8I2 S Despite economic challenges, Western continues to ensure there is funding specific to their strategic planning and AQIP Action Projects.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution’s relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution’s accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Missouri Western State University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9 Building Collaborative Relationships:

Item Critical Characteristic

- OV1c Western admits a large number of first generation college attendees and has steadily and consistently raised the average ACT score of incoming students. Western offers a number of services to support students; these include: Griffon Edge, a three day orientation experience that focuses on readiness for academic work; an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to seek assistance for students not attending or not finding success within a course; the Sophomore Jump, a series of activities and social programs targeting sophomore student success and retention to the junior year; and offers and tracks student success from applied learning experiences in their coursework.
- OV4 MWSU values its employees as evidenced through educational assistance, comprehensive benefits package, health and wellness programs and soliciting and responding to input through employee focus groups. Western provides a full tuition waiver for employees seeking undergraduate coursework and an 80 percent tuition waiver for eligible employee dependents.
- OV5 MWU uses a continuing Action Project, Communicating Quality started in 2004 to organize its communication with stakeholders. These communications are directed to the four state area surrounding MWU and includes alumni. Every two years the University conducts a Community Impact Survey along with its other strategies to gather data and engage stakeholders.
- OV8 In a system where tuition is linked to the Consumer Price Index, MWSU is demonstrating a strong and necessary commitment to continuous improvement by aligning its strategic planning process with AQIP processes.
- OV9a Western's focus on applied learning encourages student internships with regional employers resulting in meaningful, authentic learning experiences and frequent employment offers prior to graduation. Eighty-nine percent of FY 09-10 graduates participated in these applied learning experiences. In some cases, partners paid full tuition support for students willing to commit to two years of employment upon graduation.
- OV9b Western values strong collaborations and partnerships. Notable efforts include working closely with employers (e.g. providing field experiences, the "Hire a Griffon" effort supporting local student employment) and supporting the statewide P-20 Council

(encouraging degree attainment). Other partnerships include collaborations with school districts, community colleges, health care providers, business and industry, and the state.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Missouri Western State University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9 Building Collaborative Relationships.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9P1	S	Western has been successful in forging strong relationships with K-12 partners, community colleges and four-year public and private universities. This is evident by increased enrollments and 2+2/2+3 agreements.
9P2	S	Western prioritizes actions based on the level of need, availability of resources and alignment to the vision and mission. To identify area needs, Western partners with various educational organizations, workforce and economic development boards and regional businesses.
9P3	S	Western has built strong relationships with on campus food service and bookstore vendors.
9P4	S	The Purchasing Office keeps a record of all bids and assures that the institution selects the most cost effective and appropriate bid for materials and services.
9P5	S	The prioritization of relationships is based on the needs of the region, the fit with western's strategic initiatives and the availability of resources.
9P6	-	No comment.
9P7	S	Western gathers information from various stakeholders across the institution which provides cooperation, communication and positive support for actions taken.
9R1	S	Western collects and analyzes a number of measures focused on collaborative relationships.

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| 9R2 | S | Western has identified a number of results in building relationships with feeder organizations, receiving organizations, business, the general community and educational associations. |
| 9R3 | O | Western has an opportunity to compare itself with other universities in building collaborative relationships. |
| 9I1 | S | Western created a new integrated database that tracks partnerships with businesses, workforce development and applied internships. The institution has also advanced its distance education programming and started a new engineering focus to support students. |
| 9I2 | O | Although Western identifies five strategic goals in building collaborative relationships, the results and progress towards reaching these goals were not addressed. |