

## Quality Highlights

Western New Mexico University's (WNMU's) AQIP Systems Portfolio includes a number of updates, many of which result from deliberative quality improvement initiatives connected to our institutional strategic planning processes and Action Team productivity and transparency. The update also reflects increases in staffing to support institutional advancement, the growth of online instruction, and data collection and analysis. WNMU's athletic conference affiliation changed as well. In affirmation of these and other efforts, the March, 2007 Higher Learning Commission Quality WNMU Check-up team reported that "the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met [the organizational commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement] of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations (p.4)."

In order to address the rapidly changing landscape of higher education in general, and to meet the needs of the communities served by WNMU in particular, the institutional strategic planning (SP) process was redesigned using an AQIP Action Project Team in AY05-06. To date, the Team conducted university-wide SWOT analyses, from which strategic challenges were identified and prioritized; strategies for meeting these challenges and reaching strategic goals were defined; communications channels for disseminating SP information, and for obtaining necessary feedback from all stakeholders, established; and a revised University mission statement drafted. Senior administration, students, faculty, adjunct instructors, staff and the community are represented in the membership of the SP Team.

Other AQIP Action Teams were created to address concerns communicated to the WNMU Quality Council through a variety of available channels:

- The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Team focuses on two critical areas of the student experience at WNMU: writing and employment.
- The Human Resources (HR) Action Team was recently chartered to identify gaps and present to all the campus community recommendations for improvement, initially in the areas of recruitment, hiring, and orientation.
- The Marketing/Communications Team (which has assumed the basic charter and some of the membership of the now-retired Communications Team) has, with the assistance of the new Office of Institutional Advancement, enhanced the University's institutional identity both outside and inside WNMU.
- The Foundations of Excellence© Team was created this academic year when WNMU joined this externally guided self-study and improvement process for enhancement of the first year students experience.

Key personnel were added to the staff, two as a recommendation from AQIP Action Project Teams:

- The Office of Institutional Advancement, established in 2006, has been instrumental in raising funds, developing a viable alumni database, expanding a

- new online alumni social networking space, re-connecting with graduates across the country through a variety of new chapters and activities, and strengthening economic development partnerships with schools in Mexico.
- The Virtual Campus, created in 2005, employs a new, full time Director who oversees online course creation and delivery processes as well as technical support and training for students and faculty.
  - The Office of Data Analysis and Research, established in 2004, is the direct outcome of a recommendation made by the former Process Management Team (PMT). Since its creation, this office was staffed with a Director, who oversees the WNMU Data Integrity Team. This Team exists to ensure reliability and validity of all data obtained from the SCT Banner system, and develops procedures for data reporting. In its 2007 audit, the New Mexico Higher Education Department gave WNMU data a rating of 98.9%.
  - An Ombuds Office, another outcome of an AQIP Action Team recommendation, was established and staffed beginning with the 2005-2006 AY.

Finally, WNMU once again is a member of the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. This enables our student-athletes to participate in the athletic arena without having to travel to Alaska, Montana, and Hawaii and provides a complement of sports compatible with an institution of WNMU's size.

With vastly improved data collection practices, WNMU administration, faculty and staff are able to utilize data with confidence to identify opportunities for improvement. Reliance on fact rather than opinion is becoming more of a norm as people see the power of data and understand better how to effectively use it. While communication continues to be an institutional challenge, new avenues for the exchange of information and ideas, including numerous web-based tools, were put in place to help address this. These are described throughout the updated portfolio.

Further institutional information is available in the [WNMU Resource Room](#).

Updates to the WNMU Systems Portfolio are provided as [links within the original document](#). Where changes appear, the following color-coding will be used:

**Red:** data in the original Systems Portfolio are no longer valid, and were not replaced.

The WNMU Updated AQIP Systems Portfolio is located at <http://www.wnmu.edu/AQIP>