

AQIP Criterion Five: Leading and Communicating

Context for Analysis

5C1 Leadership and Communication Systems

As described in the Organizational Profile, Western operates under a shared governance model with responsibilities balanced between the Local District Board and the State Board of the WTCS. The organizational chart (Figure O-10) describes the formal leadership structure. Western's team structure has recently been redesigned to enhance communication and effectiveness.

As part of an integrated team and communication system (Figure 5-1), senior leaders provide the vision for setting and deploying the College's values, short- and longer-term directions, and performance expectations.

Figure 5-1 Integrated Team and Communication System



Western has recently redesigned its Senior Leadership Team and College Steering Teams to be more inclusive, efficient, and to provide additional clarity. Figure 5-2 captures this reconfiguration and describes the purpose, areas of focus, membership and related committees or project teams.

Figure 5-2 Steering Team Structure

Team	Purposes	Areas of Focus	Membership	Related Teams
Senior Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish direction for the college through a strategic planning process Monitor progress through College scorecard Use Environmental scanning to plan for the future Guide Human Resource's strategic objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning development and monitoring Investigate, track and improve core business processes Communicate to college at large Coordinate communication between teams Human resources Data tracking Confidential issues Final budget review 	College president and direct reports Chairs of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business and Operations Team Academic Leadership Team Policy and Legislative Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Forum Negotiations Team Business and Operations Team Academic Leadership Team Policy and Legislative Team
Academic Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance enrollment, retention, and learning processes based on systems perspective of student success Evaluate and monitor enrollment, retention and learning processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure to manage and support student goal attainment – starting with recruitment and ending with student goal attainment Overall student satisfaction with educational experience at Western – including support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP of Student Services and College Relations Vice President of Instruction Deans and Associate Deans Admissions/registration Counseling/assessment Student development Marketing/recruitment Financial aid Learning Center manager IT manager Academic quality improvement specialist Student input ISS Research specialist Extended Campus Administrators Director of Library Services Director of Business and Industry Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Deans Council Student Services managers Computer Steering team Academic Learning Council Welcome Center Operations
Business and Operations Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the annual budget with Western's strategic plan and master plans Develop alternative approaches to fulfilling the College's plans through new funding and efficiency mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget cycle/process and forecasting Benchmarks and standards Capital borrowing cycle/process Capital equipment planning Open position process Facility planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controller Vice President of Operations Dean Vice President of Student Services and College Relations Vice President of Instruction Facilities manager Director of Business and Industry Services Academic Services Manager Enterprise area manager Director of Special Services Student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunda Center team Coleman Study Group Welcome Center building Parking Committee Information Coordination Team

Team	Purposes	Areas of Focus	Membership	Related Teams
			Services/College Relations Manager	
Policy and Legislative Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate, monitor, review and recommend policies and procedures Steer and coordinate legislative activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and recommend policies and related procedures Monitor and advocate for legislative issues Coordinate Institutional Review Board activities Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College President Director of Special Services Deans (2) Faculty (2) HR Director Student Government Student Services and College Relations Manager Union representative Safety systems representative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunda Center team Academic Lab procedures team Student email policy and procedures team Incident Command Team

5C2 Alignment of Leadership

Western ensures that the practices of its leadership system at all institutional levels align with the practices and views of the District Board and senior leaders. This happens through on-going reporting at College Steering Team meetings and at District Board meetings. Western's integrated team and communication system illustrated in Figure 5-1 provides a framework for alignment. In regard to oversight entities, the District Board President serves on the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards' Association, and the College President meets monthly with the WTCS Director and other technical college presidents.

5C3 Integrating Values and Expectations

Western's senior leaders integrate the College values into all aspects of operations. These values set forth the College's expectations regarding ethics and equity, social responsibilities, and community service and involvement. Western's value statements provide an organizational context that promotes and supports ethical behavior (Figure 0-1).

Equity for all students is assured by two policies that describe the rights, responsibilities, and conduct expectations for students: the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (EO700) and the Student Code of Conduct (EO706). These policies are outlined and explained in the Student Conduct and Discipline handbook

(http://www.westerntc.edu/student_handbook/StudentPlanner.pdf). The policy was reviewed and approved by the Student Government and by Western's legal staff prior to adoption by the District Board. A Policy for Provision of Reasonable Accommodation for People with Disabilities and a Five-Year District Plan for Minority Student Participation and Retention are also evidence of our commitment to equity. These policies set the broadest possible parameters for a safe, sound, and equitable educational environment.

Western's Five-Year Affirmative Action/Civil Rights Compliance Plan sets forth policies and related activities to monitor and encourage improvement in the areas of affirmative action and equal opportunity for staff and students. The Affirmative Action Policy Statement, Equal Opportunity Education and Employment Policy, and Policy Prohibiting Harassment of Employees and Students are distributed to all District employees and are also published in the student catalog, student handbook, and employee handbook. These policies are stressed during new employee orientation and in manager training sessions. College policies are also available to all staff on the intranet WIRE.

Western's Private Sector Review Committee conducts an annual screening of all contracted training to business and industry to ensure that we are not duplicating or competing with the private sector. Additionally, Western does not publish or sell lists of students and addresses to any vendor.

Processes

5P1 Aligning Mission, Vision and Values

Western's senior leaders set directions in alignment with the mission, vision, and values in a variety of ways. All decisions at the College are framed around achievement of strategic goals and objectives including enrollment, retention, learning, and stakeholder satisfaction. This ensures that the needs and expectations of students and key stakeholder groups are addressed. These goals and objectives guide the development of strategic and annual plans.

Embedded into the culture of Western is a commitment to students and to student learning. Students are the primary customers and their needs and expectations drive development of all programs, services, and facilities. Annual planning retreats that include the Senior Leadership Team, Management Forum, and the District Board provide an opportunity to review the College's mission, vision, values, strategic goals and objectives and performance measures. Reports on progress in achieving these priorities are provided at monthly District Board meetings and at bi-weekly meetings of the College's Policy and Legislative Team and the Senior Leadership Team. Senior leaders, union members, instructional members, and a student representative all serve on this steering committee. Meetings are open to all employees of the College and agendas and minutes are posted on the intranet. Because decision-making is de-centralized at the College, teams are empowered to be innovative and to take initiative with respect to problem-solving and collaboration with guidance of the steering teams. Individual employee development is encouraged and organizational learning is fostered through College-wide involvement in teams and committees.

5P2 Future Opportunities, Building and Sustaining a Learning Environment

Senior leaders guide the College in seeking future opportunities by focusing on one of the College values—partnerships. The president plays an integral role in seeking out and in creating new partnerships that will contribute to the growth and development of the College as well as the community and surrounding region. Additionally, District Board members, Senior Leadership Team Members, extended campus administrators, and Business and Industry Services represent communities in all parts of our 5,000-square-mile district and play a major role in connecting the College with potential opportunities.

Senior leaders help to build and sustain a learning environment by targeting resources to encourage faculty and staff to continuously learn and grow. One of Western's strategic goals, Enhancing Human Resource Development and the newly created position of Manager of Organizational Development, provide direct evidence of senior leadership's commitment to creating a learning environment. Organizational learning is part of the College culture and an integral component of Western's continuous quality improvement philosophy. From the first day employees start working at the College, they are introduced to the Employee Success Policy and the process by which all employees develop an Employee Success Plan.

5P3 Decision-making Processes

Western employs a dynamic network of teams that connect the District Board, the Senior Leadership Team, steering teams, and implementation teams as described in Figures 5-1 and 5-2. These teams form an integrated team and communication system that exemplifies a commitment to collaborative decision-making. This integrated team structure serves as the framework for ensuring that senior leaders communicate values, directions, and expectations to all faculty and staff. Each steering committee has a Chair that sits on the Senior Leadership Team ensuring that a connection is maintained.

District Board Teams, identified in Figure 5-1 are comprised of District Board and Senior Leadership Team members. They set the direction for policy and planning decisions, thus assuring a strong link between policy setting and implementation.

5P4 Using Information to Make Decisions

Leaders use information and results in their decision-making process to assess progress relative to achieving the performance measures associated with the strategic goals and objectives. The performance measures that are regularly reviewed are identified in the College Scorecard presented in Criterion 7C2 (Figure 7-5). While all of these results are regularly reviewed by senior leaders, certain results are reviewed more carefully by specific teams or committees as shown in Figure 5-3.

Figure 5-3 Information Review Teams and Committees

Group	Results Reviewed	Frequency
District Board	Enrollment Retention Learning Satisfaction	Monthly Monthly Monthly Annually
Policy and Legislative Team	Enrollment Retention Learning Satisfaction	Bi-Monthly Bi-Monthly Annually Annually
Learning Council	Enrollment Retention Learning Satisfaction	Bi-Monthly Monthly Monthly Annually
Management Forum	Enrollment Retention Learning Satisfaction	Monthly Monthly Monthly Annually
Academic Deans Council	Enrollment Retention Learning Satisfaction	Bi-Weekly Bi-Weekly Bi-Weekly Annually

5P5 Communication at Various Organizational Levels

Communication occurs at all levels and in all directions as illustrated in the integrated team and communication system described in 5C1 and Figure 5-1. This system promotes a constant flow of information through all levels of the College and at all campuses and is enhanced by Western's intranet. Western's culture is one that values on-going communication and shared decision-making. Meetings are an accepted mode of sharing information and a place where staff members can freely share their ideas.

5P6 Communicating a Shared Mission, Vision, Values and Expectations

In addition to the integrated team and communication system, senior leaders communicate values, directions, and expectations to all employees by using a variety of written, oral, and electronic tools (Figure 5-4).

Figure 5-4 Communication Tools



These tools provide a constant flow of information throughout the College and multiple opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to interact with senior leaders formally and informally. Communication with extended campuses is enhanced by holding forums via interactive television or conference calls. Additionally, the District Board holds at least one monthly meeting at each extended campus every two years to assure that extended campus employees are included in the communication link.

5P7 Encouraging the Development of Leadership Abilities

Leadership abilities are encouraged, developed, and strengthened among faculty, staff, and administrators in a variety of ways – including the use of Employee Success Plans. Senior leaders recommend individuals or seek recommendations from units to identify individuals to participate in formal local, state, and national leadership development activities based upon an individual's perceived leadership potential, current involvement in the organization, and organizational needs. Examples of these formal leadership programs include the local Greater La Crosse Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program (generally two participants per year), Wisconsin Leadership Development Institute (WLDI) that is open to all employee groups (generally two participants per year), and the National Institute of Leadership Development (Figure 5R1-1).

Western supports and encourages staff to pursue advanced degrees. A tuition reimbursement policy offsets the cost of tuition. On occasion short-term, professional development employment opportunities are available to all employees that provide the opportunity to experience a new job or role and to expand individual knowledge and skills. These opportunities are often times stepping stones to career progression and leadership roles in the organization and may include activities such as serving on the Baldrige writing team.

Annually, Western sends a team of formal leaders and informal leaders to conferences such as CQIN, Pegasus (systems thinking) and the Higher Learning Commission's Annual meeting. As a result of external and in-house opportunities, Western focuses on "growing" leaders from within the organization. Professional development days are set aside and Employee Success Plans are used as the vehicle for individuals to pursue opportunities to develop leadership abilities.

5P8 Leadership Succession

Western ensures that its mission, vision and values are passed on during leadership succession by providing the opportunity for leaders to plan retirement two to three years in advance. This allows for leaders to declare their retirement plans and to develop a transition plan while the senior leader is actively employed. Western's president meets weekly with senior leaders to ensure that the mission, vision and values are reinforced.

Western's succession planning system is practiced in certain areas throughout the College, but no formal college-wide plan exists. Western has recognized the need to develop a formal system and is in the process of exploring potential models. Western's current job posting process and Employee Success Plan process allow for individuals to express an interest in leadership opportunities. These individuals are then potential applicants for posted positions. The goal of the hiring process is to allow the successor to have time to work with the retiring senior leader. This

process has been effectively used in the areas of student development and ISS.

When a new District Board member joins the College, he/she participates in an orientation program that includes attendance at Board meetings and attendance at various College committee/team meetings prior to taking office.

5P9 Measures of Leading and Communicating

Western's primary measurement of leading and communicating that is collected and analyzed regularly is the Personal Assessment of College Effectiveness (PACE). Western also uses brief surveys following every Management Forum meeting, College Day, and Professional Development Day. Western's Associate Vice President of Strategic Effectiveness recently conducted an internal communication survey that provided information that has been used to restructure the Steering Teams and communication frequency and method.

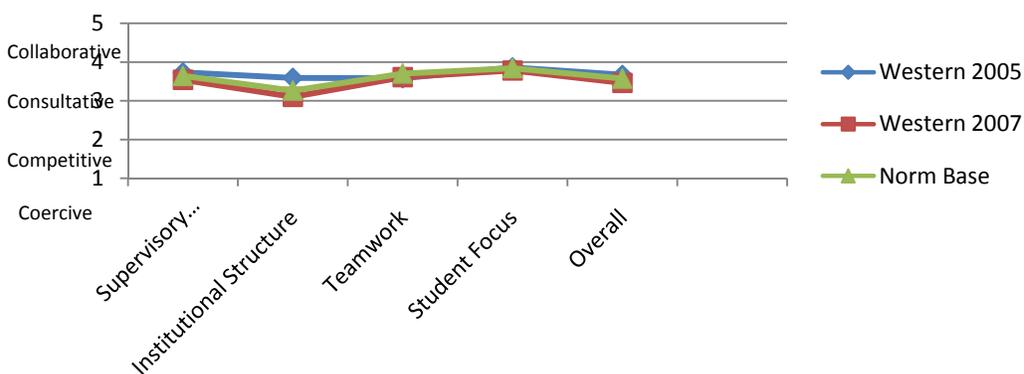
Results

5R1 Results for Leading and Communicating

Western's overall results for Leading and Communicating are displayed in Figure 4R1-1 Employee Satisfaction with College Environment. Additional analysis reveals the following:

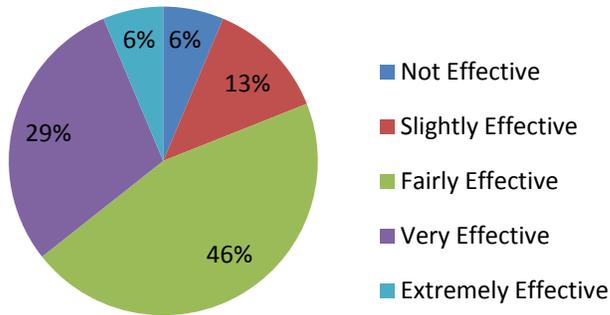
- Western's College climate is classified as one based on a consultative management style. It falls slightly below the Norm Base (Figure 5R1-1) but within the same classification.
- In reviewing each item of the PACE Survey:
 - No items fell within the coercive management style (between 1.0 and 2.0)
 - Eleven fell within the competitive management style (between 2.0 and 3.0)
 - Forty-two fell within a consultative management style (between 3.0 and 4.0)
 - Three fell within the collaborative management style (between 4.0 and 5.0)
- Western's effectiveness with various methods of communication is rated as fairly effective to very effective.
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Figure 5R1-1 PACE Comparative Analysis of College Climate



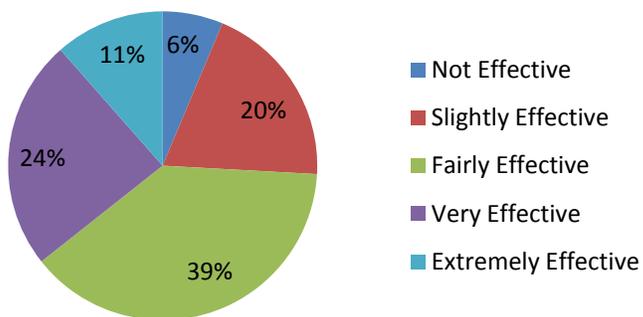
Source: PACE Survey, Human Resources, 2007

Figure 5R1-2 Effectiveness of Information Flow Sheets



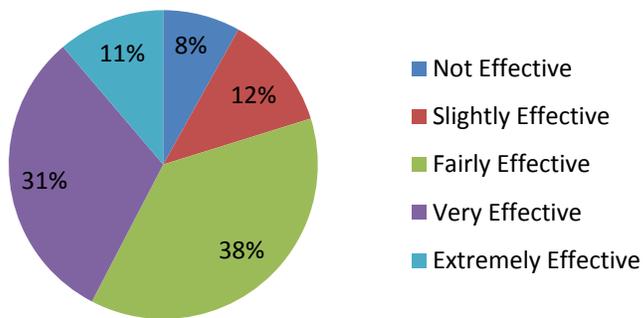
Source: Internal Communication Survey, October 2006, Strategic Effectiveness

Figure 5R1-3 Effectiveness of Intranet



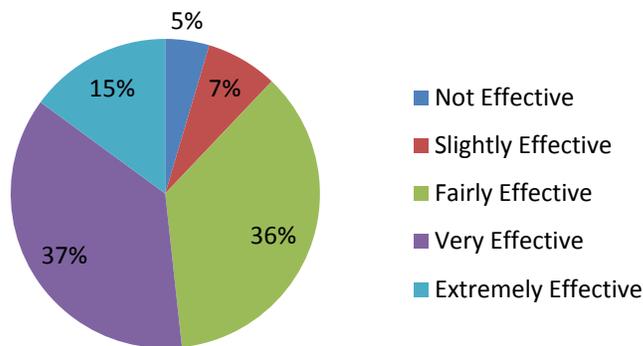
Source: Internal Communication Survey, October 2006, Strategic Effectiveness

Figure 5R1-4 Effectiveness of College Day



Source: Internal Communication Survey, October 2006, Strategic Effectiveness

Figure 5R1-5 Effectiveness of Meetings



Source: Internal Communication Survey, October 2006, Strategic Effectiveness

5R2 Comparative Results

Western's overall results for Leading and Communicating are compared nationally in Figures 4R1-1 and 5R1-1. Western falls slightly below the national Norm Base.

Improvement

5I1 Improving Current Processes

Western uses feedback from the PACE, from the 2006 Methods for Internal Communication Survey, and from ongoing event surveys to improve current processes for leading and communicating. Project teams are created when necessary.

5I2 Setting Targets for Improvement

Western sets target for improvement using the national Norm Base in PACE and by seeking incremental improvement each time an event survey is administered. When available, Western's goal is to exceed comparative means and strive to become best in class.

As a result of the PACE, Western has targeted the following improvement priorities for leading and communicating. These are areas on the PACE that received a mean score of 2.5 or less:

- Positively motivate performance
- Share information
- Use problem solving techniques
- Recognize and reward for efforts
- Make decisions at the appropriate level
- Organize the college

Results of surveys are shared in large groups such as Management Forum, and in smaller groups such as division meetings. The information is also available through Western's intranet. Through the sharing of results, Western gathers ideas as to how these processes can be improved. For example, senior leadership received feedback through an event survey that it could improve communication if meeting agendas and minutes were posted on the intranet. Western has implemented this process – allowing for the sharing of information at all levels in the College.