Standard One

Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness

Introduction

Western Nevada College is strongly committed to a shared governance approach to intentional and accountable college planning and assessment. This commitment is demonstrated by regular, open, college-wide reviews of the following college principles, documents, and data:

- College Principles of Community, reviewed regularly by College Council and published in each classroom and meeting room.
- College mission and goals, frequently found on employee business cards.
- College strategic plans, with measurable performance indicators, approved by the Board of Regents and published on the college website.
- Longitudinal analyses of performance indicators captured in the annual Institutional Portfolio and also published on the college website.
- State of the College addresses detailing plan progress, made by the president to the entire community at the beginning of each academic year.
- Individual program reviews, conducted on regular, five-year schedules for each program and department.

The open approach to college planning and assessment is seen as the joint responsibility of the Strategic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (SPFIE) committee and the Program Assessment and Review Committee (PARC), the office of Institutional Research, and the college president. The remainder of this "Standard One" discussion details the manner in which college planning is aligned with the detailed requirements of NWCCU Standard One.

Mission Statement

Western Nevada College inspires success in our community through opportunities that cultivate creativity, intellectual growth and technological excellence, in an environment that nurtures individual potential and respects differences.

Goals

1. Improve student success in program completion and graduation rates.
2. Ensure institutional excellence in teaching, programs and services.
3. Embrace our college's many communities and respond to their diverse needs.

Periodic Review of the Mission Statement

The college’s mission and goals have been reviewed and modified twice by the college community in the last 10 years. With the development of the 2006-12 strategic plan, the president directed representatives from the classified staff, academic faculty, administrative faculty, executive faculty, SPFIE, Student Services, Information and Marketing Services, and the Associated Students of Western Nevada (ASWN) to review the mission and goals in light of the new strategic plan. The latest mission and goals statements were approved by the Board of Regents in April 2009. (Exhibit 1.1) (1.A.1)
Communicating Progress toward Goals

The mission and goals appear on the college website and in the college catalog and other college publications, including the class schedule, the Institutional Portfolio, the “Quickfacts” brochure, and the annual Report to the Community. They are also printed on the back of college faculty and staff business cards.

Progress toward achieving the college’s goals is communicated through a variety of means to both internal and external audiences. For example, at the beginning of the academic year, the college president delivers an address to all college employees, providing data on accomplishments during the preceding academic year. And at the beginning of every calendar year, the college publishes and distributes to community stakeholders an annual report detailing the accomplishments of the previous year associated with strategic planning goal attainment. Each spring, Institutional Research publishes the Institutional Portfolio, which provides longitudinal data on all quantifiable goals for each of the previous 10 years. In addition, results of surveys, including the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and the Recent Graduate Survey, are published on the Institutional Research website. As appropriate, the system office supplements college data with information comparing the college to system norms and presents this to the Board of Regents.

Infrequently, the Legislative Counsel Bureau (in their capacity of supporting the state legislature’s deliberations regarding education in the state) requests normative information, and the delivery of such information is coordinated by the system office as well. The Nevada Department of Education is charged with the oversight of Carl Perkins projects. In general, all non-financial information provided is coordinated by Institutional Research. The college Budget Office provides any requested financial information.

Although the recent budget shortfalls have resulted in staffing shortages in two departments responsible for communicating goal attainment (Institutional Research has been without a director the past year, and Information and Marketing recently filled one of two vacant positions), the college has maintained its dedication to documenting its accomplishments and disseminating the information to stakeholders. (Appendices 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5; Exhibits 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11) (1.A.2, 1.A.3, 1.B.9)

Admission Policies, Resource Allocation, and Faculty Selection

The college mission and goals are consistent with the resources (human, physical, and financial) provided. A recent severe budget crisis has required some program retrenchment, but with cautious and conservative planning, these program retrenchments have not had a deleterious effect on the delivery of core services to students, as defined by the college’s mission and goals.

The college’s mission and goals provide direction to all educational activities, including admission policies, selection of faculty, allocation of resources, and planning. WNC has an open admission policy for all but four selective-admission programs—Nursing, Surgical Technology, POST Academy, and the Bachelor of
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Technology in Construction Management—exemplifying the goals to “embrace our College’s many communities and respond to their diverse needs” and to “ensure institutional excellence in teaching, programs and service.” The selection of faculty is based on candidates’ educational and professional achievements in the field in which they are to teach, thus ensuring excellence in teaching. (See Standard Four for a more in-depth description of the selection process.) An inclusive, goal-directed budgeting process ensures that resources are allocated according to priorities guided by the mission and goals.

Oversight of these activities is provided by a structure of administrative offices and college-wide committees, all of which report to the president or her designee(s). Each administrative office is staffed by personnel with formal job descriptions who are held accountable by an annual evaluation and goal setting process. Each college-wide committee is selected and charged each year by the president, and functions under a set of committee bylaws which are consistent with college mission, goals, and planning. The president is assisted in providing oversight and guidance to these mechanisms by the College Council, comprised of various governance organizations on campus. All stakeholders are represented on College Council: academic and administrative faculty, executive faculty, students, classified employees, division chairs, and the SPFIE committee. (Exhibit 1.12) (1.A.4, 1.A.5)

Principles of Community

As members of the WNC community, we choose to be part of an academic community dedicated to those principles that foster personal and professional integrity, civility, and acceptance.

We strive toward lives of personal integrity and academic excellence—We will encourage in ourselves, and in one another, those responsible actions which lead to lives of productive work, personal enrichment, and useful citizenship in an increasingly interdependent world.

We commit to treat one another with civility—Recognizing that there will be differences of opinion, we will explore the differences in a courteous and forthright manner, always acknowledging individual rights to the freedom of expression and association.

Alignment of Mission and Goals with Planning and Service

The college community engages its various components in systematic planning through the coordinated efforts of Institutional Research, the Budget Committee, the SPFIE committee, the executive faculty, and the College Council.

Public service is consistent with the educational mission and goals of the institution and is reflected in the evaluation criteria for all employees and in the Principles of Community by which all college organizations function. For example, as stated in the Academic Faculty Senate Bylaws, the evaluation of tenure candidates takes into account “recognition and respect outside the system community for participation and service in community, state, or nationwide activity” (Chapter 2, Section 1.2.2).

The college makes use of seven local campus advisory boards that provide guidance on how best to serve the seven counties within its service area. (Appendix 1.6; Exhibit 1.13) (1.A.6, 1.B.2)
Substantive Changes

The college regularly submits annual reports to the Commission detailing all changes that would have bearing on accreditation. The most recent annual reports and substantive changes submitted by the college to NWCCU are detailed in the exhibits. (Exhibits 1.20, 1.21) (1.A.7)

Planning and Effectiveness

The college culture is data-driven. The community develops a new strategic plan every six years (to be consistent with the biennial state funding cycle). The latest plan is detailed in a simple, two-page, bi-fold document that details goals, key performance indicators, responsible organizational units, and numerical benchmarks. Individual program reviews, personnel evaluation processes, and college assessment activities are all linked to the plan through the analysis of data by Institutional Research, with oversight by the appropriate executive faculty, SPFIE, and the College Council. The development of each strategic plan has been coordinated by College Council, campus advisory committees, the president and executive staff, and Institutional Research. The final strategic plan is formally adopted by the Board of Regents. (Appendices 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13; Exhibit 1.1) (1.B.1, 1.B.3)

Using Planning and Evaluation to Improve Programs and Services

The data gathered by evaluation activities (generally in the form of program reviews) is used by SPFIE, PARC, and the Budget Committee, under the oversight of College Council and the president’s executive staff, to improve its programs, services, and activities and to identify institutional priorities for improvement. (Appendices 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12; Exhibit 1.1) (1.B.4, 1.B.5)

Research Used to Support Evaluation and Planning

The necessary resources for effective evaluation and planning are provided and coordinated through Institutional Research. The College Council and SPFIE, with oversight by the president, are charged with systematic review of institutional research efforts, evaluation processes, and planning activities. The staff of Institutional Research serve ex officio on both the SPFIE and PARC committees. (Exhibits 1.1, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19) (1.B.6, 1.B.7, 1.B.8)

Strengths

- The college benefits from a mature, well-understood set of mechanisms for modifying and implementing college policies and procedures, ranging from daily operational business to long-term planning and evaluation.
- The college planning process is data-driven, outcomes based, and transparent. Measurements and results are regularly reported.

Challenges

- The college is challenged to maintain campus autonomy in an environment where eight very different institutions all share the same, overextended governing board, and where individual state legislators regularly intervene to shape campus policy.
Standard One Supporting Documentation

APPENDICES

1.1 Summary of WNC Publications
1.2 Institutional Research Survey Results Web Page
1.3 2007 Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory Results Summary
1.4 2008 Community College Survey of Student Engagement Results
1.5 2000-2009 Recent Graduate Survey Results: A Longitudinal View
1.6 2009 Goal Attainment Reports to SPFIE
1.7 Nursing Program Employer Survey for 2008 Graduating Class
1.8 2008 Nursing Program Graduate Survey
1.9 2009 AAS Early Childhood Education Academic Program Review Summary
1.10 2008 Financial Assistance Program Review Report
1.11 2009 AS Chemistry Annual Assessment Report and 2010 Plan
1.12 2008 Counseling Services Annual Assessment Report
1.13 Developmental Writing Pre- and Post Assessment Example

EXHIBITS

1.1 2006-2010 Strategic Plan
1.2 2009-2010 Catalog
1.3 2010 Spring Schedule
   http://www.wnc.edu/files/schedules/spr_schedule-10.pdf
1.4 2008 Institutional Portfolio
1.5 Quickfacts Brochure
1.6 2008-2009 Report to the Community
1.7 2009 President’s Welcome Back Presentation
   http://www.wnc.edu/files/reports/president/collegeaddress2009.pptx
1.8 E-Happenings Newsletter
   http://www.wnc.edu/news/publications/ehappenings/
1.9 Program Assessment & Review News
   http://www.wnc.edu/institutional/newsletter/
1.10 In Touch Newsletter
   http://www.wnc.edu/news/publications/in_touch/
1.11 Administrative Update
1.12 WNC Policy 1-1-1: Policy and Procedure Development at WNC
   http://www.wnc.edu/policymanual/1-1-1.php
1.13 Academic Faculty Senate Bylaws
   http://www.wnc.edu/files/policymanual/wncc_bylaws-academic_faculty_senate_bylaws.pdf
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