AQIP Criterion One: Helping Students Learn

Context for Analysis

1C1 Student Learning Objectives

Western's context for analyzing Helping Students Learn (Criterion 1) is based on the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) mission as stated in Wisconsin State Statute 38.001 (1) and (2a). One of the principal purposes of the Wisconsin Technical College System is to provide education through associate degree programs and other programs below the baccalaureate level. Western has identified six core abilities or general student learning outcomes (Figure 1-1) that are common across all associate degree programs, technical diploma programs, and certificate offerings. These core abilities represent the overall employability skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential for successful performance in the work place and in life.

Figure 1-1 Core Abilities

Learning Outcome	Patterns of Knowledge / Skills
Communication	Demonstrate effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills
Mathematics	Demonstrate mathematical skills
Science	Apply scientific concepts
Problem Solving	Identify and solve problems, applying knowledge in a critical, creative, and ethical manner
Self-Awareness, Teamwork, Diversity	Recognize the value of self and others in order to be a productive member of a diverse global society
Technology	Evaluate and use information technology effectively

In addition to the core abilities, each program consults with employer advisory committees and state-wide curriculums where appropriate to identify occupational-specific learning outcomes.

1C2 Learning Aligned with Mission, Vision and Philosophy

Western assures that its student learning expectations, practices, and development objectives align with its mission, vision, and philosophy by validating the outcomes with program advisory committee members on a regular basis. In addition, many of the program outcomes are based upon industry standards or accreditation standards and reflect entry-level competence in specific skills and knowledge related to the discipline. A recent state-wide effort to develop common curricular standards for programs has resulted in a state-wide curriculum for the nursing, paralegal and supervisory management programs. The WTCS presidents have recently placed priority on the development of state-wide curriculum for all programs.

1C3 Key Instructional Programs

Wisconsin State Statute 38.001 defines the mission and purpose of the Wisconsin Technical College System, the governing body of the 16 technical college districts within the state. The mission of establishing less-than baccalaureate level post-secondary educational opportunities is a shared responsibility between the Wisconsin Technical College System Board and the College. Thus, the educational design process is multi-faceted and well-defined by the Wisconsin Technical College System Board. This framework, illustrated in Figure 1-2, identifies the education design aid codes and programs. The Wisconsin Technical College System also mandates the functions within the programs (types of courses) and range of credits.

Figure 1-2 Wisconsin Technical College System / Western Technical College Educational Framework

Education and Design Aid code	Program	Types of Courses	Minimum Credits	Maximum Credits
10 (100 level)	Associate Degree	Technical Studies	36	49
		General Studies	21	30
		Electives	0	6
30-32 (300 level)	One Year Technical Diploma (26 – 54 credits)	Technical Studies	70%	100%
		Occupation Supportive/ General Education	0%	30%
	Two Year Technical Diploma (55-70 credits)	Technical Studies	70%	100%
		Occupation Supportive/ General Education	0%	30%
42, 47 (400 level)	General Adult Occupational Adult	All Non-Credit "Aidable"	Requires only course approval at WTCS	
50 (500 level)	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship programs of three (3) or more years of on-the-job training shall have a minimum of 400 hours of paid related instruction.	No minimum	No maximum
60 (600 level)	Adult Avocational	Non "Aidable"	Flexibility to offer any course that falls within mission defined by State Statute	
73-78 (700 level)	Adult Basic Education	Beginning, Intermediate, ESL, HIP, VIP, High School Diploma, GED, HSED, Developmental, and Remedial Education	All codes are non post-secondary courses (WTCS Reporting Process)	
38.14	Customized Training/ Technical Assistance	Training or assistance designed for a particular business/organization to meet specific employment requirements or other needs	N/A	N/A
	Certificates	Short-term training to provide basic skills and/or certification requirements	N/A	N/A

Figure 1-3 identifies the number of program offerings within the five instructional divisions at the College. These offerings include 43 associate of applied science degree programs, 23 technical diploma programs, and 6 certificates. The College also offers 40 internal certificates, apprenticeship training, non-credit courses, and customized training and technical assistance for business and industry. Adult Basic Education includes developmental education, remedial education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL), and High School Credential—regular high school diploma, High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED), and General Educational Development Certificate (GED).

Figure 1-3 Number of Program Offerings by Division

Division	Associate Degree	Technical Diploma	Certificate
Business	11	3	
Family and Consumer Science	5	2	
General Education	2		
Industrial Technologies	13	10	1
Health and Public Safety	12	8	5
Extended Education and Training	Non Associate Degree, Technical Diploma or certificate offerings		
Instructional Support Services	Non Associate Degree, Technical Diploma or certificate offerings		

Western operates on a semester basis (16-week, 55-minute class period structure) including 4- and 8-week summer sessions and an 11-week summer term. Programs and classes are offered at various times (day, evening, and weekends) by the six instructional divisions. Classes are commonly scheduled in “blocks” to accommodate students. Both credit and non-credit offerings are available at the main campus and extended campus locations.

Courses are delivered in a variety of formats and vary by program offerings. The delivery methods include traditional face-to-face, traditional with web-based enhancement, web-based (online), accelerated, block and blend (combination of accelerated and online), interactive television, independent study, and cooperative education. Prior to implementing or integrating an alternative delivery method, Western studies the targeted student segment to make sure the method fits student needs. For example, the Supervisory Management program is offered in an accelerated format with classes structured in 6-7 week blocks offered in the evenings. This delivery method works well for the targeted student market which is defined as a non-traditional market that has work experience, a need to balance full-time work schedule, family and education.

Western has responded to changing stakeholder needs by integrating technology and innovative teaching methods into instructional programs. New technology is incorporated into programs and courses based upon emerging technologies, student need, feedback from advisory committees, employer focus groups, market research, and industry standards. Figure 1-4 illustrates a variety of resources and components that support the integration of technology into instruction. Figure 1-5 depicts the increase in the number of courses offered online.

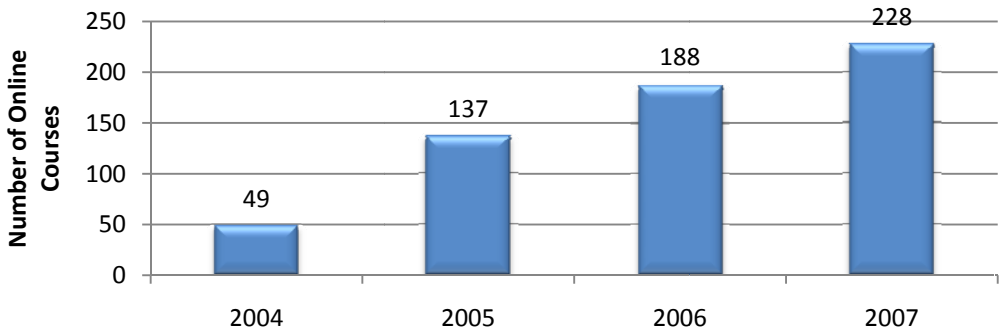
Western’s Learning Innovation Center and Instructional Technology Team consists of faculty, administration, learning and development consultants, and IT professionals, who stay abreast of emerging technologies and provide recommendations for technology upgrades and applications in the classroom. Technology upgrades are funded through Western’s annual instructional planning and budgeting process, through grants, and through in-kind donations. For example, the Respiratory Therapist program received a $20,000 grant that included a $15,000 donation of The Vest (a high-frequency Chest Wall Oscillator) and $5,000 to attend a training workshop and obtain a pre-written curriculum.

Figure 1-4 Technology Resources and Components

Component	Service/Benefit	Impact
Instructional Technology Team	Promotes integration of technology into instruction; addresses issues related to instructional technology	Enhances instructional delivery to students in non-traditional formats (ITV, online, web-assisted, open lab, etc.)
Instructional Technology Dialogue Sessions; Online Faculty Mentoring Program	Fosters and supports development of faculty instructional websites	Enhances online instruction and delivery to students
BlackBoard	Online course management system	Provides an all-in-one system for online instruction (posting course materials, chat rooms, discussion boards, testing, posting grades, etc.)
Respondus—computer- based testing tool	Supports faculty evaluation/ assessment of students (can write, administer, and report on assessments electronically and administer and reports on summative course evaluations)	Provides a secure testing/assessment environment for students enrolled in online, ITV, and traditional
eTech (the WTCS virtual college)	Educational portal promotes online course/program availability, linked to each WTCS district website	Provides working adults more flexibility in pursuing an education from home
Learning Innovation Center website	Supports integration of technology into instruction by providing resources for web-based pedagogy and online instruction	Enhances online instruction and delivery to students
General Studies Online Writing Center	Supports student learning by providing online writing resources and access to online tutoring	Enhances student writing skills

Component	Service/Benefit	Impact
Video Conferencing between counseling office on La Crosse campus and extended campuses	Provides same level of counseling and advising services to extended campuses as students receive on La Crosse campus	Enhances college's ability to be more responsive to student needs
ITV Classrooms	Converts all ITV rooms to video/IP so they can connect to any location in the world	Provides more flexibility in meeting student scheduling needs
Student Email	Provides time sensitive communication to students	Increases student knowledge of College processes, services, and timelines; provides convenient exchange of information for instructors and students

Figure 1-5 Integration of Technology into Courses



Source: Learning Innovations Center, 2007

1C4 Design and Delivery of Student Learning Options

Western ensures that the design and delivery of student learning options prepare students to live in a diverse world and accommodate a variety of learning styles. As mentioned in Figure 1-1, Western incorporates diversity into the curriculum as one of its Core Abilities. Students who successfully complete a degree program at Western recognize the value of self and others in order to be a productive member of a diverse global society.

In addition to integrating diversity into the curriculum, Western strives to create an environment where the faculty and student population is representative of the community that the College serves. Efforts to increase both the diversity of the staff and student population are on-going and are supported by the following:

- The Minority Resource Office has three minority staff who serve as community links capitalizing on diverse ideas, cultures, and thinking of the community.
- Employee recruitment efforts are focused on attracting and increasing the number of diverse, quality candidates for all employment positions. A computerized system to assess applicant flow has been implemented.
- The Diversity Team holds dialogue sessions with community groups such as the local school district to share ideas on how to promote the local area to diverse populations as part of the recruitment process.
- Students have the opportunity to serve on the College Diversity Team.
- A multicultural student organization at the main campus is active in promoting and increasing awareness of cultural diversity through speakers and programs.
- A diversity course entitled Psychology of Cultural Differences is offered in the General

Studies Division, and many programs include a specific diversity component in their curriculum.

In addition to Western's efforts to design learning options that help students live in a diverse world, the College places significant emphasis on accommodating a variety of student learning styles. Western recognizes that not all students learn in the same manner. To address this complex issue, the College provides a variety of course delivery methods as described in 1C3. It also provides access to support services such as tutoring and basic skills workshops.

Prior to selecting a program or course that is delivered in an alternative delivery mode (such as online or accelerated), students complete an assessment or are advised as to the appropriate selection of programs and courses. Students interested in online learning complete an online learning self-assessment to determine whether or not it is the right choice. Faculty throughout the college use assessment tools such as the VARK to help students identify their preferred learning style (visual, auditory, reading, kinesthetic). Professional development opportunities offered by the college help instructors learn how to appeal to students' multiple intelligences in the classroom.

Finally, faculty are trained to integrate a variety of learning activities and assessment opportunities into the curriculum by using WIDS (World-wide Instructional Design System). WIDS is a software that is used to design performance based courses and programs. It is a tool that provides a framework for developing and documenting curriculum that supports varying student learning preferences and abilities.

Students at Western experience activities such as small group discussions and projects, portfolio development, oral and written presentations, independent study, videos, lab activities, computer-assisted activities, apprenticeships, clinicals, internships, and service learning opportunities. The software assists in tracking the teaching and learning methods and assessments used in a particular course or program, and provides a library of ideas for faculty who are modifying or developing new curriculum.

1C5 Intellectual Freedom, Inquiry, and Respect for Diverse Opinions

Western creates and maintains a climate that celebrates intellectual freedom, inquiry, reflection, respect for intellectual property, and respect for differing and diverse opinions by recognizing and supporting faculty at all levels of teaching. The College supports faculty who are at the cutting edge of incorporating technology into their curriculum by providing time and resources to learn new technology and implement new approaches. Administrators also recognize that some faculty are more comfortable with traditional teaching pedagogy and thus create an environment that supports this approach as well. Efforts are made to encourage collaboration among faculty and to provide support through mentors to engage in new technology and pedagogy to deliver effective curricula.

Western defines its policies related to intellectual freedom in online documents such as the College Employee Handbook and Local 3605 Faculty/NTP Negotiated Contract. These policies: define the difference between college-owned, shared, and faculty-owned materials; describe how the materials can be used; and explain ownership in the event of faculty departure from the college. For example, the current policy for shared rights states:

> "The property rights for specific course material developed by an instructor, counselor or specialist to fulfill a special contract with the College shall be as defined in that special contract between the instructor, counselor or specialist and the College. The College may sell the materials, devices, etc. at cost to other Wisconsin Technical Colleges. Such Colleges shall not have any reproduction rights nor be required to pay any royalties. Any proceeds realized from the sale of these materials, devices, etc. shall be allocated in accord with the provision of the special contract. Regardless of the ownership rights defined in the contract, any patent or copyright shall bear the name of the instructor, counselor or specialist."

Processes

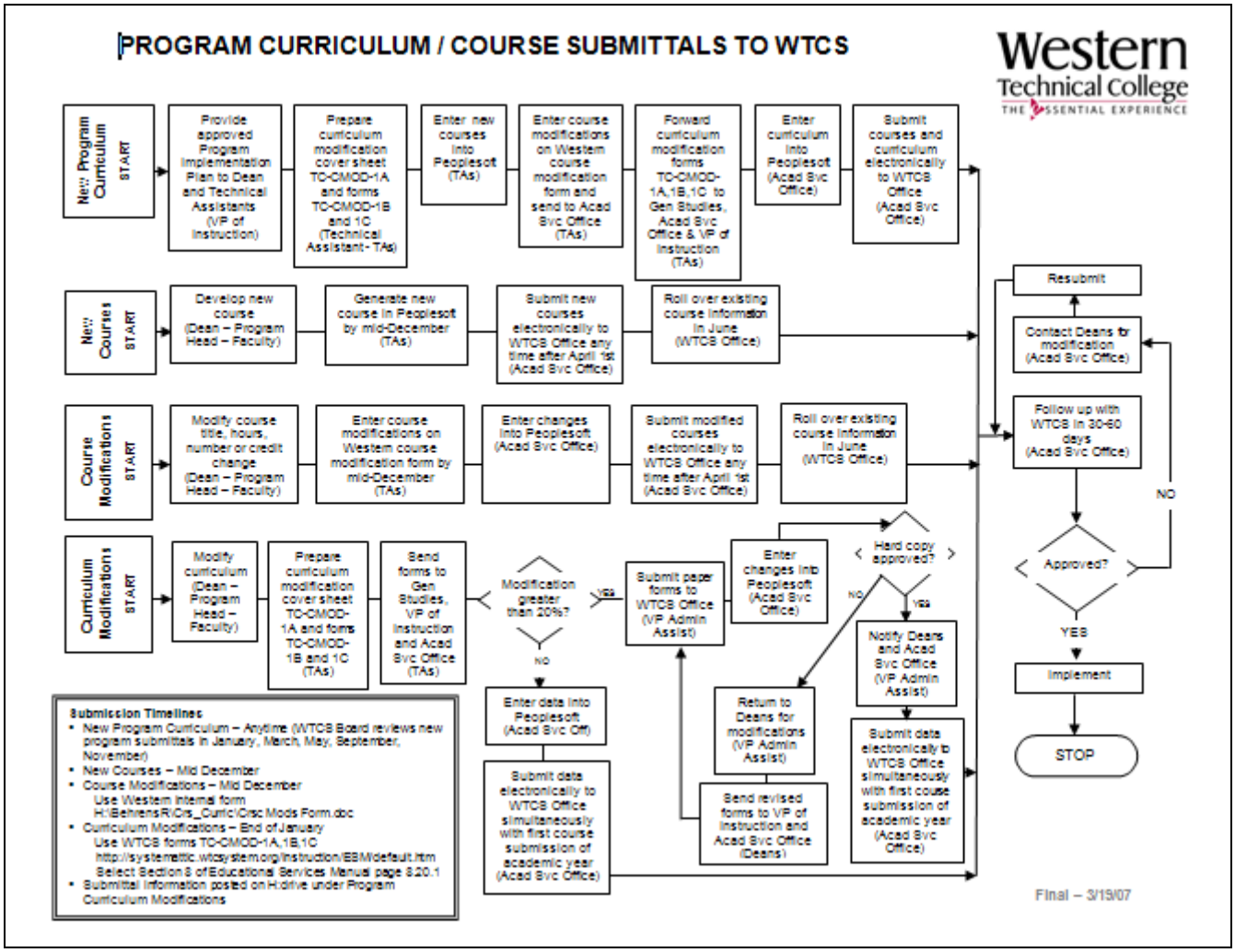
1P1 Determining Student Learning Objectives

Western determines its common student learning objectives or "core abilities" by using a collaborative faculty approach. The first set of core abilities was identified in 1995 by an assessment subgroup representing both general education and program faculty as part of the development of an assessment plan. These original core abilities have been revised as needed to reflect societal and industry changes. As indicated in Criterion 1C1, faculty in all technical programs have identified occupational-specific student learning outcomes that represent the culmination of learning as applied in the workplace. The WTCS program development process specifies procedures for identifying and validating learning objectives and requires input from employers and advisory committees. Western's programs meet high standards because curriculums are developed using a consistent process focused on business and industry needs, expectations, and standards.

1P2 Designing Responsive Academic Programming

Western designs new programs and courses to facilitate student learning using the New Program Development Process described in Figure 1-6.

Figure 1-6 Program Development Process



Within this process, all new programs must be configured as described in Figure 1-2. Other educational design aid codes shown in Figure 1-2 have design processes with specific criteria to meet the needs of the program that are outlined by the WTCS.

In designing responsive academic programming to balance educational market issues with student needs, instruction and student services units work collaboratively to ensure that programs: address student educational, developmental, and well-being needs; focus on active learning; and meet business and industry standards.

Changing student, stakeholder, and market requirements are assessed and analyzed in the instructional program Quality Review Process (described in 1I1). They are incorporated into both the design and delivery of educational programs and services using two methods: (1) the Curriculum Modification Process illustrated in Figure 1-6 and (2) faculty revision and updating of individual courses based on student feedback obtained through course evaluations, focus sessions, other listening/learning strategies (Figure 3-3), and employer feedback based on listening/learning strategies (Figure 3-4).

Active learning is a strong component of technical education. Western encourages faculty to use a variety of instructional techniques and learning activities that foster active or applied learning. Examples include collaborative learning, problem-based learning, accelerated learning techniques, electronic discussion boards, computer applications/simulations, and work-based learning experiences such as service learning, clinicals and internships. Learning activities vary by program and are influenced by student, employer and industry skills needs.

Meeting high standards is a priority for Western and is evidenced by accreditation, licensure, and development and assessment of student learning outcomes that are aligned with business and industry expectations and standards. By gathering and analyzing data, Western has been able to respond to community needs by modifying existing services, or by putting support mechanisms in place to assist students in the learning process. In 2005, Western learned through a listening session of a need from employers for specific IT training for its employees. The employers could not wait two-years to employ graduates with these skills, and the employees could not forfeit employment to attend a traditionally scheduled program. Western was rapidly able to structure curriculum on demand in a “bootcamp” format that met the needs of both the employer and the student.

1P3 Determining Preparation for Student Success

Western uses co-relational data from course placement exams and student grades in General Studies courses to determine test cut scores that students must meet in order to enroll in writing, mathematics, science and some social science courses. Students who do not meet the required score are enrolled in General College courses which are intended to prepare them for a specific General Studies course. If students’ placement test scores warrant more basic academic preparation, they are enrolled in pre-collegiate remedial coursework to prepare for General Studies courses.

Students are accepted into programs at Western by meeting the program entrance requirements and showing evidence that they can perform the essential functions required in that occupation. The program entrance requirements as well as the necessary essential functions are identified by the faculty in the program with advice from the program’s advisory committee members. For example, over the past several years the Associate Degree Nursing Program has modified the academic standards that a student must meet before being admitted into the program. Along with an increased level of focused advising that includes a personal academic plan for each student, this has resulted in higher passing scores on the Nursing Licensure Exam (see 1R2-1).

Prospective students often meet with a counselor and other student service personnel to determine the level of their basic skills and academic preparedness. These counseling sessions help assure that students are placed in appropriate programs and courses or receive the necessary remedial academic work to ensure their ultimate success in a program. At Western there is an ongoing initiative to provide students with increased knowledge of what a particular program will require of them academically. When students’ academic preparedness is not sufficient to meet the academic demands of a program, they are provided with a recommended course of action to acquire the level of academic skill that is necessary for the program.

1P4 Communication of Student Preparation and Learning Expectations

Expectations regarding student preparation and student learning objectives (for programs, courses, and the awarding of specific degrees or credentials) are communicated to prospective and current students through printed media, the college website, face-to-face communication, and one-to-one discussion of student assessment results. On a semester-to-semester basis, Western publishes an online and printed class schedule that provides information regarding college admission requirements, and prerequisites. Western has integrated WIDS into the process of communicating student preparation requirements and learning expectations. WIDS feeds Western's web site to provide potential and current students with course outcome summaries that identify course goals, prerequisites, competencies, criteria, and learning activities. WIDS also provides tools for faculty to generate syllabi and outcomes assessment documents that can be distributed to students.

In addition to preparing students for success through online and printed information, Enrollment Services administers the COMPASS test to new students. Upon completion of the test, students receive immediate feedback on their results. If the student has selected a program, program-specific course placement is discussed and students are advised as to the appropriate course selection for program entry. If students have not selected a program, they meet with a counselor to discuss appropriate career paths and program selection. Expectations are also communicated through the Student Handbook, which is distributed online, at the College orientation, and through program-specific orientations.

1P5 Helping Students Select Programs

Western helps students select programs of study that match their needs, interests, and abilities through (1) general admissions guidelines/requirements, (2) student understanding of essential functions critical to perform program competencies, (3) program entrance requirements/ guidelines, and (4) services such as personal and career counseling, advising, and special needs provided by areas such as Disability Services, Minority Services, the Student Success Center, and Opportunity Center. A variety of career interest inventories are available to assist students in selecting programs to match their needs, interests, and abilities. In addition, students enrolling in associate degree and technical diploma programs complete an entrance assessment using COMPASS or ASSET to determine appropriate placement in math and basic English. Developmental courses are available for students who do not meet minimum proficiency requirements.

While advising has typically resided in Student Services, Western recognizes the importance of engaging students and faculty, and has implemented a new student advising pilot in 2007. As part of this pilot, 400 students will meet with program faculty prior to enrolling in a specific program. Through this direct contact with faculty, students will be funneled into the most appropriate program given needs, interests, and abilities. The students are tracked and retention and graduation rates will be compared to those who did not receive faculty advising prior to program entry. With input from this pilot, Western will develop a faculty/student advising model that can be deployed across the college.

Educational programs prepare for individual differences in student learning rates and styles using a variety of instructional delivery methods, learning activities, and performance-based assessments. Differences in individual learning styles and learning rates are accommodated by providing extended test time, peer tutoring, and other tutoring services. Instructors anticipate and prepare for differences in individual learning styles by using accelerated learning techniques in their classes, offering courses in a variety of delivery formats such as online or interactive television (ITV), and incorporating applied and/or integrated instructional methodologies.

1P6 Documenting Effective Teaching and Learning

Western determines and documents effective teaching and learning through a variety of mechanisms. Effective teaching is determined and documented through evaluation of instruction. This evaluation is multi-faceted and may include supervisor, peer, student, and self evaluation.

Students provide feedback through course and instructor evaluations, and supervisors may observe classroom teaching. The process is well-defined and communicated in the employee handbook and negotiated faculty agreement. In addition, Western uses WIDS in the development of curriculum and teaching methods. WIDS assists faculty in developing teaching methods that incorporate Bloom's taxonomy, and provides documentation as to the level of learning that occurs (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation).

Effective learning is documented primarily through Western's student learning outcomes assessment and through licensure and accreditation examinations. Upon completion of a degree program, students and faculty take part in a comprehensive assessment of student learning. Through this assessment, faculty gauge student learning by identifying the percentage of students who master each program outcome. Students gauge their own learning by indicating in an online assessment whether or not they have mastered each program outcome. On a regular basis, employers are asked to complete the same assessment for students they hire. Information gleaned from this process is funneled into the program Quality Review Process, shared with faculty, and discussed with employer advisory committees (Figure 1R1-1).

Effective teaching and learning are important to Western, and the Vice-President of Instruction and the Deans are instrumental in communicating effective teaching and learning expectations across the institution. Faculty learn about institutional expectations through:

- The hiring process
- The New Faculty Institute
- College-sponsored professional development activities
- Program head meetings

1P7 Building an Effective and Efficient Course Delivery System

Western has designed a course delivery system based upon factors including:

- Student requirements
- Facilities and instructional needs
- Availability of qualified faculty and staff
- Consideration of negotiated contract
- Determination of appropriate course delivery methods (described in 1C4).

Western operates on a semester basis (16-week, 55-minute class period structure) including 4- and 8-week summer sessions and an 11-week summer term. Online courses that alleviate brick and mortar room scheduling challenges, and interactive television (ITV) courses that provide the opportunity for multiple campus locations to share resources, contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of Western's course delivery system.

To determine the feasibility of offering a class, Western conducts a class profitability algorithm. This tool allows Western to determine what level of financial outlay, if any, will be required with a new or continued instructional offering. In some instances the results yield positive cash flow to the College. While a new course or program is not automatically denied if it can't be self-supporting, it does allow the opportunity to identify the level of funding that may be required. The analysis can be used in various decision-making scenarios – such as determining whether to hire full-time or part-time instructors for a particular course or delivery method.

1P8 Currency and Effectiveness of Curriculum

Western analyzes the currency and effectiveness of its curriculum through discussion and input from its program advisory committees consisting of employers, current and former students, adjunct faculty and industry experts. It also addresses curriculum through annual state-called program meetings where all colleges in WTCS offering a particular program meet to discuss emerging trends, curriculum modifications, and best practices. The Quality Review Process (QRP), described in 1I1, also provides the opportunity to analyze the currency and effectiveness of curriculum.

In some cases, curriculum analysis may provide data that indicate a new program is needed or that an existing program should be discontinued or suspended. The Curriculum Modification process described in Figure 1-6 is used when program improvements are needed. A formal process defined by the Wisconsin Technical College System is used when a decision is made to discontinue or suspend a program.

1P9 Student and Faculty Learning Support Needs

Western Technical College attracts a diverse student population and is committed to an open-door policy for admission to the college for all prospective students who meet statutory requirements. Recognizing that students are diverse in educational preparation and that courses and programs at the college have varying levels of difficulty, admissions services are designed to provide the best match for each applicant's abilities, interests and aptitudes.

Western determines student needs relative to learning support during the student intake process and through academic advising. Applicants interested in a specific program area will go through assessment using COMPASS, a series of basic skill tests, prior to being admitted to the college. The results of the COMPASS, which include information on academic readiness, is used to guide students toward appropriate courses and programs to maximize their opportunity for success.

Students who are not program-ready have the opportunity to work with the Instructional Support Services Division (ISSD). This area of the college provides instruction for individuals who want to improve their academic skills, to complete their GED or high school credential, to prepare for college level classes, or to improve English language skills in our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

It offers five different programs of instruction and a variety of specialized services for unique student populations. These services and classes are offered in day and evening programs at many different locations within the Western Technical College district. Each year ISSD helps about 3,000 individuals achieve their educational and training goals.

Once students are accepted into a program, they are assigned an academic advisor. Students who are enrolled in at least six credit hours have access to free academic support through the Academic Success Center where instructors in math, science, written/oral communications, reading and study skills provide individualized help/guidance for students course work and/or to upgrade necessary basic skills. In addition to guidance in course work, the Academic Support Center administers a brief Learning Styles Inventory so that students may identify their primary learning style. This is followed by a one-on-one conference with a staff member to discuss appropriate study strategies for successful learning.

Faculty needs relative to learning support are determined through Employee Success Plans facilitated by the Manager of Organization Development and the instructional program Quality Review Process. Through completion, monitoring, and annual updating of an Employee Success Plan, faculty are able to identify resources and training they need to be successful. In addition, areas of the College such as the library and the Learning Innovation Center conduct employee surveys to identify supplemental resources, instructional technology, professional development and training that are needed to support student learning.

1P10 Co-curricular Development and Learning

Co-curricular development goals are aligned with curricular learning objectives through a variety of conduits. These include:

- Thirty professional student clubs directly associated with occupational programs (i.e. the Society for Human Resource Management)
- Service learning activities that are linked to a program curriculum and offered as electives or as

part of a core program course
- Student Government leadership opportunities that include managing the $330,000 budget for Student Activity Fees and learning how to build coalitions to support initiatives and effect change in an organization
- Student Government sponsorship of campus events to support diversity and student academic achievement
- Wellness Center personal fitness credit courses
- Volunteer study clubs and tutoring to support athletes involved in varsity sports.

1P11 Determining Processes for Student Assessment

Western uses the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching as a framework for its comprehensive assessment efforts. Improving upon Western's current model of assessment is a strategic priority for 2007-2009. Western's current assessment model includes Entry, On-Going (Course Level), and Exit Assessment components. Each component incorporates various formative and summative assessment tools (Figure 1-7).

Entry-level assessment is designed to gauge entry-level student competency in basic reading, writing, and math skills to identify developmental needs. It ensures that students are appropriately placed in courses and programs to enhance their success. Western has recently modified its process so that students can receive assessment results earlier (discussed in 1P4).

On-going assessment occurs at the course level. The College uses the WIDS curriculum development model to create course outcome summaries that identify course goals, competencies, assessment criteria, and learning activities. Course syllabi can also be generated.

The WIDS curriculum development model provides the framework and process to identify student expectations at the course level. Student learning competencies and objectives are identified for each course. Faculty use formative assessment measures to gain immediate feedback about teaching effectiveness and student learning. This feedback is used to make mid-course adjustments and improvements. Students who need remediation may access services provided by the Academic Success Center and Instructional Support Services Division. Instructors may refer students for academic assistance, or students may seek assistance independently.

Figure 1-7 Western's Assessment Program

ASSESSMENT/PURPOSE	INSTRUMENT/TOOLS
Entry-Level Determine student basic academic skills	ASSET, COMPASS, ACT
On-Going (Course Level) Determine if students meet course-level competencies through formative and summative assessment	**Formative**--Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT) and course evaluations **Summative**—Written and application exams, capstone projects and demonstrations, student exhibition of proficiency
Exit Level Determine if students achieve Student Learning Outcomes	Licensure/ certification exams, portfolios, capstone projects, student exhibition of proficiency, written exams

Exit assessment occurs upon program completion and is based upon student academic achievement of the college-wide Core Abilities and learning outcomes for each program. This assessment assures that students have mastered both the general learning outcomes expected of all learners and the knowledge specific to the degree which they have attained.

Western's exit assessment process has undergone cycles of improvement. The assessment process has been web-enabled and expanded to include (1) employer assessment of student learning (2) student assessment of outcome achievement and (3) faculty assessment of student learning (reported in Figure 1R1-1). Faculty use the "triangulated" assessment results and feedback to improve the curriculum; to enhance student learning; and to more effectively meet the needs of students and employers. The web-enabled approach allows faculty to easily update program

outcomes and to track trends in student learning.

1P12 Discovering Student Preparedness for Further Education and Employment

Western determines how well-prepared students completing programs, degrees, and certificates are for further education or employment based upon a variety of sources. These include:

- Annual faculty and employer assessment of student achievement of the student learning outcomes
- Six-month graduate follow-up survey
- Five-year longitudinal graduate follow-up survey
- Annual employer follow-up survey
- Feedback from program-specific employer advisory committees
- Graduate and employer focus groups as part of the Quality Review Process
- Licensure or certification results

1P13 Regularly Collected Measures of Student Performance

Western uses the QRP program scorecard and other real-time reports to regularly measure and analyze information related to student performance. On a semester-to-semester basis, program retention and course completion rates are collected and analyzed. On an annual basis, Western reviews:

- 1st to 2nd year retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Job placement in related fields
- Licensure pass rates
- Probation and suspension reports

Results are compared across the college, across the Wisconsin Technical College System, and to previous years for trend identification. In addition, an annual assessment of student learning outcomes (IP12) is conducted. These results serve as program and course level indicators.

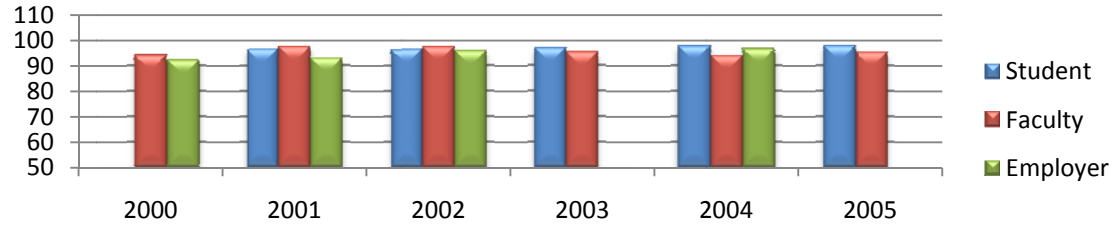
Results

1R1 Results for Common and Program-Specific Student Learning Outcomes

Data on student academic achievement is one of Western's primary indicators of student success. Six years of data, segmented by educational design aid code for credit programs and student segments, represent faculty, student, and employer assessment of the student learning outcomes from 2002-2007 as described in Section 1C1 and Exit Assessment in Section 1P11.

The data, which can also be segmented by program and by outcome, provide program faculty with feedback to identify and close curriculum gaps based on student and employer requirements. This systems approach to assessment focuses on cross-curriculum reinforcement of general learning outcomes and key occupational-specific outcomes rather than course achievement.

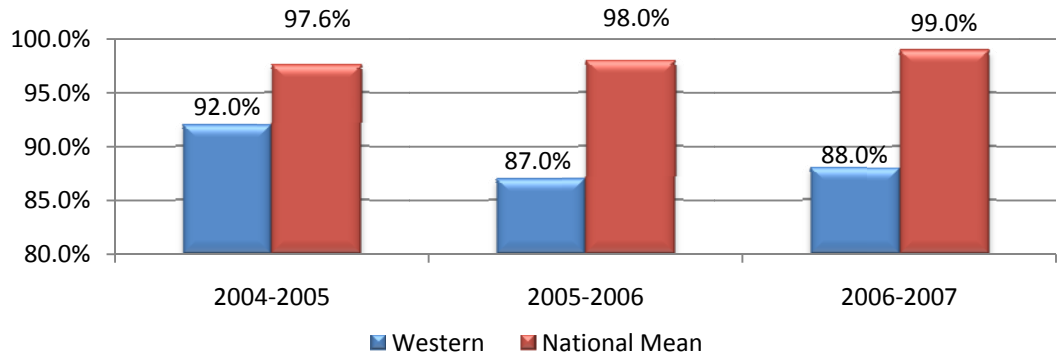
Figure 1R1-1 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes



Source: Student Learning Outcomes Database, 2007

In addition to the assessment of student learning outcomes in occupational programs, Western also analyzes student performance in its Goal-Oriented Adult Learning programs (Instructional Support Services Division). Western's General Educational Development (GED) Pass Rate is displayed in Figure 1R1-2.

Figure 1R1-2 – GED Pass Rate 2004-2006



Source: ISS Division

1R2 Evidence that Students Have Acquired the Knowledge and Skills Base Required by the Institution and its Stakeholders

Western's evidence that indicate students have acquired the knowledge and skills base required by the institution and its stakeholders includes program-specific licensure exam results, program-specific graduation rates, course completion rates, employer satisfaction surveys, and graduate follow-up surveys.

Licensure Exam Results

Twelve programs use licensure exam results to assess program effectiveness. These data are important for program accreditation purposes and reflect both strong curriculum and effective student learning. This type of exam is required by these program graduates to be employed in the profession (Figure 1R2-1).

One example of increased pass rates is that found in the nursing program. Four years ago, Western's pass rate hovered at 80% over eight quarters (standard yard-stick). At present, the rate over eight quarters is 93% -- well above the national average of the mid-80s. During this same time period, the difficulty of the exam has been raised twice.

Figure 1R2-1 Licensure Exam Results 2006

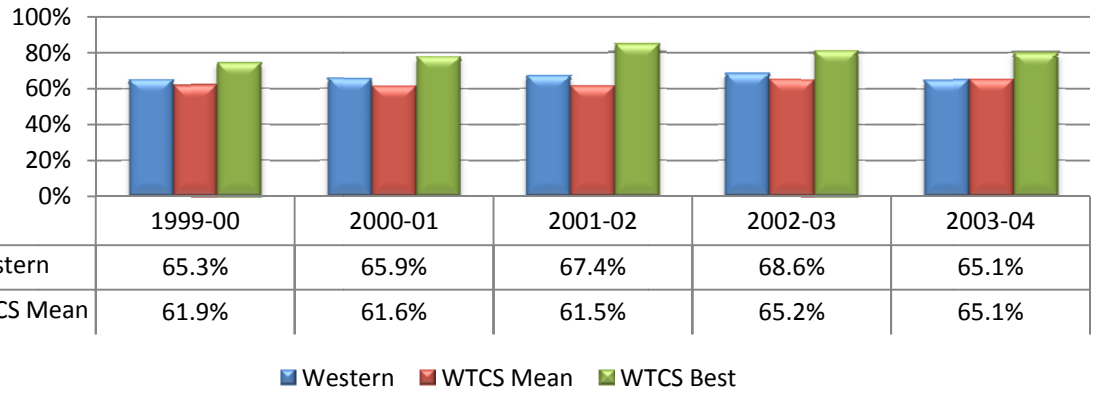
2006 Licensure Exam Results		
Program	**Western**	**National/State Rate**
Clinical Laboratory Technician	100	75
Dental Hygiene	100	NA
Electroneurodiagnostic Technology	64	40
Health Information Technologist	100	70
Medical Assistant	88	67
Nursing	100	NA
Occupational Therapy Assistant	100	NA
Respiratory	100	85
Radiography	100	91

Source: Academic Deans, 2007

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates are tracked using two reporting systems. For comparative purposes within the WTCS, Western reports cohort graduation rates based on Perkins data. Graduation rates submitted to IPEDS are based on Student-Right-to-Know data. Figures 1R2-2 and 1R2-3 show a variety of graduation results; the data source is indicated for each of the results that are tracked. The Cohort Graduation Rate (Figure 1R2-2) is tracked through the WTCS Post-Secondary Report Card.

Figure 1R2-2 Cohort Graduation Rates

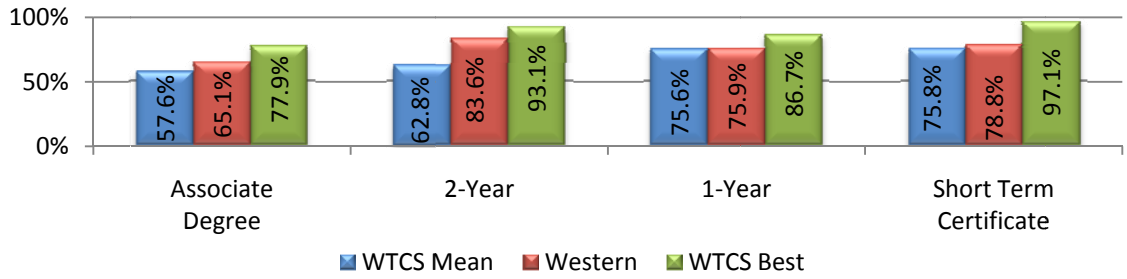


	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Western	65.3%	65.9%	67.4%	68.6%	65.1%
WTCS Mean	61.9%	61.6%	61.5%	65.2%	65.1%

Source: 2002 WTCS Post-Secondary Report Card (based on Perkins data)
**New calculation formula implemented*

Segmented student market graduation rates based on the 1998-99 cohort are shown in Figure 1R2-3 along with comparisons to the WTCS. As shown, Western surpassed the WTCS mean in all segments.

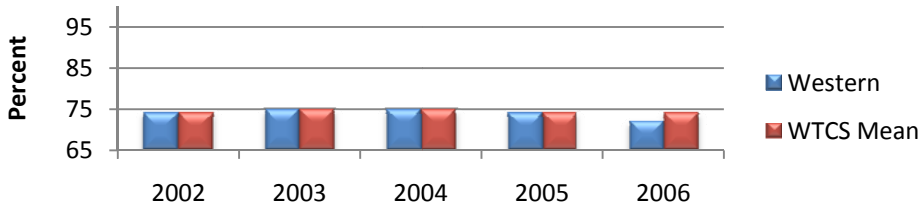
Figure 1R2-3 1998-99 Cohort Graduation Rate Segmented by Student Market



Source: 2001 WTCS Post-Secondary Report Card (based on Perkins data) AD (Associate Degree); 2-yr. (Two-Year Technical Diploma); 1-yr. (One-Year Technical Diploma); ST (Short-Term Certificates)

Course completion rates are shown in Figure 1R2-4. Western has met the WTCS mean for all but the most recent year.

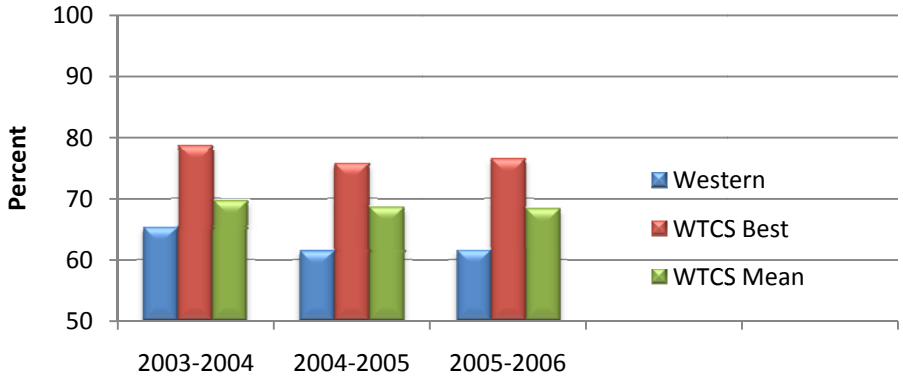
Figure 1R2-4 Course Completion Rates Compared to WTCS



Source: http://systemattic.wtcsystem.org/reports/evaluation_index.htm

General Studies course completion rates are shown in Figure 1R2-5. Western has identified the opportunity for improvement in this area and the General Studies areas have been brought into the QRP for further analysis.

Figure 1R2-5 General Studies Course Completion Rates for AAS Degrees Compared to WTCS Mean



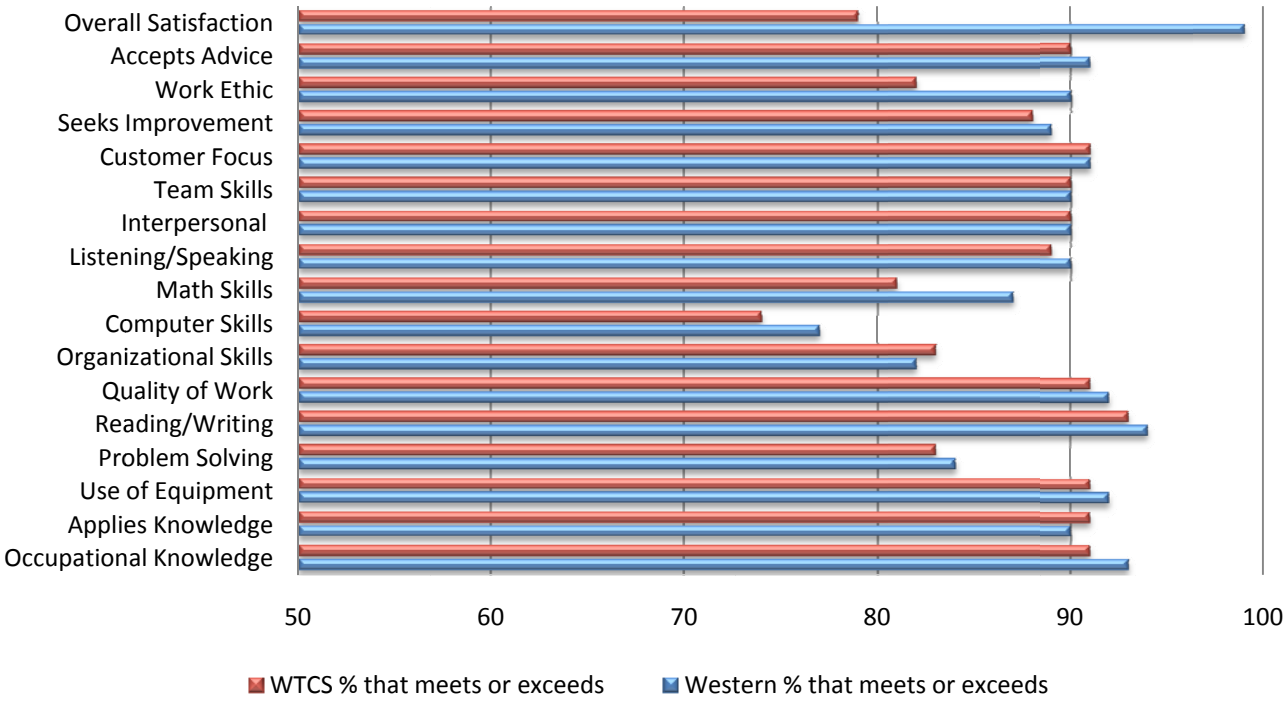
Source: http://cognos.wtcsystem.org/crn/cgi-bin/cognos.cgi

Employer Satisfaction

Every four years, all colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System conduct an employer follow up survey that captures employer satisfaction with graduates. The survey covers satisfaction with graduates and their technical skills, application of knowledge, use of equipment and other core abilities such as reading, writing, speaking, and problem-solving. Western is able to compare District results with results from other Wisconsin Technical Colleges.

Figure IR2-6 depicts the results of the most recent survey and illustrates that District employers are satisfied with the knowledge and skills of graduates.

Figure 1R2-6 Employer Satisfaction with Knowledge and Skills of Graduates 2004-2005

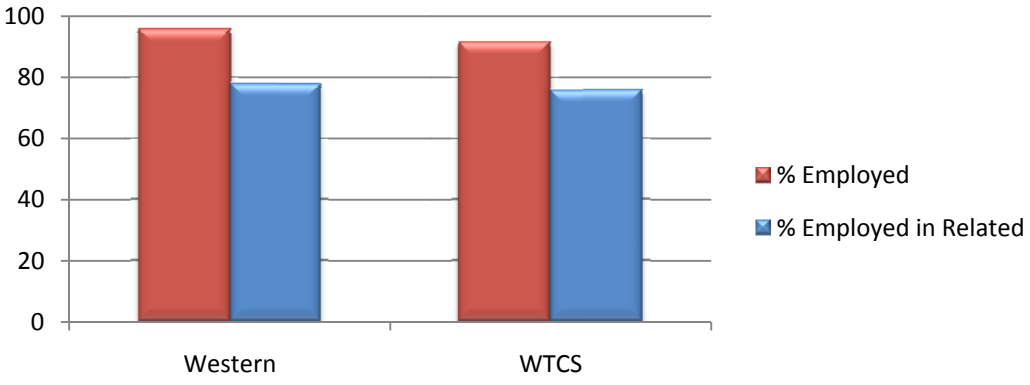


Source: Employer Satisfaction Survey, 2004-2005

Graduate Follow-Up Survey

The Graduate Follow-Up Survey is conducted annually to gather data regarding the activities and perceptions of students approximately six months after their graduation from Wisconsin's Technical Colleges. The most recent results indicate that Western is exceeding the WTCS average in both employment and placement in training-related employment. Figure 1R2-7 shows the results from the 2005-2006 Graduate Follow-Up Survey. Western's results exceeded the WTCS mean for percent of graduates employed and percent of graduates employed in a related field.

Figure 1R2-7 Graduate Follow Up Survey



Source: 2005-2006, Graduate Follow-Up Survey

1R3 Results for Processes Associated with Helping Students Learn

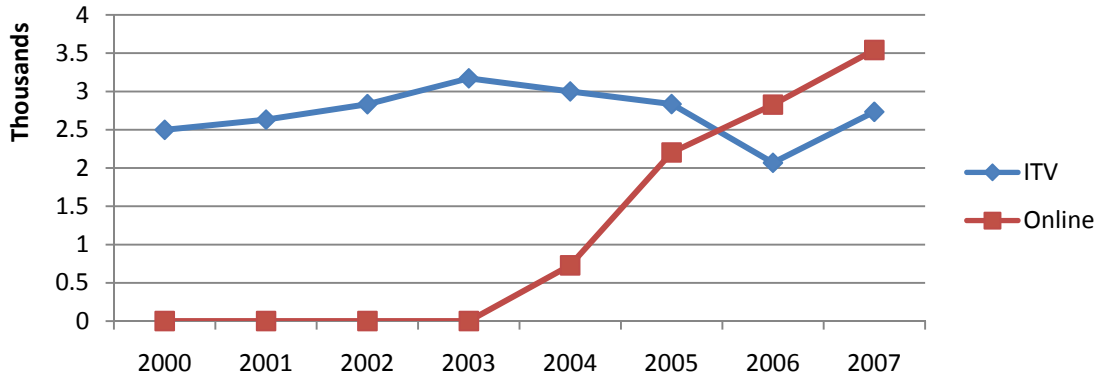
Western's process for designing responsive academic programming (1P2) and monitoring the currency and effectiveness of curriculum (1P8) has resulted in five new programs and expansion or adapted delivery methods in sixteen programs in the past two years including the following:

Figure 1R3-1 New and Expanded Programs

New	Expanded
• Therapeutic Massage – Technical Diploma • Landscape Horticulture – Associate Degree • Business Management – Associate Degree • Accounting Assistant – Associate Degree • Computer Engineering Technology – Associate Degree	• Radiography (Alternative Delivery) • Dental Hygiene (Alternative Delivery) • Physical Therapy Assistant (Alternative Delivery) • Occupational Therapy Assistant (Alternative Delivery) • Respiratory Therapist (Shared with other colleges) • Radiography (Rural Wisconsin Health Coop) • Technical Communications (Shared with other colleges) • Medical Assistant (Expanded to additional extended campuses) • Nursing (Expanded to additional extended campuses) • Marketing (Expanded to extended campuses) • Human Resource Management (Expanded to extended campuses) • Administrative Assistant (Alternative Delivery) • Supervisory Management (blended offering) • Finance (Block-n-blend offering) • Fire Protection (relocated) • ENDT (Alternative Delivery)

As a result of Western's efforts to be responsive (1P2) and balance the needs of students and the institution (1P7), the total enrollments related to alternative delivery or technology-based delivery have increased by 22% from 2006 to 2007. Figure 1R3-2 represents enrollment in alternative delivery.

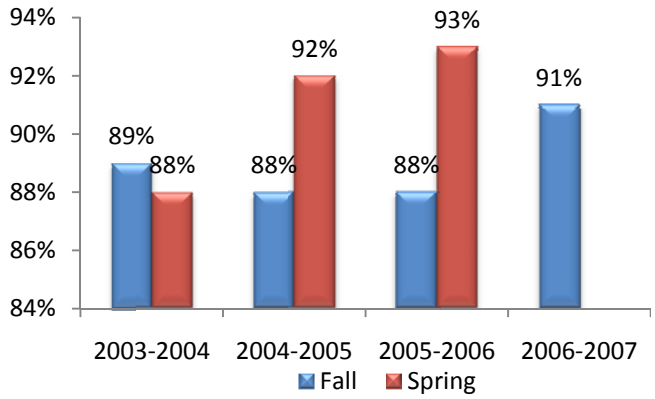
Figure 1R3-2 Graded Student Enrollment Segmented by Online or Interactive Television



Source: H:FinanceOperations\Computer Services\COGNOS Reports\Delivery Summary

Student satisfaction with online learning is measured every semester. The percentage of students who would take another online course at Western has increased as illustrated in Figure 1R3-3.

Figure 1R3-3 Students Indicating Interest in Additional Online Courses at Western



Source: Learning Innovations Center

In an effort to engage faculty in the advising process and help students select programs of study that match their needs (1P5), Western piloted a student advising model during the summer of 2007. Prior to the pilot, Western had no formal college-wide advising model for faculty to use when advising new students. Western plans to track the success of students involved in the initial pilot. Preliminary results indicate that the number of new students formally advised by faculty during the summer using a consistent model increased from 0 to 276.

In an effort to help students understand the preparation and learning expectations (1P4), Western implemented a change to the process related to sharing COMPASS exam results. Historically, it would take two weeks before a student would receive results and meet with a counselor. With the implemented changes to the process, students now receive feedback and guidance immediately after taking the test.

1R4 Comparing Results with Other Institutions

The Wisconsin Technical College System provides ample opportunity for colleges within the system to compare results. On a regular basis, the WTCS publishes employer satisfaction results (1R2-6), student performance information (1R2-2, 1R2-3, 1R2-4, 1R2-5), and graduate follow up information (1R2-7).

The Quality Review Process (QRP) provides for the opportunity for Western to compare its occupational programs to all of the 15 other colleges in the system. Indicators such as course completion, second-year retention, third-year retention, third-year graduation, fifth-year graduation, graduate placement rate, equity-minority course completion, equity-special populations course completion, and non-traditional gender enrollment are included. The QRP also provides the opportunity for comparison across the system with General Studies, Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, ESL, and Developmental/Remedial programs. Information is updated on an annual basis and historical trends are available for analysis.

In addition to system resources for comparison, Western also reviews comparative data from colleges that are members of CQIN and national comparative data (1R1-2) from sources such as the Kansas Study and the Community College Benchmark Project. Seeking out and using both comparative and benchmark data is one of the areas of focus for Western as it continues to develop and refine college systems and processes.

Improvement

1I1 Improving Current Processes and Systems for Helping Students Learn

The QRP serves as the framework for a comprehensive evaluation of programs. Its primary goal is to facilitate data-based decision making to improve services, programs, and offerings. The College's QRP adheres to guidelines set forth by the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) for evaluation of instructional programs and student services. Evaluation activities are conducted with input from students, faculty, staff, administration and employer advisory committees using the continuous improvement model and a problem solving method that includes:

- describing the current situation
- identifying potential opportunities for improvement through data and information analysis
- creating a plan for improvement that follows the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle

The QRP integrates evaluation activities with existing College initiatives and operational procedures and includes a program scorecard with ten WTCS defined measures. These measures include data that are gathered from Western's Client Reporting System. All colleges in the WTCS report similar data to be used for comparative purposes.

Western's instructional divisions and programs improve their educational programs and offerings to achieve better student learning and improvements to services by (1) implementing recommendations set forth in the QRP and embedding them in the annual planning document and (2) annually updating progress through the self-assessment portion of the planning document.

As part of the annual planning process, other units and divisions throughout the College review action plans and opportunities for improvement. Using the model for instructional programs, a formal QRP is being integrated in other areas of the College such as Student Services.

1I2 Setting Targets for Improvement

Targets for improvement for current student learning and development are set at the program level or appropriate support service unit. The College Scorecard and the individual program scorecards serve as tools to set targets. The WTCS provides thresholds and targets by program. Thresholds are an average of the four lowest scoring colleges in the system with a particular program or service. Targets are an average of the four highest scoring colleges in the system (see Figure 7-6). In addition to using the WTCS scorecards, Western also sets goals for student learning and development based on targets established through Perkins accountability efforts. The College's strategic plan takes into account performance related to these targets and the instructional master plan is designed to address opportunities for improvement. Western's strategic plan and instructional master plan identify current priorities, which are in turn reflected in division and program annual plans and QRP improvement plans. Based on Western's most recent results for student learning and development, the following priorities have been established:

- Advance the infrastructure to manage and support student goal attainment (starting with recruitment and ending with student goal attainment). This includes establishing a prospects/leads process; identifying a method to collect student intent and track goal attainment; establishing program entrance requirements as well as cut scores; offering prepared learner coursework as an option for students in the areas of math, reading, and natural sciences; and developing a "first year experience" plan.
- Identify a process that will assist in the identification of emerging trends, employer needs, etc. for the purpose of creating a program mix. The term program mix is defined as Western's academic product offering. This may include credit, non-credit, and customized learning opportunities and considers the organizational structure to support program mix.
- Create and implement a consistent academic advising model college-wide that includes student advising by faculty members throughout the student's educational career at Western.
- Create a strategy for instructional technology and delivery.
- Create a comprehensive assessment model that addresses pre, during, and post assessment.

Current results and improvement priorities are communicated to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and District Board at monthly District Board meetings and monthly Academic Leadership Team meetings.