

AQIP FINAL REPORT: SOTL
STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCE TEAM

August 2008

The AQIP SOTL Student Work Experience Team conducted a final survey in late 2007. However, the Team determined that no meaningful conclusions could be reached since the student survey response rate was so low. Only thirty-five students completed the survey while sixty-two supervisors responded. Team members considered that students were suffering from survey fatigue as other WNMU committees (for example, First Year Experience Steering Committee) were also encountering low student response rates for surveys. The Team agreed that previously obtained survey data was sufficient to draw conclusions. Previous survey responses suggested that, in general, student employees were quite satisfied with their work experiences in campus jobs. However, supervisor responses reflected a lower satisfaction of students' work experience. Supervisors indicated that the work experience varied widely between departments. The Team acknowledged that uniform training of student employees is lacking on the WNMU campus.

In addition to conducting a final survey, the Work Experience Team sought to ascertain which departments on campus had a student employee manual. Each team member was assigned to inquire about existing departmental manuals. Only the Miller Library and the Maintenance Department reported having developed a student training manual. The Miller Library manual is revised and used on a regular basis. The Maintenance Department reported that a copy of their manual could not be located. An unexpected discovery was the existence of an undated WNMU campus-wide student training manual. Based on conversations with WNMU employees, the Team estimates that the manual is more than ten years old and requires too much revision to be of use in the contemporary environment. The Student Work Experience Team recommends that the student work experience be strengthened with the development of a new University-wide student employee handbook. This handbook should address general topics that pertain to all student employees at WNMU. Examples of topics include:

- Eligibility for student positions on the WNMU campus
- Hiring process
- Time sheets and Pay Periods
- Evaluations
- Disciplinary Action
- Safety Procedures

The Team also recommends that each WNMU department develop a supplemental manual that pertains to the specific working environment at the unit level. Students should be required to be familiar with the contents of both manuals.

Lastly, the Student Work Experience Team recommends that WNMU play a more prominent role in teaching students about work ethic principles. WNMU is well-poised to make a difference in the regional business community by producing potential employees that have not only the appropriate academic preparation and but also a meaningful work experience that includes lifelong job skills. The Team recommends that WNMU offer a formal student employee training program such as Partners developed by Noel Levitz Inc.