A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Student Engagement

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

The goals of this project are to: 1) increase applications, yield, and retention of student cohort groups identified in Western's Enrollment Management Strategic Plan; and 2) increase student engagement as directly measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and indirectly by improved retention. This action item involves many other of the seven components of Western's strategic planning processes, including branding and marketing and three national initiatives connected to student engagement, the National Learning Community Project, The American Democracy Project, and Foundations of Excellence in the First Year.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

Western has strategically combined the academic and student affairs divisions to emphasize the seamless nature of the student learning inside and outside of the classroom as one means of increasing student engagement. The Citizen- Scholar concept is employed to introduce first year students and other constituents to this holistic nature of the Western learning community – one that has two distinctive signatures – applied learning and service to the region. This action project combines components of the campus strategic plan and three national projects. Two of the three national projects are through the American Association of State Colleges and Universities: the American Democracy Project (ADP) and the Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year Project (Foundations). The third national project is participation in the National Learning Community Project (NLCP). Each of these projects has an engagement emphasis and is relevant for first year students. This action project will address student engagement as a developmental process beginning with the marketing/branding of an engaged learning community to prospective students and continuing with the intentional educational programs provided for enrolled first year students.
Further, Western seeks to improve recruitment and retention of students through the deployment of a strategic enrollment management plan called Assets and Aspirations.

E. List the organizational areas - institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

Primary involvement is with the Academic and Student Affairs Division, including Admissions, Student Development, Academic Departments, and Student Services. Secondary involvement is with branding initiatives associated with the Image and Advancement sector of the strategic plan.

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

The processes involved include engagement branding/advertising directed toward prospective students and their families, opinion leaders influencing college choice, recruiting activities, orientation programming, and curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular offerings related to engagement.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

Campus teams such as the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Strategic Planning Implementation Team and the Foundations committee continue to meet regularly to monitor progress on engagement initiatives. A series of student engagement community forums were initiated in 2004 to stimulate dialogue on engagement issues outside of campus teams and to disseminate information about the work of campus teams.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

Western will employ existing strategic planning implementation teams and committees associated with the three national projects to establish process measures during the Spring 2004 semester.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been successful or failure in achieving its goals:

With respect to outcome measures, Western will begin to use the NSSE survey to monitor changes in students' expectations and attitudes toward their college experience, including: · Level of academic challenge · Student-faculty interactions · Active and collaborative learning · Enriching educational experiences · Supportive campus environment Both ADP and Foundations allow some peer group comparisons using NSSE results. In addition to NSSE, the College will employ the faculty version of NSSE from the Center for the Study of Higher Education or CSHE, which measures: · Background and demographic information · Professional activities (e.g., preferred teaching methods, research activities, advising duties, professional development activities, informal interactions with first-year students) · Perceptions of various aspects of their institution's policies, practices, and values as they relate to first-year students and one or more of the Dimensions With respect to measuring enrollment management related engagement goals, application numbers, yield rates, and retention of student cohort groups identified in Western's Enrollment Management Strategic Plan will be used as an indirect measure of student engagement for prospective and current students.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

Administer NSSE (March 2004) and CSHE instruments (February 2004) to establish baseline results for measuring student engagement improvements. Enrollment management measures of
application numbers, yield rates, and retention of student cohort groups identified in Western's Enrollment Management Strategic Plan will be used as an indirect measure of student engagement for prospective and current students. Design, develop, and implement any campus specific measures using strategic planning implementation funding and participation in the ADP, Foundations, and NLCP national projects. Evaluate NSSE and CSHE results to establish stretch goals based on comparative results from other campuses. Reflect on results from campus measures and implement continuous improvement efforts as needed. Track progress of enrollment management measures such as application numbers, yield rates, and retention of student cohort groups identified in Western's Enrollment Management Strategic Plan for prospective and current students. Evaluate progress on NSSE and CSHE stretch goals. Reflect on results from campus measures and implement continuous improvement efforts as needed. Track progress of enrollment management measures such as application numbers, yield rates, and retention of student cohort groups identified in Western's Enrollment Management Strategic Plan for prospective and current students.

K. Project Leader and contact person:

Contact Name: David J. Arnold, Vice President for Academic and Student

Email: arnold@mwcsc.edu

Phone: 816-271-4234 Ext.

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Annual Update: 2006-08-03

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

The goals of this action project are to 1) increase applications, yield and retention of student cohort groups identified in Western's Enrollment Management Strategic Plan and 2) increase student engagement as measured directly by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and indirectly by improved retention. The recruitment component of the Enrollment Management Plan was fully implemented during the past year. Six of the seven goals were met; additional strategies have been implemented to increase the likelihood of reaching the unmet goal. Status of Recruitment Goals Fall 05 Goals Increase overall new student enrollment Exceeded Goal Increase FTIC enrollment Exceeded Goal Increase transfer enrollment Exceeded Goal Increase ACT composite Met Goal Increase Missouri FTIC Exceeded Goal Increase FTIC out-of-state enrollment Goal Unmet Increase adult enrollment Exceeded Goal Action plans to achieve the goals of the retention component of the enrollment management plan have been developed and will be fully implemented during AY 2006/07. Goals include plans to increase retention for First-time, full-time, students fall-to-fall First-time, full-time freshmen with ACT scores between 21-25 First-time, full-time students enrolled in the honors program First-year, full-time minority students First-time, full-time freshmen living in the residence Second year students Degree-seeking students We used data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Faculty Survey from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), the Faculty Survey from the Center for the Study of Higher Education, the College Student Inventory (CSI), the Student Satisfaction
Inventory (SSI), and institutional data to develop goals and actions for the plan.

**Review (10-10-06):**
This project appears to be near completion in terms of accomplishing its goals. It is solidly grounded by the use of several measurement tools—ACT scores, NSSE, HERI, CSI, SSI, and institutional data (AQIP Category 7 Measuring Effectiveness). The project is designed to impact a broad spectrum of students—honors participants, minority student enrollment, freshmen in residence, second-year students, and degree-seeking students (AQIP Category 4 Valuing People). It is impressive that six of the seven goals of the project have been met thus far and the fact that strategies to meet the remaining goal have been implemented suggests that this project has every promise of achieving its initial purpose (AQIP Category 1 Helping Student Learn and AQIP Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement).

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

Many individuals at Western have been involved in this action project. The learning communities initiative continued with 32 faculty and staff and approximately 230 students enrolled in a total of 13 learning communities. The recruitment plan was developed after input from over sixty faculty and staff at the initial workshop. The Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee (AAEMC) is composed of over twenty individuals that represent all areas of campus and has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of enrollment management activities. Forty-two faculty and staff participated in the retention planning workshop last fall and additional faculty, staff and students have participated on the planning committees for each retention goal. Specifically, the Honors Committee, composed of faculty, students and administrators, developed action plans to meet the retention goal for Honors students; staff and students from the Center for Multicultural Education provided leadership in the development of action plans to meet retention goals for minority students; and residence life staff and student employees developed the action plans for retention of students living in the residence halls.

**Review (10-10-06):**
Broad participation in the development of this project is evidenced by the number of faculty and students who were involved (AQIP Category 4 Valuing People and AQIP Category 9 Building Collaborative Relationships). Specific action plans that were developed by parties in various areas—Honors Committee, Center for Multicultural Education, residence life staff, and student employees—speaks to a structure that includes the necessary elements to achieve the overall goals of the project (AQIP Category 6 Supporting Institutional Operations). One aspect to consider would be if each work group includes parties outside the group to provide alternative perspectives on planned initiatives.

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

Although we have completed the third and final year of this Action Project, we are continuing to work to improve student engagement at Western. Since the full enrollment management plan will be implemented in the coming year, much attention will be given to measuring the results of the action plans and making appropriate adjustments. We will continue to administer assessment tools such as
the National Survey of Student Engagement, the College Student Inventory, and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement to compare our results with peer institutions and to give us feedback on the success of our interventions. Many successful actions have already been implemented; we will continue to build on these successes to enhance student engagement at Western. We will actively disseminate to our colleagues across the country the details of successful student engagement activities at Western. We have been active participants at Higher Learning Commission Conferences and AQIP workshops in the past and will continue to contribute through these activities and through other organizations. We plan to continue our involvement with the Foundations of Excellence in the First Year, the American Democracy Project and Learning Communities.

Review (10-10-06):
While the final year of the project has been completed, it is clear that the University will continue its efforts to monitor the effectiveness of this project through several measurement tools (AQIP Category 7 Measuring Effectiveness and AQIP Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement). Their desire to continue enhancing student engagement speaks to a commitment to systemic change at the University (AQIP Category 4 Valuing People). This project has potential to be a model for other institutions of higher learning and those who participate in the HLC Annual Meeting workshops can benefit from presentations that will share its structure and effectiveness (AQIP Category 5 Leading and Communicating).

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

A unique orientation course, Griffon Edge, has been design to give incoming freshmen and transfer students a head start with their college experience. The program introduces students to Western facilities, services, activities, traditions, and academic experiences. A common reading program is an integral part of the course. All students in the course are required to read a book that has been specifically selected because of content that deals with diversity and diversity issues. Small group discussion sessions are lead by various faculty, staff and administrators and the students complete a short paper relating their own experiences with the content of the reading. The 2004 and 2005 NSSE results show that Western scored significantly better than the other institutions in our comparison groups on the Diverse Interactions factor. We believe that the common reading program has helped Western to improve in this area.

Review (10-10-06):
The orientation course, Griffon Edge, offers a unique opportunity to incoming freshman and transfer students. Not only does it begin to acquaint the students with various aspects of the University and campus life, but it develops an appreciation for people from various backgrounds, cultures, ethnic groups, etc. (AQIP Category 4 Valuing People). A presentation on this course could be a valuable addition to upcoming HLC programs (AQIP Category 5 Leading and Communicating).

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

It continues to be a challenge to obtain data from the administrative information system at Western. With the full implementation of the new integrative software,
SCT Banner, this problem should be alleviated in the near future.

**Review (10-10-06):**
New database software should assist in the efforts to gather and analyze data about the effectiveness of this project (AQIP Category 7 Measuring Effectiveness). The ability to substantiate observed successes with data is an important dimension of decision making for future plans.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

**Review (10-10-06):**