Appendix B -
Index to the Location of Evidence Relating to the Commission’s Criteria for Accreditation
Found in Missouri Western State University’s AQIP Systems Portfolio

Criterion One – Mission and Integrity. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Core Component 1a. The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

- Building the New American Regional University – Western’s five year strategic plan includes institutional priorities and statements of mission, vision, values, and goals that articulate Western’s commitments (Overview, 5P1, 5P2, 8P1, and 9P5).
- Western’s vision, mission, and values include a strong commitment to setting the standard for excellence in applied learning, student development, and community involvement (Overview, 3P1, 3P2, 3P4, 3I1, 4I2, 5P8, 9R2, and 9I1).
- Western’s mission emphasizes helping students achieve excellence in the classroom and beyond, as they prepare to be leaders in their work and in their communities (Overview, 1P4, 1R3).
- Western regularly evaluates and, when appropriate, revises its mission, vision, and values through its strategic planning process. The highly participative planning process involves students, faculty, staff, administrators, the Board of Governors, and regional stakeholders (Overview, 8P1, 8P2, 8P3, 8P4, 8P5, 8R1, 8R2, and 8R3).
- Western makes its Strategic Plan available to the public and internally through a web version and hard copy distributed to key stakeholders and to all Western employee and units within the institution (Overview, 4P4, 5P2, and 8P4).

Core Component 1b. In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

- Western’s values affirm the common purpose of serving people, commitment to quality, enthusiasm about learning, respect for diversity and the best in human potential, the free exchange of ideas, and a global perspective (Overview, 2P1, 3I1, 4P4, and 8P1).
- Western encourages students to reflect on the value of individual and organizational integrity, to develop personal and professional respect for others, to foster international/intercultural sensitivity, and to promote personal and social responsibility (1P8, 1P10, 3P2, 3I1).
- Western honors the dignity and worth of individuals by its commitment to shared governance, participatory strategic planning, open communication, teamwork, and consensus decision-making (Overview, 1P6, 2P6, 3P4, 4P12, and 8P4).

Core Component 1c. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

- The Board of Governors, students, staff, faculty, and administration understand and support Western’s mission (O8, 5P8, 8P1, 8P4, and 8R2).
- Western’s strategic planning process drives quality improvement (Overview, 2P1, 7P1, 7P2, 8P1, and 8R2).
- All units at Western provide annual reports that document progress toward institutional strategic goals and unit specific priorities (Overview, 4P10, 5P1, and 8P1).
- All units at Western have five-year plans aligned with the strategic priorities of the institution (Overview, 8R1).

Core Component 1d. The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

- Western’s Board of Governors actively participated in helping Western to shape its vision, mission, values, and strategic initiatives.
- Western uses well-defined administrative and governance structures, processes, and activities to distribute responsibilities for accomplishing its mission (O5, Figure O.4, Figure O.5, and 8P1).
- Faculty contributes directly to setting and achieving goals in the areas of student learning, curriculum coherence, and academic integrity (1P1, 1P2, 1P5, 1P9, and 1P12).
- Western engages in a continuous improvement cycle guided by its five-year strategic plan, annual progress reports, evaluation, improvement targets, and its vision.
Core Component 1e. The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

- Western identifies itself through its mission and adheres to its focus on students as individuals and members of society, offering them the opportunity to achieve excellence in the classroom and beyond, and helping them to become leaders in the community. A statewide mission in applied learning guides the development of programs and the way Western structures learning activities and processes (Overview, 1P4, 1P5, 3P2, and 3P4).

- Western recognizes and fulfills its responsibilities as a state-supported, open access public institution with a statewide mission in applied learning, and takes into account the consequences of its action upon the communities to which it belongs, and upon the higher education system (Overview, Figure O.1, 2P1, 9P1, and 9R2).

- Accrediting bodies ensure sustained excellence, integrity, and accountability, assessment, improvement, and results in programs at Western (Figure 8R2).

- Western takes into account the requirements and expectations of both its internal and external stakeholders and treats them with equity and respect (3P1, 3P2, 3P3, 3R4, and 3R5).

- Western has established policies that guide the institution’s ethical and fair labor standards (4P2, 4P3).

- Western has policies and processes for the resolution of appeals, grievances, and complaints (4P7, 4P10).

Criterion Two – Preparing for the Future. The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill the mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Core Component 2a. The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

- Western’s planning system takes into account institutional capacity with respect to people, operations, data requirements, and partnerships (1P5, 3P3, 4P4, 4P11, 9P1, 9P2, and 9P3).

- Western plans into the future, taking into account changing conditions and how these changes impact students and other stakeholders, operations, and performance (3P1, 3P2, 3P3, 4P1, 4P12, 6I1, 7I1, and 8P1).

- Western has created a structure and authority for decision making that is participatory and results-oriented (Figure O.4, 1P3, 2P2, 4P6, 5P7, 5P9, 6P4, 7P2, 8P1, and 8P4).

- Western’s planning evidences attention to changing societal, economic, and technological trends (O1, 1P5, 1P7, 1P8, 3P3, 8P2, 9P1, and 9P2).

Core Component 2b. The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

- Western’s resources support its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality. The level of state funding presents challenges requiring reallocation of resources internally (O4, O5, 3P2, 4P5, 4P11, and 5P5).

- Priorities articulated in Western’s Strategic Plan are particularly important in shaping the decisions of those in key administrative positions (Overview, 2P2, 6P4, 7P2, and 8P1)

- Western understands the critical importance of its human resources and provides training and development for all its employees (4P3, 4P6, 4P8, 4P9, and 4P11).

- Western intentionally sets and meets its strategic planning goals (8P1, 8P2, 8P3, 8P4, 8R1, and 8R2).

- Western has demonstrated flexibility in planning, sustaining quality, and growth during reduced state funding (O4, O5, 5P5, and 8P6).

Core Component 2c. The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

- Western’s processes for documenting improvement provides reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness across the seven opportunity areas of strategic planning and the nine AQIP categories (Figure O.2, 8P1, 8P2, 8P3, 8P4, 8R1, 8R2, 8R3, and 8R5).

- Annual unit reports on planning goals aligned with institutional planning goals provide evidence of Western’s dedication to continuous improvement and to achieving results (7P1, 7P2, 7P4, 7P5, and 7P6).

- Western is improving its systems for collecting, analyzing, and using data to support decision-making (O6, 3P1, 4P6, 6P2, 6P4, Figure 7.1, 7R2, 7I1, and 7I2).

- Western’s AQIP Systems Portfolio indicates Western uses data and feedback loops to set targets
for improvement across its systems (1I1, 1I2, 2I1, 2I2, 3I1, 3I2, 4I1, 4I2, 5I1, 5I2, 6I1, 6I2, 7I1, 7I2, 8I1, 8I2, 9I1, and 9I2).

Core Component 2d. All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

- Western engages in broad-based systemic planning that involves faculty, staff, administration, and community groups in initiating and implementing improvements that advance Western’s mission, values, and goals (Overview, 1P3, 2P1, 3P1, 4P1, 5P1, 6P1, 7P1, 8P1, 8P3, 8P4, and 8P5).

Criterion Three – Student Learning and Effective Teaching. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Core Component 3a. The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

- Western identifies nine common objectives for all students in general education and a general studies core of courses in five categories. The General Studies Committee fully reviews the general studies curriculum, philosophy, and common learning objectives every three years. The faculty develops and articulates course learning goals and program objectives, establishing and evaluating the effectiveness and currency of the curriculum at the course and program level. Academic departments complete annual reports on the effectiveness of each academic program and complete comprehensive program reviews every five years. New programs must be reviewed by the Missouri Department of Higher Education and approved by the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education (O1, 1P1, 1P2, 1P3, 1P14, and 7P1).

- Western has a comprehensive assessment system that provides institutional, program, and individual course level data on student learning and program effectiveness. Western designs its assessment system to provide data to improve instruction and student learning (7P1, 7P2, 7P3, 7P4, 7P5, 7R2, 7I1, and 7I2).

- In accordance with national program content standards, faculty determines student learning outcomes and whether outcomes are achieved (1P1, 1P2, 1P11, 1P12, and 1P13).

- Measures of student performance include GPA, general education skills assessment, senior portfolios, capstone courses, C-Base teacher admission and PRAXIS Teacher Education Examinations, acceptance rates for graduate and professional schools, the National Survey of Student Engagement, applied learning experiences, services provided by the Center for Academic Support and the pass rates on national licensure exams (e.g., nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant) (1P11, 1P17, 1R1, 1R2, 1R3, 1R4, and 1R5).

Core Component 3b. The organization values and supports effective teaching.

- Faculty determines curricula, and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council, through the Faculty Senate, recommends new and revised curriculum. Ninety-one percent of all full-time, tenure track faculty have terminal degrees in their fields (1P1, 1P3).

- Western is committed to providing faculty opportunities for professional development. Faculty members receive support to travel to conferences related to research and pedagogy (4P9).

- Western trains faculty in the use of instructional technology and software, providing various methodologies, including teleconferences, video-conferencing, web technology, and external expertise (1P3, 1P12, 4P9, and 4P12).

- Western has organized several teams (e.g., Enrollment Development Team, Student Affairs leadership Team) to address quality improvements in the student learning environment (1P9, 1P10, 1P11, 1P13, 1P15, 1P16, and 3P1).

- Western evaluates teaching and recognizes effective teaching. The quality of faculty teaching, service, and scholarship are evaluated annually, a process that begins with goal setting and concludes with a performance evaluation within the context of the goals set, including self-evaluation, peer and chair evaluation, and review by the appropriate deans and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (1P12, 4P10).

- Western annually recognizes and rewards excellence in teaching through sabbaticals, the Board of Governors Distinguished Professor Award, the Excellence in Teaching and the Presidential Citation awards as well as the Dr. James V. Mehl Outstanding Faculty Scholarship award and the Jesse Lee Myers Excellence in Teaching awards (1P11, 4P11, 4P12).

Core Component 3c. The organization creates effective learning environments.

- Western sustains the learning environment through technology and faculty expertise. Faculty stays current in fields of expertise and contributes to their professions (1P3, 1P4, 2P5, and 4P9).
• Helping Students Learn (Western’s Strategic Plan Opportunity Area One) describes many of the key processes involved with helping students learn, including establishing common learning objectives; identifying key instructional programs, delivery methods, and technology use; preparing students to live in a diverse world; promoting a climate of intellectual freedom, inquiry, reflection, and diversity; designing new courses and programs; determining student preparation and helping students select programs; and aligning co-curricular and curricular learning activities (Overview, Strategic Plan Executive Summary - Appendix).

Core Component 3d. The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

• Support areas function to reinforce all processes associated with student learning. Western staff support units appropriately and assesses the effectiveness of their services (3P1, 3P2, 6P2, 6P4, 6P5, 7P2, 7P3).

• Western’s budget is primarily focused on direct support for students and student instruction. Through strategic planning, Western continues to improve its support processes for teaching and learning (1P3, 1P8, 1P9, 1P10, 1P12, 1P13, 1P15, and 1P16).

• The use of technology is critical to teaching, learning, and support services. All classrooms at Western are technologically “smart classrooms” that include computers, Ethernet connections, video/data projectors, document cameras, and diagonal video format screens. Western replaced the previous administrative and software systems with an integrated, technologically current, web-based system that empowers users with access to accurate, current information. This project supports all institutional operations. All residence halls and common areas and most offices have wireless access. Western has moved quickly to support online courses development (O6, 1P12, 6P4, 6R3, 6R4, 6R5 and 6I1).

Criterion Four – Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge. The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Core Component 4a. The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff that it values a life of learning.

• Western expects employees and students to be leaders in their work and communities. The institutional values of Western are: service, quality, enthusiasm, freedom, respect, and courage. These core values shape day-to-day operations and contribute to a distinctive Western culture (Overview – Figure O.1, 1I2, 2I2. 3I2, 4I2, 5P2, 5I2, 6I2, 7I2, 8I2, and 9I2).

• Western maintains a climate of academic freedom, inquiry, and respect for diverse opinions for students, employees, and stakeholders through courses and degree programs offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Professional Studies, and the Craig School of Business, as well as through specific activities, events, and services (O1, O2, O9, 1P16, 2P1, 2P2, 3P2, and 9P1).

• Western offers life-long learning opportunities continuing professional education opportunities, and self-enrichment courses through the Western Institute, as well as, pre-professional programs through the colleges and school. (2P1, 2P2, 9R2).

• Western uses a consensus decision process with representation from a cross section of campus constituents involved in committees and projects. Western’s three governance groups of faculty, staff, and students provide input into institutional decision making (Figure O.4, 3P1, 4P6, 4P12, 5P1, 5P5, 8P2, and 9P7).

• Western partners with regional, national, and international organizations to develop the workforce and to provide service opportunities and programs that enhance the lives of people of the community (Overview, 9P1, 9P2, 9P3, 9P5, 9R1, and 9R2).

Core Component 4b. The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

• Western has an established set of nine common learning objectives for general education aligned with Missouri’s statewide general education policy for signatories, including all public universities. The philosophy of general education in Missouri includes enabling students to acquire the academic skills and knowledge necessary for understanding, communicating, and performing in a diverse and complex world. The objectives include understanding and appreciating moral values and ethical choices as well as understanding other cultures and times (Overview, 1P1, 2P1).

• The General Studies Committee reviews the general studies curriculum, philosophy, and common learning objectives every three years (1P1).

• Western has a statewide mission in applied learning, and all students are encouraged to complete at least
one applied learning experience by graduation. (Overview, 1P4, 2R2).

- Service, quality, freedom, enthusiasm, respect, and courage are values that create the environment in which faculty, staff, and administrators at Western organize their work to strengthen the institution’s focus on student learning (Overview, 2R4).

- The Western Institute provides educational and research outreach, including continuing and distance education, workforce development, extended campus programs, conferences, applied research centers, and special programs such as the Biotechnology Mobile Laboratory (O2, 2P1, 2R2, and 2R4).

**Core Component 4c.** The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

- Faculty develops and articulates course learning goals and program objectives, establishing and evaluating the effectiveness and currency of the curriculum at the course and program level. Academic programs are reviewed at least every five years. All new programs must be approved through the Department of Higher Education and the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. Western uses external reviewers who participate in the curricular review process and provide evaluations of the curriculum that include comments related to comparisons with national trends and the currency of the course offering (O1, 1P1, 1P2, 1P3, Figure 1.3, and 1P14).

- Western helps prepare students to live in a diverse world through the Liberal Arts and Sciences focus areas in computer literacy, international/intercultural programs, and ethics. Students gain global exposure through travel/study programs. Western’s Center for Multicultural Education challenges students to explore cultural differences. Students gain experience through their participation in applied learning activities that prepare them to live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. The Convocation on Critical Issues series provides a forum for current and compelling issues to be discussed and explored by all stakeholders (3P3, 3P4, 9P7).

- Students are encouraged to complete an applied learning experience such as an internship, practicum, or faculty/student research (Overview, 1P4).

**Core Component 4d.** The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

- The Division of Student Affairs provide services and programs that systematically impact most students and help them become active and engaged citizens both on campus and in the greater community. Western intentionally aligns curricular and co-curricular learning objectives. Learning communities emphasize leadership and citizenship (1P16, 3P2).

- Western’s Policy Guide sets out explicit policies and procedures to ensure ethical conduct in its research and instructional activities. The Student Handbook describes expected student behavior (1P11, 4P7).

- Western’s mission focuses on students as individuals and as members of society, offering students at all stages of life the opportunity to excel in the classroom and beyond, as they prepare to be leaders in their work and in their communities. A leader itself, Western is committed to the educational, economic, cultural, and social development of the people and the region it serves (Overview, 4P4, 8P1, 9P1, 9P2, 9R1, 9R2, and 9I1).

- Western is committed to providing opportunities for professional development, including sabbaticals, attendance at workshops, and at conferences (4P8, 4P9).

**Criterion Five – Engagement and Service.** As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

**Core Component 5a.** The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

- Everything Western does is shaped by its mission and its capacity to support the commitments of that mission. The institution identifies and implements AQIP Action Projects from its strategic priorities. Western realizes that accomplishing its vision, mission, and purpose depends completely upon the people of the institution. Leadership sets directions through strategic planning that are conducive to high performance, individual development, and innovation (Overview, 2P1, Category 8).

- Western uses extensive survey opportunities to gather feedback from constituents about their changing needs. Advisory councils help with employment issues and to identify the outcomes required to increase area businesses’ productivity. Western relies on several stakeholder segments to provide input regarding community
and regional needs, internships and service opportunities, and needs within the job market (5P3, 5P6, 6P1, 6P2, 9P3, 9P7, and 9R2).

• Community partnerships offer Western the opportunity to learn and to lead while contributing to the greater community. Western responds to community-identified needs, opportunities, and goals through actions that are appropriate to the mission and strength of the institution (Category 9).

Core Component 5b. The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

• Western develops collaborative relationships with many organizations, agencies, businesses, and community groups in order to accomplish its mission. Western integrates its goals with the community and regional goals, and works with private and public agencies to enhance the lives of people in the region. Western envisions itself as setting the standard for community leadership (Overview, O9, 2P1, 9P1, 9P2, 9P7, Figure 9.2)

• Western’s planning processes focus on the critical areas of student engagement, applied learning, communicating quality, information technology, planning and budgeting, facilities and grounds, and community service, community partnerships, and workforce development. Western publishes and distributes widely its strategic plan Building the New American Regional University and its annual report cards on plan implementation progress (Category 8).

Core Component 5c. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

• Western participates in partnerships focused on articulation, public education, business, higher education, government, accreditation, community, consortia, and national entities. Accreditation partners, for example, include the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the American Chemical Society, the American Health Information Management Association, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Council on Social Work Education, the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science, the National Association of Schools of Music, and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Western has been accredited by the North Central Association since 1919 (O1, Figure 8R2, 9P1, Figure 9.1)

• Missouri’s two-and four-year public institutions share a general studies structure of 42 credit hours for transfer purposes. The Missouri Department of Higher Education oversees policy and best practices in transfer (Overview, 1P1, and 9P1).

Core Component 5d. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

• Western interacts with its stakeholders in ways that enhance the institution’s involvement in planning for and meeting regional education and training needs (Overview, 3P1, 3P2, 3P3, 3P4, 3P6, 3R4, 3I1, 9P1, 9P2, 9P7, and 9R2).

• Western provides graduates in Nursing to the regional hospital, graduates of the Western Law Enforcement Academy to local law enforcement agencies, and graduates of Education to regional schools (9R2).

• Western uses a variety of measures to assess the effectiveness of relationships and the collaborative work that supports these relationships (Figure 3.2, R1, 9R2).

• Western plays a key role in many major initiatives in the region, such as development of the life sciences industry, the lifelong learning initiative, workforce development, and regional planning (Overview, 2P1, 2P2, 2R2, Category 9).