

# **YEAR ONE REPORT**

**NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**MARCH 1, 2011**



***Western Nevada College***

Carson City • Douglas • Fallon • Fernley • Hawthorne • Lovelock • Smith • Yerington

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Founded in 1971, Western Nevada College is a public, comprehensive community college serving residents of the seven northwestern counties of Nevada. Western serves a widespread, 18,000-square-mile region that includes both urban and rural communities, with some 200,000 residents. The college is based in Carson City, the state capital of Nevada, and rural campuses are located in the agricultural communities of Minden and Fallon. Small satellite centers in the towns of Fernley, Hawthorne, Lovelock, Smith Valley, and Yerington work closely with local high schools and rely heavily on distance education as well as some on-site services to meet community needs.

Offerings include associate degrees, certificates of achievement, and a Bachelor of Technology degree, as well as non-credit workforce training and community education. Areas of study include applied technologies, university parallel and transfer programs, community service offerings, and developmental education. Counseling, financial assistance, tutoring, peer mentoring, and other student services combine to address student needs within the mission of the college.

Nevada has one of the lowest college-going rates in the nation, along with one of the lowest percentages of residents who hold a bachelor's degree. Many WNC students are first-generation college students, and some are place-bound in their communities.

In 2009-2010, annualized credit headcount enrollment was 5,681, excluding community education and workforce training initiatives. More than 1,500 students took at least one class online.

WNC is guided by its mission and goals, principles of community, and strategic plan, which is reviewed annually and renewed every six years. In addition, the college disseminates information regarding progress toward achieving strategic goals through annual campus meetings, publications (paper and online), and open forums. Faculty responsible for academic programs perform annual assessment of student learning outcomes and review their programs every five years. Similarly, faculty and staff responsible for administrative services perform annual assessments of their activities and perform regular program reviews. Every member of the community can review these assessments which are vital to the decisions the college must make.

## **INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

The college celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and has taken this opportunity to reflect on its basic tenets as well as its goals and aspirations for the years ahead. During the current, ongoing state budget crisis, Western is keenly focusing on what is most important—serving students and its communities by preparing Nevadans for careers, helping students attain a college degree, and enhancing regional quality of life.

The faculty, staff, and students have all taken part in helping the college weather the budget cuts to date. Steps have included voluntary furloughs and pay reductions by professional staff to match state-mandated cuts and furloughs by classified staff; academic faculty who have willingly accepted larger class sizes and taught additional courses to meet student demand; a willingness by administrative faculty to take on extra responsibilities caused by vacant positions; and a registration fee surcharge that was accepted by campus student leaders.

In the past year, the college awarded 481 degrees and certificates, the highest number ever. A growing number of local high school students chose to enter Western immediately after graduation, including 39 percent of Carson City and 30 percent of Douglas County graduates (the two largest population centers in Western’s service area). The number of full-time students in 2009-2010 who were seeking a degree or certificate rose 36%, from 998 to 1,362.

More WNC students applied for and received financial assistance during 2009-2010 than ever before. The college distributed more than \$11 million in assistance, compared with \$6.3 million the prior year, a 42.7% increase. At the same time, more adult students enrolled to update job skills or begin college for the first time in response to Nevada’s devastating unemployment rate that remains the highest in the nation. The college has also continued reaching out to underserved populations and has, for the first time, matched the community population percentages in the number of Latino students.

## **PREFACE**

### **UPDATE ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

As WNC develops its strategic plan for 2012-2018, the Strategic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (SPFIE) committee, which serves as the Steering Committee for this report, will lead the college community in identifying the core themes that will align with the college mission as well as the objectives stated in the strategic plan. The core themes identified in this report align with the goal statements that are part of the current 2006-2012 strategic plan but have not been officially sanctioned as “core themes” by the Board of Regents.

In January 2011, SPFIE facilitated a three-part strategic planning workshop with representatives from student government; faculty, staff, and administrators; and community members. The all-day workshop began with brainstorming in small groups to identify core themes and objectives. Next, breakout groups discussed the college’s current environment in terms of its strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities as they relate to the college’s objectives. Finally, participants identified initiatives that would advance the core themes and objectives. Following this workshop, SPFIE began to consider the recommendations generated during the workshop and to designate indicators of achievement. In April, SPFIE will present a draft strategic plan for discussion at an all-

college open forum. Refinement of the plan will take place during the fall 2011 semester, and the final plan will be presented to the Board of Regents for approval in spring 2012.

Since the last report, the following minor changes have occurred:

- The General Education Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee has been elevated to a college standing committee.
- The first function of the new PeopleSoft student information system, the application for admission, went live in January 2011, and Student Services staff are preparing for the March implementation of enrollment, student financials, and financial aid functions.
- WNC is planning the migration of all online courses from its current learning management system (Blackboard's WebCT), which will soon no longer be supported, to a new LMS. This spring semester, the college is pilot testing the open-source Moodle LMS with courses in four disciplines and is planning for the integration of a new LMS with PeopleSoft.

## **RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS REQUESTED BY THE COMMISSION**

Because the writing of this report takes place just months after WNC first responded in June 2010 to the Evaluation Committee's recommendations (Appendix), only some of the recommended changes have been implemented.

For example, although the college had hoped to hire instructors for Surgical Technology and Automotive Technology during the 2010-2011 academic year, these positions will not be filled due to budgetary constraints. In December 2010, the Board of Regents approved the deactivation of five Drafting Technology programs: three associate of applied science degrees and two certificates of achievement. However, WNC will ensure that students will have the opportunity to complete these degrees and certificates.

## **DATE OF MOST RECENT REVIEW OF MISSION AND CORE THEMES**

In developing the current 2006-2012 strategic plan, the college president directed representatives from 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 college's mission and goals. The core themes of Student Success, Institutional Excellence, and One College/Many Communities in this Year One Report align with the goals stated in the resulting strategic plan.

In April 2009, the Board of Regents approved the current mission statement. In addition, in July 2010, NWCCU acknowledged that WNC's mission statement is consistent with the Commission's eligibility requirements and standards for accreditation.

Western's mission and goals appear on the college website, in the college catalog, and in other college publications, including the class schedule, Institutional Research's *Institutional Portfolio*, and the president's *Annual Report to the Community*.

# CHAPTER ONE: MISSION, CORE THEMES, AND EXPECTATIONS

## SECTION I: MISSION

### **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.

### **Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment**

WNC's mission focuses on student success, and to ensure that success, the institution itself must be excellent in terms of its human and physical resources and be responsive to the diverse needs of its communities.

The current strategic plan focuses on the following objectives:

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

WNC values the behaviors, skills, and knowledge that are articulated in the ten general education student learning outcomes and assesses these outcomes as a measure of student success.

Students who complete a degree at WNC are expected to demonstrate they:

- have college-level skills in reading, writing, and oral communication appropriate to their degree and/or emphasis.
- can use appropriate college-level mathematical skills.
- have problem solving, creative, and critical thinking skills.
- have effective and efficient learning skills, including the location and evaluation of information.
- have appropriate technological skills, including computer skills.
- know the basic principles and processes of government at the local, state, national, and international levels.
- understand scientific inquiry and the role of technology in the modern world.
- understand and apply social science principles, including an appreciation of participation in civic affairs.
- have an understanding of fine or performing arts.
- understand the importance of cultural traditions, diversity, and ethics in the modern world.

### **Articulation of Acceptable Threshold or Extent of Mission Fulfillment**

The core theme objectives are derived from the mission statement. The college continually measures the extent to which these objectives are met using established thresholds for achievement for its indicators.

## SECTION II: CORE THEMES

### **Core Theme #1: Student Success**

The primary responsibility of an institution of higher learning is to provide opportunities and means for students to accomplish their academic and career goals. WNC strives to foster within all of its students the desire to pursue knowledge as an end in itself and to continue this pursuit for a lifetime. WNC considers itself successful only when its students succeed. To that end, the college's resources are focused on students, in particular, on students' completing their programs and graduating in a timely manner. Even in bad economic times, the college maintains that focus and exerts even more effort to make sure students succeed.

**Objective:** *Improve student success in program completion and graduation rates.*

#### **Indicator of Achievement:**

- **High school to WNC continuation rate:** Fall term enrollment of recent high school graduates as a percentage of service area high school graduates. Graduate counts include standard and advanced high school diplomas only.

**Rationale:** Students who begin college immediately after high school graduation are more likely to enroll full-time and complete degrees than students who delay their college education. WNC believes so strongly in this indicator of student success that it reaches out to all service-area high school students to encourage students to continue their education. The better prepared students are for the college experience, the more likely they are to successfully complete courses and programs.

#### **Indicators of Achievement:**

- **Persistence rate:** Sum of course enrollments receiving a grade of A, B, C, or P divided by attempted course enrollment.
- **Retention rate:** Headcount enrollment of students who attend fall term and enroll the subsequent fall term, divided by the total headcount enrollment during the first term minus the number of graduates from the first term.
- **Graduation rate:** As reported to IPEDS in the fall, the standard cohort is fall semester, first-time-in-college (FTIC), full-time freshmen.
- **Transfer rate:** Percentage of students who receive associate degrees from WNC and enroll in a four-year institution at the end of the following spring semester.
- **Baccalaureate success rate:** Percentage of WNC graduates who earn a degree from a four-year institution within three years of their WNC graduation.

**Rationale:** For all students, regardless of their educational goals, success begins at the course level. Therefore, *persistence rates* are invaluable indicators of success for both students and the college. The percentage of students who continue fall to fall (*retention rate*) is an indicator of successful academic progress for students pursuing degrees or certificates. And attaining those degrees and certificates (*graduation rate*) is the key indicator of students' succeeding at WNC. Having earned those degrees and certificates indicates that these students are prepared to move on to complete further academic work, such as baccalaureate degrees, or to enter the job market. Therefore, *graduation* and *transfer rates* are significant indicators of student success. In addition, another indicator of how well WNC has prepared its students for continuing success is the *baccalaureate success rate* at transfer institutions.

**Indicator of Achievement:**

- **Student satisfaction:** Selected results from the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory.

**Rationale:** Students who are comfortable within the learning environment and with the instruction are more likely to succeed. Therefore, WNC places significant emphasis on student satisfaction and considers it another important indicator of student success.

**Indicators of Achievement:**

- **Student diversity:** Headcount enrollment of students by ethnicity as compared to service area.
- **Staff diversity:** Headcount of full-time classified staff by ethnicity as compared to service area.
- **Faculty diversity:** Headcount of full-time academic and administrative faculty by ethnicity as compared to service area.

**Rationale:** WNC strives to create a college community that reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of its service area in order to increase the likelihood that students will have a richer learning experience that will not only contribute to their success within the college but in the larger community as well.

Among WNC's ten general education student learning outcomes is the following: "Students who complete a degree at WNC are expected to demonstrate they understand the importance of cultural traditions, diversity and ethics in the modern world." The more a college community reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity within its service area, the greater the possibility that students will successfully achieve this diversity learning outcome.

**Core Theme #2: Institutional Excellence**

"[Inspiring] success in our community" requires institutional commitment to excellence and transparency. Courses, programs, and services provide bridges of opportunity over which students can travel from where they are educationally to where they are capable of going. To meet this standard, WNC continually reviews, assesses, and evaluates its programs and services. In addition, maintaining institutional excellence requires thoughtful financial planning. Because all decisions made at the college, including those affecting programs, services, staffing, space-utilization, and other resources, are data-driven, the rigorous analysis and regular reporting of institutional research is vital to meeting that standard of excellence the college has set for itself.

**Objective:** *Ensure institutional excellence in teaching, programs, and services.*

**Indicators of Achievement:**

- **Academic program review and assessment**
  - Student learning outcomes assessment
  - Review of curriculum and course scheduling
  - Successful course and program completion rates
  - Full-time to part-time faculty ratios
  - Student and faculty FTE
  - Student course evaluations



- Existence of articulation agreements with four-year institutions
- Existence of active advisory committees for occupational programs
- Attainment of program certification or accreditation
- Review by faculty members from other colleges or universities
- **Administrative program review and assessment**
  - Degrees and qualifications of personnel
  - Evidence of satisfaction with and effectiveness of services (Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and internal survey of all college employees)
  - Extant data
- **NWCCU self-study**

**Rationale:** A systematic evaluation of academic programs significantly affects college decision-making. Such evaluation aligns the program mission with the college mission, builds consensus around program goals and outcomes, and provides meaningful assessment data used to guide program improvement. Although the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) mandates a ten-year review cycle for existing academic programs, WNC reviews those programs every five years. Administrative departments are also reviewed every five years although there is no mandate from NSHE to do so. In addition, the NWCCU self-study process requires WNC to examine every aspect of its core mission. The college's efforts to measure the satisfaction with, and effectiveness of, both academic and administrative programs are an indication of the college's commitment to institutional excellence.

**Indicator of Achievement:**

- **Financial stability:**
  - All-funds institutional reserve as a percentage of all-funds annual budget
  - All-funds report of revenues and expenditures
  - WNC Foundation financial statements (private funding)

**Rationale:** Without adequate public and private funding and careful financial planning, the college would not be able to maintain the excellent quality of its programs. The indicators identified above are a comprehensive measure of the institution's financial stability.

**Indicator of Achievement:**

- **Distribution of institutional information:**
  - Annual budget requests, space utilization reports and institutional budget summary (internal only)
  - Institutional accreditation reports, program review summaries, strategic plan and updates, the president's *Annual Report to the Community*, and Institutional Research's *Institutional Portfolio* (public)

**Rationale:** To be truly excellent, an institution must keep its stakeholders informed of its activities and invite feedback that becomes a vital part of planning and decision-making. WNC communicates a variety of critical information that informs the community. Through such transparency, the college invites stakeholders not only to comment but also to participate in the college's efforts to meet individual student and community needs.

### **Core Theme #3: One College/Many Communities**

In a multi-campus college, unified planning, full utilization of physical resources, and collaboration are essential if that college is to meet the needs of its diverse communities in an environment “that nurtures individual potential and respects differences.” To meet the educational needs of its various and diverse communities, the college schedules classes to allow students to complete degrees and certificates in a timely manner and to optimize the use of its classrooms and laboratories.

At WNC, collaboration relies on clear pathways of communication among its students, staff, faculty, and administrators, and between instructional sites. Much of the work of the college is accomplished through committees, task forces, senates, and councils that cross boundaries of location and departments. The college ensures that these bodies represent its various sites and constituencies. For example, the ASWN functions as a unified, college-wide student body but allows for planning boards at the Carson and Fallon campuses. Similarly, the Division Chairs Council represents the academic interests of all campuses and rural sites.

#### **WNC’s 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.

**Objective:** *Embrace our college’s many communities and respond to their diverse needs.*

#### **Indicator of Achievement:**

- **Unified planning**

- Percentage of degree and certificate programs with courses scheduled in such a way as to allow full-time students to complete programs within 100% of normal time.
- Morning, afternoon, and evening rates of classroom space utilization.

**Rationale:** Careful course scheduling is particularly significant for a multi-campus college. Because program completion is of primary importance at WNC, the college considers unified scheduling an important indicator of its success.

#### **Indicator of Achievement:**

- **Communication:** Survey of college community to gauge effectiveness of communication among students, faculty, and staff; between instructional sites; and between instructional sites and their communities.

**Rationale:** If a multi-campus college is to meet the diverse needs of its students, there must be clear pathways of communication among its various entities. How well these entities

communicate is a significant indication of how students perceive the college as meeting their needs and their being treated equally.

## CONCLUSION

For WNC, student success, institutional excellence, and sense of community are core themes. WNC exists to provide opportunities for students from its many diverse communities to achieve their goals, including earning degrees and certificates. The timing of this report is especially fortuitous as WNC begins to create its strategic plan for 2012-2018. Because the new accreditation standards help to guide this process, the resulting plan will demonstrate a better understanding of what a good strategic plan should be and define even better the college's mission through objectives and performance indicators that reflect the college's priorities.

Of particular significance is the emphasis on performance indicators and their rationale. As a result of responding to Standard One, the college is more aware that it must ensure that performance indicators are comprehensive and justified. For example, as stated in the current strategic plan, the one objective and associated performance indicators related to student success narrow the focus to degree- and certificate-seeking students and do not provide for those taking non-credit continuing education classes and classes in adult basic skills, ESL, and GED preparation. The college does measure and report the success of all students in numerous ways, however, and the 2012-2018 strategic plan currently in development will reflect this. In addition, the evaluation of faculty by peers and administration is not listed as an indicator of achievement related to institutional excellence, yet WNC does ensure instructional excellence by evaluating faculty using a variety of measures of effectiveness, including evaluations by students, peers, and administrators.

Of the many challenges a multi-campus college faces, none is greater than maintaining a sense of oneness while still meeting the diverse needs of its various communities. WNC has succeeded in meeting this challenge and will be even more successful as it reviews its core themes and objectives in light of its ever-evolving mission.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Institutional Response To A Full-Scale Evaluation Committee Report**

May 3-5, 2010

### **Western Nevada College**

Carson City, Nevada

**A Report Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and  
Universities**

June 10, 2010

## Introduction

Western Nevada College would like to thank the members of the Evaluation Committee for their review, analysis, commendations, and recommendations. The Institutional Self-Study and the Evaluation Committee's on-site visit and peer review have been of great value to this institution.

This report is an institutional response to the Evaluation Committee's recommendations. The College not only accepts the recommendations, but has also responded to those recommendations by incorporating strategies to address each of the four recommendations. A brief review of the institution's plan and progress is provided below.

## Response to Recommendations

- 1. The Committee recommends that, as funds become available, quality faculty be hired with a primary commitment to the college for those degree programs currently lacking full-time faculty oversight. Until that time special oversight should be given by the academic administration to such programs to ensure that program quality is not being seriously diminished. (Standard 4.A.1)**

The College has made every effort to protect the quality, access, and retention of its academic programs. The institution recently hired the following positions:

- **Construction Technology Instructor**
- **Nursing Instructor**
- **English Instructor**
- **Math Instructor**
- **Distance Education Coordinator**

The College plans to hire the following positions during the 2010-2011 academic year. Additional academic teaching positions may be hired if budget permits.

- **Surgical Technology Instructor**
- **Automotive Instructor**

- 2. The Committee recommends that the College implement its plan to conduct a comprehensive assessment of all its programs. While the College is substantially in compliance with Policy 2.2's direction for planning, progress on collecting and analyzing data that creates specific improvement actions must be a college priority. The first-cycle of review, which has been analyzed and corrected where necessary, has revealed the need for another iteration before a complete analysis of the entire assessment effort can be adequately evaluated. (Policy 2.2)**

The College accepts this recommendation and continues its commitment to the continual review and improvement of its assessment processes.

- 3. The Committee recommends that, in spite of the challenges associated with knowing the certainty of future funding, the College project expenditures for a minimum of three years for major categories of expenditures. (Standard 7.A.2)**

The College has completed the three year projection of expenditures. The Budget Projection Form is provided on the next page.

**4. The Committee recommends that while the College is in substantial compliance with Standard 3.E, the institution accommodates the fair and equitable treatment of both male and female athletes in providing opportunities for participation, equipment, and access to facilities. (Standard 3.E.5)**

The College is making every effort to address gender equity in its athletic program. The following strategies will be implemented for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

- **Compensate an assistant softball coach for the Women's Softball Team.**
- **Hire a consultant to work with the coaching staff of the Women's Softball Team.**
- **Place both head coaches on full-time administrative faculty contracts.**
- **Travel 2-3 additional players on the Softball Team.**
- **Seek additional funding to build an on-campus softball field.**

Western Nevada College  
Fiscal Year 2011 Legislative Approved Budget  
Fiscal Years 2012 & 2013 Projected Budgets

Description	FY 2011 Legislative Budget	FY 2012 Projected Budget	FY 2013 Projected Budget
<b>Revenue:</b>			
State General Fund	\$ 19,614,843.00	\$ 20,092,668.00	\$ 20,092,668.00
Registration Fees	\$ 3,224,943.00	\$ 3,826,544.00	\$ 3,826,544.00
Student Surcharge	\$ 490,147.00	\$ -	\$ -
Non-Resident Tuition	\$ 185,563.00	\$ 300,236.00	\$ 300,236.00
Application Fees	\$ 19,142.00	\$ 17,090.00	\$ 17,090.00
Investment Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 23,534,638.00</b>	<b>\$ 24,236,538.00</b>	<b>\$ 24,236,538.00</b>
<b>Salary Expenditures:</b>			
Professional F/T Salaries	\$ 10,560,411.00	\$ 10,431,657.00	\$ 10,431,657.00
Professional P/T Salaries	\$ 1,888,808.00	\$ 2,325,000.00	\$ 2,325,000.00
Classified Salaries	\$ 3,889,339.00	\$ 3,566,351.00	\$ 3,566,351.00
T/A's & Tutors	\$ 180,653.00	\$ 180,653.00	\$ 180,653.00
Student Wages	\$ 54,000.00	\$ 120,550.00	\$ 120,550.00
Fringes	\$ 5,019,421.00	\$ 5,017,646.00	\$ 5,017,646.00
<b>Operating Expenditures:</b>			
In & Out-of-State Travel	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 98,500.00	\$ 98,500.00
Staff Development	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
WNC Operating	\$ 213,570.00	\$ 658,509.00	\$ 658,509.00
Attorney General Assmt.	\$ 32,106.00	\$ 32,106.00	\$ 32,106.00
Personnel Assessment	\$ 30,330.00	\$ 30,330.00	\$ 30,330.00
Facilities- O&M Plant	\$ 247,300.00	\$ 248,800.00	\$ 248,800.00
Scholarships	\$ 370,700.00	\$ 370,700.00	\$ 370,700.00
Utilities	\$ 853,000.00	\$ 1,055,736.00	\$ 1,055,736.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 23,534,638.00</b>	<b>\$ 24,236,538.00</b>	<b>\$ 24,236,538.00</b>