

PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AND ACCREDITATION AT WESTERN – A QUALITY SUMMARY



Excellence, one of Western's foundational values, is demonstrated every day at the College. Establishment of the Framework for Performance Excellence as the organizational blueprint, along with the college values, is an important step in achieving the College's Vision 2020. In September 2000, Western was selected as one of thirteen charter organizations to participate in AQIP. Throughout the next decade, Western actively participated in both the evolution of AQIP and the application of the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence in Education.

In 2001, Western joined the Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN), a higher education membership organization that provides leaders with significant networking and learning opportunities to foster continuous improvement and achievement of performance excellence. Each year, CQIN identifies a group of high performing learning partners from across other sectors such as manufacturing, service, or health care organizations. These learning partners willingly share their successful strategies, processes, and approaches with CQIN member institutions. Western's president and accreditation officer collaborate with CQIN to develop annual team learning experiences. Over 65 different Western employees have had the opportunity to attend CQIN Summer Institutes to learn from organizations such as The Ritz Carlton, Toyota, Boeing, Poudre Valley Health Care Systems, and Disney. Lessons learned have been brought back to the College and have become part of Western's performance excellence tool box. Often, CQIN participants bring CQIN learning partners to campus as keynote speakers during college in-services and community events.

As part of its commitment to provide educational programs and services that meet the highest educational standards and the quality expectations of students, employers, and other stakeholders, Western formalized its commitment to performance excellence. In 2011, the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence in Education was adopted by Western and its District Board as the framework for systems improvement.

In July 2011, Western was one of the first colleges to pioneer a Baldrige-based Systems Appraisal as a key component of the AQIP accreditation process. Submitted to the Wisconsin Center for Performance Excellence as part of the Wisconsin Forward Award Application process, the Systems Appraisal described Western's commitment to excellence in its leadership; planning; students and stakeholders; workforce; operations; and measurement, analysis, and knowledge management.

Feedback from both the AQIP and Baldrige processes has informed Western's strategic planning and improvement efforts. In 2013, in response to feedback from both the Baldrige process and the AQIP process, Western adopted an additional strategy to enhance its framework for performance excellence. In consultation with Partners in Leadership, the authors of the *Oz Principle* (<http://www.ozprinciple.com/>), Western began its work to "Create the Essential Experience through a Culture of Accountability." Key components of this strategy include (1) the establishment of Key Results that provide focus for all members of the organization; (2) steps to accountability that include operating "above the line;" (3) joint accountability through the philosophy of "See It, Own It, Solve It, Do It,®" and (4) focused feedback in all directions and at all levels of the organization.

Appendix A illustrates Western's Framework for Performance Excellence. Grounded in the College's mission, vision, and key results, this framework is reinforced through the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence in Education. The Culture of Accountability where individuals "see it, own it, solve it, and do it®" wraps the framework in an essential experience that all employees can influence.

As Western continues on its quest for excellence and uses its Vision 2020 to guide the College's journey, it is important to acknowledge the prolific change experienced by many of Western's employees, students, and stakeholders. In 2011, the state of Wisconsin passed Act 10 which eliminated most collective bargaining rights for public employees. With three active collective bargaining units, Western transitioned from a union contract environment to an employee handbook. During this time, the College experienced a surge in enrollment and a simultaneous decline in state funding.

In 2012, Western's district stakeholders supported an \$80 million referendum to improve facilities. Many of Western's academic programs will undergo curriculum changes to incorporate new equipment and learning environment design. In addition to the facility upgrades, Western has recently experienced other systemic changes. These include a transition to a new student information system, centralized scheduling, and a trimester calendar.

Action Projects

Western has leveraged the AQIP Action Project model to guide major college initiatives. Action Projects use a project charter and the Plan, Do, Check, Adjust process. Current Action Projects include:

1. Creation of an Implementation Plan for a Trimester System
2. Creation of an Implementation Plan for Centralized Scheduling
3. Creation of a Key Results-based Institutional Research Model

Past AQIP Action Projects include:

- Enrollment: Do we get them?
- Faculty Advising and High-Risk Counseling Pilot
- Enhancing Employee Development Using an Employee Success Model
- Retention: Do we keep them?
- Online Student Readiness
- Integration of College-wide System Thinking at Western
- Student Learning: Do they learn?
- Creation of WIDS 2 Web Implementation Plan
- Improving Internal Communication through the Development of a Comprehensive Communication Plan
- Enhance Employee Satisfaction and Success
- Diversity Task Force Initiative
- Planning Continuous Improvement: Developing and Implementing a Five-Year Strategic Plan

Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies as Cited in Feedback Reports

AQIP/Baldrige Option Systems Appraisal Feedback

The AQIP/Baldrige Option Team identified the following issues related to the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and other expectations:

Feedback:

2.D. *"The college does not fully deploy its ethics policies and practices to all of its stakeholders, nor does it review these approaches to identify improvements. Full deployment and review of ethics practices may help ensure that ethical behaviors occur in all college and stakeholder interactions (WFA Feedback Report, p. 7). While this statement is not supported by examples and includes no indication of the scope of the concern, it identifies an important area for stakeholder focus and continual process improvement that the institutional may explore."*

2.E. “The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly. The College’s response focuses primarily upon standards for institutional research and data management, as well as access to information for decision-making, and documents oversight by the Research and Technology Team (RTT). Ethical standards for students in applying knowledge are provided in policies on conduct, and the College further supplies policies on intellectual property. The College may benefit, however, from a more explicit statement that defines knowledge more broadly, includes guidelines for the ethical conduct of research, and documents support systems for student research.”

Response:

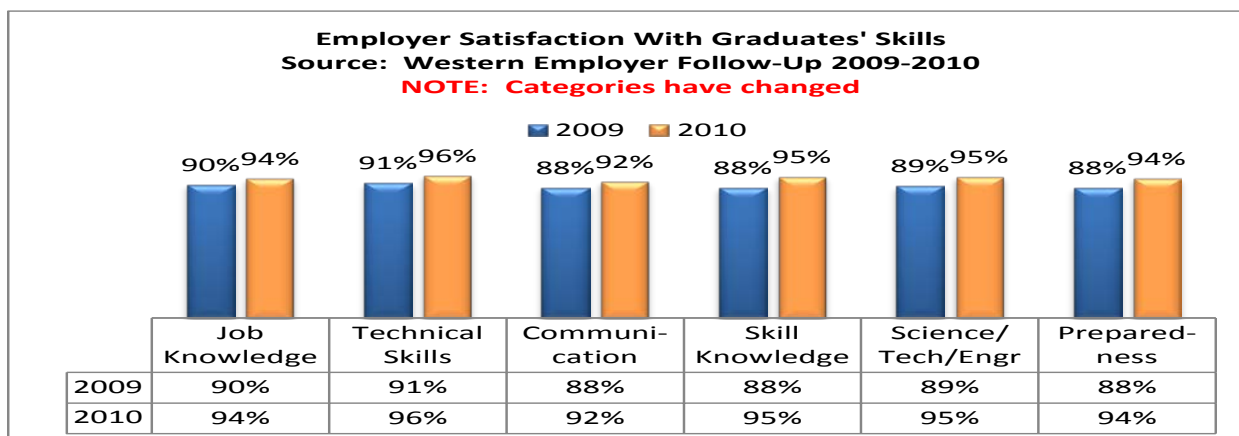
Western has addressed this feedback by adjusting its process for receiving ethics-related complaints. An ethics hotline has been established, formal student complaint system is being created, and information has been updated in the Employee Handbook. Western’s District Board Policy and Instruction Committee serves as the review board for research requests. Processes have been established to guide the administration of student surveys. Western’s newest AQIP Action Project focuses on the creation of an Institutional Research Model. This model will address and support the review of student research that involves human subjects.

Feedback:

4.B. “Western uses admission-to-placement assessments to monitor student educational improvement and achievement. Its 4-way approach of (1) entrance, (2) on-going (formative), (3) exit (summative), and (4) confirmative (job placement) assessments provide a holistic view of student progress and success. Entrance assessments of in-coming students in reading, writing, and math skills are used for placing students in appropriate courses. Equally important is the final confirmative assessment measure which indicates graduates’ success. However, the College should consider offering some explanation of the downward trending numbers in Figure 7-32 (Application) relating to Employer-Follow-Up-Satisfaction in some categories in 2006 and 2007 relative to previous years indicated. Moreover, the Fig. 7-33 Employer Follow-Up data stops with 2007. Clearly it is to Western’s advantage to bring this data up to date.”

Response:

Western believes that the data in Figure 7-32 of the Wisconsin Forward Award was misinterpreted by the evaluation team. The chart portrays both “satisfied” and “very satisfied” and the combined rates improved from 97% in 2005-2006 to 98% in 2009-2010. Western’s College Scorecard includes an updated version of Figure 7-33. As indicated in the chart below, the 2010 rates show marked improvement over the 2009 rates. The College is in the process of conducting the next assessment of Employer Satisfaction with Graduates’ Skills.



Wisconsin Forward Award Feedback

Appendix B includes a summary and comparison of feedback received from the 2002 and 2008 Baldrige Applications and the 2011 Wisconsin Forward Award Application. This document has served as a roadmap for Western’s Senior Leadership Team’s performance excellence work.

As indicated in the summary and comparison document, Western has maintained levels in several areas including:

- senior leadership
- governance and social responsibilities
- strategy development
- measurement, analysis, and improvement of organizational performance
- management of information, information technology, and knowledge
- workforce engagement
- work systems design
- work process management and improvement

Western has experienced an increase in scoring in strategy implementation and workforce environment. The College has experienced a decrease in scoring in voice of the customer and customer engagement. Several specific opportunities for improvement were noted and Western has worked to respond as follows:

Leadership	
Opportunity for Improvement	Response
1.1a(1) Mission, Vision, Values Deployment.	Western has adapted the Employee Success Plan process to incorporate the college values. College in-service days are structured around Western’s values. The College has recently re-organized, and a new strategy team structure is currently in development. Strategies and tactics such as the identification of four Key Results, frequent Town Hall meetings, and periodic Information Flow Sheets from the president have been deployed. All employees are scheduled to attend Creating the Essential Experience through a Culture of Accountability training to achieve alignment at the individual, team, department, and College level.
1.2a(2) Lack of systematic evaluation of leader performance.	The president has conducted two 360 degree evaluations. The College’s climate survey incorporates specific questions about Western’s leadership team.
1.2b(1) Managing societal concerns and adverse impacts.	Western has implemented a process of conducting community surveys before embarking upon major initiatives such as the \$80 million facilities referendum.
1.2b(2) Lack of fully deployed ethics policies and tracking.	Western has established an Ethics Hotline to collect and track ethics concerns. In addition, the Human Resources Director serves on the Senior Leadership Team and provides a conduit for information from employee groups. The college engaged the services of a third party to review and provide recommendations for changes to current written policies.

Strategic Planning	
Opportunity for Improvement	Response
2.1a(1) Lack of evaluation of strategic planning process and cycles of learning.	Western has recently restructured. The new Senior Leadership Team now includes an Associate Vice President of Strategic Effectiveness and Engagement. An essential function of this position is to lead the development of the College's strategic plan through oversight of the master and annual planning processes.
2.1b(2) Lack of clear alignment between strategic objectives and strategic challenges and advantages (as described in application).	Western has completed two full cycles of revisions to its strategic plan. Vision 2020 now guides the work of the college. Key Results have been identified and the College has adopted the Creating a Creating the Essential Experience through a Culture of Accountability model to connect each individual employee and all work to four strategic objectives and four Key Results. Western has engaged the assistance of Maguire and Associates to develop a strategic enrollment management process and plan.
2.1b(2) Lack of clear strategies to address sudden changes in funding levels.	Western has deployed a five-year budget projection process to assist in planning for sudden changes in funding levels. The College has enhanced its financial stability by adjusting post-retirement benefits, conducting systematic annual budget and open position reviews, and through banked resources to achieve Vision 2020. Recently, over \$6 million in grants have been aligned with college strategies and the Vision 2020 concepts.
2.1b(1) No timetable for accomplishing key strategic objectives.	Western has identified four Key Results with a timetable of 2020 for achievement.
2.1b(1) Vision 2020 lacks short and medium term plans to address short and longer term challenges.	Western's Senior Leadership Team is working on a plan to help the organization "pace its progress." Structured around the four strategic objectives and Key Results, this plan will assist individuals and groups in prioritizing plans during a time of significant change and transition.
2.2a(1) No means for ensuring that each action plan is coordinated with strategic plan or individual prioritized action plans.	Using the Creating the Essential Experience through a Culture of Accountability model and a focus on Key Results, Western will begin in the summer of 2014 to study its approach to integrated planning, budgeting, and continuous improvement. The goal is to align continuous improvement activities at all levels with the planning and budgeting cycles and Key Results achievement. In addition, Western is restructuring its organizational teams to allow for a more cohesive approach.
2.2a(6) Lack of processes to ensure rapid response to changing needs.	Western is re-evaluating its curriculum, scheduling, calendaring, and program development processes to be more responsive to its stakeholders. Using Lean processes, the College is studying how it can integrate and streamline processes thereby reducing lead time and delays. This will allow for the College to develop new programming, allocate funding, and ensure consistent information for key stakeholders such as students and employers. Two current Action Projects (Trimester Transition and Centralized Scheduling) are designed to improve responsiveness. A recently completed Action Project, WIDS 2 Web, also focused on improving rapid response. Western's new student information system, PowerCampus, was selected for its ability to collect and report

	data to make rapid adjustments to services and programs. In addition, Western uses “pilots” to try new things. Combined with cycles of PDCA, this allows the college to quickly respond, yet monitor the progress and make changes before full-scale implementation.
2.2b Use of projections and comparative data not well-deployed.	Western’s newest Action Project is geared to the creation of an Institutional Research Model focused on Key Results. In addition, the College was recently accepted into the Achieving the Dream program. Combined, these two efforts will assist the College in developing infrastructure and systematic processes to use data.

Customer Focus

Opportunity for Improvement	Response
3.1a(1, 2) No systematic approach for using student satisfaction data. Listening mechanisms do not yield actionable information that can be used to improve.	To address several opportunities within this category, Western has partnered with Maguire and Associates to develop a strategic enrollment management process. Combined with Western’s regular student satisfaction and student engagement assessment processes, work with Maguire and Associates will provide the opportunity for the college to better understand potential, current, and past student patterns. A key component of the strategic enrollment management process will be to better understand population segments and their satisfaction and success with the College. The College is in the process of creating a formal complaint tracking process and system. It has purchased Maxient software to assist in the process. The District Board has adopted a policy on routine complaints. Western’s Action Project to create a Key Results-focused Institutional Research Model will also provide a framework for the College to collect, analyze, and use student-related data. The establishment of a set of Key Results that includes metrics for stakeholder satisfaction will help all employees connect to student and other stakeholder satisfaction. Overall satisfaction scores remain very high despite many transitions at the college. The College has established the division of Adult Learning to design programming and provide case management services for this expanding population of learners.
3.1a(1, 2) Listening mechanisms are not tailored for different student groups.	
3.1a(1, 2) Lack of systematic approach to collect and use dissatisfaction data.	
3.2b(2) Lack of segmented complaint data and systematic process to review.	
3.2a(3, 4) Lack of segmentation of student data and use to determine satisfaction and engagement of particular groups.	
3.2a(2) Lack of systematic approach to provide all student segments with information and support. Lack of data collection related to support services.	

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

Opportunity for Improvement	Response
4.1a Lack of effective process for selecting appropriate benchmarks and target setting.	Western’s Action Project to create a Key Results-focused Institutional Research Model and involvement in Achieving the Dream will address feedback related to Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management. The College has recently transitioned from a consortium-based student information system (Peoplesoft) to an institution-owned
4.1c(1) Lack of effective and systematic approach to sharing best practices across the organization.	
4.1b Limited evidence that measurement and analysis has improved organizational performance or supported innovation.	

4.2a(2,3) No effective and systematic way to make relevant data available to suppliers and partners.	<p>student information system (PowerCampus). This new flexibility will allow the College to develop its own reports and to segment data according to Key Results and College needs. For the first time, Western will be able to track student patterns and segment information throughout the entire enrollment management pipeline.</p> <p>The College has recently hired a new Institutional Research Analyst to assist with the establishment of a formal Institutional Research Model.</p> <p>Western's Title III grant has provided faculty with funds to explore and share new best practices. A best practice-sharing fair will be launched at the end of April during Program Development Days.</p>
4.2a(1) No effective and systematic method for validating data.	

Workforce Focus

Opportunity for Improvement	Response
5.2a(1) Has not demonstrated same level of engagement with adjunct as with full-time staff.	<p>Through Western's Human Resources Department and the Academic Excellence and Development Division, the College has established a plan to provide additional supports to adjunct faculty. This includes a formal adjunct faculty orientation process and professional development opportunities.</p> <p>The College has actively recruited adjunct faculty for representation on committees. The Strategic Enrollment Management team and the Culture of Accountability facilitation team now include adjunct faculty.</p>
5.1a(2) Organization does not appear to reflect the diversity of the community.	Western's Diversity Task Force continues to work on this particular issue. A member of the Diversity Team serves on all selection committees.
5.2b(1) Lack of evaluation of PACE survey and pulse check processes and other possible assessment mechanisms.	Western has increased the use of Town Hall Meetings and Information Flow Sheets to share and discuss feedback from various assessment mechanisms. The recently identified Key Results include a metric for stakeholder satisfaction.
<p>5.2c(1) Lack of systematic process to share best practices and capture organizational knowledge from retiring employees.</p> <p>5.2c(3) Lack of demonstrated systematic approach to manage career progression within the organization.</p>	<p>Western continues to hire replacements before individuals retire from the College.</p> <p>Individuals interested in or new to leadership positions have the opportunity to attend professional development activities such as the Wisconsin Leadership Development Institute (WLDI) or a local Servant Leadership group.</p> <p>The Employee Success Plan is designed to help individual employees identify professional development goals.</p> <p>An emphasis has been placed on providing faculty with opportunities to serve as formal leaders through one-year professional development positions in management. At the end of these opportunities, they in turn have the option to return to faculty positions or to apply for or remain in the leadership position.</p>

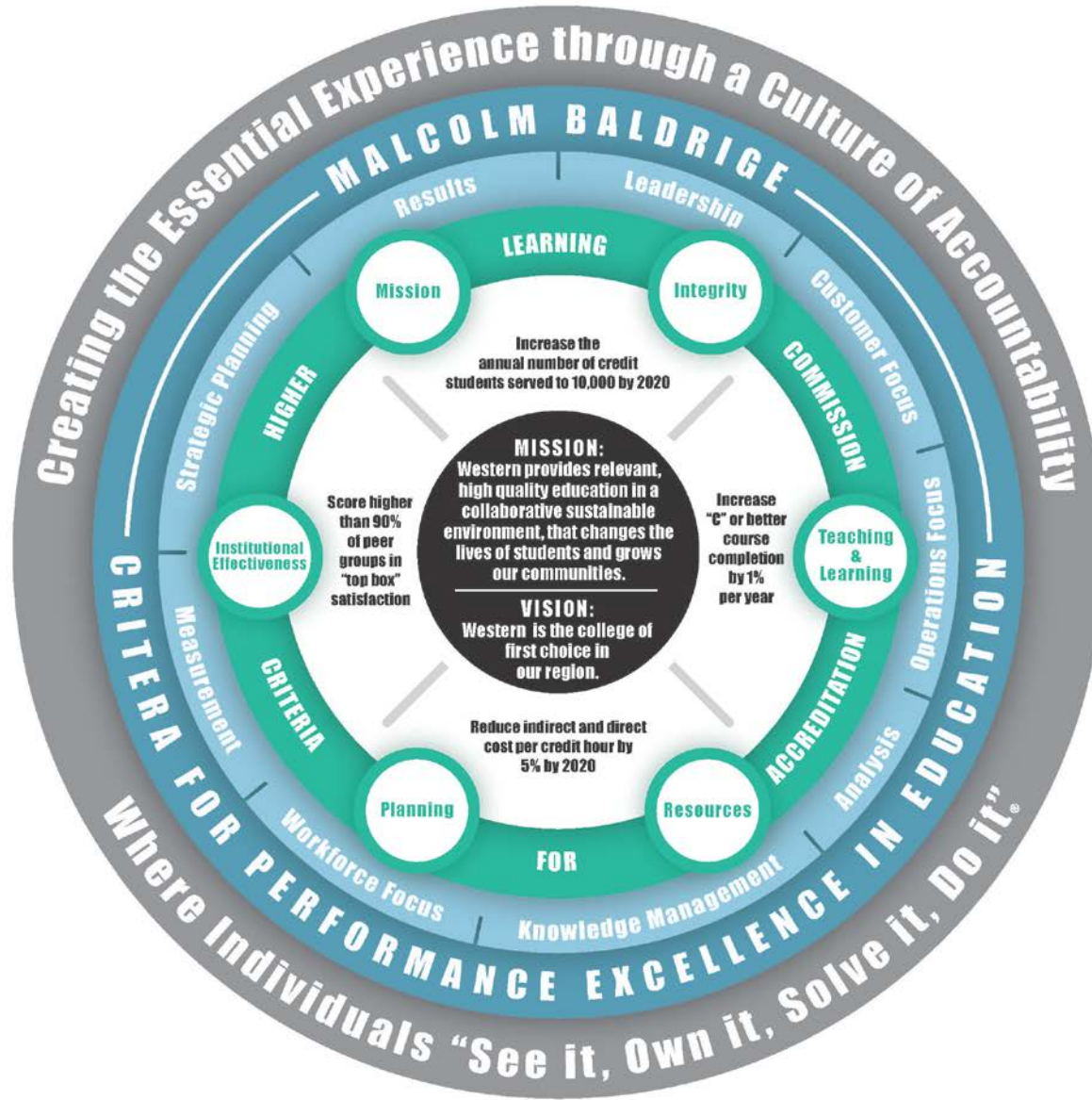
Operations Focus	
Opportunity for Improvement	Response
6.1 Improvement approaches are not widely deployed (QRP, cross-functional teams, college scorecard, etc.). Lack of awareness of improvement tools.	<p>Western will revisit its integrated program planning and evaluation (QRP) process in 2014. The recent transition from Peoplesoft to PowerCampus has limited the College's ability to analyze data. In addition, the Wisconsin Technical College System is in the midst of redesigning its data systems. Progress in both areas will allow Western to redesign and deploy new improvement approaches.</p> <p>A focus on Creating the Essential Experience through a Culture of Accountability and the four Key Results will provide a mechanism to create greater awareness of improvement processes and tools.</p>
6.1b(2) No systematic process to control costs, prevent errors and rework.	One of Western's Key Results is to reduce direct and indirect costs per credit hour by 5% by 2020. A focus on cost-reduction, including individual and organizational accountability, will assist the organization in developing systematic processes to control costs and to prevent errors and rework.
<p>6.2b(1) No systematic approach to designing work processes. Difficult to determine what needs to be improved.</p> <p>6.2b(2) No systematic approach to managing the supply chain, including evaluating suppliers and validating their qualifications.</p>	<p>Western has sought the assistance of several external agencies to help in the design of new work processes. Western's Academic Excellence and Development Division and IT Department are working with a Lean consultant and a systems integration consultant to redesign major college processes.</p> <p>The College's Human Resources Department is working with Fox Lawson to standardize job descriptions and to align worker compensation practices.</p> <p>Western's work with Maguire and Associates to create a strategic enrollment management process addresses student-focused processes and will uncover opportunities for improvements in work design.</p>
6.2b(3) Limited deployment of process improvement across the organization despite the availability of PDCA and Lean.	<p>Western is in the process of redesigning its strategy teams. These newly created teams will operate from project charters with formal Plan, Do, Check, and Adjust components.</p> <p>The new trimester calendar provides for additional "non-student" days for the college to work on process and program improvement.</p>

Summary

Western's mission is to provide relevant, high quality education in a collaborative sustainable environment that changes the lives of students and grows our communities. The vision is to be the college of first choice in our region. The College's rich history and engagement in continuous quality improvement as well as the Framework for Performance Excellence provide the opportunity for the College to achieve its Key Results. Western will continue on its journey using the AQIP model, the Baldrige criteria, and the Creating the Essential Experience through a Culture of Accountability to refine and implement Vision 2020.

Appendix A

Framework for Performance Excellence



Wisconsin Forward Award Summary and Comparisons

Baldrige 2002			Baldrige 2008		Wisconsin Forward Award 2011	
Category 1	30-40%	Leadership	50-65% 30-45%	Leadership 1.1 Senior Leadership 1.2 Governance and Social Responsibilities	50-65% 30-45%	Leadership 1.1 Senior Leadership 1.2 Governance and Social Responsibilities
Category 2	30-40%	Strategic Planning	50-65% 30-45%	Strategic Planning 2.1 Strategy Development 2.2 Strategy Deployment	50-65% 50-65%	Strategic Planning 2.1 Strategy Development 2.2 Strategy Implementation
Category 3	30-40%	Student, Stakeholder, Market Focus	50-65% 50-65%	Student, Stakeholder, Market Focus 3.1 Student, Stakeholder, and Market Knowledge 3.2 Student and Stakeholder Relationships & Satisfaction	30-45% 30-45%	Customer Focus 3.1 Voice of the Customer 3.2 Customer Engagement
Category 4	50-60%	Information and Analysis	30-45% 30-45%	Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management 4.1 Measurement, Analysis & Improvement of Org Performance 4.2 Management of Information, Information Technology, and Knowledge	30-45% 30-45%	Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management 4.1 Measurement, Analysis & Improvement of Org Performance 4.2 Management of Information, Information Technology, and Knowledge
Category 5	30-40%	Faculty and Staff Focus	50-65% 30-45%	Workforce Focus 5.1 Workforce Engagement 5.2 Workforce Environment	50-65% 50-65%	Workforce Focus 5.2 Workforce Engagement 5.1 Workforce Environment
Category 6	50-60%	Process Management	30-45% 30-45%	Process Management 6.1 Work Systems Design 6.2 Work Process Management and Improvement	30-45% 30-45%	Operations Focus 6.1 Work Systems 6.2 Work Processes
	30-40%	Results		Process Items (Band 3) Results (Band 2)		Process Items (Band 4) Results (Band 4) Overall (Band 4)