AQIP Criterion Four: Valuing People

Context for Analysis

4C1 Organizing Work and Jobs

The distinctive ways in which Western organizes its work environment, work activities, and job classifications to strengthen its focus on student learning and development are described below. Western is focusing on systematic and aligned approaches in this area to generate results that impact the organization as a whole and student goal attainment.

Work and jobs at the College are designed primarily around functions. They align work areas with units or employees who work collaboratively to keep current with educational service needs. Faculty, staff, and administrators work together to ensure that the College achieves its strategic priorities, and meets student and stakeholder needs. In addition, faculty positions are designed to meet the required educational design framework described in Figure 1-2. Their workload is calculated in units that include both teaching and non-teaching activities.

Teams serve as a means of communication, interaction, and formal and informal staff knowledge/skill sharing across departments, jobs, and locations. They provide the framework for strengthening employee-based decision making at all levels. This team structure (Figure 5-2) helps the College in both its planning and decision-making processes and offers opportunities for input to College work processes. Although the formal organizational structure described in Criterion 5 (Leading and Communicating) depicts the way supervision, planning, budgeting, and formal reporting occurs, the committee/team structure illustrates the way College/District work is accomplished.

One of the most significant ways Western focuses on student learning and development is demonstrated by the primary importance that is placed on hiring the best and most qualified faculty to fill positions. Faculty are hired based on their expertise in the discipline, work-place experience, and appropriate educational background and credentials (Figure 4-1). In addition to the academic credentials, all faculty meet certification requirements set forth by the Wisconsin Technical College System Board.

Figure 4-1 Faculty Educational Credentials

DEGREE	NUMBER OF FACULTY
Doctorate	6
Associate Degree	2
Masters	124
Bachelors	49
Bachelors Equivalency	30

Source: Faculty Catalog, Human Resources, 2007

4C2 Key Institutional and Demographic Factors

The key institutional and geographic factors that determine how Western addresses its work environment and job classification include:
- Collaboration with collective bargaining units
- Geographically dispersed campuses
- Size of and demand for skills needed in adjunct faculty pool

Faculty and staff at the College are organized formally and represented by the Western Wisconsin Federation of Employees--Local 3605. The Teamsters Local 695 represents the custodial staff. Local 3605 is an integral part of the work system at Western. Faculty and staff participate by providing input on job design, compensation, and recognition through union contract negotiations. Local 3605 represents the full- and part-time contract faculty, non-teaching professional (NTP), and Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel (PSRP). Members from these employee groups represent Local 3605 on key College steering and implementation teams. The Federation bargains with the local District Board on wages, hours, and working conditions and also represents the members of their respective units when complaints arise. New contracts were ratified in February 2004 for the Faculty/NTP and PSRP employee groups using cooperative decision-making (consensus bargaining) to address non-monetary issues. The Skilled Craft employees are not represented by a union group.

In addition to faculty and staff who are represented by Local 3605, the College utilizes MANPOWER (temporary custodial), Olsten Staffing (temporary support services), and Riverfront (employment for developmentally disabled adults). These outside sources provide a pool of qualified individuals who fill part-time or temporary staff positions at the College. The temporary assignments have resulted in regular employment for some individuals using the standard selection process. Figure O-7 depicts the employee profile for full and part-time employees.

Western's geographically dispersed campuses require flexible resources for teaching both credit and non-credit courses and for administrative support. To meet this need, a database of approximately 600 adjunct faculty is maintained, and approximately 200 instructors teach part-time each semester. Adjunct faculty who teach credit courses must meet the same certification requirements as full-time faculty. An Adjunct Faculty Handbook provides these part-time employees with important information about the College and access to needed resources. Several instructional divisions also hold their own adjunct faculty orientation sessions.

The administrative support to the extended campuses is connected to the main campus through an organized group called SWEET. This team meets regularly to discuss opportunities for collaboration and consistency in work across the extended campuses.

4C3 Demographic Trends

The demographic trends that the College analyzes as it looks at its workforce needs over the next decade include the following:
- Continued increase in planned retirements of faculty, staff, and administrators
- Emerging technology that will impact the program offerings and methods of delivery and require faculty and staff to develop specialized skills
- Emerging or declining occupations that may require altered program offerings and different educational or occupational credentials for faculty
- Changes in the size of the populations the College serves (i.e. a decrease in the number of 18-25 year-olds and an increase in aging populations)
- Changes in the size or types of minority populations throughout the District

4C4 Training Initiatives

Key faculty, staff, and administrative training initiatives that the College is currently planning for support the implementation of the strategic plan. They include:
- Technology in the workplace (Blackboard, Office 2007, Peoplesoft, student email, Voice-over-IP)
- Curriculum design (WIDS)
- Customer service training
- Lean methodology, process mapping, problem-solving, consensus-based decision-making (collective bargaining teams)
- Leadership development
- Skillsoft

- WTCS certification requirements
- Student advising training for faculty

Employee Success plans identify individual training requested by employees to aid in their individual development and where possible, these requirements are aggregated to provide on campus training to address multiple needs.

Processes

4P1 Identifying and Specifying Credentials and Skills

Broadly speaking, Western identifies specific credentials, skills, and values required for faculty, staff, and administrators by carefully reviewing, revising, and updating all open positions that occur at the College prior to posting the position—either internally or externally. Faculty descriptions that focus on key duties and responsibilities have been agreed to in negotiations and are coupled with state certification and applicable accreditation requirements to define the essential qualifications for new faculty and instructional administrative staff. Special attention is paid during the interview process to incorporate behavioral interview questions that help selection committees determine if the candidate shares Western's values.

Beginning at the unit level, managers identify characteristics and skills needed by potential employees. In addition, faculty skills and characteristics are determined by certification requirements defined by the WTCS education design code described in Criterion 1. Managers closely examine each vacancy in terms of its function to determine if the position needs to be restructured, redesigned, or eliminated to effectively meet emerging College needs. The College's open positions report is reviewed regularly. Each position is reviewed to determine (1) if the position needs to be filled immediately or if it can be held open for a time thus allowing a temporary salary savings, (2) if the position can be combined with one or more existing positions, and (3) if the position can be eliminated either immediately or after a short transition period staffed by other staff or a temporary employee.

Job descriptions are developed based upon the skills and qualifications needed. A position reclassification process is in place for both administrators and PSRP. This method recognizes changes in job roles to address the changing needs and operations of the organization. Any management position without clearly identified internal successors are posted simultaneously, both internally and externally. Position postings within the faculty/NTP and PSRP classifications are grouped in three tiers. To provide the opportunity for career progression, internal candidates are given preference based upon the tier criteria before qualified external candidates are considered.

Western makes certain through its hiring process that the people it employs possess the requisite characteristics through the use of its defined hiring process. The hiring process ensures legal compliance with statutory and College selection requirements while striving to employ the best-qualified candidate for the position. The Human Resources Department serves as a resource to each unit/selection committee throughout the hiring process.

4P2 Recruiting and Retaining Employees

New employees are recruited using a variety of media and methods including:
- Electronic postings (College, WTCS, and local Job Service web sites)
- Local and regional newspapers within a tri-state area, trade journals, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*
- Community links fostered through the Minority Resource Office and the Diversity Team

Opportunities for staff to become familiar with the college include:
- One-day orientation session for new employees focused on Western's culture which includes its continuous improvement philosophy
- Two-day New Faculty Institute
- New faculty mentoring program
- Unit-specific Safety Training (i.e. blood-borne pathogen training for Health and Public Safety staff)

Efforts to retain new and existing employees include:
- Orientation sessions, training and development, development and review of Employee Success Plans
- Compensation and non-monetary reward/recognition strategies
- Work design strategies
- Health and well-being emphasis
- Focus on employee satisfaction

Western plans for changes in personnel by monitoring employee demographics (the potential for retirement) and by planning for adjustments in staff resources through the strategic planning and annual budgeting process. Western's succession planning for senior leaders includes initiating the hiring process for the successor in a timely manner so that the successor will have the opportunity to work with the retiring senior leader for a short time.

4P3 Work Process and the Impact on High Performance and Ethical Conduct

Western's highly integrated system of standing committees, steering teams, project and process teams forms the foundation of the College's work processes and activities. This integrated and cross-functional structure contributes to communications, cooperation, high performance, innovation, empowerment, organizational learning, and skill sharing. Figure 5-2 illustrates Western's team structure and how communication is facilitated to others in the organization. In addition, Western leverages its intranet web site so that all employees can stay current and knowledgeable about decisions that are made.

The College ensures the ethical practices of all employees by defining policies and procedures that are communicated in the Employee Handbook that is available on wire. Checks and balances exist in areas such as the College's cash handling process to ensure a multi-layered/multi-person approval process. In addition, the College has a Code of Ethics designed specifically to apply to employee use of the Internet and personal computers. As new employees are oriented to the College, these ethical practices are explained and emphasized. Any action by an employee that violates these ethical policies is dealt with swiftly and firmly. The College attorney is always consulted on such matters to assure fair and equitable treatment of the employee and strict adherence to College policy. Student and staff grievance processes provide opportunity for identification/sharing. Professional development days provide workshops related to ethical conduct.

4P4 Training

College-wide training is broad-based and addresses activities related to the College's long-term key objective *Enhance Employee Success*. Education, training, and development are provided to address College and personal staff needs. Training is provided through both internal and external resources such as The Higher Learning Commission, Pegasus, and CQIN.

Western motivates faculty, staff, and administrators to contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers by using a variety of processes and mechanisms including (1) Western's leadership system and employee success philosophy (Employee Success Plans), and (2) collaborative efforts of both management and the representative bargaining units. Department managers also play a significant role in reinforcing training. They identify key employees within their work unit or team to receive specialized training as needed. These employees' knowledge and skills are reinforced when the supervisor expects the employees to (1) implement the process at the College or within work units, (2) become content experts, and (3) train other employees.

Other motivating mechanisms open to employee groups include:
- Professional leave to attend conferences
- Non-paid professional leaves of absences that may include professional development
- Team/committee work that provides opportunities to participate/contribute to goals of specific teams that match interests and employee success goals of individuals
- Sabbaticals for faculty/NTP employee groups
- Occupational Competency Grant (a WTCS state grant with matching College funds) that supports three faculty per year to obtain up to 80 hours of on-the-job training
- WTCS Technical Preparation Grant that provides counselors the opportunity to work in secondary educational support services
- Union-sponsored employee development activities such as its annual convention
- Tuition reimbursement for Administrative, Support and Technical, professional and custodial staff to encourage continuing formal education
- Salary adjustments and professional development funds for Faculty who pursue additional education
- College Foundation professional development resource for all staff to apply for support to attend local, regional, and national training, classes or conferences as either presenters or participants
- Department/Unit budgets that provide employee success funding
- Professional Development funds/sources including the faculty/NTP 0.5 percent of base salary

4P5 Determining Training Needs

The college determines its training needs through a variety of means including the Employee Success Plan process (refer to 4P6); the QRP; through departmental institutional planning; and through environmental scanning and trend monitoring. Employee needs segmented by employee groups are also identified from feedback received from the PACE Climate Survey. The results are used to develop a series of training activities which are open to all employee groups and include general and specialized training sessions as well as required training activities for some employee groups.

The training is aligned with the plans addressed in Criterion 8 (Planning Continuous Improvement) and augments its focus on helping students learn by the way in which it is designed and delivered. Organizational training for key College needs is identified in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2 Key Organizational Needs

NEED	ADDRESSED BY
Technology	In-House Computer Specialist Trainer, MIS Help Desk, Instructional Technology Team, Online Mentoring
Leadership/ Supervisor Development	Management Forum, WLDI, Chamber Leadership
New Faculty and Staff Orientation	New Employee Orientation, New Faculty Institute, New Faculty Mentoring
Safety	Safety Committee, Crisis Team, Physical Plant, Individual Units
Performance Measurement/ Improvement	Quality Review Process
Diversity	Diversity Team, Greater La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce Diversity Statement Program

Faculty and staff evaluate training and professional activities using formal and informal processes; i.e. written evaluations and verbal feedback. These results, coupled with results from needs surveys and the PACE Climate Survey, provide data that are analyzed and used by the Human Resources Department to continuously improve education and training offerings that align with the College's Strategic Priorities.

4P6 Designing and Using a Personnel Evaluation System

In 1999 the local District Board approved the Employee Success Policy which is a philosophy that promotes open communication among all employees and supports the belief that all employees can be successful if given the opportunity and appropriate support. With the development of the Employee Success Policy, Western identified guidelines that ensure an environment of encouragement, trust, and mutual commitment that is designed to reinforce employee growth, development, and training needs throughout their tenure at the College.

Employee success focuses on personal and professional goals of employees, and the development of individual plans to help staff achieve these goals. The plans align an individual's personal goals with division/unit goals and overall organizational goals. On occasion, performance issues arise and in these instances, a Special Performance Appraisal process is available. Figure 4-3 outlines Western's comprehensive performance evaluation methods.

4P7 Recognition, Reward, and Compensation System

Western's compensation plan is structured to attract and retain high quality faculty and staff. Compensation is negotiated for all employee groups excluding administrators; the District Board determines salary increases for administrators. The College has evolved with a varying pay scale, salary adjustment procedures for all employee groups that are described in Figure 4-3.

The College recognizes faculty, staff and teams for their achievements through recognition at District Board meetings, Information Flow Sheets from the President, and College-wide electronic notices. Examples of achievement include publications, performance, research, presentations at conferences, and activities such as curriculum improvements and grant awards to enhance student learning and development.

Employees are also recognized for exceptional quality efforts with verbal and written appreciation from their supervisor, other departments, and/or senior leaders. The Foundation hosts an annual year-end breakfast to recognize current retirees and to present years-of-service awards to staff. District Board members and retired employees are invited to participate.

Compensation incentives are also available to motivate faculty and staff to pursue professional development. As a result of the collective bargaining process:
- Faculty/NTP receive 0.5 percent of their base salary that is allocated to a professional development fund which can be used for any business related expense to include training, attending conferences, or purchasing materials/resources to meet their professional and business needs.
- PSRP, custodial, administrative staff and most NTP receive educational tuition reimbursement for course work completed up to sixty credits in a five year period.

Figure 4-3 Western's Salary Compensation and Performance Evaluation Methods

EMPLOYEE CATEGORY	WAGE AND SALARY ADMINISTRATION	SALARY ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES	PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND EMPLOYEE SUCCESS
Administrator	Job requirements, individual skills, abilities and training, willingness to accept new tasks, and past record of achievement determine position in the Salary Formula	• Annual adjustment • Equity adjustments • Job reclassification • Temporary assignment/ augmentation	• Implementation of the ES Policy • Probationary reviews for two years • Annual ES Plans are prepared thereafter

EMPLOYEE CATEGORY	WAGE AND SALARY ADMINISTRATION	SALARY ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES	PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND EMPLOYEE SUCCESS
Faculty/NTP	Outlined in Faculty/NTP Contract. Initial placement in the salary schedule is based on the education and relevant experience, both teaching and non-teaching	• Additional college credits (up to 35) beyond current degree • Additional work experience related to instructional area (up to a maximum of 12 years) • Step increases • Annual adjustments	• Implementation of the ES Policy • Probationary faculty are evaluated at least once per semester during the first three years of employment • Faculty develop annual ES Plans • Special Performance Appraisals, etc.
PSRP	Outlined in PSRP Contract	• Job reclassification • Longevity pay • Step increases • Annual adjustments	• Probationary reviews are made at the end of three months and prior to the completion of six months • Custodial have subsequent annual reviews • PSRP develop annual ES Plans for three year cycles with 18 month reviews.
Custodial	Outlined in Teamsters Contract		

4P8 Determining Key Issues Related to Staff Motivation

Western determines key issues related to the motivation of faculty, staff, and administrators by administering an employee climate survey every other year. The Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) survey was first administered to College staff in 1994. After exploring various climate survey instruments, Western determined that the four components of the PACE Climate Survey are appropriate measures to assess key factors related to employee well-being, satisfaction, and motivation. These four components include 1) supervisor relations, 2) teamwork, 3) institutional structure, 3) student focus. These components focus on both the College values and the strategic goal to Enhance Human Resource Development.

The Senior Leadership Team and Management Forum review and analyze the results (1) according to the collective College-wide response and (2) segmented by individual employee groups and by division/units to determine what strategies are needed to improve the work environment and to support employee well-being and satisfaction. Appropriate courses of action are identified to work on improving the College's score on the survey. The 2007 results compared to previous years saw little change (Figure 4R1-1). At this time, results are being shared with staff for feedback and action planning.

4P9 Providing for and Evaluating Employee Satisfaction, Health and Well-being

The College focuses on improving workplace health, safety, and well-being through the implementation of various activities and initiatives that are coordinated or monitored by the Wellness Center, Safety Committee, Crisis Team, Health Benefit Improvements Team and Security Services.

The College Safety Committee takes an active role in assessing safety and risk factors in the organization and in making recommendations based upon these assessments. The Crisis Team has also developed a Crisis Management Handbook that outlines procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency situation, and has had mock drills as well as one specific incident to work through its processes. The College provides a safe work environment and work climate with several basic security provisions for students, faculty, and staff that include providing 24-hour security service and escort services. Campus Security maintains monthly security logs and incident reports that are reported to senior leadership; the results are available on site.

The College's Wellness Manager develops, promotes, and implements health-related activities at the Western Wellness Center to all students and staff. In recent years, the Wellness Center has shifted its focus from a fitness-oriented facility to one that encourages and promotes a holistic and balanced lifestyle. It coordinates educational programs on personal health topics and activities/ facilities

including health risk and fitness assessments, personal training, health promotion programs, exercise rooms, swimming pool, gymnasium, and locker facilities. College employees and family members can join the Wellness Center for a reasonable annual fee. In 2007, the College implemented the first annual Health Risk Assessment through Mayo Health Systems. In addition to reports for participating staff and spouses, the system provides aggregate risk reports which will guide future group education.

Several formal and informal measures are used to evaluate employee satisfaction, health, and well-being. The formal, nationally-normed, biennial PACE Climate Survey is administered to collect qualitative data using a 1-5 Likert scale. The results provide both internal trend data and comparative data with other national two-year institutions.

Informal Pulse Check surveys are used as formative assessments to collect feedback on issues such as College values, parking, communication flow, and other issues that are of importance at a particular time to address a specific College need, work unit, or employee segment. Other indicators to assess employee satisfaction, well-being, and motivation are participation at training weeks, the favorable tenor of negotiations as a result of consensus bargaining, the low turnover rate (Figure 4R2-1) and low number of grievances which may reflect Western's collaborative work environment.
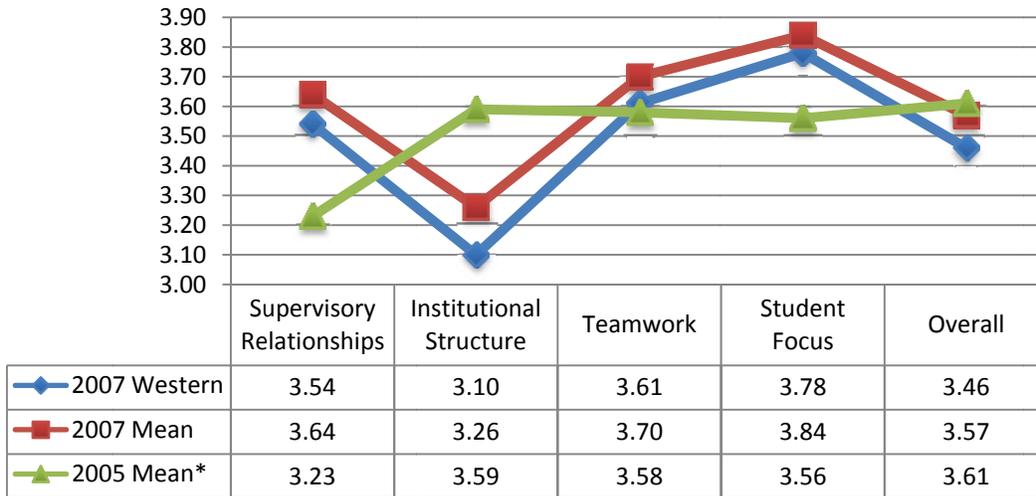
4P10 Regularly Collected Measures of Valuing People

The measures of valuing people that are collected and analyzed regularly include the employee survey satisfaction results (PACE).

Results

4R1 Results for Valuing People

Western's PACE Employee Climate Survey results indicate that Western is slightly below the 2007 national mean for all areas. This survey is a direct measure for one of the College's strategic priorities. The results have been shared with all managers in the College and they in turn are shared with all employees. Western is in the process of understanding the significance of the data and is collecting input as to how to respond.

Figure 4R1-1 Employee Satisfaction with College Environment

	Supervisory Relationships	Institutional Structure	Teamwork	Student Focus	Overall
2007 Western	3.54	3.10	3.61	3.78	3.46
2007 Mean	3.64	3.26	3.70	3.84	3.57
2005 Mean*	3.23	3.59	3.58	3.56	3.61

Source: PACE, 2007, Research Unit

One of Western's strategic priorities is to enhance employee success and satisfaction and this includes employee wellness. Figure 4R1-2 identifies the trends in Wellness Center membership. Western continues to develop programs and services that meet the needs of both students and staff.

**Figure 4R1-2 Wellness Center Student and Employee Membership**

Wellness Center Membership

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Students	1589	1180	1025	972	969
Staff	232	103	101	115	115

Source: Wellness Center, 2007

4R2 Results for Processes Associated with Valuing People

Western believes that its low employee turnover rate is indicative of the effectiveness of its processes related to Valuing People. Figure 4R2-1 illustrates Western's turnover rate compared to data from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics.
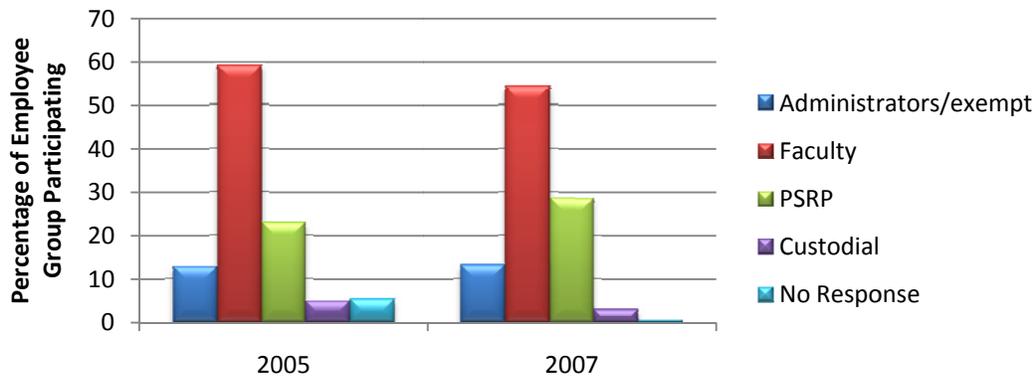
Figure 4R2-1 Attrition Rate vs. BLS Data
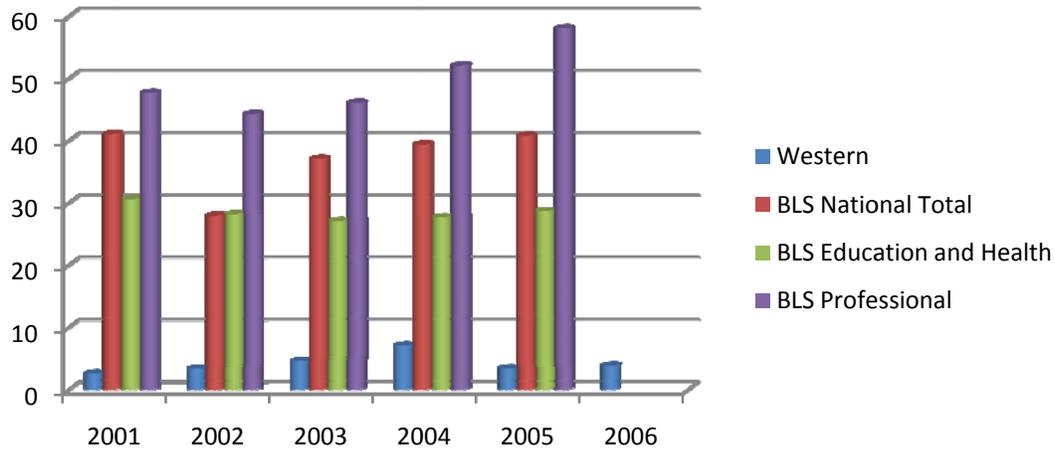
Source: Human Resources, 2007

Western's participation in the PACE survey dropped slightly in 2007 (Figure 4R2-2).

Figure 4R2-2 Participation in PACE Survey – 2005-2007 Comparison by Group

Source: Human Resources, 2007

Western's increase in the percentages of employees who have developed an Employee Success Plan demonstrate a commitment to its personnel evaluation system. Western acknowledges that it has an opportunity to increase the percentage of plans that are updated on an annual basis (4R2-3).

Figure 4R2-3 Participation in Employee Success Plans

Employee Success Plan Implementation Spring 2007					
	Total Employees	Total with Plan	Total with Current Plan	% with Plan	% with Current Plan
ADMN/Exempt	51	49	24	96%	49%
FAC	191	182	126	95%	69%
NTP	36	29	3	81%	10%
CST	17	17	14	100%	82%
PSRP	129	110	55	85%	50%
TOTAL	**424**	**387**	**222**	**91%**	**57%**

Source: Human Resources

4R3 Evidence that Indicates Productivity of Employees Helps to Reach Goals

Western conducted the PACE in April of 2007. Researchers at the National Initiative for Leadership and Effectiveness (NILIE) have synthesized from the literature four leadership or organizational systems ranging from coercive to collaborative. According to Likert (1967) the Collaborative System generally produces better results in terms of productivity, job satisfaction, communication and overall organizational climate. Four factors are measured (supervisory relationship, institutional structure, teamwork, student focus) and contribute to an overall determination of the type of climate at Western (coercive, competitive, consultative, or collaborative). Results from 2007 indicate that Western's climate results fall within the consultative range. The data also indicates that perceived levels of productivity and satisfaction have declined slightly since 2005 (Figure 4R3-1) and are below the Norm Base. Western recognizes this as an opportunity for improvement and it is addressing it in the strategic planning process.

Figure 4R3-1 2007 PACE Results
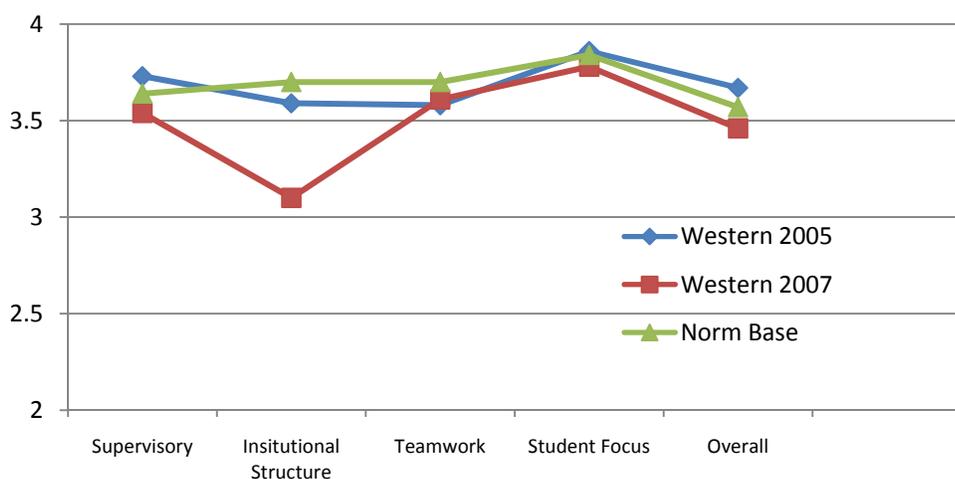
*Norm Base = 45 different climate studies conducted at two-year institutions since 2006.
Source: PACE Survey, 2007, Human Resources

4R4 Comparative Results

Western uses the Norm Base results from PACE for comparison. An example is noted in Figure 4R3-1.

Improvement

4I1 Improving Current Processes for Valuing People

Western improves its current processes and systems for valuing people by reviewing feedback from formal surveys to determine gaps in expectations and performance and to determine organizational priorities to address areas that are of concern college-wide, by employee segments, or divisions/units. The College also evaluates the effectiveness of team structure and re-aligns when necessary. Most recently, several key teams in the College were re-aligned to enhance communication throughout the organization (see Figure 5-2).

In addition, informal activities such as Pulse Check surveys and 1:1 meetings with supervisors are assessed to determine whether topics need to be addressed further using a more formal process or at a higher level in the organization. An example of using evaluation findings to identify priorities to improve the work environment and to support faculty and staff is the Joint Labor-Management Team's proactive approach to rising healthcare costs. As a result, health care agreements for all employee groups were re-negotiated.

Western sets targets for improvements by reviewing results as they relate to the College's strategic goals and objectives, and by examining the comparative results such as those provided by the PACE survey. Areas that are deemed to be most important are included in Human Resource plans for the following year.

Current results and improvement priorities are communicated to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate stakeholders via the President's message delivered on College Day held in August; District Board reports; Management Forum; informal sharing; and Professional Development Day activities held each October.