

AQIP Criterion Eight: Planning Continuous Improvement

Context for Analysis

8C1 Vision

Western's vision, "to be a collaborative, innovative educational leader in the community," provides the context for setting the strategic direction. To achieve the vision, Western will address these strategic challenges:

- Provide a high quality technical education with limited resources
- Align resources and services to support ever-changing needs and expectations of diverse student segments
- Align resources and services to support developmental needs of students
- Anticipate ever-changing needs and expectations of stakeholders

8C2 Institution's Short-term and Long-term Strategies

Western's mission, "committed to excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and responsiveness to the Western District," provides the context for planning and continuous improvement.

Processes

8P1 Planning Process

Western's Strategic Planning Process (Figure 8-1) is dynamic and guides the College's program and services, budget, and facilities planning for a five-year cycle. This planning process enhances the College to establish strategic priorities, address student and stakeholder needs, enhance performance relative to competitors, and enhance overall performance. All aspects of the planning process are intended to enhance the College's ability to be responsive to the needs of the District.

Strategic goals and objectives are identified for a five-year time frame and revisited on an annual basis – in order to be responsive and provide focus for developing strategic plans for key operational areas: facilities, technology, instruction, marketing, and student services (Figure 8-2). An integral part of the strategic planning process is alignment of strategic challenges with strategic goals and objectives. This alignment process assures that goals and objectives are moving the College forward with respect to the mission and vision to meet student and stakeholder needs and to stay competitive in the higher education environment.

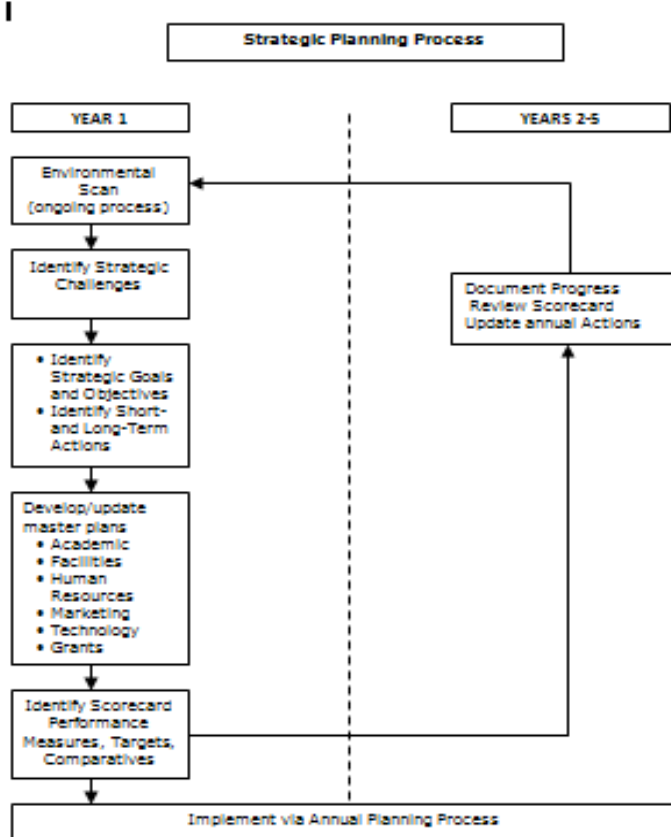
Western's mission, strategic challenges, strategic goals and objectives, key actions, performance measures, and targets are integrated into the strategic plan (Figure 8-3).

Western's annual program and services, budget, and facilities planning process (Figure 8-4) guides the yearly development of major division and unit-level action plans that include performance measures, resource needs, and budget implications. These annual plans guide the development of the subsequent year's budget.

District Board members, senior leaders, administrators, faculty, and staff are all involved in this process throughout the various stages of planning and budget development. The Business and Operations Team under the guidance of the Senior Leadership Team provides the primary leadership for budget-related decisions that must be made as the subsequent year's budget is

developed. This on-going budget dialogue and decision making related to the division and unit-level action plans connects the planning and budgeting processes. Decisions are made based on a set of criteria, questions Western needs to ask each time a budget request comes forward beginning with “Does this align with Western’s strategic plan, related unit master plan and performance excellence criteria?”

Figure 8-1 Strategic Planning Process Five-Year Cycle



8P2 Selecting Short-term and Long-term Strategies

Western selects its strategic goals and objectives and related short- and long-term actions by responding to the strategic challenges that impact the College. Trend analysis of the key factors identified in Figure 8-5 has resulted in the identification of key strategic challenges. Addressing conflicting expectations of key stakeholders has been a challenge for Western. Because the College believes so strongly in its role to serve the student, employers, and the community, Western has had to practice diligence in not trying to be all things to all people.

With increasing limitations on resources, the College has reorganized its steering team structure as illustrated in Figure 5-2. A primary driver of this reorganization is to have senior leadership focus more on strategic planning and strategic decision-making to better reconcile stakeholder needs with resources. Western’s culture is changing – and this is evident through the on-going efforts to make sure that short-term and long-term strategies fit with the College’s mission, vision, and values.

8P3 Developing Key Action Plans to Support Institutional Strategies

The annual program and services planning process is driven by the College’s strategic plan and unit master plans (Figure 8-2). The process to develop strategies/tactics begins at the closest point of impact – the programs. The process then moves up through the college.

- Instructors or staff begin by completing annual planning spreadsheet documents which allow them to list up to four no cost actions and four actions that require a budget allotment. The format requires the program/service staff to include:
 - Action description
 - Performance measures
 - Alignment with at least one strategic goal
 - Capital expense detail
 - Operational expense detail
 - Possible alternative funding source
- Division and department managers then add in actions which impact the entire division or department. Managers and instructors or staff will then meet to discuss overall priorities.
- All actions at the division or department level that are no cost can be approved at the division or department level. Those actions requiring new dollars are rolled into the next level of decision making.
- All division or department actions requiring new dollars are rolled into a summary spreadsheet where the unit managers and the assigned Vice President determine the priority requests for that unit.
- Each unit then brings forward their top priorities to the Business and Operations Team to go through the budget deliberation process. This team has cross representation of units as well as levels of staffing represented.
- Once the final budget decisions have been made that information will be fed back to the unit, department or division and ultimately to instructors or staff for implementation.

Figure 8-2 Strategic Priorities Planning Components

Planning Component	Key Participants	Planning Timeline	Long-range Action Plans
Strategic Planning	District Board; Senior Leadership Team; Steering Teams, Management Forum, college-at-large	5 years (annual review of actions)	Strategic Plan
Facilities Planning	Business and Operations Team	10 years/3years/1year Western has a 10 year plan and annually submits to WTCS an updated three year plan – any project not listed in the three year plan will not be considered by WTCS	Facilities Master Plan
Technology Planning	Information Systems Oversight Committee	3-5 years	Technology Master Plan
Academic Planning	Academic Leadership Team	3-5 years	Academic Master Plan (In Progress)
Market Planning	VP of Student Services and Public Relations Team	3-5 years	Marketing Master Plan
Human Resource Planning	HR staff, VP of Finance and project team	3-5 years	Human Resources Master Plan (In strategic plan for 2008-09)
Grants planning	Director of Special Services, Grants staff, and project team	3-5 years	Grants Master Plan (In strategic plan for 2008-09)

Operational dollars are allocated as part of the budget development process. Capital equipment requests are funded separately and are allocated to units based on need and/or an internal formula allocation. As part of the planning process, the Grants Office works closely with major divisions/units to identify new and/or emerging initiatives that might be supported by grant dollars.

Funding sources are a key factor that significantly impacts Western's action plan development and deployment. Because of changes in state funding for the WTCS, Western strives to be as efficient as possible in the use of resources.

Performance measures for the College-level strategic goal, objectives, actions and decision drivers provide the framework for the Western Scorecard (Figure 7-5) and the basis for organizational performance review. Tracking college progress and making corrections through the planning process is achieved through Western's District Board and the steering team structure which consists of the Senior Leadership Team, the Business and Operations Team, the Academic Leadership Team and the Policy and Legislative Team. Tracking of progress for annual actions is completed on the unit, department/division levels.

Progress is communicated to staff via electronic reports on the intranet, College Day presentations, President Information Flow communications, Management Forum Meetings, and all-subscriber emails.

8P4 Coordinating and Aligning at All Levels

Aligning planning processes with overall institutional strategies occurs at the department and unit level through the development of short- and longer-term action plans. The alignment of these action plans with the strategic priorities and related performance measures ensures consistent deployment throughout the College. It also ensures that faculty, staff, and administrators are working together to help achieve our overall strategic priorities.

8P5 Selecting Measures

Western selects measures and sets performance projections for institutional strategies and action plans partially through the common measures identified by the Wisconsin Technical College System and measures identified specifically to address progress related to the strategic goals and objectives. Western looks at benchmarks from other higher educational institutions and CQIN and AQIP partners.

8P6 Accounting for Resources

As part of the planning process, Western identifies resource needs (i.e., staff, financial, facilities, technology, and equipment) through budget development at the unit and department level. This information is used to create an overall College budget for the upcoming year that is prioritized based upon College needs.

8P7 Developing People Capabilities

Western ensures that faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities will be developed and nurtured to address requirements regarding changing institutional strategies and action plans by aligning human resource plans with the strategic plan, Employee Success Plans, and employee education and training needs. Individual unit training throughout the year and offerings during all-college professional development days are processes used to meet the training needs for all employee groups.

8P8 Measures of Effectiveness of Continuous Improvement System

The measures of the effectiveness of systems for planning continuous improvement that are collected and analyzed include:

- AQIP Systems Portfolio Appraisal Feedback
- Action Projects Feedback
- QRP Improvement Plan Feedback (from WTCS)

- Current Baldrige Application Process

Figure 8-3 Example of Strategic Objective in Western' Strategic Plan

Western Technical College Strategic Plan			
Goal #1 Increase Student Goal Attainment			
Strategic Objective	2007-2008 Actions	2008 & Beyond Actions	Measurement Methods will include:
1.1 The infrastructure to manage and support Western's core business starting with recruitment and ending with Student Goal Attainment will be advanced.	1.1a Establish a prospects/leads process through the use of PS software 1.1b Identify method to collect student intent and track goal attainment 1.1c Pilot an Academic Advising model which expands the role of instructor advising for continuing students 1.1d Establish program entrance requirements as well as cut scores 1.1e Offer prepared learner coursework as an option for students covering the areas of Math, Reading, and Natural Science and determine cut scores 1.1f Develop first year experience plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a turbo admit process • Implement a method to measure student intent and goal attainment • Expand instructional academic advising model college-wide • Establish a process for personal education plans for at risk students • Increase early intervention counseling services • Create and implement a comprehensive learning assessment model • Increase the percentage of students who attend new student orientation • Increase the number of faculty using interactive teaching methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention rates • Graduation rates • Course completion rates • Job placement rates • Project completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prospects ○ Advising model ○ Program entrance requirements ○ Prepared learner coursework ○ First year experience model

Figure 8-4 Annual Program and Services, Budget, and Facilities Planning Process

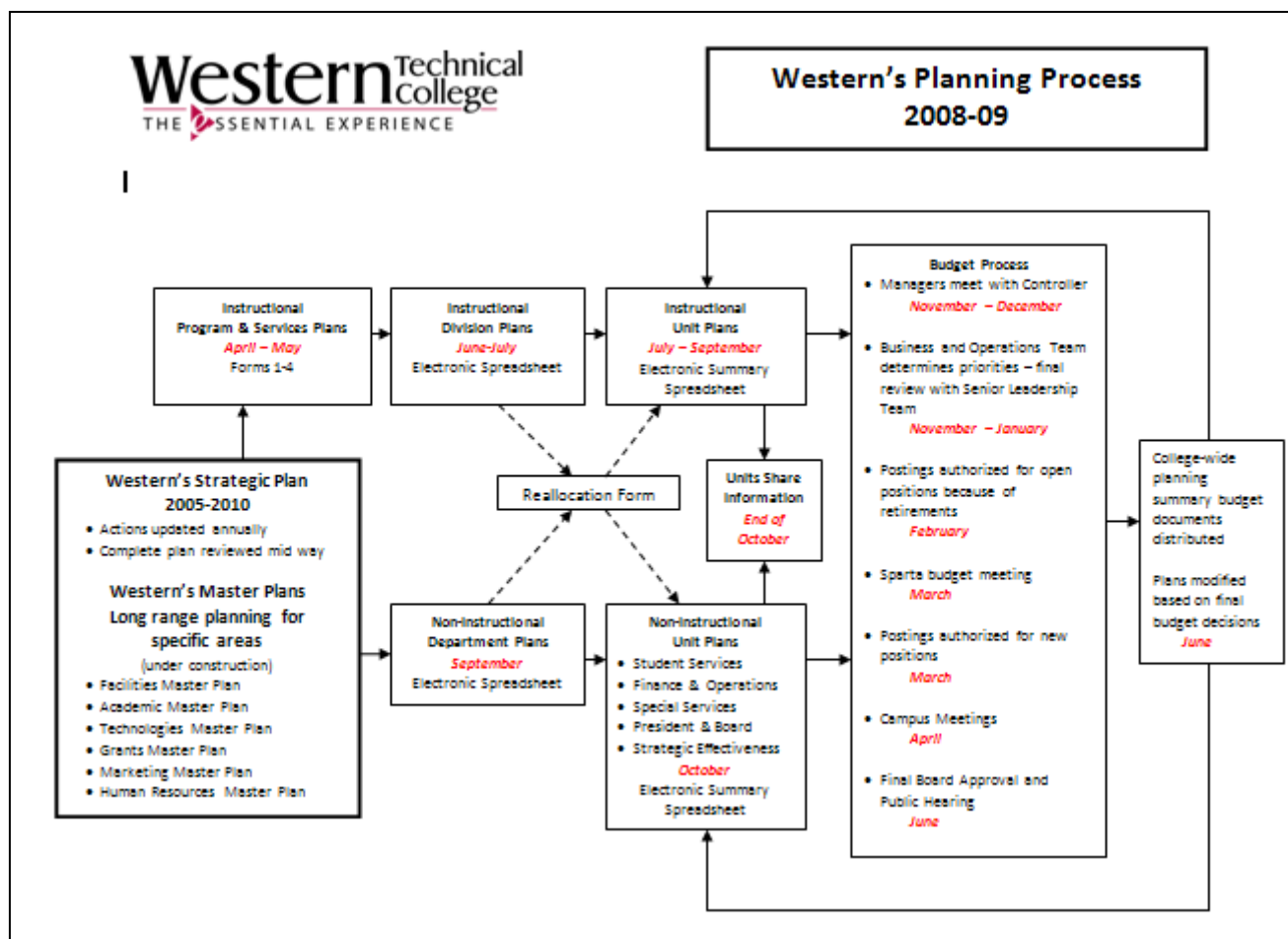


Figure 8-5 Key Factor Analysis

Key Factors	Sources for Gathering Relevant Information	Analysis Team
Funding Sources	State Budget	District Board Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Business and Operations Team (BOT)
Current Students	Student Opinion Survey	SLT Student Service Unit Teams Academic Leadership Council (ALC) Program Teams
Future Students	Focus Groups High School Dialogue Sessions Market Research	SLT ALC Program Teams Student Service Unit Teams
Current Stakeholders	Employer Survey Advisory Committee Feedback	ALC Student Service Unit Teams Program Teams
Future Stakeholders	Needs Assessments Market Research Environmental Scans	ALC Student Service Unit Teams Program Teams College Relations Unit Team

Key Factors	Sources for Gathering Relevant Information	Analysis Team
External Factors—e.g. Partner's Strengths/Weaknesses; Competitive Environment; Comparable Schools	Wisconsin Forward Award Application HLC—AQIP Process Climate Survey Employer Survey Student Satisfaction Survey	ALC District Board New Directions Team Student Service Unit Teams Program Teams
Technological Changes	Market Research National Conferences Trade Journals	Instructional Technology Team Information Systems Management Team Program Teams
Student Learning and Development	Licensure Exams Student Learning Outcomes Assessment	ALC Assessment Team Program Teams District Board Policy and Instruction Team
College Strengths and Weaknesses	Wisconsin Forward Award Application HLC—AQIP Process Climate Survey Employer Survey Student Satisfaction Survey	SLT ALC Program Teams Student Service Unit Teams District Board
Ethical, Societal, Budgetary, and Other Potential Risks	ADA Reports OSHA Reports NACUBO Report WTCS State Reports	BOT PLT ALC Student Services Unit Team Program Teams District Board Planning, Budget, and Audit Team Diversity Team
Community Economic Vitality	Information supplied by 7 Rivers Region Technology Alliance (Economic Summit, Higher Education Council) and local Chambers of Commerce	SLT District Board BOT PLT

Results

8R1 Results for Accomplishing Institutional Strategies and Action Plans

Figure 8-3 provides an example of a strategic objective and the types of results that are/will be collected. These results are located in various criterion sections throughout the Systems Portfolio.

8R2 Projections for Performance

Western is in the early stages of establishing performance projections for key measures related to strategic goals, objectives, and action plans. These performance projections are influenced by a variety of demographic, environmental, and socio-economic factors. Internal and external trends are considered when initial five-year projections are set. These projections are revisited on an annual basis.

8R3 Comparison

Western uses four types of comparative data: internal, state educational, national educational, and national outside education that are indicated with various results presented throughout the portfolio. Overall, Western's performance compares favorably with those of higher education institutions. A sample list of comparative performance measures is shown in Figure 7-7.

8R4 Evidence of System Effectiveness

Western uses feedback from externally reviewed organizational assessments to help improve as an organization. Figure 8R-1 identifies the scoring bands for two state quality award applications and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award application. Western is in the process of submitting an additional Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award application.

Figure 8R1-1 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and Wisconsin Forward Quality Award Feedback

Category	Possible Points	2001 WFA % Band	2001 WFA Points	2002 WFA % Band	2002 WFA Points	2002 Baldrige % Band	2002 Baldrige Points
			Site Visit		Site Visit		Consensus
1 - Leadership	120	60-70% 72	-84	50-60% 60	-72	30-40%	36-48
2 - Planning	85	50-60% 43	-51	50-60% 43	-51	30-40%	26-34
3 - Student, Stakeholder, & Market Focus	85	50-60% 43	-51	50-60% 43	-51	30-40%	26-34
4 - Information & Analysis	90	40-50% 36	-45	40-50% 36	-45	50-60%	45-54
5 - Faculty & Staff Focus	85	60-70% 51	-63	40-50% 34	-43	30-40%	26-34
6 - Process Management	85	50-60% 43	-51	40-50% 34	-43	50-60%	43-51
7 - Organizational Results	450	30-40% 13	5-180	40-50% 18	0-225	30-40%	135-180
Total	1000	Band 4 451-550	423- 525	Band 4 451-550	430-530	Band 3 351-450 3	37-391

Source: Continuous Improvement

Improvement

8I1 Improving Current Processes and Systems

Western improves its current processes and systems for planning continuous improvement by analyzing feedback from AQIP Action Projects and Systems Appraisals, by soliciting informal feedback from College employees about the effectiveness of the planning process, and by trending results of the modified PACE Climate Survey in the areas of organizational structure and work design.

8I2 Improvement Priorities

Western communicates results to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate stakeholders as a regular part of the communication system described in Figure 5-1.

Western has identified the following improvement priorities related to Criterion 8:

- Complete an environmental scan/market research and study of trends
- Fully develop an academic master plan to drive instructional planning and decision-making
- Develop a human resource master plan
- Develop a QRP model for all of Western's services
- Continue the development and integration of the College-wide, division/unit, and program level scorecards

- Revisit the College mission, vision and values
- Develop a consistent and comprehensive internal communication process